

# 2019 JEWELL MAINSTAGE PLAY GUIDE



**TAPROOT  
THEATRE**  
COMPANY

PROFESSIONAL THEATRE IN A NEIGHBORHOOD SETTING

THE 2019 JEWELL  
MAINSTAGE SEASON:

*ARSENIC AND OLD LACE*  
JAN 23 - MAR 2

*WE WILL NOT BE SILENT*  
MAR 20 - APR 27

*KIM'S CONVENIENCE*  
MAY 15 - JUN 22

*BRIGHT STAR*  
JUL 10 - AUG 17

*NECESSARY SACRIFICES*  
SEP 18 - OCT 26

DIRECTED BY MARIANNE SAVELL  
JANUARY 23 - MARCH 2



# *Arsenic & Old Lace*

by Joseph Kesselring



# WELCOME

***The Brewsters are an eccentric bunch: Mortimer's a theatre critic, his brother thinks he's Teddy Roosevelt and Aunts Abby and Martha are the most gracious killers. When Mortimer causally proposes to the pastor's daughter he unwittingly opens the lid on buried family secrets. As strangers and cops keep calling, the Brewsters will go to hilarious lengths to protect the skeletons in the cellar.***

---

You think *you're* family is crazy?

Our families shape much of who we are. At times your family may seem strange and confusing but, nevertheless, you also love them with all of your being.

In *Arsenic and Old Lace*, Mortimer's family is as crazy as they come but he goes to extreme lengths to defend them. Out of this sense of identity and family loyalty Mortimer tries to rescue his aunts from their misguided murdering while his brothers also wrestle with their own identities. The *mostly* innocent Teddy believes himself to be President Theodore Roosevelt and the sinister Jonathan tries to change his face to look like Boris Karloff.

How has your family shaped you? What do you cherish about them?  
And, what are you trying to keep locked in the cellar?

---

**We'd love to hear from you!**

Tag us on any of the social media platforms listed below.

## EVERYONE'S A CRITIC ... starting with YOU!

### What did you think?

Post, tweet, update, review...  
Let us and your friends know  
if you liked the show!



Search "Taproot Theatre"  
to find us on your favorite  
social media websites.

*Be sure to tag us when  
you post about us!*

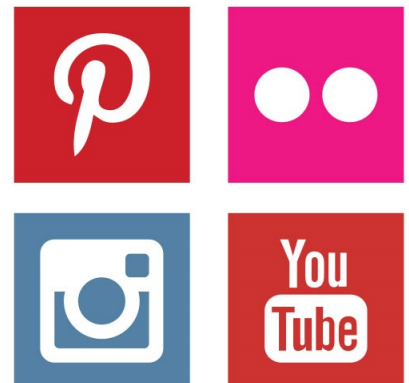
**TAPROOT THEATRE**  
COMPANY

*Professional theatre in  
a neighborhood setting*

TAPROOTTHEATRE.ORG

### See behind the curtain!

See what inspires and delights  
us behind the scenes here at  
Taproot Theatre.





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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### THE AUTHOR

- 4 Joseph Kesselring
- 4 The Kesselring Prize

### THE PLAY

- 5 Synopsis
- 6 Inspiration and Film Comparison
- 7 Farce and Dark Comedy
- 7 Boris Karloff
- 8 Setting/Place
- 9 Costumes

### CULTURAL CONTEXT

- 10 Teddy Roosevelt
- 12 The Panama Canal
- 13 Sanitariums
- 14 Medical Practices of the Early 20th Century

### QUESTIONS

- 16 Post Show Reflections

### TAPROOT THEATRE COMPANY

- 18 About Us



# Joseph Kesselring



Joseph Kesselring (1902 - 1967)

Photo from [stageagent.com/writers/2913/joseph-kesselring](http://stageagent.com/writers/2913/joseph-kesselring)

**Joseph Kesselring** (July 21, 1902 – November 5, 1967) was an American playwright who was best known for writing *Arsenic and Old Lace*, a hit on Broadway from 1939 to 1944. He was born in New York City to Henry and Frances Kesselring. His father's parents were immigrants from Germany. His mother was an English Canadian.

Kesselring spent much of his life in and around the theater. In 1922, he began teaching vocal music and directed stage productions at Bethel College, a Mennonite school in North Newton, Kansas. After two years, Kesselring left teaching and returned to the stage, working for two years with an amateur theatrical group in Niagara, New York. He began working as a freelance playwright in 1933, completing 12 original plays, of which four were produced on Broadway: *There's Wisdom in Women* (1935), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1939), *Four Twelves are 48* (1951), and *Mother of that Wisdom* (1963).

*Arsenic and Old Lace* was his masterpiece. It ran for 1,444 performances on Broadway and 1,337 performances in London, and became a staple in high school and dinner theater circuits. The 1944 movie adaptation was also a comedy hit. Kesselring died on November 5, 1967, in Kingston, New York, at the age of 65.

[wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph\\_Kesselring](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Kesselring)

**The Kesselring Prize** for playwriting was established in 1980 by National Arts Club member Charlotte Kesselring – widow of noted playwright and National Arts Club member Joseph Kesselring – to honor and support as yet not nationally recognized playwrights with an honorarium and indirect support towards development of their work. Among its past recipients are Lucas Hnath, Tony Kushner, Nicky Silver and Anna Deavere Smith.

The 2018 Kesselring Prize Jury included John Guare, best known as the author of *The House of Blue Leaves* and *Six Degrees of Separation*, Lincoln Center Theater Dramaturg Anne Cattaneo and Two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and screenwriter Lynn Nottage whose plays include 2017 Pulitzer Prize winner *Sweat*.

- |                                     |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Kesselring Prize recipients:</b> | <b>2017 – Lauren Yee</b>                     | <b>1995 – Amy Freed &amp; Doug Wright</b>        |
|                                     | <b>2016 – Lindsey Ferrentino</b>             | <b>1994 – Nicky Silver</b>                       |
|                                     | <b>2015 – Lucas Hnath</b>                    | <b>1993 – Anna Deavere Smith</b>                 |
|                                     | <b>2009 – Rajiv Joseph &amp; David Adjmi</b> | <b>1992 – Marion Issac McClinton</b>             |
|                                     | <b>2007 – Jordan Harrison</b>                | <b>1991 – Tony Kushner</b>                       |
|                                     | <b>2006 – Mark Schultz</b>                   | <b>1990 – Elizabeth Egloff &amp; Mel Shapiro</b> |
|                                     | <b>2005 – Deb Margolin</b>                   | <b>1989 – Jo Carson</b>                          |
|                                     | <b>2004 – Tracey Scott Wilson</b>            | <b>1988 – Diane Ney</b>                          |
|                                     | <b>2003 – Bridget Carpenter</b>              | <b>1987 – Paul Schmidt</b>                       |
|                                     | <b>2002 – Melissa James Gibson</b>           | <b>1986 – Marlane Meyer</b>                      |
|                                     | <b>2001 – David Lindsay-Abaire</b>           | <b>1985 – Bill Elverman</b>                      |
|                                     | <b>2000 – David Auburn</b>                   | <b>1984 – Phillip Kan Gotanda</b>                |
|                                     | <b>1999 – Heather McDonald</b>               | <b>1983 – Lynn Alvarez</b>                       |
|                                     | <b>1998 – Kira Obolensky</b>                 | <b>1981 – Cheryl Hawkins</b>                     |
|                                     | <b>1996 – Naomi Wallace</b>                  | <b>1980 – Susan Charlotte</b>                    |

The Prize is awarded annually and consists of a \$25,000 honorarium to each winner plus the opportunity for the winner to reside at the Club's historic landmark clubhouse to assist in development of their work.

<http://www.nationalartsclub.org/kesselring>

# Synopsis

**Please Note:**

***This section contains spoilers and important plot points. Skip this section if you wish to be surprised during the play.***

The play begins in the living room of the Brewster family home, which is inhabited by Abby and Martha, spinster aunts who care for their nephew Teddy. In the play's first moments, they meet with Reverend Dr. Harper, who mentions Abby and Martha's other nephew, Mortimer, and the Reverend's daughter Elaine have been courting. The aunts and the Reverend are soon joined by two friendly police officers, Klein and Brophy, who are dropping by to pick up a charity box from the philanthropic Brewster sisters. Teddy is introduced and proves to be quite insane, although mostly harmless. He thinks he's Theodore Roosevelt. The Reverend and police leave, and the family is soon joined by Mortimer, who announces that he's accompanying Elaine to a play that night. He's also planning to propose to her shortly.

The happy family reunion doesn't last, however, as Mortimer discovers a dead body hidden in the living room. He's horrified and accuses Teddy of killing the man. But Abby and Martha reveal they were the killers. Not only did they poison the man with their secret stash of homemade elderberry wine, but he was actually one of a dozen men they have killed this way. The sisters explain that they're actually doing a good deed, from their perspective. They befriend lonely old men who have lost the will to live, give them a good time, and then kill them with the elderberry wine, which is laced with arsenic. They tell Mortimer not to worry, because Teddy is downstairs digging a grave in the cellar. They have told Teddy that he's digging the "Panama Canal."

Elaine arrives at the house, and Mortimer is anxious and worried. He tells her that he'll have to break their date for the theater because of a pressing family matter, and they briefly argue before she leaves. Mortimer's brother Jonathan arrives next, accompanied by his mad surgeon friend named Dr. Einstein. Jonathan, a sadistic career criminal, has had his face changed by Einstein to look like Boris Karloff. Teddy invites Einstein down to the cellar to inspect his digging work. Einstein returns and tells Jonathan that there's a hole big enough to bury Mr. Spenalzo, Jonathan's latest victim, once everyone goes to sleep. Jonathan and Einstein head out to the car to retrieve the body, and this leads to a farcical segment as people move bodies back and forth, trying to avoid detection. When the lights finally come up, the entire family realizes there's not one but *two* dead bodies in the house.

The family members begin hurling accusations and threats at each other. Because of the noise at the house, the family is visited by Officer O'Hara, who checks in to make sure there's no criminal activity. After he sees nothing out of sorts, he corners Mortimer, who works as a drama critic, to discuss a play that O'Hara is writing. Lt. Rooney, O'Hara's superior, joins them, and immediately recognizes Jonathan as a recently escaped convict from a prison for the criminally insane. Jonathan tries to buy his freedom by selling out his family, but the police do not believe his claims about dead bodies in the cellar.

Teddy, still acting as President Roosevelt is deemed insane by the officers, and is taken to Happy Dale Sanitarium, while Einstein escapes entirely. Mortimer still has to deal with the problem of his aunts, but is pleasantly surprised when they agree to go to Happy Dale with Teddy. Before they go, they tell Mortimer that he's actually not a Brewster—he's an illegitimate child and won't pass the congenital Brewster insanity onto his own children after marrying Elaine. Ecstatic, Mortimer goes to find Elaine. The play closes as Abby and Martha meet with the visiting head of Happy Dale and offer him a glass of their homemade elderberry wine.



**Kim Morris and Pam Nolte**  
in *Arsenic and Old Lace*  
at Taproot Theatre.

Photo by Erik Stuhaug



# Inspiration and Film Comparison



**Amy Archer Gilligan**

Photo from [wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy\\_Archer-Gilligan](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_Archer-Gilligan)

*Arsenic and Old Lace* takes its inspiration from a Connecticut news story from 1916. Amy Archer Gilligan ran a home for the elderly in Windsor in the early 1900's. The residents of the facility would receive a lifetime of care in exchange for lump sum payments or signing over their life insurance policies. However, after several years of operation, her clients began turning up dead.

Amy and her husband, James had opened the Archer Home for Aged People in 1907. James died in 1910 but by that time Amy had established herself as a fixture in Windsor. She was active in the town's affairs and even donated a stained-glass window to the church. However her involvement in town affairs did not keep others from noticing the abnormally large amounts of arsenic she purchased to control a supposed rat problem at the home.

In 1913 Amy married Michael Gilligan, but he died just three months into their marriage. His death was one of 60 deaths that occurred at the home between 1907 and 1916. There was no investigation however until she was linked to a particularly suspicious death. Franklin Andrews died suddenly, after being seen the day before doing yard work in seemingly perfect health. When his sister went through his papers after his death she found information regarding a \$500 loan to Amy. Amy was arrested in May of 1916 and the trial began in June of 1917. During the four week trial authorities exhumed bodies and found traces of arsenic in the systems of more than two dozen of Gilligan's former residents.

Joseph Kesselring was able to take the macabre story of Ann Archer Gilligan and turn it into a comedic Broadway hit. *Arsenic and Old Lace* opened at the Fulton Theatre on January 10, 1941. It received rave reviews, including one opening night review in the New York Times describing the show as "so funny that none of us will ever forget it."

The production moved to the Hudson Theatre in September of 1943 and played the remaining of the 1,444 total performances there before closing on June 17, 1944. The show's major draw at the time was popular horror movie star Boris Karloff cast in the role of Jonathan Brewster, who is described as looking like Karloff due to a botched plastic surgery.

The play was adapted for film, and while the movie was shot in late 1941, it was not released until 1944 when the run of the play ended. Despite being shot while the play was actually running, the movie features three of the Broadway cast members, Josephine Hull (Abby Brewster), Jean Adair (Martha Brewster), and John Alexander (Teddy Brewster).

The screenplay stayed fairly true to the script, but as with any adaptation there are some differences. The action of the play takes place exclusively in the Brewster home. However the movie opens on Elaine and Mortimer waiting to get married at a New Jersey courthouse. Which leads to another difference, Mortimer and Elaine's relationship. In the play we witness their off-the-cuff engagement, which Elaine then fights to maintain while Mortimer seemingly loses his mind. Arguably this change in relationship status also changes the character of Elaine some as well, who seems a bit more fiery and independently thinking in the play than in the film.

There are also scenes in the movie that take place in the street in front of the house, which introduce us to the cab driver, who, thanks to Hollywood sensors, gets the last line. The play ends with the Brewster sisters pouring another glass of arsenic laced elderberry wine for another lonely, older man. However the Production Code in Hollywood at the time only allowed acts such as murder to be shown if the perpetrators were punished by the end of the film. So, while Abby and Martha still thought they were doing the right thing, even Hollywood disagreed. Sensors also would not allow the famous "Darling, I'm a bastard!" line from the play on screen. So to comply with both of these boundaries the line was changed to "I'm not a Brewster. I'm a son of a sea cook" to which the cab driver, who has been waiting on his fare for the entire movie, responds in exasperation. "I'm not a cab driver. I'm a coffee pot!"

Despite the differences, the Brewsters' antics continued to be enjoyed both onstage and on screen. The story has become a classic in both arenas.

# Farce and Dark Comedy

**Farce** is one of the most popular and enduring types of comedy in theatre. Aristophanes used elements of farce in his Ancient Greek comedies. Farce as its own genre started as comical interludes in religious plays in the Middle Ages and made its way into full length plays by the 15th century.

These comedies are characterized by the absurdity of over the top characters, the improbable situations they face and the ridiculous obstacles that get in their way. The major tropes in farce include mistaken identity, miscommunication between characters and interactions just barely missed, usually due to the multiple doors in and out of the room in which the scene is set.

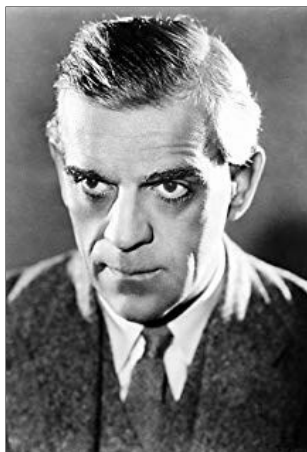
The goal of farce is simply to make the audience laugh rather than to evoke thought or feeling. Farce is generally fast paced and pushed along by a character's panic, thus not really allowing time to dissect the plot, because often times it is nonsensical or lacking. Even in *Arsenic and Old Lace* nothing that is going on really makes sense. Upon finding a dead body in his aunts' window seat Mortimer

leaves the house with the body still in the living room. In the middle of his mad dash to get his brother, who has not killed anyone, committed so his aunts don't get arrested for murders they did actually commit, he takes the time to stop and watch the first act of a play. While he's gone Abby and Martha are almost more concerned about Jonathan coming to the funeral of a person none of them knew than the fact that they have a violent murderer in their house. A murderer who just happened to bring his own dead body along with him. And around all of this is Teddy Roosevelt going about his presidential duties in Panama. But we're so caught up in the ride that it doesn't matter if it doesn't make sense, we're laughing.



Cary Grant as Mortimer in Warner Brothers Pictures' *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944)

Photo from [imdb.com/title/tt0036613/](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0036613/)



**Boris Karloff** was a British actor widely known for his work in horror films. He starred in over 50 horror movies and famously portrayed Frankenstein's monster in *Frankenstein* (1931), *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) and *Son of Frankenstein* (1939).

Singer Bobby Pickett was an avid horror film fan and impersonated Karloff in his 1962 hit song *The Monster Mash*. Karloff won a Grammy for his voice work on *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1966).

In addition to being a great example of farce *Arsenic and Old Lace* is a prime example of a more modern form of comedy, dark comedy, also known as black or gallows comedy. **Dark comedy** takes something morbid or taboo, (like poisoning innocent men and burying them in the basement), and makes light of it. This type of humor relies on the audience's cynicism and skepticism. While it can encompass any number of topics, abuse, war, disability, sex, substance abuse, etc, death and murder do seem to be the most popular themes in dark humor. Dark comedy often makes use of farcical elements in order to make light of the heavy subject matter. A play about two women who poison their boarders and then make their delusional nephew carry the bodies to the basement, being taken hostage in their own home by their sadistic nephew does not sound particularly funny. But add in a third nephew frantically trying to save the otherwise saint-like aunts from prison while constantly being interrupted by the phone, his new fiancé, work responsibilities and an over eager would-be playwright police officer and suddenly it's not nearly as morbid.

## Setting/Place

In a novel or a short story the setting is usually established by the author's description indicating time and place. At most theatrical productions the program will briefly list the setting and time period of the play, but after that it's up to the set designer to create a visual representation of the location that the story is set. A good set designer will create a set that gives the audience clues about the story even before the actors come on stage.

Set Design  
by Mark Lund.





# Costumes

Authors of novels or short stories will often include character descriptions as part of the story. In a play, the costume designer is responsible for creating the first impression of a character. As soon as an actor walks out on stage you can guess something about their character. Are they old or young? Are they rich or poor? Are they from another time period or dressed in modern clothes?

**Costumes Research  
by Jocelyne Fowler.**

Arsenic and Old Lace

**Abby Brewster**

Costumes: J. Fowler



Arsenic and Old Lace

**Mortimer Brewster** Costumes: J. Fowler



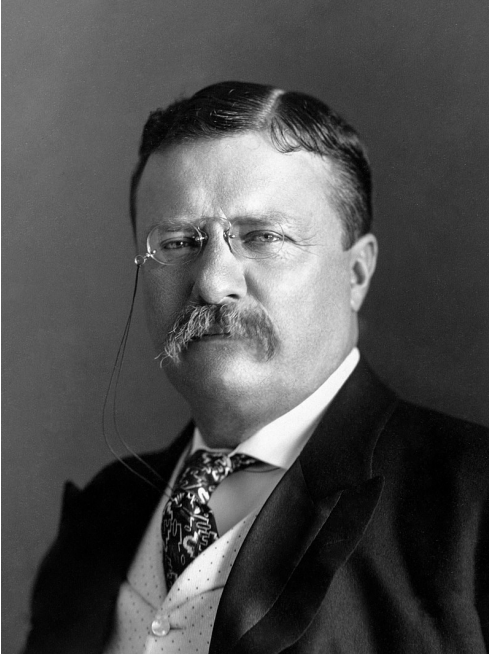
Arsenic and Old Lace

**Martha Brewster**

Costumes: J. Fowler



## Teddy Roosevelt



**President Theodore Roosevelt**

Picture from  
[wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore\\_Roosevelt](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Roosevelt)

With the assassination of President McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, not quite 43, became the youngest President in American history. He brought new excitement and power to the Presidency, as he vigorously led Congress and the American public toward progressive reforms and a strong foreign policy.

He took the view that the President as a “steward of the people” should take whatever action necessary for the public good unless expressly forbidden by law or the Constitution.” I did not usurp power,” he wrote, “but I did greatly broaden the use of executive power.”

Roosevelt’s youth differed sharply from that of the log-cabin Presidents. He was born in New York City in 1858 into a wealthy family, but he too struggled against ill health and in his triumph became an advocate of the strenuous life.

In 1884 his first wife, Alice Lee Roosevelt, and his mother died on the same day. Roosevelt spent much of the next two years on his ranch in the Badlands of Dakota Territory. There he mastered his sorrow as he lived in the saddle, driving cattle, hunting big game – he even captured an outlaw. On a visit to London, he married Edith Carow in December 1886.

During the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt was lieutenant colonel of the Rough Rider Regiment, which he led on a charge at the battle of San Juan. He was one of the most conspicuous heroes of the war.

Boss Tom Platt, needing a hero to draw attention away from scandals in New York State, accepted Roosevelt as the Republican candidate for Governor in 1898. Roosevelt won and served with distinction.

As President, Roosevelt held the ideal that the Government should be the great arbiter of the conflicting economic forces in the Nation, especially between capital and labor, guaranteeing justice to each and dispensing favors to none. Roosevelt emerged spectacularly as a “trust buster” by forcing the dissolution of a great railroad combination in the Northwest. Other antitrust suits under the Sherman Act followed.

Roosevelt steered the United States more actively into world politics. He liked to quote a favorite proverb, “Speak softly and carry a big stick. . . .”

Aware of the strategic need for a shortcut between the Atlantic and Pacific, Roosevelt ensured the construction of the Panama Canal. His corollary to the Monroe Doctrine prevented the establishment of foreign bases in the Caribbean and arrogated the sole right of intervention in Latin America to the United States.

He won the Nobel Peace Prize for mediating the Russo-Japanese War, reached a Gentleman’s Agreement on immigration with Japan, and sent the Great White Fleet on a goodwill tour of the world.

Some of Theodore Roosevelt’s most effective achievements were in conservation. He added enormously to the national forests in the West, reserved lands for public use, and fostered great irrigation projects.

He crusaded endlessly on matters big and small, exciting audiences with his high-pitched voice, jutting jaw, and pounding fist. “The life of strenuous endeavor” was a must for those around him, as he romped with his five younger children and led ambassadors on hikes through Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C.



# Teddy Roosevelt

Leaving the Presidency in 1909, Roosevelt went on an African safari, then jumped back into politics. In 1912 he ran for President on a Progressive ticket. To reporters he once remarked that he felt as fit as a bull moose, the name of his new party.

While campaigning in Milwaukee, he was shot in the chest by a fanatic. Roosevelt soon recovered, but his words at that time would have been applicable at the time of his death in 1919: "No man has had a happier life than I have led; a happier life in every way."

*The Presidential biographies on [WhiteHouse.gov](http://WhiteHouse.gov) are from "The Presidents of the United States of America," by Frank Freidel and Hugh Sidey. Copyright 2006 by the White House Historical Association.*



## Teddy in Africa

As his time in office and involvement in Panama came to an end, Roosevelt set his sights on another international project. On March 23, less than three weeks after leaving office, Roosevelt along with his son, Kermit, and several renowned biologists, set sail from New York for Africa. The purpose of this trip across the world was to gather specimens for the Smithsonian's new Natural History Museum (now the National Museum of Natural History). During the year-long hunt the group gathered 11,400 animal specimens, including big game and other mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects. They brought back numerous plant species as well. It took the Smithsonian eight years to catalogue the collection.

Teddy and Kermit combined total of 512 big game kills chafes against current day animal cruelty ideals, but Roosevelt was a conservationist in his own time. Conservation included protecting an environment, but not necessarily leaving it alone. It meant sustainably interacting with the area and the animals in that environment. And while 512 seems like a very high number, that number was reached over the course of an entire year and the safari travelled through modern Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan, over several thousand kilometers, thus not greatly effecting the populations of any one area. In his book *African Game Trails* Roosevelt said, "Game butchery is as objectionable as any form of wanton cruelty or barbarity. But to protest of all hunting of game is a sign of softness of head and unsoundness of heart"

The expedition also functioned as a social and political outing, with Teddy meeting many local people and leaders. It also lent itself to anthropological study as well; *Roosevelt in Africa* is a documentary shot by Cherry Kearton during some of the journey. Kearton captured not only wildlife footage but also a number of native dances and celebrations.

# The Panama Canal



Panama was discovered in 1501 by Rodrigo de Bastidas of Spain. Panama City was founded 18 years later by conquistador Pascual de Adgoya. In 1534 King Charles V of Spain ordered a survey to see if a canal could be built, thus improving trade routes. It was the beginning of a 380-year struggle to make a reality out of the idea. British buccaneers heavily raided Spanish forts from the mid 16th century through the 18th century. Panama City was looted in 1671 and was not rebuilt until 1673. Combating the pirate activity kept Spain from being able to build a waterway.

U.S. involvement in the canal first started in 1835, when President Andrew Jackson ordered a study of the feasibility of the canal. Ten years later a group of New York businessmen obtained the rights to build a railroad across the isthmus through New Grenada (present day Colombia). It would be the first transcontinental railroad in the world and would keep the dream and the reality of the canal afloat. Construction of the railroad started in 1850 and it was completed by 1855. During the California gold rush of 1849, some prospectors used the isthmus to get from the east coast to the west. It was also used to transport troops and supplies during the Civil War, as the U.S. transcontinental railroad would not be complete until 1869.

In 1880 the French Canal Company bought controlling shares in Panama Rail Road and employed the railroad during their excavation of the canal. In 1881 building actually began under the direction of Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French diplomat who had been the principal director of the Suez Canal, in Egypt, and thought a similar sea level canal could be built in Panama. Unfortunately he did not take in to consideration the difference in the Atlantic and Pacific tides. The French hired 30,000 West Indians to work the canal and by 1888 the French had cut a 74 ft. wide swath through the jungle, mostly by hand and had removed 15,000,000 cubic yards of earth.

However, de Lesseps abandoned the project in 1889. 25,000 workers had died in the span of 8 years, mostly from malaria and yellow fever. The canal project, *Compagnie du Universelle Canal Interoceanique*, was declared bankrupt and dissolved. In 1894 Phillipe Bunau Varilla became the major stockholder and spokesman in *Compagnie Nouvelle du Canal de Panama*. He immediately offered to sell the company's assets to the US for \$109 million. He later reduced his offer \$40 million.

The Spanish America War allowed the U.S. to acquire the Philippines and Puerto Rico and annex Hawaii in 1898. Assistant Secretary of Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, saw the need for easy access from the Atlantic to the Pacific and publically supported the construction of the canal. Three years later, then vice president Roosevelt became president after President William McKinley was assassinated.

In 1902 the U.S. Senate voted in favor of Panama as a canal site. The U.S. support for the \$40 million purchase from France was based on congressional acceptance of a canal in Panama instead of Nicaragua. In 1903 Colombia (to whom Panama still belonged) refused to ratify a treaty that would have given U.S. the land and right to build the canal. Later that year the treaty was ratified but with the agreement that the U.S. will pay \$10 million and \$250,000 annually for a 6-mile wide zone. Phillipe Bunau Varilla later met with President Roosevelt to tell him a group in Panama was planning a rebellion and to ask the U.S. to prevent Colombian troops from landing. He went back to Panama without a solid answer. However, not long after this meeting Panama declared its separation from Colombia after a one-day coup, in which a U.S. warship sat offshore and prevented the Colombians from landing. Teddy recognized the new Republic of Panama three days after the separation and a treaty was signed that granted the U.S. a strip of land across the Isthmus of Panama. Panama adopted the U.S. dollar as its currency not long after.

In 1904 the U.S. purchased equipment and infrastructure from France and construction begun. Roosevelt appointed John Findley Wallace as first Chief Engineer. Wallace unfortunately found conditions in Panama chaotic; the French



# The Panama Canal

equipment was in scrap heaps, rusted train cars were covered in grown-over vines, rails and pipes were scattered, the French buildings were abandoned and in disrepair and there was poor infrastructure and poor sanitary conditions. Nevertheless, Wallace started work immediately on the Culebra Cut with salvaged French equipment. Conditions were abysmal as there was little housing, no public buildings, few roads and no sewage system. People died in great numbers from malaria and yellow fever and Wallace retreated back to the United States after only one year.

Teddy replaced Wallace with John F. Stevens, who realized working and living conditions needed to improve before work on the canal could progress. He orders work on the Culebra Cut to stop and spent the next year building 1,250 homes, hospitals, admin buildings and recreation centers. He rebuilt 1,200 French buildings and encouraged women and families

to come to the canal. Stevens appointed Col. William Crawford Gorgas as Chief Sanitary engineer and gave him whatever men and supplies he needed to eradicate yellow fever. Gorgas realized the illness is contracted by mosquitos and that mosquitos are attracted to water. He cleaned up the Canal Zone by fighting mosquitos and eradicated yellow fever within one year.



Maps from [worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/camerica/pa.htm](http://worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/camerica/pa.htm)

## Sanatoriums in the 19th and 20th century

“Sanatorium” was the name given to any medical facility dedicated to patients suffering from a long-term illness. Drug and alcohol rehab facilities were called sanatoriums, however the term was largely used for facilities dedicated to the containment and treatment of tuberculosis. Asylums were sometimes referred to as sanatoriums in an attempt to sound less alarming.

The early-mid 20th century was a time of questionable practices in psychiatric care. While many people turned a blind eye, ignored, or denied reports of abuse there was no real question that some level of abuse was happening in these facilities. That’s not to say that every patient in every asylum was abused or assaulted more than once, but the tools of the day were tools of cruelty. Any number of behaviors, including public drunkenness, were grounds for commitment so the facilities were often overcrowded.

The asylum in Brooklyn in the 1930s was Kings County Asylum. Built in 1885, initially it followed the popular farm colony model where patients would grow crops and livestock both as forms of therapy and as a way to build a self-sufficient community. This was a successful model and the hospital grew into its own community ran by the patients and employees. The asylum started as a group of cottages, with a desire to avoid the high-rise asylum model, which was viewed as inhumane. However, as the population of both New York and Kings County skyrocketed throughout the 1930’s the institution built Building 93, a 13-story building bearing a strong resemblance to what they were trying to avoid, in 1939.

Kings County was known for being on the cutting edge of psychological science, adopting lobotomy and shock therapy early, as well as being one of the first institutions to successfully prescribe anti-psychotics for outpatient treatment. However, at the time of its establishment until the early 1940’s there were not a lot of options or resources for psychiatric care beyond the heavy use of restraints and isolation and talk therapy. When a patient entered the hospital they lost their right to give or deny consent for treatment, thus letting health care professionals use whatever desperate means they had.

# Medical Practices of the Early 20th Century



## Patent Medicine

Patent medicines were popular from the 18th century to the early 20th century, reaching their peak from the mid to late 19th century. They were homemade remedies used to treat or cure any number of ailments. The popularity of patent medicines was due to their accessibility. There was a lack of medical knowledge (germ research only started to be thoroughly tested and understood in the 1860s) and doctors were expensive and scarce, especially the farther West one traveled.

Traveling salesmen made patent medicines easily available, and because they promised to treat or cure a wide variety of ailments ranging from rheumatism to pimples, the common cold to eye infections, diabetes to cancer and “female problems” the elixirs seemed more practical than finding a doctor.

Patent medicines were named for the patent on the labels, not the concoctions themselves. There were no regulations regarding the contents of the remedies and their makers were not required to list all the ingredients on the bottle. This lack of regulation often proved dangerous as the ingredients generally included some amount of alcohol, opiates or narcotics. Sometimes the secret ingredients would include arsenic, mercury, chloroform, or radioactive materials. There was little to no real medicinal qualities.

The Food and Drug act of 1906 attempted to prevent the dangerous nature of the patent medicines, not by banning the use of alcohol and stimulates in them but by requiring all ingredients to be listed on the label. There are still some products on the market left from patent medicines, with obvious ingredient revisions, including Bayer Aspirin, Luden's Throat Drops and Vicks Vapor rub. There are also many consumer products that were once marketed as patent medicines but have been repurposed for non-medicinal uses, including many soft drinks such as Coca-Cola, Dr. Pepper, Pepsi, and 7-Up, as well as graham crackers and tonic water.



# Medical Practices of the Early 20th Century



## Cosmetic Surgery 1460-1939

The first recorded nose job was by Antonio Branca in 1460. He used parchment or leather to make a model of the nose, traced that model onto the arm and then separated the underlying layers of skin. The arm was then raised to the head and the model stitched over the nose. The arm was bound to the head for 8-10 days until healed and the lower part of the skin flap was cut, at last freeing the arm. The nostrils could then be reconstructed.

Antonio often loses his place in cosmetic surgery history to Gasparo Tagliacozzi, who wrote a textbook of sorts for the procedure nearly 100 years later in 1595. It's due to this work, that the technique became wide spread in Europe, thus the credit for the procedure generally given to Tagliacozzi.

In the 18th century skin grafts were redeveloped from an 8th century BC book by Indian healer Sushruta called "Sushruta Samhita." It was once again used initially for the nose, by taking a leaf shaped piece of skin from the forehead to reconstruct the nose. This technique became widely known as the "Indian Method" after it was published in the 'Gentleman's Magazine of Calcutta' in October 1794.

In 1798, Pierre Desault of Greece named such surgeries as *plastikos*, meaning moldings. The term 'plastic surgery' was evolved from this Greek name.

World War I provided the opportunity for the beginnings of modern plastic surgery. The first university and military training facilities dedicated to plastic surgery were established between 1910-1919 as visionaries Dr. Wilray Blair and Dr. Varaztad Kazanjian developed innovative techniques in skin grafting and facial surgeries. New methods such as tubed pedicled graft, were used primarily to treat severe facial burns. Such techniques relied on growth and development of blood supply from the recipient bed into the grafted tissue over a period of weeks, or even months.

Advancement in the field continued after the war with the first modern rhinoplasty, or nose job, in the United States after the war in 1923. In 1931 a team of surgeons performed the first public facelift. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s leaps and bounds were taken in education and regulations in the field. In 1924 John Davis established the first formal training program in plastic surgery at John Hopkins University and was appointed as the first professor of plastic surgery in the United States. A year later Dr. Jacques Maliniac convinced the New York City hospital system to establish the first division of plastic surgery in a public hospital. In 1931 he, along with Gustave Aufricht founded The American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons. Six years later a group of ASPS members convinced the American Board of Surgery to establish the American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS), which dramatically raised the standards in the field.

## Post-show Reflection

*The Question:* How far would you actually go to protect someone in your family?

- 1. Why do you think a comedy like Arsenic and Old Lace remains popular for decades?*
- 2. Is there such a thing as an innocent or even a benevolent crime?*
- 3. If you could be a different person who would you want to be? Why?*

## Post-Show Reflection

After the show, write a short review of the performance using the space below. Include what you liked and didn't like while identifying the main conflicts of the play and its plot structure.



# TAPROOT THEATRE COMPANY

## MISSION STATEMENT

Taproot Theatre Company creates theatre experiences to brighten the spirit, engage the mind and deepen the understanding of the world around us while inspiring imagination, conversation and hope.

## ABOUT US

Taproot Theatre Company was founded in 1976 by six friends, five of them graduates from Seattle Pacific University. From its humble beginnings as a touring group, the company is now Seattle's largest mid-size theatre company. Today Taproot Theatre serves over 150,000 people annually throughout the Pacific Northwest with its Jewell Mainstage season, Isaac Studio Theatre season, Touring programs and Acting Studio.

## STAFF CONTACTS

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## EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### In-School Residencies & Workshops

- From drama games to acting classes to putting on a production, Taproot Theatre's residencies can range from several weeks to months, or an entire school year. Whether during the school day or after school as an enrichment program, let Taproot's trained teaching artists introduce a whole new world to your students.
- Our theatre arts professional will visit your classroom for a workshop that will inspire and excite your students. They will develop basic acting skills and explore non-theatre curriculum using theater as a medium.

### Touring Productions

- The Road Company – performing plays for elementary and secondary schools focusing on issues such as bullying prevention, substance abuse, and friendship skills.
- Family oriented productions and improv comedy for churches, clubs, office parties and other groups.

### Camps & Classes

- Taproot Theatre Company's Acting Studio is a year-round instructional program for theatre artists of all ages and experience levels. We are devoted to the wholeness of the artist with the goal of creating a nurturing environment to help each student develop his or her unique gifts.

MARCH 20 - APRIL 27



by David Meyers

## **NEXT ON THE JEWELL MAINSTAGE:**

### ***We Will Not Be Silent***

*By David Meyers*

**The true story of an ordinary young woman during extraordinary times.**

Tewnty-one-year-old Sophie Scholl is a college student, anti-Nazi activist and, along with her brother, a member of The White Rose resistance. Charged with treason and held in a German prison, Sophie is forced to play a psychological game of cat and mouse as she fights for her life and soul with a Nazi interrogator. This emotionally charged story testifies to the courage required to live out your values.

**Intergenerational Matinee:  
Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 10:30 AM**

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**TICKETS FOR ALL 2019 MAINSTAGE SHOWS ARE ON SALE NOW!**

MAY 15 - JUNE 22



by Ins Choi

## **Coming Soon!**

### ***Kim's Convenience***

*By Ins Choi*

Enter Kim's Convenience Store and meet the Kims, a loving, if imperfect, Korean family making their way in Toronto. As they face an uncertain future Appa (dad), Umma (mom), their unmarried daughter Janet and disappointing son Jung learn to see each other in a new light. This hilarious and heartwarming story reminds us that family isn't always convenient, but it might be the best deal out there.

**Intergenerational Matinee:  
Wednesday, May 29, 2019 at 10:30 AM**