PlayNotes

Season | 48 Issue | 1

PERSEVERANCE

Written by Callie Kimball

PS
PORTLAND STAGE

Discussion Series

Join us for a Book Club-style **Page to Stage** with the Portland Public Library. Check out your copy of the script and join us two weeks before previews of each Mainstage Production. Scripts are available at the reference desk at the Main Branch of the Portland Public Library. This year discussions will be held over Zoom at 6pm. Feel free to come and chat about the plays with Literary Manager, Todd Brian Backus; his Directing and Dramaturgy Apprentices, and special guests. Visit portlandlibrary.com/programs-events/ for more information.

The Artistic Perspective, hosted by Artistic Director Anita Stewart, is an opportunity for audience members to delve deeper into the themes of the show through conversation with special guests. A different scholar, visiting artist, playwright, or other expert will join the discussion each time. The Artistic Perspective discussions are held after the first Sunday matinee performance.

Curtain Call discussions offer a rare opportunity for audience members to talk about the production with the performers. Through this forum, the audience and cast explore topics that range from the process of rehearsing and producing the text to character development to issues raised by the work Curtain Call discussions are held after the second Sunday matinee performance.

All discussions are free and open to the public. Show attendance is not required. To subscribe to a discussion series performance, please call the Box Office at 207.774.0465.

Meredith G. Healy leads a conversation with the playwright, director, and cast of Rx Machina *by Caity-Shea Violette as part of the 2021 Digital Little Festival of the Unexpected.*

Perseverance

by Callie Kimball

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Letter from the Editors

Dear *PlayNotes* Readers,

Welcome back to Portland Stage for the 2021-2022 Season! We want to introduce you to the literary staff who will be writing this guide during the coming year. Todd Brian Backus is the Literary Manager at Portland Stage as well as the Editor-in-Chief of *PlayNotes*. He's joined by two Directing and Dramaturgy Apprentices, Macey Downs and Meredith G. Healy.

In this first issue of *PlayNotes* of 2021-2022, we will step into the world of the fictional town of Hillcroft, Maine, in Callie Kimball's new play, *Perseverance*. The play tells the story of two teachers separated by 100 years. We have tried to give context to the times that both Percy and Dawn occupy in 1920 and 2020, respectively. There are articles about historical suffrage leaders (p. 31), as well as a timeline detailing important events that led to the passage of the 19th Amendment (p. 18). We also spoke with Dr. S.E. Houchins, who consulted with Callie Kimball about Frances E.W. Harper and Pauline Hopkins. These two Black suffragists passed through Maine during their careers and served as an inspiration for Percy (p. 28). Dawn's narrative is explored in "Social Media and Campaigning," an article about the growing importance of using technology in modern political campaigns (p. 15). Several of the articles ("A History of Black People in Maine" on p. 23, "Reckoning with White Supremacy" on p. 34, and "True Womanhood & Intersectional Feminism" on p. 26) speak to similarities between the two time periods, and help to underscore the idea that there is always more work to be done in the realm of racial, gender, and educational equity.

When compiling each issue of *PlayNotes*, we strive to provide articles and interviews that give you insight into what the process has been like behind the scenes (see articles in "Portland Stage's Perseverance"), contain pertinent information about the play's setting and major themes ("The World of Perseverance"), and provide deeper dives into specific subjects that compelled our literary department ("Digging Deeper"). We include a list of books, films, plays, and television shows that we hope audiences will access for more cultural content that relates to the play ("Recommended Resources").

We hope you enjoy this issue and we look forward to seeing you at the theater!

Sincerely yours,

The Portland Stage Literary Department

About the Play

by Macey Downs

"Now that women have won the vote, to what purpose should women of all races, who might otherwise be enemies, point their shared resources? Tomorrow, women will cast ballots for the first time ever. Finally, men and women both will have an equal voice in a government that serves everyone's interests."
- Perseverance "Percy" Turner, Perseverance

Perseverance illuminates the complexities at the heart of the suffrage movement and highlights the contributions of Black women who were silenced by White suffragists while following the parallel stories of two fictional characters. In 1920, Perseverance "Percy" Turner, a Black schoolteacher, writer, and suffragist, is determined to elevate her students above the circumstances in which they were born. One hundred years later, in the same small town of Hillcroft, Maine, Dawn Davis, a White schoolteacher, is running for office on a platform of education reform while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. The play hops back and forth in time, weaving Percy and Dawn's storylines together. By juxtaposing past and present, playwright Callie Kimball reveals both the bravery and the profound divisions that shape the course of social movements across the ages.

Perseverance fills a notable gap in the American theater canon: there are currently no significant theatrical works about women's suffrage, and certainly none that approach the movement from an intersectional perspective. Anita Stewart, Executive & Artistic Director of Portland Stage, explains, "Kimball's play has the potential to greatly enrich the field of theater and America's cultural heritage."

Perseverance was commissioned by Portland Stage and the Maine Suffrage Centennial Collaborative in 2018 to commemorate the 2020 centennial of women's suffrage. This production at Portland Stage will be the world premiere of the play, which was originally scheduled to open exactly one year ago, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Kimball describes the play as a "period piece," as both the 1920 and 2020 timelines of the play feel eerily far away, yet still haunt our current world in 2021.

Director Jade King Carroll and the cast during a rehearsal for Perseverance, *Portland Stage Company, 2021.*
Photo by Mical Hutson.

About the Cast and Characters

by Macey Downs

Characters in 1920

Name: Nedra Snipes

Character: Perseverance "Percy" Turner. A teacher, suffragist, and unpublished writer. She teaches three students. A mix of passion and formality. She uses her commas.

Name: Vin Knight

Character: "Judge" Elmer. The mayor of Hillcroft, Maine, where his family has lived for generations. Is profiting nicely off of Prohibition by running a bootlegging business. Doesn't worry about too many things. Not actually a judge.

Name: William Oliver Watkins

Character: Leland "Moss" Tarker. Served in France in World War I. Judge's hired hand. Talented at many types of jobs. A reformed sinner, he is not above profiting off the sins of white folk. A bit of a brag.

Characters in 2020

Name: Catherine Buxton

Character: Dawn Davis. A teacher running for public office. Learning what it takes to use her own voice, and what it costs not to.

Name: Brendan D. Hickey

Character: Cooper "Coop" Davis. Dawn's husband. In a bid to support his marriage and his wife, he's renovating a grange hall into their new home. Prides himself on being a true Mainer.

Name: Sally Wood

Character: Dilly. Dawn's campaign manager. She's worked on many campaigns, none of them successful. Divorced and the opposite of idealistic. Is not above snorting crushed Adderall to deliver on a deadline.

An Interview with the Playwright and the Director: Callie Kimball and Jade King Carroll

Edited for Length and Clarity by Macey Downs

Callie Kimball.

Directing and Dramaturgy Apprentice Macey Downs spoke with playwright Callie Kimball and director Jade King Carroll about the creation of *Perseverance* and the changes it has undergone since the spring of 2020.

Macey Downs (MD): ***Callie, I know that this play was commissioned by Portland Stage (PS) and the Maine Suffrage Centennial Collaborative. Could you talk about your journey from when they first approached you with the project to where the play is now, a week before its world premiere?***

Calle Kimball (CK): Back in 2018, Anita approached me because she had been approached about commissioning a play to commemorate the centennial of women getting the right to vote. I'm always excited to get a commission, but it was really important to me that I understood what the expectations were. I was definitely not interested in telling the story of White women getting the vote 100 years ago, because that's a problematic history—if anyone knows anything about women's suffrage, they're more likely to know about White suffragists. I was much more interested in putting something on stage that I didn't know a lot about, and that was a story of a Black suffragist, educator, or journalist. So before I accepted, Anita and I had a candid talk with the donor and we had a discussion about the kind of play that I would be interested in writing. I was thrilled when we were all on the same page. We were able to discuss all of the different layers to the story. That was now three years ago, but it was two years before the 2020 election. Then, of course, the pandemic hit. When the pandemic hit, we realized we would not be able to produce it to coincide with the 2020 presidential election, the centennial of women earning the right to vote, and the bicentennial of Maine's statehood. There were a lot of things happening in 2020, but it all got derailed by COVID-19. We did two online workshop readings of it to keep working on the play, in a very optimistic way. We held out hope that we would all be able to come together in a room again, and here we are, doing exactly that, under the guidance of Jade King Carroll.

MD: ***Jade, you came on for one of the workshops that Callie mentioned, is that correct?***

Jade King Carroll (JKC): We started talking in the spring of 2020, I was in Portland doing *Native Gardens*. It was before the pandemic had really hit, we were in the mindset of the pandemic only lasting a couple of weeks, we were being cautious and talked over FaceTime. So we started talking. At that point, the play was all inside.

CK: That's right! The play took place primarily in the cellar and in the kitchen, in interior spaces. So, everything went into lockdown. Then in the spring, PS wanted to do a reading of the show for Little Festival of the Unexpected. So that was when we workshopped the play, and that was when I started to place the action of the play outdoors in case we were able to produce something in September as planned.

JKC: It was interesting, trying to write a period piece while living during a period when everything was constantly changing. The logic of what people were doing—are we staying six feet apart, are we masked—was being worked into the play and was also being navigated in life. That was really exciting, and I'm grateful that it became part of the process. Really answering to the moment we were in that was changing so much.

MD: ***How did you reconcile the want to respond to what was happening in the moment with making the play what you wanted it to be artistically? How did those things inform each other?***

JKC: The first version of the play I read was [version] 2.5, and then it very quickly became 5! The play was already in such great shape. It was clear what the intention of the story was and who the characters were. It was the world that was changing, and we had to move the characters in the new space.

CK: People responded to early drafts of the play in ways that really surprised me. I think there's something about the two time periods in one space and the themes that draw you in. It's a simple plot and a simple idea. I set things up on stage so that audiences see things that they have not seen before, and maybe are given a chance to see something in a new way. So, I was addressing my usual themes of class, race, power, economic challenges, and what it means to be a woman. The early drafts before the pandemic, I was writing a play about women's suffrage and the issues facing a Black suffragist 100 years ago. Then the pandemic hit, and there were references in the 1920 timeline to influenza, so that was a little bit weird and echoey. There was also a national focus on educational inequity and racial

Jade King Carroll.

injustice, topics that had already been in the play: the 2020 female candidate is running on a platform of education reform specifically about economic differences from town to town in the state of Maine. We also had the presidential election in 2020 and the death of Ruth Bader Ginsberg. I had already written in an early draft about the trigger bill, and how a woman's right to choose is at risk in this country. We elected the first female vice president. These are all issues I care about and have always written about, but it just so happened that a lot of things that had been bubbling underneath came to the forefront. It was a weirdly relevant play that we could not do at the time when it was most apt and relevant! Sadly, it is still relevant a year later. We still have some of these same issues.

MD: ***Now being a year later, how has the meaning of the play changed for you? How is it different in 2021 than it would have been in 2020?***

JKC: It's interesting figuring out where the opportunities to play were. We discussed at one point doing it outside. Looking at the

bones of the play and how you enter it both literally and figuratively. There was a different anticipation that I was excited about when it was going to be performed in the fall of 2020. I'm always inspired by how theater can change a conversation and an audience. I was so excited about the possibility of seeing how theater could effect change in an actual political arena. It would have been interesting to see the power of this theatrical conversation a month or two before the Trump-Biden race. It's been really wonderful to see how it continues to resonate after that event. The play is beautiful. I am excited about these characters, and I love Percy. As a woman of color, and someone who is fiercely independent, there is a lot of Percy that I relate to. I related to her in 2019, 2020, and now in 2021, but I was excited for the change that she could have sparked. And I felt most connected to that in the fall of 2020, as a political artist. But I still feel very connected to the play in 2021. I still feel that it has the power to open up conversations. Theater artists have needed hope, and this play gives us that.

MD: ***Could you speak about what the collaborative process on this piece has been like? I know, for instance, that Jade will give Callie proposals for script changes, or Callie will offer staging suggestions during rehearsals. What are your conversations around collaborating on this piece in a really generous way?***

CK: This is one of the first pieces of theater that I've been involved with since the pandemic, and it felt very hopeful to begin having conversations around ideas, the themes, the design, and the reality of casting. Bit by bit we got all the logistical things squared away for the production. That left the work of serving the play and serving the script, which includes me! We've discovered the play together. I think I know the play I wrote, but when you get into the actual rehearsing of it, Jade and the actors have to make it actually work in real time and be vivid and authentic. We've all collectively been sniffing out the moments where things are overwritten or underwritten, or need to be nourished a bit, or might be confusing. I think this is the best collaborative experience I've had working on a play, and for it to be during a time when there is so much stress and uncertainty in everyone's life, the fact that we've all been able to come together and pour so much energy and generosity into this process, has helped me improve and understand the play in new ways. I would say that I don't think there is any ego in the room, which is why we've been able to grow the play as much as we have. Everybody is coming up with genuine questions, and is up for trying and exploring things.

JKC: The goal is to create a safe space for everybody to bring their authentic selves. I think there's a gift in doing a new play coming out of this pandemic because there is no established or right way to do it: this is ours. We get to bring our full selves in, we get to make the choices, we get to create it together, and we get to be the true theater artists that we are as writers, designers, actors, directors, and stage managers. It feels so good to be creating something together. Inviting people to play and bring their authentic selves continues to raise the bar of what we can achieve together. I see it in the room happening with the actors. They keep finding deeper and deeper truths within the play and in asking the questions of the play. This is what I love about creating theater. I'm so glad that the group of people that we've been able to assemble and collaborate with are being generous and allowing themselves to feel safe in a room with people after so much time away.

CK: It's been really exciting watching Jade run the room. I don't think I've ever seen anybody hold the space lightly, but with such intention. She has such ease and grace, and there is always the sense that there is enough time. I never feel like I'm interrupting, there's a grace to the rhythm that you create in the room. I think that people feel comfortable asking questions. Questions are where I start. I'm not a scholar on this subject, so I did a lot of research. I'm especially interested in the questions that come up during rehearsal. My hope is that the audience has questions! There is a saying that a play can either confirm or challenge a worldview, and my hope is that the audience will engage with the play in the way that we all have been. Wondering about the themes, and digging a little deeper in their

Assistant Director Macey Downs with Director Jade King Carroll during a rehearsal for Perseverance, *Portland Stage Company, 2021. Photo by Mical Hutson.*

thinking about these issues.

JKC: It is my goal to make people comfortable. I feel like when I'm rushed that I have to quickly land on the right choice, and don't have the time to think things through. If you rush, you'll just end up having to do it twice and you won't have any depth to the decision. When actors aren't comfortable and when things don't make sense, they aren't as deep or connected, and they don't resonate as much for the audience. Allowing breath in the room ultimately is a better use of time than rushing through.

MD: ***Is there a specific scene, moment, or idea from the play that you are most excited for people to see or experience?***

CK: The scene with Percy and Moss sharing a meal!

JKC: That scene! I just smile through it, that scene delights me. It's basic nourishment and seeing each other. It has all of the best qualities of humanity in it.

CK: It's intimate. It's funny because I don't often write romantic scenes. I think that, if I had set out to write it in a romantic way, it wouldn't have the effect that I think it has, which is really about a blooming friendship, and the intimacy of discovering each other. We see the two of them relaxing into a new friendship. It ends up being intimate with a question mark of romance over it. I think it's delicious, I love watching that scene! I also like that the scene sets up the scene that comes later when Percy gives her speech. I think the later scene is tied to that first moment of intimacy and discovery and the new friendship. I'm also excited about the set and the design! I have no idea how everyone is accomplishing this and I can't wait to see it. I think the set is really going to be like a seventh character.

Putting it Together: An Interview with Costume Designer, Kathleen Payton Brown

Edited for Length and Clarity by Meredith G. Healy

Kathleen Payton Brown.

Directing and Dramaturgy Apprentice Meredith G. Healy spoke with Kathleen Payton Brown, costume designer for *Perseverance*, about designing costumes for new works, the unique nature of designing for a period piece, and her path as a costume designer.

Meredith G. Healy (MGH): ***Welcome back to Portland Stage (PS)! As a frequent collaborator, what do you most enjoy about working with PS?***

Kathleen Payton Brown (KPB): The people that work here! They're enthusiastic, friendly, warm, talented, and great problem solvers.

MGH: ***What are you most excited about with regards to the costumes for*** **Perseverance*?***

KPB: I'm both excited and nervous to see how the two different time periods will work onstage. I have it in my mind, but you never know until you see it come together during tech. There's also a costume that "Judge" has that I'm very excited to see because it is hilarious!

MGH: ***You have been attached to this project for over a year! Have your ideas about the costumes changed as the script has changed?***

KPB: I'm going to say no in regards to the script changing, although there are some things that have been added. However, now that we're actually in rehearsals and having conversations with the actors during fittings, the development of their characters have changed somewhat. Specifically Sally Wood playing Dilly. That can be very much cast-driven.

MGH: ***Is there a particular element of her wardrobe that has changed or has her personality inspired the change?***

KPB: The inspiration that Sally is feeling is going in a different direction than what Jade [King Carroll, the director] and I had initially talked about. We talked about her as being more traditionally dressed and we're moving in a very different direction.

MGH: ***Is designing for a new work different from designing for a play that has been produced many times?***

KPB: Definitely! There's always some changes that happen. It's really exciting to be part of a new work. I really enjoy the process. You get a chance to have it be fresh and original, and you're not trying to reproduce someone else's previous designs.

MGH: ***That must be freeing to know that you're the original person conceptualizing the designs, and that you're not being compared to anyone besides yourself, but that could be intimidating too.***

KPB: It is a little intimidating, although we had a lot of time to talk about this one! So that was nice. Everybody had more time to think about it than we typically would with a new work process.

MGH: ***What are some of the challenges that come with designing a period piece?***

KPB: At PS specifically, if we don't have it in the costume stock and can't acquire it, that means we have to build it, and we have a very limited time frame and limited staff in the costume shop.

MGH: ***How long do you usually have in the costume shop from the first time you set foot in the space again until opening night?***

KPB: It's usually three weeks of rehearsals into dress rehearsals. Then we get some tweaking time during previews. If I'm lucky, and we get measurements early enough, then I get a little bit of advance time. For instance, during *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Summer 2019), we had a lot of measurements so we could start early.

MGH: ***Is there anything that you're building for this show that you're particularly excited about?***

KPB: We're building a skirt for Percy. It's pants with skirt panels, so we're calling them "skants." We're still working on what that really is, but we're excited about seeing what it looks like. We did a mockup fitting on her yesterday. She's got to do a lot of movement, in some scenes she might be able to wear a traditional skirt, but specifically when she's riding the bike she needs more mobility. I don't think that any audience member will notice that they're pants, but it will give her more mobility.

MGH: ***So it's not reflective of the character making the choice to dress in pants?***

KPB: No, I would have loved to do that! It was what many suffragists did. I think the closest that the character of Percy would get to pants would be pantaloons under a skirt.

MGH: ***What has your journey been like as a costume designer?***

KPB: It started when I was pretty young. I fell into theater when I was 14, and I've been working backstage in one way or another throughout the years. I went to college knowing that I wanted to study at least the technical aspects of design. It's not always been easy after that. I got lucky in college. They were starting up a new BFA design curriculum so I had a lot of opportunities. Being a freelance designer is challenging financially, so you always have to have another job. Once I settled back in Maine in 1991, I've been just Maine-based designing, which has made it a lot easier. I do a lot of driving! I also have a really good rapport with lots of different theaters that will loan me pieces, or allow me to rent pieces at a discounted rate. I know what's in stock now, and when it comes to a period show having that knowledge and connection is really important.

MGH: ***Do you have any advice for young people pursuing a career as a costume designer?***

KPB: Learn how to actually make the costumes, ask a lot of questions, and take care of yourself. It can be an all-encompassing, challenging, and demanding job.

MGH: ***What are you hoping audiences will take away from this production of*** **Perseverance*?***

KPB: It seems like such a relevant topic, particularly when we started talking about it in May 2020. Having access to education for everyone is such an important part of this conversation. It also shows you how little has changed since 1920. Things have gotten a little better, but not by enough. There's definitely still more work to be done.

Social Media and Campaigning

By Lizz Mangan in 2020
With Updates by Macey Downs and Meredith G. Healy in 2021

Perseverance introduces us to two women campaigning for what they believe in: Perseverance Turner is looking to unite Black and White women so they might work together to uplift more causes, and Dawn is looking to give students equal education no matter the financial background of their county. Because Dawn and Perseverance are living in 2020 and 1920, respectively, their approaches to campaigning are vastly different. Perseverance's main platform of outreach comes from traveling and delivering speeches. Dawn, on the other hand, is living in a time of technology, and is pushed by Dilly, her campaign manager, to utilize various forms of social media. To make sure her presence is known, she sets up goals such as posting on platforms like Facebook and YouTube twice daily. Though Dawn is hesitant about the intensity of this plan, Dilly explains why this type of excessive posting is necessary:

DILLY
Campaigns are won or lost on social media, so you need a punchy slogan, colorful clothes, and daily content posted to Instagram.

Because social media was not even a thought in Perseverance's time, this is not something she had to worry about. However, Dawn, as a modern candidate, does. But is there really a correlation between social media and a candidate's audience engagement? What can social media actually do in terms of helping or hurting a campaign?

To start, let's break down what is typically needed to make a campaign. When a politician decides to run, they will often hire a campaign manager. According to the article "The Modern Political Campaign" from *Lumen*, "modern campaign managers may be concerned with executing strategy rather than setting it." This means, for example, if a candidate wants to have a rally, the campaign manager will figure out how to make it happen. Campaigns also involve hiring individuals for different departments, which include but are not limited to financial, communications, technology, and legal, all of which work together to try to create the strongest campaign possible. Of course, with so many people working together, it is necessary for a campaign to fundraise in order to stay afloat. This is where social media comes in, and how politicians can use social media to both keep up their income and spread their messages and goals. But how can these platforms be leveraged?

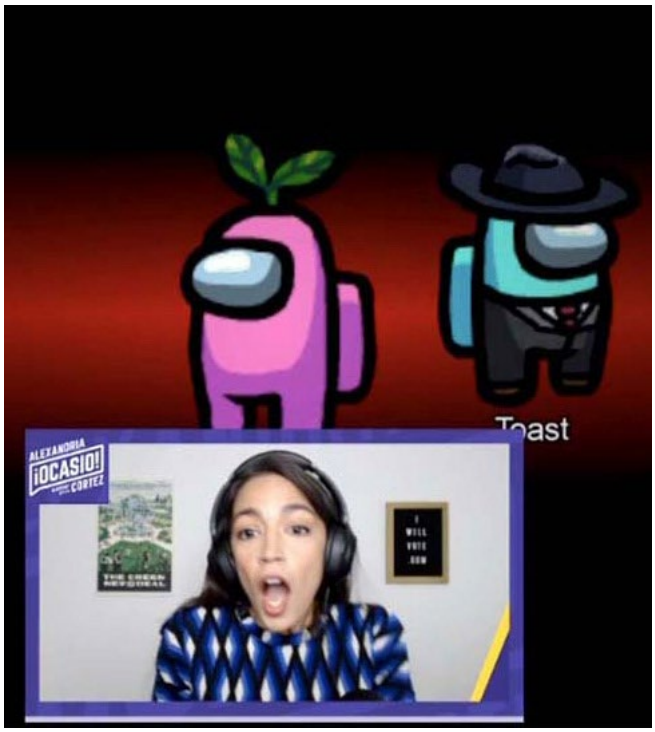
One of the most prominent examples of a politician using social media to their advantage during their campaign is former US President Barack Obama, who first ran in 2008. When used correctly and efficiently, social media can act as its own type of finance manager. It can spread word of a politician's goals quickly, thus getting an equally fast reaction and source of income from supporters who want to see the candidate's message spread and flourish. While Obama was able to use social media to fundraise, he was also able to use it to reach a desired subsection of voters: voters under 30. According to the article "Young Voters in the 2008 Election" from 2008, "this year, 66% of those under age 30 voted for Barack Obama, making the disparity between young voters and other age groups larger than in any presidential election since exit polling began in 1972" (Tom Rosentiel). One of the biggest reasons for this voter turnout is, in part, due to Obama's social media presence during this time. To get the word out about his campaign, Obama turned to platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to show himself engaging with his supporters and broadcast his plans for office to a wider audience. His presence on social media also allowed for him to share his personal life and hobbies, making him feel like a relatable person rather than an elusive politician.

Obama's turn towards technology and social media allowed him to put his messages onto

platforms that were easily accessible to anyone with an internet connection. The power of tweets, Facebook posts, YouTube videos, and Instagram stories (among other platforms) comes from their ability to be shared and widespread in a matter of minutes. When politicians put out content regarding their campaigns, they are actively inviting their audiences and supporters to share and provide feedback on what they like or do not like about a politician's message. This real-time feedback can influence a campaign, making or breaking the trajectory of a politician based on how they receive and interact with their audience. In Perseverance, this is why Dilly wants Dawn to be so active: a presence on social media, even for a smaller election, can help establish her goals as a political figure and engage audiences in a way Perseverance was unable to in her time. One of Dawn's speeches has the potential to go viral via social media, an unimaginable concept in 1920. This is also why, ultimately, Dawn and Dilly's blunder at the end of the play is unable to be hidden once the video is posted on Twitter. From there, it is only a matter of time before this information becomes widespread, showcasing how social media can be used to shine a light on problematic choices made by candidates.

While Obama paved the way for social media use, recent years have shown an evolution in how politicians are received by the public when they take their campaigns to social media. A big part of making it on social media is knowing your brand, though this can be a difficult thing to distinguish. Trying to be too relatable can, in fact, have the opposite effect. A recent example of an attempt to go viral receiving mixed reviews can be seen in Mayor Pete Buttigieg's campaign for the 2020 election. In the beginning of November 2019, a trend emerged that involved Buttigieg supporters performing a synchronized dance to the song "High Hopes" by the band Panic! At the Disco. The dance became widespread on platforms such as Twitter and TikTok. With this attention came criticism, with articles such as the *Guardian's* "Is Pete Buttigieg's flashmob dance the cringiest campaign trend so far?" popping up. Though the backlash for this dance ultimately was not enough to do any harm to his campaign, this was an obvious attempt to go viral that proved to be less efficient than trying to organically connect with people.

On the other hand, politicians like Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez have been able to harness social media as an effective way to interact with their constituencies. This has been especially important as the COVID-19 pandemic created a necessity to harness social media as a way to connect with voters when in-person campaigning was not possible during the 2020 election. Ocasio-Cortez regularly used, and continues to use, Instagram Live to speak candidly with voters and answer questions about a range of issues including minimum wage, healthcare, climate change, and her response to the January 6 insurrection. This often occurs while she is repotting houseplants or cooking dinner. In October 2020, Ocasio-Cortez also took to the streaming platform Twitch with her friend Representative Ilhan Omar and gamers like Imane "Pokimane" Anys and Benjamin "DrLupo" Lupo, to play Among Us and promote early voting. As a millennial who is more savvy with social media, she has been able to connect with younger voters in a meaningful way by speaking their language. Social media is also used to propel social



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez plays Among Us in October 2020.

movements in addition to political activism. For almost a decade, the online community known as Black Twitter has used the website to call out instances of overt racism and microaggressions, and has been responsible for viral hashtags like "#HasJustineLandedYet," after a White woman made a racist joke about getting AIDS on a trip to Africa, and "#PaulasBestDishes," after Paula Deen admitted to using the n-word. After the 2020 murder of George Floyd, activists mobilized on Twitter and Instagram to spread the word about protests and bail funds, as well as to broadcast and share videos of police violence and White aggression. According to the Pew Research Center, 45% of Black social media users used social media to find information about rallies and protests in their area compared to 29% of White social media users. In a different survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in October 2020, 23% of adult social media users in the US said that they had changed their mind about a social or political issue based on content they had engaged with on social media over the past year. This further illustrates the impact that social media posts can have on the general population during the digital age.

Though politicians may feel a tweet or a Facebook ad is the best way to reach their supporters and spread information about their campaign, the public's responses to their presence on social media can sometimes reflect something different. First, it is no question that social media platforms provide a quick and digestible way to learn about the news. In the book *Towards a New Enlightenment: A Transcendent Decade*, Diana Owen states, "More Americans are seeking news and political information since the 2016 presidential election and the turbulent times that have followed than at other periods in the past decade." However, this turn to social media for news, particularly political news, does not necessarily mean that social media users only want political news in their various feeds. A Pew Research Center study from 2019 found, "Some 46% of adult social media users say they feel 'worn out' by the number of political posts and discussions they see on social media…" This is apparently an increase of "nine percentage points since the summer of 2016, when the Center last asked this question."

This fatigue may come as a result of social media being used to promote slander of political opponents or their media critics. Former President Donald Trump actively used Twitter in lieu of press conferences to voice distaste towards those who opposed him. He tweeted out claims that what was being said about him was untrue or tried to shed light on supposedly grevious actions about whoever was speaking against him. Trump used this as a tactic for advertising his campaign, placing Facebook ads that, according to *The New Yorker*, "…accused the former Vice President Joe Biden of offering Ukrainian officials a billion dollars to drop a case against his son Hunter." While using social media to distribute information holds people accountable, like when Dawn is caught plagiarizing Perseverance's speech, the information is not always true. Trump's claims against Biden were false, showing that an extra burden is placed upon social media users to verify the information they are being shown. This can prove extra taxing due to the fact that, while social media is often curated to an individual's interest, these types of ads may still appear in their feed even if they do not support or want them.

Dilly's insistence that Dawn should turn to social media platforms to solidify her presence comes from a place of knowledge regarding how posts and ads can reach a wider range of people. However, how these ads and posts are perceived may not be exactly what she imagines, especially considering how some people turn to social media as an escape from the non-stop political news cycle. Regardless of how their messages are being spread, whether it is through an Instagram post or a speech delivered in front of thousands of people, both Perseverance and Dawn are trying their best to bring change to causes they are passionate about. How this information is received is up to those who listen or scroll.

Timeline of Events of the Women's Suffrage Movement

by Isabella Brezenski

1820: Maine became a state as part of the Missouri Compromise to keep the balance of "slave" states and "free" states equal. Within Maine's constitution, women were not permitted to vote. This upset many women and led them to take action.

1840: Elizabeth Cady Stanton met Lucretia Mott at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, England. They became friends and bonded over their desire to fight for women's rights alongside their anti-slavery stance, and they were determined to start speaking on behalf of women's rights to the public when they returned the US.

1848: Elizabeth Cady Stanton spoke at the Seneca Falls Convention. This is often recognized as the beginning of the Women's Suffrage Movement, but many people had been working towards equal voting rights for women for many years before this. Taking place on July 19-20, 1848, in Seneca Falls, New York, this convention was organized by pioneers of women's rights, including Stanton, Mott, and Susan B. Anthony. This convention hoped to promote women's civil rights and bring attention to the unfair treatment of women. Hundreds of women attended the convention, as well as a few dozen men. During the convention, the Declaration of Sentiments was read. This document, written and modeled after the Declaration of Independence by Stanton, demanded equal rights for women concerning their property, freedom to vote, and the chance to have a voice concerning governmental elections, education, and holding oppressors to a standard of morals. Among the dozens of signers was Frederick Douglass.

1851: Sojourner Truth delivered her famous "Ain't I a Woman" speech in Akron, Ohio at a women's rights convention.

Nurses during the Civil War.

1860-1865: During the Civil War, many women put their energy towards the war efforts. The passing of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments were a huge leap into civil rights for many disenfranchised Black citizens. The 13th Amendment outlawed slavery and freed previously enslaved people. The 14th Amendment legally granted citizenship to all people born naturalized in the United States. The 15th Amendment stated that the right to vote cannot be denied based on race.

1866: The American Equal Rights Association (AERA) was formed by abolitionists and women's rights advocates supporting both women's and Black men's right to vote. Mott was the president, and Stanton, Anthony, Truth, Frances Watkins, and Harriet Forten Purvis were active within the association as well.

1868: The 14th Amendment was ratified. The 14th Amendment included the word "male" when discussing voting laws. This distinction became a topic of multiple human rights movements, including the women's rights organizations, who fought for women's suffrage, and people and organizations fighting for Black citizens' rights, who fought for Black men to vote.

1869: The debate over supporting the 15th Amendment led to a divide among the suffrage movement, and two opposing women's suffrage associations were formed. The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) was formed by Stanton, who became the president, and Anthony, who became the vice president. The NWSA opposed the 15th Amendment, desiring to fight for not just Black men, but women, too. The NWSA not only fought for women's suffrage, but fought for equal treatment of women in society nationwide. The American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) supported the 15th Amendment and was more moderate concerning their plans and actions to fight for women's right to vote. The AWSA focused on women's suffrage on a state-by-state basis, rather than fighting for a national amendment. The AWSA was headed by women and men who supported the cause of women's suffrage, including Lucy Stone and her husband Henry Brown Blackwell.

1870: The 15th Amendment was passed allowing Black men to vote. There were disagreements over the passing of this amendment. Frederick Douglass was a pioneer in the abolitionist movement and a passionate supporter of the women's rights movement. Stanton and Anthony wanted women to be added to the amendment, but Douglass disagreed, believing it would be harder for the amendment to pass if women were included. This year also marked the end of the American Equal Rights Association.

1872: Susan B. Anthony registered to vote and voted in an election in Rochester, NY, and was promptly arrested, convicted, and fined $100, which she said she would never pay.

1878: The Women's Suffrage Amendment (which would pass as the 19th Amendment over 40 years later) was written by Anthony and introduced to the government but not passed.

1890: The National American Woman Suffrage Association—a combination of the American Woman Suffrage Association and the National Woman Suffrage Association—started. Alice Stone Blackwell, daughter of Lucy Stone, the president of the AWSA, brought these two associations together. Wyoming became the first state to allow women to vote.

1917: The National Woman's Party was formed to fight for women's equality.

1919: The government passed the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. It needs to be approved by at least 3⁄4 of the states to be ratified into the Constitution.

1920: The 19th Amendment is passed by 3⁄4 of the states, allowing women the right to vote.

First-time women voters, 1920.

WWI, The 1918 Flu, and Suffrage

by Meredith G. Healy

"We have endured much hardship in recent years. We lost some of our finest in the War, God rest their souls, and we lost even more to the ravages of influenza, including my wife Delilah, may she rest in peace. Let us mark this day to remember, to celebrate, and to look ahead to a bright future for our tiny town of Hillcroft, Maine!"
- "Judge" Elmer, Perseverance

As "Judge" states early in *Perseverance*, there were two major events that shaped America during the 1910s, World War I (WWI) and the 1918 influenza pandemic, which overlapped for a period of approximately a year. These two events also happened to fall at what was seemingly the end of the decades-long process of granting women the right to vote. Did the war and the pandemic help or hinder the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920?

Suffragists had been advocating to get women the right to vote long before WWI and the 1918 flu. The earliest Women's Rights Convention was held in 1848 in Seneca Falls, NY. For the next 40 years, women across the US organized suffrage groups, and advocated for issues including the right to vote and equal pay. In 1890, Wyoming became the first state to include women's right to vote in the state's constitution. Over the next 30 years, other states began to follow suit, and women started to make up more of the electorate. By 1918, there were 15 states in which women had equal suffrage to men, and it appeared that both political parties were in support of ratifying the amendment.

A major push from suffragists came during WWI, which had a big effect on the lives of those left in the US as many men went off to serve in Europe. Women were given an opportunity to join the workforce, and proved themselves to be an integral part of the US economy. This engagement encouraged women to become more active within the suffrage movement. Carrie Chapman Catt, a prominent leader in the suffrage movement, argued this point in an open letter to Congress that she penned in November 1917: "The increasing number of women wage-earners, many supporting families and some supporting husbands, has thrown out the 'women are represented' argument." So, the support of US women during WWI helped to prove their patriotism and convince the opposition that they were deserving of the right to vote. The momentum seemed to be shifting in their favor, but it met a major roadblock when the influenza peaked during the fall of 1918, right before the crucial midterm elections.

The influenza pandemic killed over 670,000 Americans and approximately 50 million people across the globe from January 1918 through December 1920. The first wave of the 1918 flu epidemic coincided with the end of WWI, and historians believe that one of the reasons that the flu spread so rapidly was due to the conditions in which soldiers lived during the war. Similar to COVID-19, the 1918 flu was spread by respiratory droplets being exhaled by an infected person, and then inhaled by a healthy person. Soldiers lived in close quarters during the war and this allowed the virus to spread rapidly. When the disease found its way to the US, women became nurses for their loved ones and were particularly vulnerable to infection.

People wearing masks during the 1918 flu.

SUFFRAGISTS PROTEST OUTSIDE OF THE WHITE HOUSE, 1917.

The second wave of the flu hit the US during the fall of 1918, resulting in the most American deaths due to the epidemic. States across the country began to cancel in-person gatherings, putting suffragists and their planned rallies in a difficult position. The women began to rely on taking out ads in local newspapers, going door to door to distribute pamphlets, and reaching out directly to friends and family for support. The efforts of the larger national organizations to mobilize smaller, local grassroots organizations across the country paid off. Despite a turnout of 3 million fewer voters than the previous midterm election in 1914, suffrage referendums in Michigan, South Dakota, and Oklahoma passed in the 1918 midterm election. The midterm election also gave the Republican Party, which was the party of the progressives in the 1800s and early 1900s, control of both the House and the Senate. Even though the suffrage bill was supported by voters of both political parties, it is unlikely that the bill would have passed if Democrats had maintained control of the Senate. Republican control resulted in Congress passing the suffrage bill in June of 1919. The 19th Amendment was officially ratified on August 18, 1920, when Tennessee became the 36th state to approve the amendment, crossing the necessary threshold of 75% approval from the states needed for ratification.

The participation of American women in both the war effort and the care of 1918 flu patients helped propel states to vote in favor of giving women the right to vote. It became clear to the country that women were deserving of casting a vote independent from that of their husband, due to their patriotism and their work to keep the economy in motion during an incredibly challenging time for the US.

A History of Black People in Maine

by Meredith G. Healy

The state of Maine has the distinction of being one of the two whitest states in the country. This means that the history and contributions of Black Mainers are often, at best, an afterthought and, at worst, forgotten. The work and sacrifice of Black people in our state has benefitted the White population for generations, and it is important to understand and acknowledge Maine's complicated history with race.

Before Maine officially became a state as part of the Missouri Compromise in 1820, it was a district of Massachusetts, which didn't outlaw slavery until 1783. Up until that point, people were enslaved in the state of Maine. A 1754 census reported that there were 154 enslaved people living in the district. Enslaved people in Maine worked primarily in shipping yards and in the residences of wealthy White Mainers. This free labor allowed the White owners to conduct and profit from business affairs outside of their homes. Additionally, even though there were no plantations, the Maine economy still benefited from enslaved laborers in the South. Cotton was the primary crop cultivated by enslaved people in the South, and Maine led the country in cotton fabric production in the 1800s; thus, mill towns continued to profit from slavery even after it was no longer legal in the district.

Maine's path to statehood was also impacted by the growing tension and division between states regarding slavery. In 1819, there were an even number of free states and enslaved southern states. The Missouri Compromise would result in Maine being founded as a free state and Missouri as an enslaved state to keep the balance. This meant that by establishing statehood, Mainers were also advancing slavery. The legislation narrowly passed in Congress, but only two of the seven representatives from the then District of Maine voted in favor of the compromise because of the implications of expanding slavery into a new state. Throughout the 1800s, a small population of Black, White, Native Americans, and mixed race

Residents of Malaga Island.

Mainers lived in a community on Malaga Island, located off the coast of Phippsburg, Maine. An African American man named Benjamin Darling purchased Horse Island in 1794, and his descendants settled in the area. In the 1860s, Darling's granddaughter and her husband were the first known people to build a residence on Malaga. Others joined the couple on the island and formed a mixed-race community of between 40 and 50 people who lived together for generations. In the early 1900s, however, Maine began to suffer as the shipbuilding industry became less profitable. This led to the state transforming into the tourist destination that it is known as today. On a visit to the island, Governor Frederick William Plaisted stated, "The best plan would be to burn down the shacks with all their filth. Certainly the conditions are not creditable to our state, and we ought not to have such things near our front door..." The people living on the island were evicted by order of the governor in 1912, and were offered no housing alternatives by the state. For many years following this event, descendants did not disclose their connection because of the fear of stigma and skepticism about the mixed-race community.

By the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan had established itself in Maine and worked to elect government officials who could be influenced by the

organization. Kate McMahon, a historian from the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC, notes that "by the 1920s, you have all these economic circumstances that lead to a lot of African Americans leaving the state of Maine, but also a lot of social circumstances that were not conducive for people of color wanting to move to the state of Maine to settle....You have this economic exclusion and social exclusion." In the one hundred years that passed between 1850 and 1950, Maine saw an increase from 398,000 to 910,000 White residents, but only 1,000 to 2,000 Black residents.

Even though Maine was less restrictive in terms of overt racial segregation than other states, Black Mainers were still denied access to equal housing and employment opportunities. In the early 1920s, Maine's first official chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded by Black Bangor residents. The Portland chapter was founded in 1947, and its members began lobbying for laws prohibiting discrimination based on race. Civil rights activists were finally able to pressure the state to officially prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and gender during legislative sessions between 1965 and 1971.

Recently, despite having an overwhelmingly White population, Maine, and more specifically Portland, has become a refuge for immigrants from African nations, like Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia, who are seeking asylum. In Portland, 13% of the residents are not American citizens. One reason is that the population of Maine is aging (in 2020, it was estimated that one in four Mainers is over the age of 65), and the state desperately needs younger people to join the workforce. Portland is also the only city in the country with a municipal fund, called the Community Support Fund, that provides immediate support to asylum seekers, even before their papers are processed.

Despite this interest in incorporating immigrants into the Maine community, Black Mainers have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the summer of 2020, they accounted for 1.6% of the state's population and an astounding 24% of Maine's total coronavirus cases. Beyond the risk of contracting the virus, COVID-19 has exposed the underlying and systemic racism that still exists in Maine, including discrimination in healthcare services and continued housing inequalities. When asked about these issues, Governor Janet Mills stated, "It is deeply disheartening, and, frankly, unacceptable to me that Maine is confronting such significant racial disparities," and acknowledged that the pandemic "has laid bare the deep-seated inequities and racism in our society that deserve our attention."

In 2019, Maine ushered in a new motto for people entering the state: "Welcome Home." At the time, Governor Mills said,

> This sign is a simple, inclusive, and powerful message which our state will send to every family, business owner, and young person coming into our state—you are welcome here. It is also a reminder of the love we all share for this great state as we ensure that Maine is a place of opportunity for all those hoping to create a better future for themselves and their family. To all of them I say, welcome home.

As the population of Black Mainers continues to grow, it is important to acknowledge and address the societal changes that must occur to make the state a more equitable place to live. It is not as simple as naming a place as "home." This responsibility lies with White Mainers to foster an environment where immigrants and folks "from away" feel as welcomed and supported as those whose families have lived here for generations.

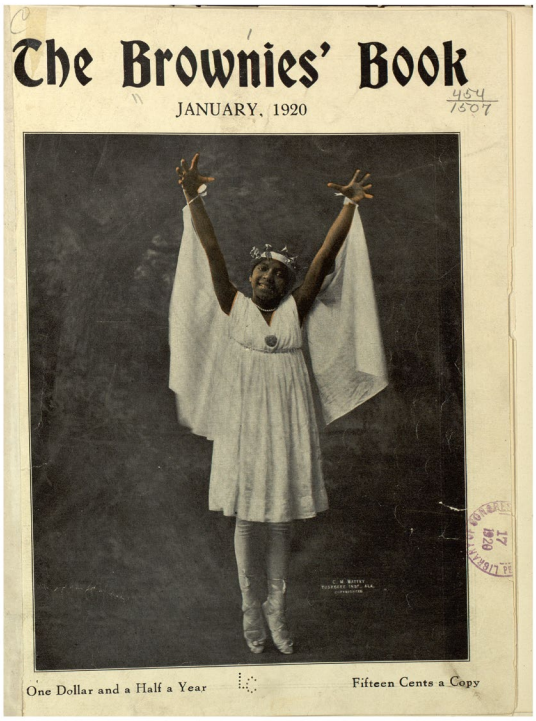
Glossary

by Macey Downs

Saint Augustine (November 13, 354–August 28, 430)**:** One of the most significant Christian philosophers and theologists. He is known for writing about his conversion to Christianity, and is used as inspiration for those who struggle with habits or vices they long to break.

"Bonjour, Mademoiselle. Soldat américain. Cigarette?": French for "Hello, miss. American soldier. Cigarette?"

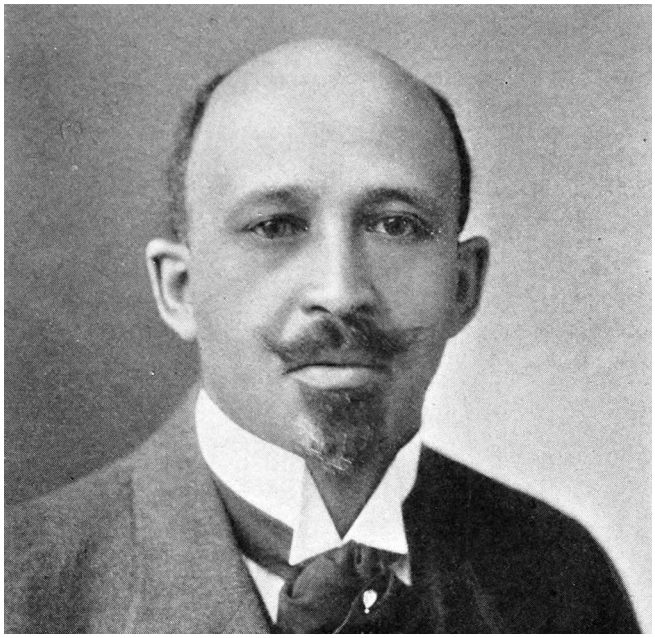
Brownies Magazines: The first magazine published for Black children and youth; founded by three people including W.E.B. Du Bois and originally called *The Brownies' Book*.



Brownies *Magazine.*

***Darkwater*:** A literary work published by W.E.B. Du Bois in 1920; it features autobiographical information, essays, spirituals, poems. It discusses the complications and political implications of segregation; it includes a chapter on elevating women by acknowledging their devalued labor, encouraging economic independence and their right to reproductive freedom.

W.E.B. Du Bois (February 23, 1868–August 27, 1963)**:** An American sociologist, socialist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, and author born in Massachusetts. He is regarded as one of the most influential protest leaders during the early 20th century, and was an early leader of the NAACP.



W.E.B. Du Bois.

Entomology: A branch of zoology that deals with insects.

Fire and brimstone: The torments suffered by sinners in hell; in the Bible, the method God uses to destroy the cities Sodom and Gommorah for their wickedness.

Grange hall: A meeting place for an organization. In Maine, they historically were social centers for many rural communities.

Hemorrhaging: Losing rapidly and uncontrollably, often of blood.

Howard: A historically Black university in Washington, DC.

Largesse: Liberal giving (as of money) to or as if to an inferior; generosity.

Mason-Dixon Line: A man-made boundary line from the southwest corner of Delaware north to Pennsylvania and west to approximately the southwest corner of Pennsylvania; it came to symbolize the border between the North and South during the Civil War.

Morehouse: A historically Black liberal arts college for men in Atlanta, Georgia.

Graves Hall, Morehouse College.

"Parlez-vous français?": French phrase meaning "Do you speak French?"

Samson and Delilah: A biblical story in which Delilah was bribed to entrap the warrior Samson, who fell in love with her. She coaxed him into revealing that the secret to his strength was his long hair. She cut it as he was sleeping and betrayed him to his enemies. "Delilah" is now synonymous with a voluptuous, treacherous woman.

Spelman: A historically Black liberal arts college for women in Atlanta, Georgia.

Thales (c. 624-620 BCE–c. 548-545 BCE)**:** A Greek philosopher from Miletus remembered primarily for his cosmology based on water as the essence of all matter, with Earth a flat disk floating on a vast sea.

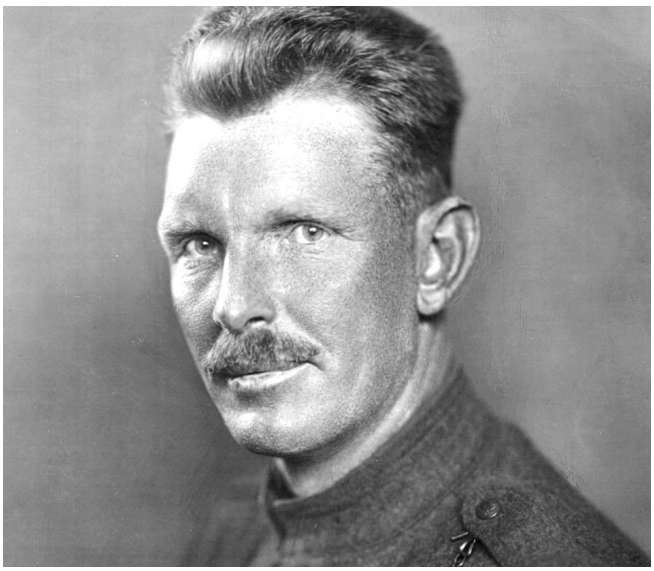
Tippling: Drinking liquor by habit or to excess.

Sojourner Truth (c. 1797–November 26, 1883)**:** A formerly enslaved woman who became an outspoken advocate for abolition, temperance, and civil and women's rights in the 19th century.

Mary Turner ***(CW: mention of lynchings)*** (c. 1885–May 19, 1918)**:** A 33-year-old Black woman and mother of two who lived in Georgia. In 1918, after a White murderer and plantation owner was killed, a White lynching rampage killed over 12 people, including her husband. She was brutally lynched for speaking out against the murders, as was the fetus she was eight months pregnant with.

Women's Christian Temperance Union: Founded in 1874, one of the largest and most influential women's groups in the following decades. Members pushed for labor laws, prison reform, and suffrage. In 1898, its focus shifted primarily toward prohibition.

Sergeant Alvin York (December 13, 1887–September 2, 1964)**:** An American hero of World War I, he received the Medal of Honor for leading an attack on a German machine-gun nest.



Alvin York.

True Womanhood and Fourth Wave Feminism

by Macey Downs

"I stand before you today to speak of the concept of True Womanhood....My comments are centered around the question of how those of us with means can and should do the most for those in need. Now that women have won the vote, to what purpose should women of all races, who might otherwise be enemies, point their shared resources?"
- Perseverance "Percy" Turner, Perseverance

Perseverance follows Percy's journey as she writes her speech "True Womanhood." The climax of the play sees Percy delivering this speech to a Maine branch of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union on the night before Election Day. Only a month and a half prior, women in Maine were given the right to vote, and would be voting for the first time. Her speech reminds an audience of mostly White women of the ways in which White suffragists repeatedly silenced the Black women fighting before and alongside them. The play interrogates how "true womanhood" has historically been defined, and the work women of color have done to include all women in questions and movements around women's rights.

The women's suffrage movement—often seen as being part of the "first" wave of feminism—has been criticized for gatekeeping which women get to receive the fruits of its labor, and which are told that their time has yet to come. For example, Maine (among many other states) imposed statewide literacy tests in 1890, which were still in place when women's suffrage was passed nationwide in 1920. These tests were created specifically to bar people of color and people who learned English as a second language from registering to vote, and disproportionately kept Black and immigrant Mainers from voting in elections. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 halted the use of literacy tests for those with more than six years of education, and Maine voted on a ballot measure in 1979 to ban literacy tests altogether, which did not pass.

Members of the National Association of Colored Women, 1896.

As Percy points out in *Perseverance*, suffrage effectively granted middle- and upper-class White women the right to vote, while doing nothing to ensure that women of color could vote safely. This happened despite the work of many Black suffragists, like Sojourner Truth and Ida B. Wells, who were driving forces behind the movement, but were still not granted the same privileges that White suffragists received.

This approach to suffrage corresponds with a tendency for privileged White women to align their movements with patriarchal ideals, in order to appeal to and gain power from White men. White Americans have historically enforced definitions of womanhood along the intersections of other axes of privilege and oppression, such as race, class, and sexuality. Since colonial times, to "count" as a woman hinges on being cisgender, White, upper-class, and a mother—the counterpart of a White man in power. By furthering the privileges of women who fit into this ideal first, yet branding it as feminism for "all" women, White women maintained white supremacist power structures that set themselves up for success, while maintaining the oppression of the global majority of women who did not fit into this narrow definition of "womanhood." This also oversimplified the fight for women's liberation, and ignored the multitude of experiences women face—a solution that works for one person may not work for another, due to the ways in which other parts of their identities interact with their gender.

In 1989, civil rights activist and law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" to describe this phenomenon. Intersectionality is the acknowledgment of the ways in which intersecting axes of identity—such as race, class, gender, and sexuality—mutually construct one another. Intersectionality recognizes that people face privilege and oppression in different ways depending on the intersection of their identities. White cisgender men are triply advantaged while Black transgender women are triply disadvantaged due to their intersectional positions.

Kimberlé Crenshaw.

While women of color have been demanding an intersectional eye to feminism for centuries, mainstream coverage of the Black Lives Matter movement and the spread of information via social media has pushed intersectional feminism center stage in the last decade. White feminists are needing to leave behind the incomplete trajectory of feminism that they've historically focused on, and instead center intersectionality within the movement. This is referenced in *Perseverance*, as Dawn is forced to face major consequences when she unknowingly co-opts a Black suffragist's words for her own gain. *Perseverance* incites conversation around how White women need to make space for the voices they have repeatedly pushed aside, and how to hold each other accountable to shift our society toward an intersectional feminist perspective.

Community Connections: An Interview with Professor S.E. Houchins

Edited for Length and Clarity by Meredith G. Healy

Professor S.E. Houchins.

Directing and Dramaturgy Apprentice Meredith G. Healy spoke with Professor S.E. Houchins, Associate Professor of African American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies at Bates College, about Frances E.W. Harper and Pauline Hopkins, the two Black suffragists whom she directed Callie Kimball towards as inspiration for the character of Perseverance.

Meredith G. Healy (MGH): ***How did Callie initially connect with you to consult with on her play*** **Perseverance*?***

Professor S.E. Houchins (SEH): I received an email asking what I knew about Black women involved in the issue of abolition and perhaps suffragist movements in Maine in particular. She was particularly interested in those Black women in Maine. One of my favorite abolitionist, suffragist, prohibitionist people—perhaps one of the most popular abolitionists—was Frances E.W. Harper. So I told her about Harper, but Frances Harper is not native to Maine.

MGH: ***That's interesting, because Perseverance, the character that Callie ended up crafting, also finds herself in Maine but is not native to the state. It is a place that she stays for a bit, and then at the end of the show she travels to Philadelphia. So perhaps their stories helped to motivate some of the choices that Callie made with this fictional character.***

SEH: That's right, because Harper was born in Baltimore, and, in fact, her story as a Baltimorian is what is really interesting. She is born of a free family in Baltimore, but Baltimore is trying to lessen its African American population, especially free people. They see free people as a hotbed of trouble making. So there is a period when the state of Maryland says, if you're a free person and you leave the state, you may not return. When the young Frances E.W. Harper decides that she is going to leave Baltimore and walk to Pennsylvania to get more education, she is basically deciding to sever her relationship with her entire family. This is an incredible choice. She finishes what education she finds important and goes to Philadelphia, which is the center of abolition for Black people, and is rejected in Philly as a person who could go on the road, because she is a woman too young to go on the road. Maine is a place that is willing to take her. That part of the story is a very powerful one, and if the playwright has decided that this fictional character is not going to be "too" Frances E.W. Harper, then that's okay. But hers was a powerful story.

MGH: ***That's very powerful to give up everything and go off on your own, especially during that time period.***

Frances E.W. Harper.

SEH: Maine ends up being a good place, because not only do they take her, but Harper says that Maine does something for her. Maine abolitionists travel in pairs, so she travels with another woman. And the way that one gets lodging is to be housed with that other woman. This means that whomever she is partnered with over her time in Maine she will develop a relationship, perhaps a friendship, but some sort of cordial relationship of respect with a White woman. That means that the two of them have this personal opportunity to become acquainted with each other. So many, many years later when there is a rift between White members of the suffrage movement who are not sure they want anything to do with Black women who are asking for suffrage, because they see that as weakening their cause and as an obstacle to their southern subscribers to suffrage, it is Harper who says, "Perhaps those years of being in Maine taught me how to get along with those women."

MGH: ***I know that another Black suffragist that you spoke to Callie about was Pauline Hopkins. Could you tell me a little bit about her?***

SEH: Pauline Hopkins was born in Portland, Maine, in 1859 of free parents of color. She lived most of her life in Massachusetts and called herself a "daughter of New England." She certainly had great influence throughout New England. She was the first Black woman to write and star in her own dramatic work. She was famous for her public performances. So, that's part of what may have been of interest to Callie. She both wrote drama, and, from what I understand, she performed in her own drama. She performed music, she did traditional spirituals, folk songs, and religious songs.

MGH: ***Do you know if these were solo performances, or was she part of a larger ensemble?***

SEH: She did them with her family. She eventually moved from performance to writing. She tried to edit a journal for a period of time. She was considered to be a major literary and cultural figure in Boston into the early 20th century. She talked about the histories of concubinage and enslavement, and is really famous for her anti-lynching work. There's a collection of writings by African American women who were writing in the 1800s, so 19th century women, that are held by the Schomburg Collection, which is the largest collection of writings by people of color in the world. It's part of the New York library system. There was a publication in the late 20th century of as many of those books as they could do. The editorship was under Henry Louis Gates. Hopkins's novel, which was called *Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South* was published as part of that series. As was my collection of writings called *Spiritual Narratives*, which was by 19th century Black women. She published *Contending Forces* in 1900 when she was about 40 years old, and it has since been republished.

MGH: ***She had presumably been writing for a number of years before that. How did she begin writing?***

SEH: Yes! Before that she had written the articles about anti-lynching and she had written her play. She's been part of public debates throughout the 1890s.

MGH: ***Is it accurate to say that she was known more for her writing than for her speaking?***

SEH: Yes, her early life was one of performance, but she made a transition from performance to writing. She is really known for

her writing. She writes for *The Colored American Magazine*. Not only did she write for the magazine, but for a small period she tried to edit that magazine. Her stuff was really cutting edge. This magazine was originally published in New England, but moved to New York, and became a really important political journal in the Black community. If you were to talk about how to characterize her notions about what the political strategy should be for Black people to have success, they were different from those of people like Booker T. Washington. She would be a person who resisted oppression. She would be a person who was in favor of a classical education. Booker T. Washington believed that, to be a success, one had to accept their current position and hope to work out of it. Hopkins would want to resist now. I'm telling you this story because she writes for *The Colored American Magazine* and Booker T. Washington buys it and takes it over, and she's fired. Which ended her relationship with that magazine. Hopkins and the writers like her are banished from that magazine after he takes it over. She does write 30 or 40 articles, three serialized novels, and she delivers speeches. This woman is prolific! She is willing to not only speak and be resistant to the dominant ideology of racism and of slavery, but she is also an outspoken person about feminist rights even when it requires her to speak frankly to leaders in Black movements.

Cover of The Colored American Magazine.

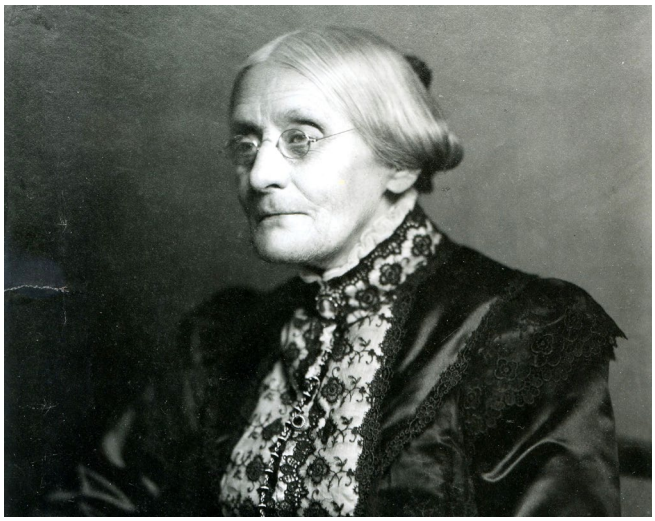
MGH: ***What are your academic research interests?***

SEH: At a broader level, I do research in the text and the things written by African and African-descended women. So, for example, I have a book with a colleague from Bates which is the translation of a biography written about a Black woman taken as a slave to Spain. I'm noted for the work I've done on spiritual narratives by African American women in the 1800s in the US. The book I'm working on now deals with queerness, so I've worked on issues of sexuality in women. So, that's what my research is. But I teach, for example, a class on Black women's literary productions, so I have a course on [Toni] Morrison, or their slave narratives, essays like that, which are early works. Or the things that freed Black women wrote, which, I'd imagine, is why Callie reached out to me to help with this project.

Famous Suffrage Leaders

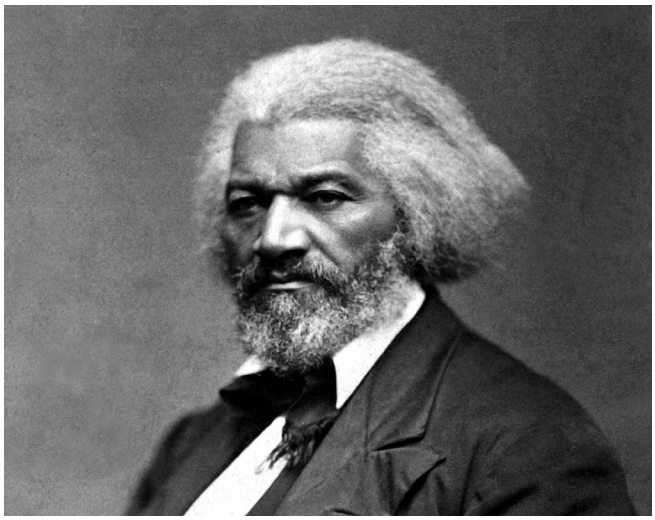
by Madison Worthington

While Perseverance Turner is an fictional amalgamation of different women's stories, we also want to highlight the very real historical figures and groups that led the suffrage movement.



Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) is one of the most well-known women's rights activists in history. In 1853, Anthony began to speak up for married women's rights to own property. Anthony was also an active abolitionist; she joined the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1856 and gave abolitionist lectures in New York. In addition to co-founding the National Woman Suffrage Association, Anthony was also the second president of the organization. Today, a statue of Susan B. Anthony alongside her colleagues Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott stands in the US Capitol.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862-1931), born Ida Bell Wells, was a Black woman born into slavery during the Civil War. The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, issued by President Abraham Lincoln, ended slavery and freed Wells. She became a journalist, and wrote about slavery and the unfair treatment of African Americans. In 1895, Wells married a famous lawyer and racial equality advocate named Ferdinand Lee Barnett. As an activist, she is also known for leading an anti-lynching crusade and founding the National Association of Colored Women's Club. This club discussed civil rights and women's suffrage.



Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) escaped from slavery in Maryland and became a leader of the abolitionist movement. He was known for his powerful writing and speaking on the anti-slavery movement. Douglass supported women's suffrage and was the only Black man to attend the Seneca Falls Convention. Douglass believed in the equality of all people. However, Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony had different thoughts about the 15th Amendment (which gave Black men the right to vote). Douglass believed that the amendment would be harder to pass if women were included. Stanton and Anthony did not want the 15th Amendment to pass unless women were included.

Alice Paul (1885-1977) was well educated; she studied in New York and London, earning a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. While she was in London, Paul met Emmeline Pankhurst, a suffragist. Pankhurst used civil disobedience to draw attention to her cause. When Paul returned to the United States, she brought what she learned from Pankhurst to the National American Woman Suffrage Association. This included plans for marches, parades, and protests. Some women did not like Paul's ideas because they thought she was "unladylike" and too radical. This led Paul to start her own organization in 1913 called the Congressional Union. The Congressional Union became known as the National Woman's Party in 1917.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) organized the first women's rights convention in New York in 1848. The Seneca Falls Convention marked the beginning of the Suffrage Movement. At the convention, Stanton declared that women were equal to men and deserved the right to vote in elections. In 1869, Stanton and her colleague Susan B. Anthony created the National Woman Suffrage Association. Stanton was the NWSA's first president. Stanton and Anthony wanted to pass constitutional amendments that included women's right to vote.

Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) was a Black woman born into slavery. Her birth name was Isabella Baumfree, but she changed her name in 1843 when she felt a religious obligation to speak the truth, preach the gospel, and denounce slavery. She escaped from slavery in 1826 and became an abolitionist, working fiercely to end slavery. She even went to court to free her son, Peter, from slavery and won. This was very inspirational because it was rare for a woman to go to court during that time. Truth also became a suffragist and was a powerful speaker. She traveled the country speaking about women's rights and telling her life story as an enslaved person. The speech she is most known for, "Ain't I a Woman," was delivered at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention.

The National Woman's Party (NWP) was a group that fought for women's rights. The party was started by Alice Paul in 1917. The group was known for executing more radical acts to gain attention. For example, they picketed outside the White House for six months! At one point, Paul and other members of the NWP were arrested for their acts of civil disobedience, but in January 1918 Paul's efforts paid off when President Wilson announced his support for women's right to vote. In 1920, Paul proposed an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution. The ERA states, "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States." The ERA has never become a law; even though women now have the right to vote, the fight for equal rights is still ongoing.

The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) was an association dedicated to women's suffrage. The NWSA was founded in 1869 by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Stanton and Anthony wanted to pass a constitutional amendment that included women's right to vote. They created a newspaper called *The Revolution*, which spread information about women's suffrage and education. The NWSA supported rights for Black people, but they did not support the proposal of the 15th Amendment. In the end, the 15th Amendment passed in 1870, giving Black men the right to vote but still excluding women. It took another 50 years for the 19th Amendment to be added to the Constitution, finally giving women the right to vote.

Lucy Stone.

The American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) was founded by Lucy Stone and her husband Henry Brown Blackwell, with the help of lecturer Julia Ward Howe, writer Mary Livermore, and preacher Henry Ward Beecher. Dedicated to women's suffrage, the AWSA was founded in 1869, the same year as the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). Both groups supported women's right to vote, though the AWSA supported the 15th Amendment while the NWSA did not. Because of this, the AWSA became more popular than the NWSA. The AWSA also published a newspaper called *The Women's Journal*, which spread information about women's suffrage. In 1890, the NWSA and AWSA joined together to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).

Reckoning with White Supremacy and American History

by Meredith G. Healy

In *Perseverance*, the audience is able to see the implications of white supremacy illustrated most clearly in the dynamics that exist between the characters living in 1920: Perseverance "Percy" Turner, Leland "Moss" Tarker, and "Judge" Elmer. Both Percy and Moss are reliant on Judge's employment, who uses his race and class to profit from his bootlegging business. The roles could not be reversed, and when Judge decides to terminate Percy from her position as a teacher, her options are extraordinarily limited. In the US, White people have always had an advantage due to the color of their skin, and in recent years the conversation about white supremacy and race has once again entered the public consciousness.

For as long as America has existed, white supremacy and racism has been woven into the fabric of the society. *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines white supremacy as "beliefs and ideas purporting natural superiority of the lighter-skinned, or "White," human races over other racial groups." White supremacy is responsible for the power dynamics that exist between White people and people of color, and these dynamics are at the core of American history and understanding the US's relationship with race.

When European colonizers came to the Americas, they brought with them a sense of superiority and entitlement over the Indigenous people who inhabited the land and the African people that they kidnapped and enslaved. Over 12.5 million Africans were taken from their homes and brought to the Americas between 1525 and 1866. Europeans also decimated the Indigenous population from 7 million people to 225,000 people during the same time frame. European colonists became dependent on enslaved laborers as the country was founded. Africans were used for this free labor because their unfamiliarity with the new territories made them less likely than Indigenous people to flee. White slave owners bought into white superiority over people of color, and convinced working-class Whites that their success would be hindered if people of color were given equal rights.

This fear has continued to be a driving force behind white supremacy in the US, and was written into the Constitution of the democracy. Article I, Section 2, of the Constitution states that,

> Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.

Even though enslaved people were not given the right to vote in elections, they did count in determining the state's population, and thus the number of representatives each state received. This resulted in the south receiving more representation due to the number of enslaved people in those states. The so-called Three-Fifths Compromise was in effect until slavery was abolished with the 13th Amendment in 1865.

The 13th Amendment abolished slavery, but left in a sentence that has allowed the penal system to use people as enslaved labor during their sentences. The loophole reads, "[e]xcept as punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." This sentence has allowed the US to continue benefiting from an enslaved labor force over the past 150 years. American prisons are filled with a disproportionate number of Black people due to targeted criminal justice policies, including the so-called "War on Drugs." As of this year,

one of every three Black boys can be expected to be sentenced to prison in their lifetime compared to one out of 17 White boys.

Outside of the penal system, White Americans have found ways to continue promoting racism in society. Residents of northern states encouraged segregated neighborhoods as a way of distancing themselves from Black Americans—and thus their own guilt for mistreating Black Americans. There were poll taxes that prevented people of color from voting in elections, the marginalization of Black soldiers who fought in World War II (WWII), housing developments that prevented African Americans from making down payments on homes, segregation in schools, laws preventing interracial marriage, and discrepancies in wages and hiring practices between White and Black employees.

Hate groups, including the Klu Klux Klan (KKK), also continued to exist in the US after the Civil War. Between the end of the war and the beginning of US involvement in WWII (in 1941), there were more than 4,400 lynchings of Black Americans. The KKK has experienced multiple resurgences, especially during times when their power has felt threatened by movements towards racial equity. This was notably true during the 1920s after the founding and expansion of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s and 1960s, and the current Black Lives Matter Movement. In recent years, there has been a shift from white supremacy to white nationalism. White nationalists are threatened by immigration and the social advancement of people of color. They view whiteness as the most crucial component of forming a national identity. This movement has resulted in a greater number of hate groups whose primary goal is cultivating a culture of fear and submission, punctuated by many horrific acts of violence targeting people of color. These groups vary from the KKK to the alt-right, who tend to gather online. Donald Trump's 2016 and 2020 election campaigns encouraged support from members of these groups.

White Americans must confront their own privilege and bias as conversations about race and equity continue. The expectation cannot be for people of color to educate and inform. The end of *Perseverance* leaves us with that important lesson. As Dr. Walters advises Dawn, "Ms. Davis, you are in charge of your own enlightenment. And I am sure you will get there. Good luck tomorrow."

A Black Lives Matter Rally in Portland, June 2020.

Recommended Resources

by Editors

Books
Becoming by Michelle Obama
Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates
How to be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi
Lives of Consequence: Blacks in Early Kittery & Berwick in the Massachusetts Province of Maine by Patricia Q. Wall
Maine's Visible Black History by Harriet H. Price
So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo
The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead

Plays
33 Variations by Moisés Kaufman
Arcadia by Tom Stoppard
August Wilson's Century Cycle
Beneatha's Place by Kwame Kwei-Armah
Cloud 9 by Caryl Churchill
Dreams of the Penny Gods by Callie Kimball
Sofonisba by Callie Kimball
Things that are Round by Callie Kimball

TV
The Good Lord Bird
Roots

Film
Knock Down the House
Suffragette

Marjolaine Whittlesey in Sofonisba, Dramatice Repertory Company, 2016.

Portland Stage Company
Education and Outreach

Join Portland Stage as we discuss, debate, and explore the plays on our stage and in the classroom! Portland Stage is dedicated to bringing exciting theater, inspiring conversation, interactive experiences, and thought-provoking literature to a wide audience of youth and adult learners. Whether you take part in a discussion, subscribe to *PlayNotes*, take a class in our Theater for Kids space, or bring a group of students to see a performance, there is something here for everyone. How would you like to participate?

Student Matinee Series
The Portland Stage Student Matinee Program annually provides more than 7,000 middle and high school students from Maine and New Hampshire with discounted tickets for student matinees. This season, we are offering this program digitally. Portland Stage can send you the video in a way that works best for your group. We would be happy to do a workshop with you too!

Play Me a Story
Experience the Fun & Magic of Theater on Saturday Mornings at 10:30am with Play Me a Story: in your living room! All ages can enjoy a free performance of children's stories on Facebook live. Ages 4-10 are welcome to participate in an interactive workshop over zoom for $5. Build literacy, encourage creativity and spark dramatic dreams!

After School Classes
After school classes at Portland Stage produce a safe environment for young people to find a higher sense of play, stretch their imaginations, and gain valuable social skills such as listening, risk-taking, ensemble building, public speaking, and leadership through storytelling. These classes are wildly fun, creative, spontaneous, and begin to build skills for the young actor or non-actor's voice, body, and imagination. Visit our website for this year's offerings!

Vacation and Summer Camps
Our theater camps are fun, challenging, and enriching. We use stories of all kinds to fuel these active, educational and lively, process-based week-long school vacation and summer programs for youth. Theater for Kids works with professional actors, directors, artisans, and composers. Students are invited to think, speak, and act, and even sing imaginatively, critically, and creatively in an environment of inclusivity and safe play.

Virtual Portland Stage PLAY
An interactive dramatic reading and acting workshop for elementary school students in grades K – 5. Professional teaching artists perform children's literature and classic poetry for the entire school, and then work with select classrooms in workshops based on the stories. Actors actively engage students in small groups/workshops using their bodies, voices, and imaginations to build understanding of the text while bringing the stories and characters to life. PLAY helps develop literacy and reading fluency, character recall, understanding of themes, social emotional skills, physical storytelling, and vocal characterization. The program also comes with a comprehensive Resource Guide filled with information and activities based on the books and poems.

Virtual Directors Lab
Schools get access to a 50 minute filmed production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* performed by professional actors/teaching artists. After the performance, students engage directly with the text in an interactive virtual workshop with the actors and creative team. In these workshops, students practice effective communication, creative collaboration, rhetoric, and critical analysis. The program also comes with a comprehensive Resource Guide filled with information and resources about the play we are focusing on. Directors Lab puts Shakespeare's language into the hands and mouths of the students, empowering them to be the artists, directors, and ensemble with the power to interpret the text and produce meaning.

Portland Stage Company
2020–2021 Staff

Anita Stewart *Executive & Artistic Director*

Artistic & Production Staff

Meg Anderson *Props Master*
Todd Brian Backus *Literary Manager*
Daniel Brodhead *Production Manager, Lighting & Sound Supervisor*
Hannah Cordes *Education Director*
Ted Gallant *Technical Director*
Nate Genrich *Carpenter*
Myles C. Hatch *Stage Manager*
Meg Lydon *Stage Manager*
Julianne Shea *Education Administrator*
Susan Thomas *Costume Shop Manager*

Affiliate Artists

Ron Botting
Peter Brown
Daniel Burson
Maureen Butler
Ian Carlsen
Hannah Cordes
Moira Driscoll
Abigail Killeen
Callie Kimball
Daniel Noel
Ed Reichert
Hans Indigo Spencer
Dustin Tucker
Bess Welden
Monica Wood
Sally Wood

Administrative Staff

Paul Ainsworth *Business Manager*
Cody Brackett *Marketing Associate*
Chris DeFilipp *House Manager*
Nolan Ellsworth *Front of House Associate*
Marjorie Gallant *Graphic Design Associate*
Beth Given *Development Director*
Mical Hutson *Marketing Director*
Zoë Lewis *Executive Assistant*
Jennifer London *Company Manager*
Martin Lodish *Finance Director*
Renee Myhaver *Assistant Box Office Manager*
Donald Smith *Audience Services Manager*
Madeleine St. Germain *Front of House Associate*
Nathan Sylvester *Front of House Associate*
Adam Thibodeau *House Manager*
Shannon Wade *Front of House Associate*

Intern/Apprentice Company

Julian Bencze *Costumes Intern*
Casey Boriskie *Stage Management Intern*
Sophia B. Diaz *Education Apprentice*
Macey Downs *Directing & Dramaturgy Apprentice*
Savanna Genskow *Props Apprentice*
Meredith G. Healy *Directing & Dramaturgy Apprentice*
Audrey Kastner *Electrics Apprentice*
Taylor Kibbler *Sets Intern*
Katie Ludlam *Company Management Intern*
Jessica Mount *Education Intern*
Mallory Topel *Stage Management Intern*
Kelly Yamahiro *Costumes Intern*