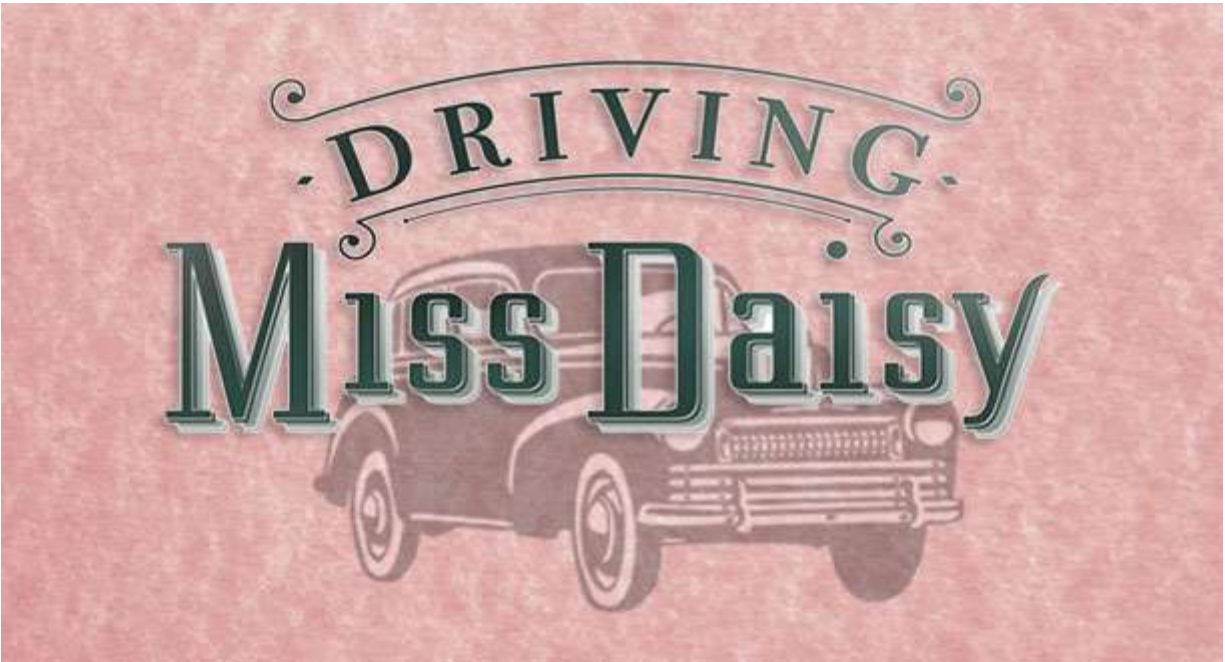


# The Jefferson Performing Arts Society

Presents



## A Study Companion

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## TEACHERS' NOTES

The Jefferson Performing Arts Society is delighted to present **DRIVING MISS DAISY**, by **Alfred Uhry**; **STARRING JANET SHEA, DONAL LEWIS and CHRIS SHAW**. Winner of the 1988 Pulitzer Prize and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Off-Broadway Play and later, an Academy Award-winning film, **DRIVING MISS DAISY** is a warm-hearted, humorous and affecting study of the unlikely relationship between an aging, crotchety white Southern lady: and a proud, soft-spoken black man. The place is the Deep South, the time 1948 - just prior to the civil rights movement. Having recently demolished another car, Daisy Werthan, a rich, sharp-tongued Jewish widow of seventy-two, is informed by her son, Boolie, that henceforth she must rely on the services of a chauffeur. The person he hires for the job is a thoughtful, unemployed black man, Hoke, whom Miss Daisy immediately regards with disdain. Hoke is not impressed with his employer's patronizing tone and, he believes, her latent prejudice. In a series of scenes spanning twenty-five years, the two, despite their mutual differences, grow ever closer to, and more dependent on each other. It becomes movingly clear that they have more in common than they ever believed possible.

"The play is sweet without being mawkish, ameliorative, without being sanctimonious." —NY Times. "...a perfectly poised and shaped miniature on the odd-couple theme." —NY Post. "Playwrights Horizons has a winner in this one...gives off a warm glow of humane affirmation." —Variety. "DRIVING MISS DAISY is a total delight." —NY Daily News.

The idea of ordinary people in the civil rights movement is something that was recently capitalized upon in the Broadway production of **DRIVING MISS DAISY**. James Earl Jones, who played the role of Hoke in the Broadway production, stated in an interview on the Today Show, that the reason playwright *Alfred Uhry* wanted to bring "*Driving Miss Daisy*" to Broadway was because "*the young people knew about Martin Luther King but didn't know about the ordinary people that were surviving during those days.*" And then there's its depiction of the changing face of American race relations, rendered in microcosm in the dynamic between a lady and her driver. When the play begins, in 1948, Daisy explains to her son why she's been able to get along with her longtime black housekeeper: "We know how to stay out of each other's way," she says. By the time the story ends, in 1973, Daisy and Hoke have learned a harder, more valuable lesson: how not to. The characters, inspired by Uhry's grandmother Lena Fox and her chauffeur, Will Coleman, are universal figures that appeal to a wide audience. Miss Daisy and Hoke struggle to determine their personal and social roles as the world they have always known changes before their eyes.

When Alfred Uhry *DRIVING MISS DAISY*, he was in part reminiscing about his headstrong grandmother. He was also chronicling a crucial period of social history in a slice of the South and concocting a canny entertainment, laced generously with schmaltz and sly humor. The linear narrative touches on such temporal issues as black-white relations, anti-Semitism, mother-son ties, aging and loneliness.

This Study Companion provides background information on both the theatrical production and the film *DRIVING MISS DAISY*, as well as historical information relevant to Louisiana. Lesson plans explore the social conditions that underlie the story. One focus of the lesson plans is biography, how people and events can shape the direction of a life.

Enjoy!



# LOUISIANA

## CONTENT STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

Content Standards, Benchmarks and Grade Level Expectations will follow the lesson section of this companion. In the interest of brevity, **Content Standards, Benchmarks and Grade Level Expectations** generally are listed for grades K-4 only.

Most Content Standards and Benchmark coding for each subject is similar, and can be adapted for every grade level. As an example, English Language Arts Content Standard Three, **“Students communicate using standard English grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and handwriting**, has corresponding Benchmarks across grade levels. The code is written **ELA** (English Language Arts,) **3** (Content Standard **3**,) and **E1** (grades **1-4**.) The same Benchmark applies to all grade levels. Coding can be converted as follows:

**ELA-3-E1** Writing legibly, allowing margins and correct spacing between letters in a word and words in a sentence **Grades 1-4**

**ELA-3-M1** Writing fluidly and legibly in cursive or printed form **Grades 5-8**

**ELA-3-H1** Writing fluidly and legibly in cursive or printed form **Grades 9-12**

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Academic standards define the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn in a subject in each grade. Louisiana defines academic standards for core subjects, including English language arts (reading and writing), math, science, social studies, foreign languages, physical education and health.

In 2010, Louisiana adopted Common Core State Standards in English language arts and math. The Common Core State Standards define what students need to learn in reading, writing and math in each grade to stay on track for college and careers. Louisiana is aligning state assessments and end-of-course tests to the new academic standards, phasing in additional common core test items each year until completely measuring students’ achievement of the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and math in 2014-2015. Please visit this site for more information:

<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/common-core-state-standards>

All Louisiana Grade Level Expectations and Content Standards and Benchmarks were retrieved from: <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/common-core-state-standards>

## BACKGROUND





## ***Driving Miss Daisy***

The play *Driving Miss Daisy* had its New York premiere on April 15, 1987, off Broadway at the Studio Theater at Playwrights Horizons. Written by [Alfred Uhry](#) and directed by Ron Lagomarsino, the original theatrical production featured a cast including [Atlanta](#) native Dana Ivey as Miss Daisy, Morgan Freeman as Hoke, and Ray Gill as Boolie. The play received a [Pulitzer Prize](#) in 1988, and in 1989 it was adapted into a [film](#) directed by Bruce Beresford and starring Jessica Tandy, Morgan Freeman, and Dan Aykroyd. The film received nine Academy Award nominations and won for Best Picture, Best Actress, Best Makeup, and Best Screenplay. The play also ran for two seasons (1988-90) at the [Alliance Theatre](#) in Atlanta.



[Tandy and Freeman](#)

## **Characters, Setting, and Plot**



[Driving Miss Daisy](#)

*Driving Miss Daisy* is set in Atlanta, Uhry's hometown. Spanning a quarter of a century, from 1948 to 1973, the action takes place before, during, and after the [civil rights movement](#). The plot centers on two characters, an elderly [Jewish](#) widow named Miss Daisy Werthan and her African American driver, Hoke Colburn. Although the story was inspired by Uhry's grandmother Lena Fox and her chauffeur, Will Coleman, the characters are universal figures that appeal to a wide audience.

At the beginning of the play, Hoke is hired by Miss Daisy's son, Boolie, who has become concerned about his aging mother's driving abilities. The proud Miss Daisy resents Hoke's presence, as she believes that he will do nothing but sit around, take up space, eat her food, and run up her phone bill. Concerned about appearances, Miss Daisy is also terrified that her neighbors will consider her a snob because



[Miss Daisy and Hoke](#)

she has a chauffeur to drive her around town. Hoke persists, however, and soon Miss Daisy is not only tolerating the kindly man but also accepting him as a friend. By the end, the proud, elderly, and frail woman, confined to a nursing home, tells Hoke that he is her best friend, and she allows him to spoon-feed her when she is unable to eat on her own.

Both the theatrical and film versions of *Driving Miss Daisy* were written by Uhry and are similar, but some differences are evident. The play includes only three characters, Miss Daisy, Hoke, and Boolie, and the set is very simple, utilizing two stools to represent the car in which much of the dramatic action takes place. The

play consists of a series of vignettes, with the passage of time revealed in the actors' mannerisms and by topical references, as well as by set and costume changes. The movie, by contrast, was filmed in and around Atlanta and features such locations as Druid Hills, Lullwater Road, [Agnes Scott College](#), and The Temple. Characters who are only mentioned in the play, including Boolie's wife and Miss Daisy's cook, were given roles in the film, and all of the characters were enhanced and expanded to allow for more insight into their lives and environment.

### Themes and Critical Reception

The personal and social conflicts of its characters are at the heart of *Driving Miss Daisy*.



[Beresford and Tandy](#)

These conflicts result mainly from the mixture of southern and Jewish cultures, a theme about which Uhry, himself a southern Jew, often writes. The play is cast against the background of the civil rights movement in Atlanta, and many of the tensions that mark the developing relationship between Hoke and Miss Daisy reflect the world that is changing around them. As Hoke begins to test and push the boundaries of his social and working relationship with Miss Daisy, she begins to realize not only her own prejudices, but also those of the mainstream Christian community in which she lives.

Miss Daisy also experiences conflicts with Boolie that further illustrate the theme of change within the South. As a representative of the "Old South" and its traditions, Miss Daisy is highly resistant to change. Boolie, by contrast, is a shrewd businessman who, along with his wife, exemplifies the transformation of the South from an agrarian to an industrial culture. He owns all of the latest technology, including



[Miss Daisy and Boolie](#)

intercom systems in his store, decorative Christmas lights at his house, and a hi-fi stereo system from which he blasts music that the whole neighborhood hears. Boolie constantly tries to push this newer, more technologically advanced way of life on his mother, who refuses it all.

The critical reception of *Driving Miss Daisy* has been mixed. While some reviewers found the work a "touching tribute to friendship and human dignity" and praised its subtle and subversive portrayal of the civil rights movement and racial prejudice, others criticized its romanticized and overly simplistic portrayal of a relationship between a rich white woman and her black employee. Nonetheless, the play and the film have both been popular with audiences, and the story is prominently identified with the South and its culture.

### Suggested Reading

Beverly Branch, "Southern Society in *Driving Miss Daisy*," in *Motion Pictures and Society*, ed. Douglas Radcliff-Umstead (Kent, Ohio: Department of Romance Languages, Kent State University, 1990).

Angela J. Mason and Timothy J. Viator, " *Driving Miss Daisy*: A Sociosemiotic Analysis," *Southern Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (1994).

Don Shewey, "Ballyhoo and Daisy, Too," *American Theatre* 14, no. 4 (1997).

Helene Vann and Jane Caputi, " *Driving Miss Daisy*: A New 'Song of the South,'" *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 18, no. 2 (1990): 80-82.



RETRIEVED FROM: <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-1525>

Miriam Terry, Macon

Published 11/11/2005



Photographed: Donald Lewis as Hoke Colburn and Janet Shea, AEA as Daisy Werthan, the JPAS production of DRIVING MISS DAISY



### ***Gefilte Fish in the Land of the Kingfish: Jewish Life in Louisiana***

By Susan Levitas

#### **View video clips from *Shalom Y'all: The Documentary Film***

[New Orleans Mardi Gras with Cathy Kahn](#)

[New Orleans Klezmer Allstars with Jonathon Freilich](#)

Popular culture and history have helped create the idea in the public imagination, that American Jews are northern city dwellers, mostly living in New York, who sound and act like Woody Allen. As southern Jewish historian Eli Evans points out, even northern Jews are hard pressed to believe that Jewish life exists, let alone thrives, south of the Mason Dixon Line. The fact is, over one million Jews live in the South, from tiny towns in Arkansas to booming metropolises like Atlanta. What about Louisiana? Are there Jewish communities around the state, and if so, how did they get here and what have their influences been?

Jewish life in Louisiana has been flourishing, largely under the radar for hundreds of years. While it has become conventional wisdom that Louisiana is the Creole State, with waves of settlement encompassing Native America, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, and Canada, the story of Louisiana Jews is lesser known. Today, there are over 13,000 Jews in New Orleans alone, and Jewish communities are thriving in small towns across the state. There are Jewish cemeteries in such places as Berwick, Bogalusa, Farmerville, and Opelousas, and Jewish communities exist today in Natchitoches, Baton Rouge, Washington, Monroe, Shreveport, Lafayette, and many other towns.

So, how did Jews get to Louisiana? Several people interviewed responded to this question with a story they had heard, and assumed to be true, about an unknown Jewish peddler who came to their small town. While there, his horse died, so he decided to stay. In fact, hundreds of Jewish peddlers, mostly from Eastern Europe, worked itinerantly around the South. There is a mystique that developed around these early "wandering American Jews." They were seen as industrious and adaptable. They were the progenitors of the landed merchant class that many southern Jews became. The "Jew store," as it came to be known in many communities, was often the one dry goods store in town, and the Jewish family that owned it, was sometimes the only Jewish family in the community. In fact, Jewish life in Louisiana precedes the arrival of 19th century peddlers by hundreds of years. Their arrival in the state continued a trend of Diasporic settlement that has its roots in the first century.

Since the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the expulsion of Jews from their Promised Land, Jewish communities have emerged and thrived in every corner of the globe. From Shanghai to the Seychelles, Jews were the "eternal strangers" living in a Diaspora that was supposed to eventually end with the return to Israel. Jews learned to adapt, acculturate and assimilate to the life around them, which was often hostile to their presence. They lived with

the constant threat of persecution or, worse, expulsion from their new homes. No matter how successful they became, or how prominent they were in civic, political, or social life, there was always the prospect of banishment. This fractured existence was the Jewish way of life the world over for hundreds of years.

The 15th century Spanish Inquisition dealt a stunning blow to Jewish life in Europe, as Jews had risen to unprecedented levels of integration and prominence in European society. It was 1492, the year that Christopher Columbus was "sailing the ocean blue" to America. School textbooks, tell us little about the early colonists, but it turns out that right there on the boats with Columbus, were Portuguese and Spanish Jews-doctors, merchants, and advisors. It would be a couple hundred years before Jewish life was established in America in towns like St. Augustine, Florida, and Savannah, Georgia.

The first Jews came to Louisiana in the early 1700s. They were Spanish and Portuguese traders along the Gulf Coast, who came to this colonial outpost from the Caribbean. Other Portuguese Jewish settlers followed, forming the first Jewish congregation in Louisiana in 1828. Together, these Sephardic Jewish communities comprised the first wave of Jewish immigration to the state. Jewish life thrived, even during the time of the infamous "Black Code" of 1724, which decreed that Jews should be expelled from the Louisiana French colony.

The next wave of Jewish settlement in Louisiana came from Western Europe in the early to mid-19th century. Jews from Germany and Alsace-Lorraine settled in cities and towns all over the state, and brought with them a less traditionally observant practice of Judaism. The French-speaking Alsatian Jews, found a niche in the burgeoning Cajun communities in the southern part of the state, as fur traders who shared a common language. Ury Wainer, an older Jewish fur trader interviewed, described this little-known world of Jewish fur brokering. "We used to go out on the boats for a month at a time. We'd go from camp to camp and buy furs from the Cajun trappers. Then, we'd sell them to the fur dealers. They were comfortable with us because we spoke French."

According to historical researcher Cathy Kahn, Jews "took on the coloration" of the people with whom they settled. So, it was that Hyman Salz, a fifth-generation German Jew from Morgan City, became an alligator fisherman - a prohibited food under kosher dietary laws. His family owned the dry goods store on Main Street, following a trend of Jewish settlement all over the South. As Hyman recalled, "I grew up with swamp mud between my toes." He helped run the family business and sold alligator meat around town. The Jewish community of Morgan City was small, so his family had to bring in an itinerant Hebrew teacher from New Orleans to prepare Hyman for his Bar-Mitzvah. Hyman, like other Jews in Louisiana, felt more a part of the culture than apart from it.

Spike Herzog of Providence, Louisiana, in the northern part of the state, recounts that he did not feel different from his neighbors because of his Jewish identity. As he told it in his North Louisiana-inflected accent, "We didn't feel different because we were Jewish, we felt different because we didn't have two first names. All my friends were Tom Ed and Connie Ray and Bobby Lee. We just had one first name." Like other Reform Jews, Spike grew-up eating seafood and other non-kosher foods indigenous to the region. He had blond hair and fair skin, like his neighbors, and he did not wear a *kippah* (skull cap), or *tsisit* (fringe worn under garments) required of more observant Jews, which would have caused him to stand out.

Jews found creative ways to blend the traditions of their neighbors with those of their ancestors. Elaine Schlessinger of New Orleans makes an old family recipe for *charoset*, which, although blending the Old World with the New South, is not kosher. *Charoset* is a ritual food item made for and consumed exclusively on Passover, the Jewish holiday commemorating the Exodus from slavery in Egypt 5000 years ago. The dish, a mixture of nuts, apples, honey, wine, and cinnamon, symbolizes the bricks and mortar Jews were forced to make while enslaved. It represents the hardship they suffered as forced laborers, and it is eaten during the Passover Seder meal. Elaine Schlessinger's recipe substitutes Jack Daniels for the sweet Manishewitz wine, used traditionally. She knows that using the grain alcohol makes her *charoset* non kosher, but it makes her feel connected to her southern roots.

The third, and final, wave of Jewish migration to Louisiana, brought thousands of Eastern European *Ashkenazi* Jews to the state in the late 19th and early 20th century, bringing with them a more observant, traditional form of Jewish practice. These Jews were part of what Macy Hart of the Institute of Southern Jewish Life refers to as "the Dixie Diaspora." Jews came in through the ports of Ellis Island, New York, and Galveston, Texas, and fanned out across the South. In New Orleans, there was instant friction between these new more Orthodox Jews and their Reform brethren. The Reform Jews were concerned that these immigrants were "too Jewish," and thus would draw unfavorable attention to Jews in general. While Anti-Semitism was not as much a part of the cultural landscape of Louisiana as in other parts of the South, there was still a concern that, as one merchant put it, "we not stand out."

Fitting in was so vital to a Jewish population used to persecution the world over, that stories of "passing" or being fully embraced are common. One such urban legend encountered in many interviews tells the story of a Jewish merchant who was so accepted as part of the larger community, that he was asked to join the notoriously Anti-Semitic Ku Klux Klan. The hero would politely decline the invitation, but he knew that he was selling white sheets to these same men who would use them as disguises. The irony lies in the Jew-hating Klan member unknowingly buying his wares from a Jewish merchant. The story expresses a deep-seated fear of the KKK, as well as a triumphant sense of getting one over on the bad guy. Each teller believed the story to be true, and in most cases, said it happened to a distant relative.

In contrast, the Ashkenazi Jews did not try to fit in and that made Reform Jews very nervous. Ashkenazim tended to settle in small enclaves where they could walk to synagogue on Saturday, so as not to break the Jewish law prohibiting driving on the Sabbath. They ate kosher meat and spoke Yiddish, a creolized Jewish language, blending Hebrew, Russian, and German idioms. The Dryades neighborhood in New Orleans' Lower Garden District was one such enclave of Orthodox Jewish life. There were several synagogues and stores serving this insular community.

In the mid-20th century, Jewish populations moved to the suburbs. Today, only one synagogue remains in Dryades with a handful of older members. Several African American churches have bought the old synagogues, leaving the Stars of David and Menorah carvings on the buildings. As one pastor explained, "We feel honored to be worshipping in the house of God's Chosen People." There are still Orthodox and Conservative Jewish congregations in New Orleans, but most of the Jews are Reform.

Jews in New Orleans have been able to be involved at every level of civic life. Judah P. Benjamin of New Orleans, helped finance the Civil War, and served as Secretary of War and Secretary of State for the Confederacy. (Elaine Schlessinger makes her Jack Daniels *charoset*

in Judah P. Benjamin's old house, which she now owns.) According to Cathy Kahn, Jews were not, however, accepted at the highest levels of society, which in New Orleans means Mardi Gras. "It is a little known fact, that the first king of Carnival - the first Rex, in 1872 - was Jewish. His name was Lewis Solomon. Of course, he was the last Jewish king of Carnival." While Jews are members of the elite Mardi Gras krewes, they are not among the social tiers that represent Carnival royalty. In response to this, a group of Jews got together in the 1990s and created the Krewe du Jieux, a satirical marching club attached to the renowned French Quarter parade Krewe du Vieux. They hand out painted bagels, along with the usual Mardi Gras beads and trinkets.



The Jewish Star of David is used by the Krewe du Jieux parade in 1999, New Orleans.



Krewe du Jieux, Mardi Gras, 1999. A member of the Krewe du Jieux dresses as the Anti-Christ.



The Krewe du Jieux parade on Mardi Gras day in New Orleans, 1999. They are a group of young Jews who follow the Zulu parade and parody New Orleans Mardi Gras.

This cultural parody is set against a backdrop of resurgence in Jewish cultural and religious identification. The first Jewish private school in the state, the New Orleans Jewish Day School, opened in the early 1990s, and several Jewish Film Festivals take place around the state. Synagogue-based gift shops vend a dizzying array of religious and customary items, jewelry, and *tchochkes* (trinkets). A Jewish Renewal group, full of young members, holds *havdalah* services, marking the end of the Sabbath, on the banks of the Mississippi River.

To hear many Louisiana Jews describe it, they have found in the South and in this state, a new Promised Land. It is a place that has enabled them to thrive and continue ancient practices without the fear of expulsion. As Cathy Kahn mused, "If Moses had a boat, this is where he would've come."

#### Resources

Ashkenazi, Elliott. 1988. *The Business of Jews in New Orleans, 1840-1875*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Bain, Brian. 2002. *Shalom Y'all*. Directed by Brian Bain, Produced by Susan Levitas. [www.shalomyall.com](http://www.shalomyall.com). A one-hour documentary film about Jews in the South, includes footage in Louisiana from Donaldsonville, Morgan City and New Orleans.

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Evans, Eli N. 1988. *Judah P. Benjamin: The Jewish Confederate*. New York: Free Press.  
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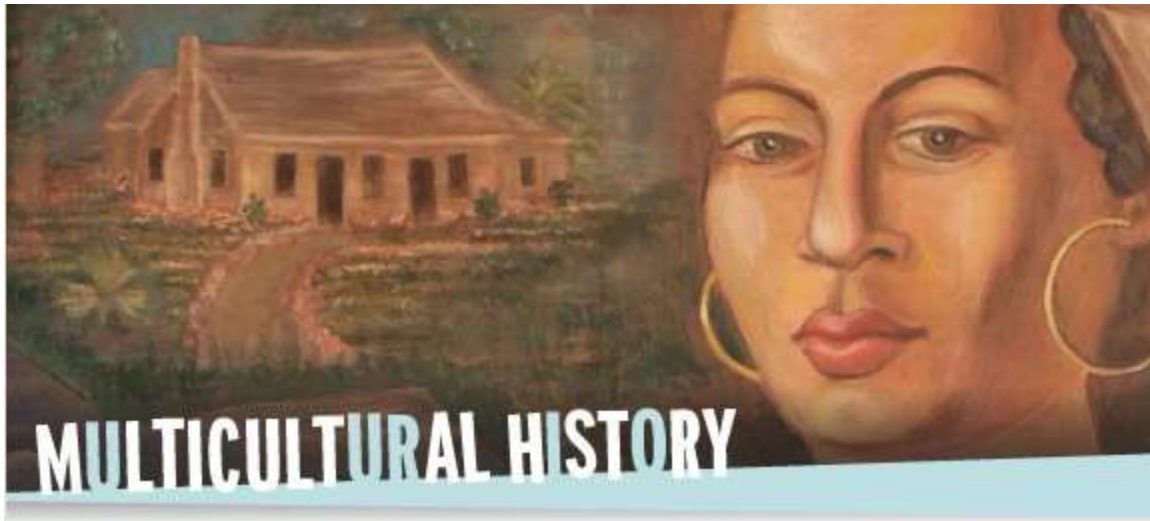
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Rosen, Robert N. *The Jewish Confederates*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2000.

Simons, Andrew. *Jews of New Orleans: An Archival Guide*. New Orleans: The Greater New Orleans Archivists, 1998.

*Susan Levitas, a folklorist and filmmaker in New Orleans, was producer for the film, Shalom Y'all.*





## Oy! Such a Home



Businessman and philanthropist Judah Touro, founder of Touro Infirmary



Drugstore tycoons Gustave Katz and Sydney J. Besthoff, better know by the initials of their stores, K&B.



Before any Jews had even come to Louisiana, the Code Noir (Black Code) of the French colonial period decreed that they be expelled. No one bothered to enforce this part of the code against the handful of Jews who gradually trickled into New Orleans in the mid-1700s. After taking control in 1769, the second Spanish governor, however, did expel certain successful Jewish merchants-in particular the family of Isaac Monsanto who temporarily fled to Florida-but the Spanish governor's probable motivation was more a perceived threat to Spanish economic power rather than religious intolerance.

Judaism, after all, was not very important to New Orleans' early Jews. Independent and individualistic, they generally came alone to New Orleans, seeking opportunity and leaving established Jewish enclaves elsewhere. A religious Jew in early New Orleans would have had a hard time upholding Jewish traditions which require, among other things, praying with at least nine others and following certain dietary restrictions. In fact, local Jewish history says the first New Orleans congregation, Gates of Mercy, began in 1827 when a Jew named Isaac Solis couldn't find any unleavened bread to eat during Passover and decided to do something about the lack of Jewish life in the city.

The Jewish community developed into a small but prominent population in New Orleans. The lifetime bachelor Judah Touro, a New England Jew of Dutch descent, steadily amassed a fortune as a merchant and businessman. He wasn't particularly religious, but he was charitable, and his many philanthropic works include funding the congregation that became Touro Synagogue in 1850 and two years later starting Touro Infirmary, which grew into the enormous hospital it is today.

While the first Jews of New Orleans had roots in Western Europe, a new wave began arriving from Eastern Europe. These Dryades Street Jews, so named after the Central City neighborhood where they settled, tended to be Orthodox, working class, and somewhat removed from city life, even from the established Jewish community.

Jews hadn't faced much anti-Semitism in New Orleans. The Krewe of Rex's first King of Carnival in 1872 was even Jewish. But by the early 20th century, Jews were excluded from elite Mardi Gras krewes and other social organizations no matter how wealthy or prominent they were in city's structure.

Nevertheless, Jews continued to be leaders in the city. Many of New Orleans beloved retail stores have been Jewish-owned: the former Canal St. department stores Krauss

Krauss



New Orleans  
Museum of Art



Delgado Community  
College



and Maison Blanche, the dearly missed K&B Drugs, and the still functioning Adler's, Hurwitz-Mintz, and Rubensteins. Jewish philanthropy to New Orleans did not stop with Touro. Isaac Delgado founded Delgado Community College and the Museum of Art in City Park; Isidore Newman began one of the city's top college prep schools; and the city can thank Malcolm Woldenberg for Woldenberg Park.

Over the decades, the Jewish community's focus gradually shifted farther uptown and is now dispersed throughout the city and into Metairie. Jewish Community Centers in both New Orleans and Metairie and congregations across the metropolitan area keep New Orleans Jewish life thriving.

## **Jewish Community Centers**

### **Jewish Community Center-Uptown**

5342 St. Charles Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70115  
(504) 897-0143  
[www.nojcc.com](http://www.nojcc.com)

### **Goldring-Woldenberg Jewish Community Center-Metairie**

3747 W. Esplanade Avenue  
Metairie, LA 70002  
(504) 887-5158  
[www.nojcc.com](http://www.nojcc.com)



Touro Synagogue



Temple Sinai

## Synagogues

### Touro Synagogue

4238 St. Charles Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70115  
(504) 895-4843

[www.tourosynagogue.com](http://www.tourosynagogue.com)

### Temple Sinai

6227 St. Charles Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70118  
(504) 861-3693

[www.templestinaino.org](http://www.templestinaino.org)

### Congregation Gates of Prayer

4000 West Esplanade Avenue  
Metairie, LA 70002  
(504) 885-2600

[www.gatesofprayer.org](http://www.gatesofprayer.org)

## Kosher Restaurants

### Casablanca Restaurant

3030 Severn Ave.  
Metairie, LA 70002  
(504) 888-2209

### Kosher Cajun Deli

3519 Severn Ave.  
Metairie, LA 70002  
(504) 888-2010

[www.koshercajun.com](http://www.koshercajun.com)

## Judaica Shops

### Dashka Roth Contemporary Jewelry & Judaica

332 Chartres Street  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
(504) 523-0805

[www.dashkaroth.com](http://www.dashkaroth.com)

### L'Dor V'Dor Judaica

3519 Severn Ave.  
Metairie, LA 70002  
(504) 455-4450



Congregation Gates of Prayer



Casablanca Restaurant



Kosher Cajun Deli

**Naghi's**

633 Royal Street  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
(504) 586-8373  
[www.naghis.com](http://www.naghis.com)

**M.S. Rau Antiques**

630 Royal Street  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
(504) 523-5660  
[www.rauantiques.com](http://www.rauantiques.com)

# The Jews of New Orleans

BY JANE GOLDBERG

New Orleans and Jews have a real love/hate relationship with one another — always have. Here is a religion who metes out privilege and punishment in the same breath. Take for instance the story of the father of the first Jew of New Orleans, David Monsanto, a Dutch Sephardic Jew. He was apparently a rather prosperous man. He held important positions within his community in Holland. Eventually, however, he fell into hard times, and was forced to accept a monthly stipend from the same Jewish community in which he had once been a leader. His payment for his bad luck and for his state of need: he was required to serve as a *minhanista*, one of the guys who must attend religious services in order to assure the presence of a *minyán*, a mandatory quorum of ten men necessary for the performance of the religious service.

In other words, his punishment for being poor was that he had to pray. Interesting religion, one might say, to concoct such an idea. A religion with a twist, a kind of ironic twist. A rather generous religion too. A religion, perhaps, of meaningful morality.

New Orleans, from the beginning, wanted to hate the Jews and drive them out, like most of the rest of the world. But, in the end, it was a city that was, like the Jewish religion itself, a generous and moral. Too, it had a sense of irony. The city that care forgot actually cared.

Their history together begins in the mid-1700's. In 1724 France passed a *Code Noir* (the Black Code), effectively banning all Jews from living in the French colony of Louisiana. Nevertheless, six brave Jews (one of them Issac Monsanto, David's son) had apparently defied the edict, and settled in New Orleans. We know it was six because someone was counting. In 1759 the Commissaire Ordonnateur of New Orleans announced that

*...Jews, who according to the edicts and ordinances must not remain in a colony more than three months, under penalty of imprisonment and confiscation of their property, are forming establishments here by the progress and the danger of which have been observed by the whole country. There are, at present, six of them here...*

But that being said, for the record, so to speak, for the time that New Orleans remained under French rule, in their usual lax fashion, the French counted the Jews, and left them alone. When Louisiana was ceded to Spain, in 1769, the Monsanto family was expelled, and their monies and property were confiscated. They fled to Pensacola, then an English territory, and soon returned back to New Orleans. Even minus their possessions, the love affair between Jews and New Orleans had taken hold. For the rest of the history of the town, the Jews were left to prosper, which they did.

The town is proud of its lack of anti-Semitism. The Jews themselves will tell you that there is virtually no anti-Semitism in the town. They will tell you that the city is unique in how warmly the Jewish community has been embraced and treated respectfully. Yet, this is the town where the entire social calendar is built around Mardi Gras, one of the most anti-Semitic inventions of modern America. The local Mardi Gras, the Mardi Gras known only to New Orleanians, constitutes the debutante balls, the coming out place for New Orleans' finest daughters who like lace and velvet. Word had it that my cousin, Amy, was the first Jew in New Orleans to make her debut. This, in spite of the fact that her father is an atheist who has never practiced a moment of

religious Jewry, her mother was born and remains a practicing Catholic, and Amy herself has been raised Catholic. In the eyes of New Orleans society, in its long memory of family and ancestors as the only proper placement of an individual, she is considered a Jew.

The Jews, in fact, have been too busy creating their own place in New Orleans culture to worry much about who on the outside thinks what about them. They never needed to compete with Gentiles because there was plenty enough to contend with within their own community. As with the rest of New Orleans and its co-mingling of disparate groups, the Jews, too, had the high rollers and the low rollers.

The two groups came over on different boats in different influxes. The western European Jews, among them my mother's great grandparents, were fleeing the violence and chaos of Alsace-Lorraine in the 1850's as it passed from French to German hands. This violence, though, had nothing to do with anti-Semitism. They didn't feel hated for their religion. They didn't even care too much about their religion, except as a cultural grounding. These, then, were the first Jews of New Orleans, and they easily found a cultural homeland in a place where they already spoke the language. They fit right in. Some of them converted or married Gentiles without looking back, and within a short period of time they had established themselves as some of the city's leading retailers and richest citizens.

The eastern European Jews, on the other hand, were being persecuted in Russia and Poland in the late 1880's precisely because of their religion. When they left their homeland, they were running for their lives. If they were lucky, as were my father's parents, they got rides from Poland/Russia/Latvia/Lithuania to Hamburg hidden in hay wagons, pulled by oxen or mules; the unlucky ones walked. When they had saved enough money to come to the New World, they brought over no precious heirlooms and no commonality of culture to their new home.

The western European Jews wanted to look indistinguishable from the community in which they were rapidly becoming acculturated. They embraced Reform Judaism: they threw off their yarmulkes and tallis; they sat through religious services conducted in English; organ music filled the rafters in the glorious synagogue (Touro) built in the best and most expensive Moorish tradition; and they did the unthinkable –they broke with strict tradition by having men and women sit together. Except for the small amount of Hebrew prayers, these services could have been in any Christian church in the land. Such was their aspiration: to look Christian; to stay Jewish, but look Christian.

The eastern European Jews kept their old-time religion. This was a religion of community and prayer. These were Jews who took life seriously because, with their history of persecution, they were, perhaps, never quite able to throw off their worries about which direction the next death threat was going to come from. Assimilation was the farthest thing from their minds. They stayed Orthodox; they didn't wear fur coats (as the Reform Jews did) to Yom Kippur services because praying was serious business, not show-time. They didn't send their children to private schools because it was unnecessarily elitist. They didn't join the Jewish country club because Saturdays were for God.

Since Monsanto's first settling, Jews have been an important part of the New Orleans heritage. Among the prominent Jews in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were Isaac Delgado, who gave the city its art museum; Samuel Zemurray, president of the United Fruit Company; Captain Neville Levy, chairman of the Mississippi River Bridge Commission; Percival Stern, benefactor of Tulane and Loyola universities, Newman School, and the Touro Infirmary; Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Stern, who supported many institutions and schools and Sydney J. Besthoff III, whose

extensive sculpture collection now graces the New Orleans Museum of Art. Jews have served as presidents and board members of practically all cultural, civic, and social-welfare agencies.

And then, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, came Katrina, and brought with her a bit of unexpected Lagniappe to the Jews of New Orleans. In 2005, there were about 10,000 Jews – the smallest Jewish population of any major city. The city lost 25% of the Jewish population post-Katrina – its own kind of New Orleans Diaspora. Jews from all over the country rallied: homes were opened for displaced families; monies were raised to replace ruined Torahs; and, most interestingly, a recruitment call went out to Jews everywhere: come down y'all and live with us; help us to revitalize our Jewish community. Over 2,000 Jews responded, and have now relocated to New Orleans. They form a vibrant and significant part of the contemporary New Orleans Jewish population, and include the new Provost at Tulane, the new Dean of Tulane Law School, the new head of Hillel, new rabbis at 3 of the 5 synagogues.

Zoe Oreck, who left New Orleans to go to school in Georgia, as so many college-bound kids do, comments about the unique aspect of the association between New Orleans and the Jews: “I mean, the hours of my Sunday School were changed to better accommodate Saints games. The Jews of New Orleans could not be the Jews of any other city.” And, Zoe’s grandmother, Carol Wise, comments that unlike other cities, “We have NEVER had one section of the city that is primarily Jewish—we are a Gumbo—each of the parts makes us better.”

And every New Orleanian who has ever made Gumbo knows what makes the Gumbo the miraculous conglomerate that it is: it’s the Lagniappe – the unexpected treat that lies in the hidden alcoves of the refrigerator waiting to be discovered.

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# The Krewes and the Jews

## New Orleans's two Jewish-themed krewes offer a tongue-in-cheek take on the Mardi Gras festivities

By Justin Vogt | February 16, 2010

To understand why there is still so much Jewish angst about Mardi Gras, it's important to understand the festival as a social institution of astounding complexity and enormous economic and political significance. It is a sprawling, all-consuming Carnival that engulfs and reorders the city for the two weeks leading up to Lent. There are nearly as many forms of celebrating Mardi Gras as there are communities in New Orleans, and these forms often bear little resemblance to one another. But if there is a mainstream celebration, it is the series of parades along St. Charles Avenue held during the two weeks prior to Mardi Gras and on Mardi Gras itself. These are carefully planned affairs, heavy on spectacle but light on chaos. They have their roots in a pre-Civil War attempt to save Mardi Gras, which fell on hard times after Louisiana became part of the United States. In 1857, a group of relative newcomers to New Orleans decided to revive Carnival through an act of brazen cultural appropriation, injecting it with a distinctly Anglo-American combination of mass spectacle, organizational science, and classicist pretension—and a lot of cash. They formed a secret society, the Mistick Krewe of Comus, named for the Greek god of festivity and excess, and staged an elaborate theme parade and masquerade ball, reigned over by the deity himself, embodied by a member of the group whose identity was a closely guarded secret.

“It was early Disney,” said James Gill, a columnist for the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* and the author of *Lords of Misrule: Mardi Gras and the Politics of Race in New Orleans*. “There was a theme for the parade and the ball, and proper organization, and marching in unison, and working very hard on the floats. What Comus brought to the celebration was discipline and order.”

Other krewes formed in the image of Comus, and alongside them grew the parallel universe of gentlemen's clubs. During the Reconstruction era, the krewes and the clubs served as the reactionary bastion for the deposed Confederate aristocracy. Their Mardi Gras parades became protests against the Union occupation and the enfranchisement of blacks. Comus's theme in 1873 was “The Missing Links in Darwin's *Origin of the Species*.” The parade depicted Union officials as worms, snakes, and hyenas—saving for last a grinning gorilla in the likeness of P.B.S. Pinchback, an African-American who had briefly served as governor of Louisiana the prior year.

This entrenched racial prejudice, which would later be codified during the Jim Crow era, did not extend at first to Jews, small numbers of whom belonged to the old-line krewes and clubs during the 19th century. But with the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and virulent nativism in the 1910s, the Jews of New Orleans were finally expelled for good from the very upper echelons of elite

society. An important exception is the Rex organization, whose king also acts as the official King of Carnival, and which has always had some Jewish members.

By the time Trillin arrived in 1968, the relationship between Jews and Mardi Gras had changed very little since the 1910s. As for how much has changed since then, it depends whom you ask. “I think some Jews feel an exclusion from the party,” said Rabbi Edward Cohn of Temple Sinai, a Reform temple that boasts the largest congregation in town and serves as a bellwether for the Uptown Jewish establishment. But, he added, “I have Jewish friends who are fervent Mardi Gras participants who say they just love it. They’re out there at every parade, their children ride as soon as they’re old enough, they attend balls, and they have to make sure they’ve got enough white-tie-and-tail outfits to get them through the season.”

Some of the Jews I spoke with, particularly those who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s, played down the significance of the issue. “I think the Jewish community generally is very comfortable with Mardi Gras,” said Cathy Glaser, the New Orleans regional director of the Anti-Defamation League. “It’s fun, and there are plenty of opportunities for anyone to get involved.” That’s particularly true ever since the advent of Bacchus and Endymion, the “superkrewes” that democratized and supersized Mardi Gras beginning in the late 1960s. The superkrewes were founded by merchants and professionals, many of them Jews, who sought to capitalize on Mardi Gras’ untapped tourist potential. On the weekend before Mardi Gras, they mount massive, glitzy parades presided over by celebrity honorees. This year, Bacchus was portrayed by Drew Brees, the quarterback of the Saints, who is himself something of a deity in New Orleans.

By the 1980s, the superkrewes had completely overshadowed the old-line krewes, whose classical allusions and low-tech parades had come to seem quaint. Still, their symbolic importance kept them relevant—and made them the target of a belated effort to force them to integrate. In 1991, an African-American councilwoman named Dorothy Mae Taylor proposed a city ordinance that would require all krewes that wished to parade on city streets—and thus avail themselves of public services—to prove they did not discriminate based on race in their membership policies. (Perhaps because the ordinance did not have the support of many prominent Jews, religion was not mentioned.) After a sometimes incendiary, sometimes comical public debate, a rather skewed compromise was reached. The krewes would not have to reveal their membership rolls, but they would have to sign sworn affidavits pledging that their policies were not discriminatory. Comus refused to comply and chose to quit parading, as did Proteus and Momus. They would retreat to their racially pure caves and focus all their Mardi Gras energies on their elaborate, invitation-only balls, which are now held on private property. Rex—always considered a bit more liberal—chose to comply and still officially reigns over Carnival. Eight years later, Proteus also complied and returned to parading.

The businessmen’s lunch clubs that are closely linked to the old-line krewes remain bastions of white, Christian manhood. One cannot apply for membership but must be nominated. Exclusivity is maintained via a “blackball” system, which means that a nominee can be vetoed by any current member, who need not reveal himself or his reasons. This makes it exceedingly difficult to prove any discriminatory intent. Still, a few years after Dorothy Mae Taylor’s ordinance passed, a coalition of African-American leaders and civil-rights lawyers persuaded the city to force the clubs to comply with it. The clubs sued preemptively in federal court, and won the case

easily, on the grounds that they were private organizations with a First Amendment right to include or exclude whomever they liked. The ruling was upheld on appeal. Thus, Jews and other minorities (and, of course, women) are still unable to access these traditional hubs of elite social networking, which play a vital role in the city's most important civic ritual and exert an undeniable—if difficult to quantify—influence on its politics and economy.

This is a source of resentment for some Jews. “You have a limited business base here,” said one retired Jewish lawyer, who spent years at one of the city's major law firms and complained that the clubs had an effect on the bottom lines of many businesses. “They want to keep this as a self-sustaining situation where they take care of each other,” he said of the club's members. “They've got their own doctors and insurance men, and the businesses feed off each other.”

One prominent Jewish New Orleanian who was involved in the fight against the old-line krewes and the businessmen's clubs is Joseph Bernstein. A successful lawyer and entrepreneur, Bernstein is now retired. Ten years ago he moved to Bay St. Louis, a prosperous enclave just over the state line in Mississippi. Bernstein had welcomed the revelations in Trillin's 1968 article, and he tried to encourage the Jewish community to take a more aggressive stance against discrimination. Frustrated by the lack of support he felt, and bitter about what he saw as the city's unchanging culture of intolerance, Bernstein gave up. “I got out of New Orleans for the very reasons that Calvin was writing about—this discrimination and anti-Semitism and racism,” he told me recently. “I just couldn't live there anymore, so I moved away.”

Middle-aged professionals in the Jewish community seem less concerned about the clubs than the older generation, partially because they believe the influence the clubs exert has diminished substantially over the years. I was particularly interested in the views of the city's most high-profile Jewish resident, Councilman Arnie Fielkow, who is one of the most popular politicians in town. At first, Fielkow told me that he didn't know enough about the clubs to form an opinion about them. I pressed him a bit. “As a Jewish person I'm always very sensitive to exclusion, and I don't agree with it,” he said. “But it's not a top-of-mind issue that I can see from my constituents.” I asked him about the clubs' political influence. “I have supporters, financial supporters and political supporters, from every realm of this community, and many of them do come from the business community, and I'm sure many of them come from the different krewes and the different clubs,” he said. “But I haven't focused on that. I mean, my focus is on trying to move New Orleans forward and trying to unify New Orleans.”

To some observers, though, the clubs reflect the very attitudes that prevent unity. “I am still shocked by the casual anti-Semitism you encounter in conversation—even with very educated people—in this town,” said James Gill, a veteran *Times-Picayune* writer who moved to the United States from his native Great Britain in the 1970s. “It is really quite strange,” He added that he is puzzled by what he sees as the Jewish community's tacit acceptance of this prejudice. “I don't know why they put up with it,” he said. “I really don't.”

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L.J. Goldstein moved to New Orleans in 1994, when he was in his late 20s. Raised in Manhattan, he had just completed a post-college pre-med program at Towson University in Maryland, and

he'd been offered a job as a chemist in a laboratory. "I said, 'No, thank you, I don't want to spend my life under fluorescent lights doing this.' I decided I was going to move to New Orleans to be a photographer. So that's what I did."

Soon after moving to the city, Goldstein experienced what he described as a "transformative moment" while watching the Mardi Gras parade of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club. The aid and pleasure clubs play a somewhat similar role in the black community to that played by old-line krewes in the white community. The Zulus came to prominence in the early 20th century by staging a Mardi Gras parade that satirized Rex and lampooned white society's prejudice against black people through a comic embrace of racist stereotypes. That, at least, is how the parade is generally interpreted today, though it continues to discomfit many onlookers, including some African-Americans. The Zulus don blackface and adopt black caricatures from the unpleasant *oeuvre* of minstrelsy: the Big Shot, the Witch Doctor, Mr. Big Stuff. They wear grass skirts, and their most prized "throws" are coconuts.

But Goldstein found it inspiring. "It was unlike anything I had ever seen before," he told me recently, reminiscing about his early days in New Orleans. We met at what he calls his bunker—a dark, chaotic workspace near his house in the Tremé area, which is considered by some historians to be the oldest African-American neighborhood in the United States. "You had African-Americans wearing blackface and Afro wigs and handing out spears and coconuts," he recalled, smiling. "It was refreshing and shocking and normalized."

After the Zulu parade had passed, Goldstein was surprised to see a procession of klezmer musicians arrive in its wake, leading an impromptu second-line of sorts. The cumulative experience—the street parade, the racial satire, the Jewish music—had a profound effect on him. For the next two years, he joked about creating a krewe that would do for Jews what Zulu did for African-Americans. "You know, we'd wear big noses and throw decorated bagels," he'd tell friends. The Krewe du Jieux became a reality in 1996 when Goldstein and a few dozen others were invited to form a sub-krewe in the Krewe du Vieux parade.

Krewe du Vieux is a sort of Mardi Gras fringe festival that since the 1980s has provided a very downtown alternative to the staid traditional Uptown parades. It's an attempt to restore the upside-down quality that once defined Carnival. It features bawdy, often pornographic floats propelled along by some of the city's best brass bands. The most compelling float this year was the Krewe of Comatose's "Jindal Drops the Pelican's Briefs," which starred a 10-foot tall, uncannily accurate paper-mâché model of Louisiana's conservative Republican governor, Bobby Jindal. Jindal had five arms: one held a Bible, two others held checks made out to "Creationists, Inc.," and the final two reached for the rear end of huge paper-mâché pelican positioned in front of him. Out of Jindal's fly poked an oversized pencil. When the float started rolling, a strategically placed motor allowed Jindal to treat the state's official bird in the manner that many New Orleanians feel he has treated them.

Krewe du Vieux was a good fit for the Jieuxs, who created their own Zulu-esque cast of characters. Their Witch Doctor is the Rich Doctor, their Big Shot is the Big Macher. There is also the Gaza Stripper, played by a local burlesque dancer, and a Jewish Mother, who approaches

parade-watchers and worries aloud about their eating habits: “You look so thin. Here, have a bagel!”

But just as Zulu is not universally loved by African-Americans, some Jews took issue with the Krewe du Jieux, at least at first. According to Joel Nitzkin, a health-policy consultant who joined the krewe in its early years, some members of the Jewish establishment found objectionable the krewe’s flaunting of its Jewish identity, even (or perhaps especially) in a humorous way. “That was so against the prevailing ethic at the time,” he said. “They wanted to be in the background. There were certainly lots of people who were active in the Jewish community that were also active in the lay community, but it was like they lived in two separate worlds, and never let the lay community know that they were Jewish.”

Goldstein ultimately earned a law degree from Tulane. Through his photography, he became an avid chronicler of the black community’s parading and musical culture, getting to know many of its leading lights and becoming an honorary member of the Happy House Social Aid and Pleasure Club and a full member of the Tremé Sidewalk Steppers, a parading outfit. He sees the Krewe du Jieux as a means of building a bridge between Jews and blacks in New Orleans. He aims to take ideas from traditional Judaism “and mix them into a modern secular Judaism that is in turn trying to get in touch with what makes New Orleans special, which is its African-American influence. New Orleans wouldn’t be on the map if it weren’t for what the African-Americans did here. But when you look into that history, you see Jewish fingers in the pie. I mean, Louis Armstrong wore a Jewish star around his neck.” (He did so to honor the Karnofsky family, Jewish immigrants who acted as a sort of surrogate family to him.)

Over the years, Goldstein began to take the krewe’s mission more and more seriously. “When people take hold of these stereotypes and debunk them, and take the power away from them, and do this outrageous, comical display, it makes the world a better place for everybody,” he told me.

But not everyone shared this ambitious vision. In 2002, a schism began to develop within the Krewe du Jieux. A number of members objected to what they saw as Goldstein’s autocratic style of leadership. Goldstein concedes that the krewe was not a democracy. “You don’t make art by committee,” is his response.

But there was a deeper problem. Joel Nitzkin, who led the anti-Goldstein faction, explained it this way: “L.J. saw this very, very seriously. You know, this was going to be a krewe that was going to save the world. It was going to eliminate anti-Semitism, at least locally, by having a theme that poked fun at certain Jewish stereotypes. And the rest of the group didn’t share that concept. We just wanted to have a good time.”

Nitzkin’s faction ultimately left the Krewe du Jieux to form their own group. The final schism happened, fittingly, in the aftermath of Katrina. After protracted negotiations, a compromise was reached: Goldstein kept the rights to the name Krewe du Jieux and a sort of intellectual-property right to its approach and aesthetic, while Nitzkin and his group kept the spot in the Krewe du Vieux parade, in which they would march as the Krewe du Mishigas. (This year, Goldstein’s group marched in the inaugural parade of Krewedelusion, a new organization that formed partly out of a sense that Krewe du Vieux has become too big and mainstream.)

The Krewe du Mishigas includes an epidemiologist, a physicist, a judge, and a few doctors. In spite of their membership in the city's professional class—or perhaps because of it—the group gleefully embraces Krewe du Vieux's X-rated ethos. This year, their theme was “Krewe du Mishigas Stokes the Burning Bush.” I visited the studio where krewe members were putting the final touches on the float. It depicted “Mistress Hot Knish,” a figure composed of a pair of enormous bare breasts adorned with Star of David pasties and a set of splayed legs, in between which sat a glowing orange-and-red “bush.” The Mistress had no head. (“Only the important parts,” a krewe member explained.)

During the parade the following night, I tried to gauge how the Mishigas float was perceived by the audience. One man, a visitor from Alabama, watched the parade on Decatur Street near Jackson Square and cheered as the Krewe du Mishigas passed. I asked him if he “got” the float. “Did I get it?” he said. “All I saw was it was tits and pussy. And we've got tits and pussy in Alabama, too.” A block away, I asked some college-age kids if they understood the float. A girl wearing a denim jacket gave me a quizzical look and said, “Of course. They're burning the Jews. Duh! How could you even ask?”

## Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities

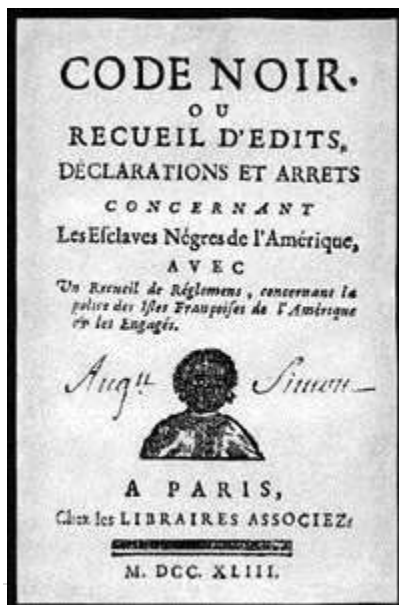
### LOUISIANA



Louisiana consists of very distinct regions and cultures, from the Catholic Cajuns in the southern part of the state and the Protestants in the north, to the unique cultural gumbo of New Orleans. While the state is certainly part of the South, its history and development have marked it as different from the rest of the region. Much of this difference stems from the French influence, which remains apparent today. One can still hear Cajun patois on Acadiana radio stations while the legal system in Louisiana is still based on the Napoleonic Code instead of English Common Law. The French influence also shaped the state's Jewish history, as many Alsatian Jews were drawn to the area in the 19th century because of its cultural familiarity. While they have always been a tiny religious minority, Louisiana

Jews have been a vital part of the state and its unique cultures for 250 years.

When writing about Jews in Louisiana, it's easy to focus too much on [New Orleans](#), which has long overshadowed the state and region's Jewish community. As the largest Jewish community in Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Alabama, New Orleans has played a leading role in the economic and religious development of smaller Jewish communities throughout the region. Indeed, a majority of Louisiana's Jews has always lived in the Crescent City. But a significant minority has lived in northern cities like [Shreveport](#) and [Monroe](#), taking an active role in those cities' civic life. In southern Louisiana, often known as Acadiana due to its Cajun influence, Jews formed small congregations that thrived amidst the Catholic majority. With the decline of Jewish communities in small cities and towns in recent decades, New Orleans remains the center of Jewish life in the state, although Hurricane Katrina has increased the prominence of [Baton Rouge](#).



Jews were not welcome in the French colony of Louisiana, known then as New France. France had expelled all Jews from within its borders and its colonies in 1394 for a period that lasted until the French Revolution in 1789. In 1724, King Louis XV ordered that his administration in Louisiana adopt the *Code Noir*, which declared that Roman Catholicism would be the only religion practiced in



the colonies. The first article of the edict concerns Jews specifically, ordering that French officers “chase from our islands all the Jews who established residence there. As with all declared enemies of Christianity, we command them to be gone...at the risk of confiscation of their persons and goods.” Despite this edict’s harsh language, it was rarely enforced in colonial Louisiana, so when Isaac Monsanto arrived in New Orleans in 1757, he was able to establish a successful trading business. After Spain acquired Louisiana, the new colonial governor enforced this prohibition, deporting Monsanto and his cohorts from the area, although they eventually returned. When President Thomas Jefferson negotiated the 1803 Louisiana Purchase with Napoleon and Louisiana came under American jurisdiction, Jews acquired the right to freely inhabit what would become the 18th state in the Union.



19th century Jews in Louisiana embraced this freedom and in many cases became part of the state’s ruling elite. At the time of the Civil War, Jews held several important political offices in Louisiana. Dr. Edwin Moise was speaker of the state house and had earlier served as Attorney General. Henry Hyams had been elected Lieutenant Governor in 1859. Judah P. Benjamin was one Louisiana’s U.S. Senators and later became an important cabinet official in the Confederacy. This political role continued even after the war. Benjamin Franklin Jonas, who was a

Confederate veteran, represented New Orleans in the state legislature from 1865 to 1868. He later served as the New Orleans City attorney in the 1870s, before spending a term in the U.S. Senate from 1879 to 1885. Adolph Meyer, who also fought for the South during the Civil War, was elected to the US House of Representatives in 1890, and served until his death in 1908. This political role has continued into the 21st century: Jay Dardenne was elected as Louisiana's Secretary of State in 2006.

The first hundred years of Jewish history in Louisiana was centered in New Orleans. In the 18th century, a handful of Sephardic Jews from other new world colonies like Curacao settled in the city located at the mouth of the Mississippi River, although they made no efforts to organize Jewish communal institutions. The Jewish population of New Orleans grew in the early 19th century as immigrants from Alsace and the German states began to settle there. In 1828, New Orleans Jews organized the state's first congregation, Gates of Mercy. By 1855, New Orleans had three synagogues, two Jewish benevolent associations, and a Jewish orphanage. There were no other congregations in the state at the time.

Over the next five years, Jewish immigrants from Alsace and the German states settled in communities around the state. Many came through New Orleans, which was the country's second largest immigration port in the decades before the Civil War. By 1861, perhaps as many as 8,000 Jews lived in Louisiana and congregations had been established in [Donaldsonville](#), Shreveport, Baton Rouge, Monroe, and [Alexandria](#). With the exception of Donaldsonville, these cities would remain the centers of

Jewish population in Louisiana well into the 20th century. Many of those who settled in these communities began as peddlers and ended up as small town merchants, supplied by Jewish wholesalers in New Orleans. Much of the 19th century Jewish settlements in Louisiana and Mississippi were economic outposts of New Orleans.

Louisiana Jews played a remarkable role in the state's economic development. Leon Godchaux, in addition to owning a large clothing store in New Orleans, helped to revolutionize the state's sugar industry in the years after the Civil War by using more modern and efficient production techniques. Godchaux became the largest sugar producer in the South. [Abrom Kaplan](#) played a similar role in southern Louisiana's rice industry. Jews also had a hand in some of the more distinctive Louisiana industries. Jacques Weil and his brothers made [Rayne](#) the frog capital of the world with their successful business that shipped 10,000 pounds of frog legs around the country each week. In New Orleans, Joseph Haspel popularized the seersucker suit, which soon became synonymous with the hot and sticky summers of the Deep South.

After the Civil War, Jewish immigrants from central Europe continued to settle around the state, and they were soon joined by immigrants from the Russian Empire and Eastern Europe. During the last thirty years of the 19th century, Jews established congregations in [Natchitoches](#), [Morgan City](#), [Opelousas](#), [Bastrop](#), [Plaquemine](#), [Lafayette](#), Lecompte, [St. Francisville](#), [Lake Charles](#), and [New Iberia](#). Of these congregations, only those in Cajun country (Lake Charles, Lafayette, and New Iberia) still

remain active today. In larger communities like New Orleans, Shreveport, and Alexandria, Eastern European Jews established their own Orthodox congregations.

During the early 20th century, Louisiana Jews began to concentrate more in the larger cities of the state. Congregations in St. Francisville, Lecompte, Bastrop, and Natchitoches all became defunct in the first quarter of the 20th century, as residents moved to Shreveport, New Orleans, or elsewhere, and new immigrants bypassed these small towns. In 1937, 15,000 Jews lived in Louisiana, well over half of which lived in New Orleans. At the time, other significant Jewish communities (over 50 people) included: Alexandria, Baton Rouge, [Bogalusa](#), Crowley, Donaldsonville, [Houma](#), Lafayette, Lake Charles, Lake Providence, Monroe, Morgan City, New Iberia, Opelousas, Plaquemine, and Shreveport.

Over the years, Louisiana Jews have made a significant mark on their communities and the state. In Shreveport, four Jews have served as mayor. Several Louisiana Jews have been elected to the state legislature and the US Congress. They have become leading philanthropists throughout the state, especially in New Orleans, where facing exclusion from elite social organizations, they have focused their time and resources on civic improvement. While Jews have enjoyed overall acceptance in the state, they have had to face occasional anti-Semitism. In the early 1990s, former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke launched a briefly successful political career in Louisiana. Several activists organized against Duke,

including Holocaust survivor Anne Levy, who helped to thwart his efforts to win statewide elective office.

In recent decades, as in the rest of the South, smaller towns and cities have experienced a decline in their Jewish population. Shreveport and Monroe had 3,400 Jews combined in 1960, but only about 800 today. Alexandria had over 700 Jews in 1980, but only 175 today. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans had about 10,000 Jews, down from about 12,000 in 1984. After the storm, only about 70% of the Jewish population has resettled in the city. Baton Rouge, which only had 1,600 Jews on the eve of the storm, has seen a significant increase in the size of its Jewish population. Although predictions that Baton Rouge would soon outstrip New Orleans as the largest city in the state did not come to pass. New Orleans remains the largest Jewish community in the state, and its ability to recover and rebuild from Katrina will profoundly shape the future of Louisiana Jewry.

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## LOUISIANA

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**LOUISIANA**, south-central U.S. state at the mouth of the Mississippi River. In 2001 its population was estimated at 4,470,000 including about 15,000 Jews. The largest Jewish communities are Greater \*New Orleans, which includes Metairie and the North Shore (13,000), Shreveport (1,100), and Baton Rouge, the state capital (1,200); there are also organized communities in Alexandria, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, and New Iberia. Jewish welfare federations function in New Orleans (1913), Alexandria (1938), Monroe (1938), and Shreveport (1941). There are approximately 18 congregations in the state; about 13 rabbis served these congregations. Many of the other congregations are served by student rabbis.

### Early New Orleans

It has generally been assumed that the Louisiana Code Noir, or Black Code, promulgated in Paris in 1724 and excluding settlement by Jews and the practice of any religion other than Catholicism in the French colony of Louisiana, discouraged the immigration of Jews to the area.

Although there were transient Jews in the colony, the first recorded settler was Isaac Rodriguez Monsanto, a Dutch-born merchant who had taken his brothers and sisters to Curaçao before moving his headquarters to New Orleans in 1757. Between 1757 and 1769 Monsanto conducted successful business operations with settlers and merchants throughout Louisiana, the Illinois country, Atlantic and Caribbean ports, and Europe. In 1769, when Monsanto and his family and associates were expelled from New Orleans under the rigorous Spanish rule of Governor Alejandro O'Reilly, who invoked the first provision of the Code Noir for their expulsion, the Monsantos took refuge in British West Florida, but all gradually filtered back into Spanish Louisiana. The Monsantos, born Jewish, all participated in the rituals of the Protestant and Catholic churches without baptism.

Judah \*Touro arrived in New Orleans from Boston in late 1801 or early 1802 and became, through diligence and his simple manner of living, a wealthy man. He was indifferent to Judaism until late in life, when he was persuaded by Gershom Kursheedt, the first truly religious Jew in the city, to build a synagogue for the second New Orleans congregation, Nefutzoth Yehudah, or Dispersed of Judah, organized in 1845. Other early settlers were equally unconcerned about the preservation of Jewish identity.

Of the approximately 15 Jews who were in New Orleans in January 1815, when the battle for the city between American forces, led by General Andrew Jackson, and the British took place, at least ten and possibly 11 had some part in the action. Touro suffered a near-fatal wound. Of these 15, seven remained bachelors, seven intermarried, and one, Manis Jacobs, married a Christian woman after his first (Jewish) wife died. It was Manis Jacobs who became the first president of Shaarei Chessed or Gates of Mercy (1827), the first congregation in Louisiana and indeed anywhere in the Mississippi Valley south of Cincinnati. This congregation, Sephardi at the outset, later became Ashkenazi as increasing numbers of Jews arrived in the town from the German-speaking lands. But Jewish religious life did not prosper in New Orleans. The wealthiest men did not support any of the three congregations in existence by 1850. (Gates of Prayer Congregation was established in the Lafayette suburb of New Orleans in January of that year.) Touro's building of a synagogue did not inspire others to do likewise. Inter-marriage continued apace in New Orleans, perhaps more than in any major city in the United States.

German Jews at the port of New Orleans fanned out from that city into more rural areas and became peddlers and artisans. Significant numbers of Jews were country merchants and traders in small Louisiana towns before the Civil War. They established benevolent societies, cemeteries, or congregations in Alexandria (1854), Donaldsonville (1856), Baton Rouge (1858), and Monroe (1861). But the most significant Jewish institution in Louisiana was the Association for the Relief of Jewish Widows and Orphans of New Orleans (1854), one of the earliest agencies of its kind in the United States. Made necessary by frequent epidemics of yellow fever and cholera in the New Orleans area, this association was supported from its inception by assimilated Jews who demonstrated no other concern with their Jewish identity. The free-wheeling atmosphere of the state, dominated by New Orleans, encouraged the full participation and integration of Jews; there was then little anti-Jewish prejudice, which seems to have gained momentum only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among Louisiana's notable assimilated Jews were U.S. Senator Judah P. Benjamin (1853–61); Henry M. Hyams, Benjamin's cousin, lieutenant governor of Louisiana in 1859; and Dr. Edwin Warren Moise, speaker of the Louisiana legislature at the same time and later state attorney general. It was apparently no accident that each of these men intermarried. In 1872, the first Rex, King of Carnival, was Louis J. Salomon, a great-grandson of Haym Salomon, the well-known Revolutionary War patriot.

## **The Civil War and After**

More than 200 Louisiana Jews are known by name to have served in the Confederate forces, but the true number is probably three times that large. Three of these men, S.M. Hymans, Edwin I. Kursheedt, and Leon R. Marks, achieved the rank of colonel. Benjamin Franklin Jonas, served as a private; he became the second Louisiana Jew to serve in the U.S. Senate (1879–85). Dr. Joseph Bensadon, who was the first medical director of Touro Infirmary (1854), was a surgeon in the Confederate army from 1862 to 1865.

The distinctive leader of the Jews of New Orleans after the Civil War was Rabbi James K. Gutheim, who before the war served as Reverend at Dispersed of Judah then moved to Gates of Mercy soon after the war's end. He encouraged the growing Reform movement within the congregation, but, when proposed reforms in the liturgy he recommended in 1868 caused an uproar, he accepted the position of Reader at Temple Emanuel in New York City. He returned to

New Orleans four years later in response to the creation of Temple Sinai, a new Reform congregation organized by his followers from Gates of Mercy.

Rabbi Isaac Leucht, who followed Gutheim to the pulpit at Shaarei Chessed, also became the rabbi when Gates of Mercy and Dispersed of Judah amalgamated in 1881. Leucht began calling the merged congregation Touro Synagogue, in memory of the philanthropist whose largesse assisted both congregations in their formative years. He assisted in relief work during the yellow fever epidemic of 1878, as well as in civic work; and he was a bridge to the gentile community, serving as president of the Red Cross Society and a member of the State Board of Education.

In 1882 the Hebrew Foreign Mission Society of New Orleans, in conjunction with the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society, sponsored an agricultural colony of Russian Jews at Sicily Island in Catahoula Parish. But the project failed when the Mississippi River overflowed and flooded the entire area that year.

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CODE NOIR.  
O U  
RECUEIL D'EDITS,  
DÉCLARATIONS ET ARRETS  
C O N C E R N A N T  
Les Esclaves Nègres de l'Amérique,  
A V E C

*Un Recueil de Réglemens, concernant la  
police des Isles Françoises de l'Amérique  
et les Engagés.*



A P A R I S,  
Chez les LIBRAIRES ASSOCIEZ

M. DCC. XLIII.

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[http://www.frenchcreoles.com/Code\\_noir.jpg](http://www.frenchcreoles.com/Code_noir.jpg)

## ***Code Noir* (page 34)**

King Louis XIV, of France, put the *Code Noir* into place in 1685; however, it was revised in 1789 to address the policy of the right of slavery. The first article deals with the policy that Jews were to be expelled from the French colonies. Jews could not own private property, or own slaves. The rest of the articles mainly have to do with slaves in the French colonies, and with the harsh controls that were necessary to control the enslaved. The main policies included: “prescribed baptism and instruction in the Catholic church for all slaves. It provided that assemblies of slaves for purposes other than Catholic worship were illegal, and masters would be punished for permitting such gatherings, as they could be interpreted as plots or revolts. However it was impossible to prevent all slave assemblages and secret reunions during the night occurred frequently”. These policies had a big impact on how the slaves were treated, and the laws that the slaves had to abide by in the Haitian colonies.

Sources:

<http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/voodoo/syncretism.htm>

The *Code Noir* was implemented in Haiti in 1685 for the regulation of the slave trade. It was a royal legislation. It had such stipulations as the forbidding of any religions other than Roman Catholicism, and the requirement that all slaves and slave overseers were baptized in that religion. It outlawed work other than going to the market on holy days. It set several punishments for intercourse and intermarriage between the races, and stated that for a slave to marry, the consent of his or her master was the only necessary approval, not that of the slaves parents. It detailed the status of the children of slaves; children born to two slave parents were enslaved, children born to a free mother and a father in servitude were to be free, and children born to a slave mother and a free father were to be slaves. It forbid slaves from bearing arms, the assembly of slaves, and slaves trading or selling their own goods for a profit. It stated that slaves who struck their master or any free person were to be punished by death. It explicitly defined slaves as personal property. The document did allow slaves a few protections: masters could not force slaves to marry against their wishes, masters had to bury slaves properly (baptized slaves in a holy cemetery), slaves who were being “barbarously” could report their masters, slaves who were rendered incapable of servitude due to old age or illness were to be cared for by their masters or their care at a nearby hospital was to be paid for by the master, torture and mutilation of slaves was outlawed, and

husbands, wives and their prepubescent children could not be sold separately from each other.

Its mention in *Kingdom of this World* refers to its “gentle reprimands” in the context of powerful men who colonized Haiti and made “their will law.” This seems to suggest that the document held little authority in a land that was an ocean’s distance from the government which issued it. Its protections were probably of little value to the slaves of Haiti.

RETRIEVED FROM:

<https://www.msu.edu/~williss2/carpentier/part1/codenoir.html>

The *Code noir* initially took shape in Louis XIV's edict of 1685. To regulate relations between slaves and colonists, the Louisiana Code noir, or slave code, based largely on that compiled in 1685 for the French Caribbean colonies, was introduced in 1724 and remained in force until the United States took possession of Louisiana in 1803. Although subsequent decrees modified a few of the code's provisions, this first document established the main lines for the policing of slavery right up to 1789. The very first article expels all Jews from the colonies; Jews played a significant but hardly dominant role in the Dutch colonies of the Caribbean region but were not allowed to own property or slaves in the French colonies. The edict also insisted that all slaves be instructed as Catholics and not as Protestants. For the most part, the code concentrated on defining the condition of slavery (passing the condition through the mother not the father) and establishing harsh controls over the conduct of those enslaved. Slaves had virtually no rights, though the code did enjoin masters to take care of the sick and old.

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Edict of the King:

On the subject of the Policy regarding the Islands of French America

March 1685

Recorded at the sovereign Council of Saint Domingue, 6 May 1687.

Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and Navarre: to all those here present and to those to come, GREETINGS. In that we must also care for all people that Divine Providence has put under our tutelage, we have agreed to have the reports of the officers we have sent to our American islands studied in our presence. These reports inform us of their need for our authority and our justice in order to maintain the discipline of the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith in the islands. Our authority is also required to settle issues dealing with the condition and quality of the slaves in said islands. We desire to settle these issues and inform them that, even though they reside infinitely far from our normal abode, we are always present for them, not only through the reach of our power but also by the promptness of our help toward their needs. For these reasons, and on the advice of our council and of our certain knowledge, absolute power and royal authority, we have declared, ruled, and ordered, and declare, rule, and order, that the following pleases us:

Article I. We desire and we expect that the Edict of 23 April 1615 of the late King, our most honored lord and father who remains glorious in our memory, be executed in our islands. This accomplished, we enjoin all of our officers to chase from our islands all the Jews who have established residence there. As with all declared enemies of Christianity, we command them to be gone within three months of the day of issuance of the present [order], at the risk of confiscation of their persons and their goods.

RETRIEVED FROM: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/335/>





## *The Louisiana Code Noir*



- I. Decrees the expulsion of Jews from the colony.
- II. Makes it imperative on masters to impart religious instruction to their slaves.
- III. Permits the exercise of the Roman Catholic creed only. Every other mode of worship is prohibited.
- IV. Negroes placed under the direction or supervision of any other person than a Catholic, are liable to confiscation.
- V. Sundays and holidays are to be strictly observed. All negroes found at work on these days are to be confiscated.
- VI. We forbid our white subjects, of both sexes, to marry with the blacks, under the penalty of being fined and subjected to some other arbitrary punishment. We forbid all curates, priests, or missionaries of our secular or regular clergy, and even our chaplains in our navy to sanction such marriages. We also forbid all our white subjects, and even the manumitted or free-born blacks, to live in a state of concubinage with blacks. Should there be any issue from this kind of intercourse, it is our will that the person so offending, and the master of the slave, should pay each a fine of three hundred livres. Should said issue be the result of the concubinage of the master with his slave, said master shall not only pay the fine, but be deprived of the slave and of the children, who shall be adjudged to the hospital of the locality, and said slaves shall be forever incapable of being set free. But should this illicit intercourse have existed between a free black and his slave, when said free black had no legitimate wife, and should said black marry said

slave according to the forms prescribed by the church, said slave shall be thereby set free, and the children shall also become free and legitimate; and in such a case, there shall be no application of the penalties mentioned in the present article.

VII. The ceremonies and forms prescribed by the ordinance of Blois, and by the edict of 1639, for marriages, shall be observed both with regard to free persons and to slaves. But the consent of the father and mother of the slave is not necessary; that of the master shall be the only one required.

VIII. We forbid all curates to proceed to effect marriages between slaves without proof of the consent of their masters; and we also forbid all masters to force their slaves into any marriage against their will.

IX. Children, issued from the marriage of slaves, shall follow the condition of their parents, and shall belong to the master of the wife and not of the husband, if the husband and wife have different masters.

X. If the husband be a slave, and the wife a free woman, it is our will that their children, of whatever sex they may be, shall share the condition of their mother, and be as free as she, notwithstanding the servitude of their father; and if the father be free and the mother a slave, the children shall all be slaves.

XI. Masters shall have their Christian slaves buried in consecrated ground.

XII. We forbid slaves to carry offensive weapons or heavy sticks, under the penalty of being whipped, and of having said weapons confiscated for the benefit of the person seizing the same. An exception is made in favor of those slaves who are sent a hunting or a shooting by their masters, and who carry with them a written permission to that effect, or are designated by some known mark or badge.

XIII. We forbid slaves belonging to different masters to gather in crowds either by day or by night, under the pretext of a wedding, or for any other cause, either at the dwelling or on the grounds of one of their masters, or elsewhere, and much less on the highways or in secluded places, under the penalty of corporal punishment, which shall not be less than the whip. In case of frequent offences of the kind, the offenders shall be branded with the mark of the flower de luce, and should there be aggravating circumstances, capital punishment may be applied, at the discretion of our judges. We command all our subjects, be they officers or not, to seize all such offenders, to arrest and conduct them to prison, although there should be no judgment against them.

XIV. Masters who shall be convicted of having permitted or tolerated such

gatherings as aforesaid, composed of other slaves than their own, shall be sentenced, individually, to indemnify their neighbors for the damages occasioned by said gatherings, and to pay, for the first time, a fine of thirty livres, and double that sum on the repetition of the offence.

XV. We forbid negroes to sell any commodities, provisions, or produce of any kind, without the written permission of their masters, or without wearing their known marks or badges, and any persons purchasing any thing from negroes in violation of this article, shall be sentenced to pay a fine of 1500 livres.

XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, provide at length for the clothing of slaves and for their subsistence.

XX. Slaves who shall not be properly fed, clad, and provided for by their masters, may give information thereof to the attorney-general of the Superior Council, or to all the other officers of justice of an inferior jurisdiction, and may put the written exposition of their wrongs into their hands; upon which information, and even ex officio, should the information come from another quarter, the attorney-general shall prosecute said masters without charging any costs to the complainants. It is our will that this regulation be observed in all accusations for crimes or barbarous and inhuman treatment brought by slaves against their masters.

XXI. Slaves who are disabled from working, either by old age, disease, or otherwise, be the disease incurable or not, shall be fed and provided for by their masters ; and in case they should have been abandoned by said masters, said slaves shall be adjudged to the nearest hospital, to which said masters shall be obliged to pay eight cents a day for the food and maintenance of each one of these slaves ; and for the payment of this sum, said hospital shall have a lien on the plantations of the master.

XXII. We declare that slaves can have no right to any kind of property, and that all that they acquire, either by their own industry or by the liberality of others, or by any other means or title whatever, shall be the full property of their masters ; and the children of said slaves, their fathers and mothers, their kindred or other relations, either free or slaves, shall have no pretensions or claims thereto, either through testamentary dispositions or donations inter vi-vos; which dispositions and donations we declare null and void, and also whatever promises they may have made, or whatever obligations they may have subscribed to, as having been entered into by persons incapable of disposing of any thing, and of participating to any contract.



XXIII. Masters shall be responsible for what their slaves have done by their command, and also for what transactions they have permitted their slaves to do in their shops, in the particular line of commerce with which they were intrusted ; and in case said slaves should have acted without the order or authorization of their masters, said masters shall be responsible only for so much as has turned to their profit; and if said masters have not profited by the doing or transaction of their slaves, the peculium which the masters have permitted the slaves to own, shall be subjected to all claims against said slaves, after deduction made by the masters of what may be due to them ; and if said peculium should consist, in whole or in part, of merchandises in which the slaves had permission to traffic, the masters shall only come in for their share in common with the other creditors.

XXIV. Slaves shall be incapable of all public functions, and of being constituted agents for any other person than their own masters, with powers to manage or conduct any kind of trade ; nor can they serve as arbitrators or experts; nor shall they be called to give their testimony either in civil or in criminal cases, except when it shall be a matter of necessity, and only in default of white people; but in no case shall they be permitted to serve as witnesses either for or against their masters.

XXV. Slaves shall never be parties to civil suits, either as plaintiffs or defendants, nor shall they be allowed to appear as complainants in criminal cases, but their masters shall have the right to act for them in civil matters, and in criminal ones, to demand punishment and reparation for such outrages and excesses as their slaves may have suffered from.

XXVI. Slaves may be prosecuted criminally, without their masters being made parties to the trial, except they should be indicted as accomplices; and said slaves shall be tried, at first, by the judges of ordinary jurisdiction, if there be any, and on appeal, by the Superior Council, with the same rules, formalities, and proceedings observed for free persons, save the exceptions mentioned hereafter.

XXVII. The slave who, having struck his master, his mistress, or the husband of his mistress, or their children, shall have produced a bruise, or the shedding of blood in the face, shall suffer capital punishment.

XXVIII. With regard to outrages or acts of violence committed by slaves against free persons, it is our will that they be punished with severity, and even with death, should the case require it.

XXIX. Thefts of importance, and even the stealing of horses, mares, mules, oxen, or cows, when executed by slaves or manumitted persons, shall make the offender

liable to corporal, and even to capital punishment, according to the circumstances of the case.

XXX. The stealing of sheep, goats, hogs, poultry, grain, fodder, peas, beans, or other vegetables, produce, or provisions, when committed by slaves, shall be punished according to the circumstances of the case ; and the judges may sentence them, if necessary, to be whipped by the public executioner, and branded with the mark of the flower de luce.

XXXI. In cases of thefts committed or damages done by their slaves, masters, besides the corporal punishment inflicted on their slaves, shall be bound to make amends for the injuries resulting from the acts of said slaves, unless they prefer abandoning them to the sufferer. They shall be bound so to make their choice, in three days from the time of the conviction of the negroes; if not, this privilege shall be forever forfeited.

XXXII. The runaway slave, who shall continue to be so for one month from the day of his being denounced to the officers of justice, shall have his ears cut off, and shall be branded with the flower de luce on the shoulder: and on a second offence of the same nature, persisted in during one month from the day of his being denounced, he shall be hamstrung, and be marked with the flower de luce on the other shoulder. On the third offence, he shall suffer death.

XXXIII. Slaves, who shall have made themselves liable to the penalty of the whip, the flower de luce brand, and ear cutting, shall be tried, in the last resort, by the ordinary judges of the inferior courts, and shall undergo the sentence passed upon them without there being an appeal to the Superior Council, in confirmation or reversal of judgment, notwithstanding the article 26th of the present code, which shall be applicable only to those judgments in which the slave convicted is sentenced to be hamstrung or suffer death.

XXXIV. Freed or free-born negroes, who shall have afforded refuge in their houses to fugitive slaves, shall be sentenced to pay to the masters of said slaves, the sum of thirty livres a day for every day during which they shall have concealed said fugitives ; and all other free persons, guilty of the same offence, shall pay a fine of ten livres a day as aforesaid ; and should the freed or free-born negroes not be able to pay the fine herein specified, they shall be reduced to the condition of slaves, and be sold as such. Should the price of the sale exceed the sum mentioned in the judgment, the surplus shall be delivered to the hospital.

XXXV. We permit our subjects in this colony, who may have slaves concealed in any place whatever, to have them sought after by such persons and in such a way

as they may deem proper, or to proceed themselves to such researches, as they may think best.

XXXVI. The slave who is sentenced to suffer death on the denunciation of his master, shall, when that master is not an accomplice to his crime, be apprised before his execution by two of the principal inhabitants of the locality, who shall be especially appointed by the judge, and the amount of said appraisement shall be paid to the master. To raise this sum, a proportional tax shall be laid on every slave, and shall be collected by the persons invested with that authority.

XXXVII. We forbid all the officers of the Superior Council, and all our other officers of justice in this colony, to take any fees or receive any perquisites in criminal suits against slaves, under the penalty, in so doing, of being dealt with as guilty of extortion.

XXXVIII. We also forbid all our subjects in this colony, whatever their condition or rank may be, to apply, on their own private authority, the rack to their slaves, under any pretence whatever, and to mutilate said slaves in any one of their limbs, or in any part of their bodies, under the penalty of the confiscation of said slaves; and said masters, so offending, shall be liable to a criminal prosecution. We only permit masters, when they shall think that the case requires it, to put their slaves in irons, and to have them whipped with rods or ropes.

XXXIX. We command our officers of justice in this colony to institute criminal process against masters and overseers who shall have killed or mutilated their slaves, when in their power and under their supervision, and to punish said murder according to the atrocity of the circumstances; and in case the offence shall be a pardonable one, we permit them to pardon said masters and overseers without its being necessary to obtain from us letters patent of pardon.

XL. Slaves shall be held in law as movables, and as such, they shall be part of the community of acquests between husband and wife; they shall not be liable to be seized under any mortgage whatever; and they shall be equally divided among the co-heirs without admitting from any one of said heirs any claim founded on preciput or right of primogeniture, or dowry.

XLI, XLII. Are entirely relative to judicial forms and proceedings.

XLIII. Husbands and wives shall not be seized and sold separately when belonging to the same master: and their children, when under fourteen years of age, shall not be separated from their parents, and such seizures and sales shall be null and void. The present article shall apply to voluntary sales, and in case such

sales should take place in violation of the law, the seller shall be deprived of the slave he has illegally retained, and said slave shall be adjudged to the purchaser without any additional price being required.

XLIV. Slaves, fourteen years old, and from this age up to sixty, who are settled on lands and plantations, and are at present working on them, shall not be liable to seizure for debt, except for what may be due out of the purchase money agreed to be paid for them, unless said grounds or plantations should also be distressed, and any seizure and judicial sale of a real estate, without including the slaves of the aforesaid age, who are part of said estate, shall be deemed null and void.

XLV, XLVI, XLVII, XLVIII, XLIX. Are relative to certain formalities to be observed in judicial proceedings.

L. Masters, when twenty-five years old, shall have the power to manumit their slaves, either by testamentary dispositions, or by acts inter vivos. But, as there may be mercenary masters disposed to set a price on the liberation of their slaves ; and whereas slaves, with a view to acquire the necessary means to purchase their freedom, may be tempted to commit theft or deeds of plunder, no person, whatever may be his rank and condition, shall be permitted to set free his slaves, without obtaining from the Superior Council a decree of permission to that effect; which permission shall be granted without costs, when the motives for the setting free of said slaves, as specified in the petition of the master, shall appear legitimate to the tribunal. All acts for the emancipation of slaves, which, for the future, shall be made without this permission, shall be null; and the slaves, so freed, shall not be entitled to their freedom; they shall, on the contrary, continue to be held as slaves; but they shall be taken away from their former masters, and confiscated for the benefit of the India Company.

LI. However, should slaves be appointed by their masters, tutors to their children, said slaves shall be held and regarded as being thereby set free to all intents and purposes.

LII. We declare that the acts for the enfranchisement of slaves, passed according to the forms above described, shall be equivalent to an act of naturalization, when said slaves are not born in our colony of Louisiana, and they shall enjoy all the rights and privileges inherent to our subjects born in our kingdom or in any land or country under our dominion. We declare, therefore, that all manumitted slaves, and all free-born negroes, are incapable of receiving donations, either by testamentary dispositions, or by acts inter vivos from the whites. Said donations shall be null and void, and the objects so donated shall be applied to the benefit of

the nearest hospital.

LIII. We command all manumitted slaves to show the profoundest respect to their former masters, to their widows and children, and any injury or insult offered by said manumitted slaves to their former masters, their widows or children- shall be punished with more severity than if it had been offered to any other person. We, however, declare them exempt from the discharge Of all duties or services, and from the payment of all taxes or fees, or any thing else which their former masters might, in their quality of patrons, claim either in relation to their persons, or to their personal or real estate, either during the life or after the death of said manumitted slaves.

LIV. We grant to manumitted slaves the same rights, privileges, and immunities which are enjoyed by free-born persons. It is our pleasure that their merit in having acquired their freedom, shall produce in their favor, not only with regard to their persons, but also to their property, the same effects which our other subjects derive from the happy circumstance of their having been born free.

In the name of the King, Bienville, De la Chaise. Fazende, Bruslé, Perry, March,  
1724

*French, B.F. Historical Collections of Louisiana: Embracing Translations of Many Rare and Valuable Documents Relating to the Ntural, Civil and Political History of that State. (New York: D Appleton, 1851)*

RETRIEVED FROM: <http://www.mad-madame-lalaurie.com/codenoir.html>

# 19th-century American Women Voodoo & Tignon Laws in Louisiana



During the 19th century, Marie Leveau (d. 1881), a devoted Catholic known as the Voodoo Queen, was generally a feared figure in New Orleans. Though apparently adept with Voodoo charms & potions of all kinds, Marie's real power came from her extensive network of spies & informants. The New Orleans elite had the careless habit of detailing their most confidential affairs to their slaves & servants, who then often reported to Marie out of respect & fear. As a result, Marie appeared to have an almost amazing knowledge of the workings of political & social power in New Orleans, which she used to build her power as a voodoo priestess.

In this portrait *Marie Laveaux of New Orleans*, Marie was depicted wearing a tignon. A tignon is a series of headscarves or a large piece of material tied or wrapped around the head to form a kind of turban resembling a West African gélé.

It was the mandatory headwear for Creole women in Louisiana during the Spanish colonial period, and the style was adopted throughout the Caribbean island communities as well. This headdress was required by Louisiana laws in 1785. Called the tignon laws, they prescribed appropriate public dress for females of color in colonial society, where some women of color & some white women tried to outdo each other in

beauty, dress, ostentation and manners.

In an effort to maintain class distinctions in his Spanish colony at the beginning of his term, Governor Esteban Rodriguez Miró (1785 - 1791) decreed that women of color, slave or free, should cover their heads with a knotted headdress and refrain from **"excessive attention to dress."**

But the women, who were targets of this decree, were inventive & imaginative with years of practice. They decorated their mandated tignons, made of the finest textiles, with jewels, ribbons, & feathers to once again outshine their white counterparts.

Extramarital relationships between French & African settlers, occurring since slaves arrived in New Orleans about 1719, had evolved into an accepted social practice. The custom of freeing the children of such unions; the right of slaves to purchase their freedom; the policy of liberating enslaved workers for excellent service; and the arrival of free people of color from Haiti, Cuba & other Caribbean colonies led to the rise of a vocal free black population.

Through inheritance, military service, and a near monopoly of certain skilled trades, free blacks acquired wealth & social status.

By the time Thomas Jefferson arranged for the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, New Orleans free blacks constituted nearly 20% of the city, while enslaved Africans comprised about 38% of the residents.

Women of color, slave & free, continued to wear their bright tignons well into the 19th century, and they continued to attract the attention of men regardless of class or color.



1796 Thomas Rowlandson. Rachel Pringle of Barbados. Published by William Holland (London, 1796); Barbados Museum.



Women of Santo Domingo in Tignons. [www.slaveryimages.org](http://www.slaveryimages.org), sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities & the University of Virginia Library.





**Woman Wearing Red Tignon with Bag of Laundry. The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.**



**19th Century Tignon Wearing Women of Color. [www.slaveryimages.org](http://www.slaveryimages.org), sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities & the University of Virginia Library.**



Woman in Tignon Selling Fruits & Vegetables. The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.



19th Century Mulatto Women and Tignons. [www.slaveryimages.org](http://www.slaveryimages.org), sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities & the University of Virginia Library.



19th Century New Orleans Tignon.



19th Century Portrait. Historic New Orleans Collection.



1840 House Servant with Tignon. Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans.

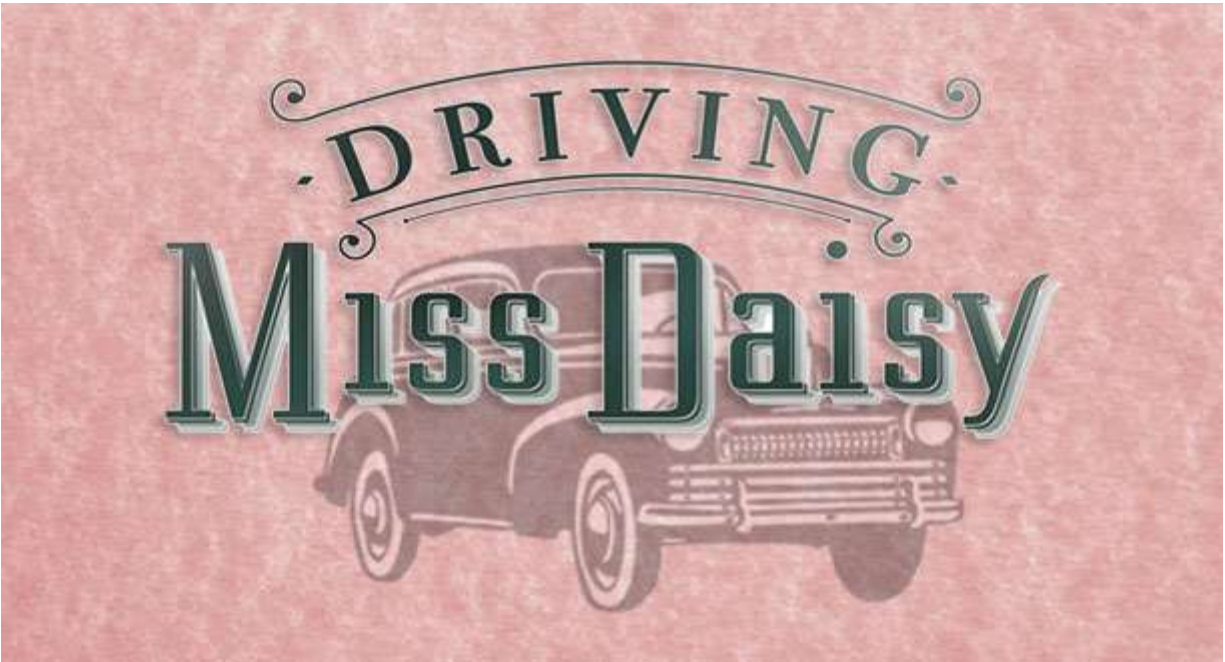


1844 Adolph Rinck. Possibly a portrait of Marie Laveaux. University Art Museum, Lafayette, Louisiana.



1910 Black Woman in Tignon, Ellsworth Woodward Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans.

## ARTS INTEGRATION BACKGROUND



## Specific Connections

The following are examples of *specific connections* that may be made between the four arts areas and reading, writing and mathematics. There are literally countless connections that may be made quite naturally throughout the study in each area. These connections not only serve to link the various areas of study to all other learning but, also, enhance meaning, make learning more relevant, and demonstrate that all learning contributes in a utilitarian way to helping us understand and function in everyday life. Students who recognize these connections will appreciate the learning they have already accomplished, gain an understanding of how things relate and/or fit together, and see life and learning as interrelated. Integrating learning frequently promotes the use of intuition, making inference, and creative thinking, all of which are key elements in the study of dance, music, theatre arts and visual arts.

### *Mathematics*

Dance - In the creation and execution of dance, a variety of related concepts are used including symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes; sequencing; geometric forms and designs; relationships between metered time and fractions; organized problem-solving skills; patterns (rhythm, movement and body shape) and measurement (metric, movement and breath).

Music - Like, unlike and empty sets in mathematics are the same as music measures with similar/dissimilar rhythm or melody patterns or measures with no notes in them. Greater than, less than or equal correlates with comparing music intervals, dynamics and/or rhythm values (fractions - rhythm and meter). Proportions in mathematics equate to relationships between music intervals and/or rhythm values. Reciprocals in mathematics relate directly to inversions of music intervals (perfect fourth to perfect fifth, major third to minor sixth, etc.).

Theatre Arts - In the design and building process used to create scenery, numerous mathematical skills must be learned and employed. To design and/or construct a simple door flat with a half-round window above it, a student would have to measure and use measurement tools, add, subtract, multiply, divide, create angles, implement geometric principles and use geometry tools, express numbers to communicate, use proportion, use mathematical problem-solving skills, and other math concepts.

Visual Arts - During the process of creating a painting or sculpture, students might explore spatial relationships to include the concepts of more or less, proportion, recognition of one- two- or three- dimensional shapes,

identification and use of patterns, measurement and use of measurement tools, measurement of liquids, estimation of space and distance, identification and /or making plane and solid figures, and description and/or creation of 3-dimensional objects from different perspectives.

RETRIEVED FROM:

[http://www.ncpublicschools.org/publicationsmaterial/html/is130/is130\\_content.htm](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/publicationsmaterial/html/is130/is130_content.htm)



# Driving Miss Daisy

## AUDITION SCENES & MONOLOGUES

### DAISY: Monologue One

He's stealing from me! I don't make empty accusations. I have proof! This! (*She triumphantly pulls an empty can of salmon from her robe pocket.*) I caught him red handed! I found this hidden in the garbage pail under some coffee grounds. Yes, a can of salmon! Here it is! Oh I knew. I knew something was funny. They all take things, you know. So I counted. The silverware first and the linen dinner napkins and then I went into the pantry. I turned on the light and the first thing that caught my eye was a hole behind the corned beef. And I knew right away. There were only eight cans of salmon. I had nine. Three for a dollar on sale. (*Seeing that her son is offering to pay for the salmon.*) No, no, I don't want money. I want my things! I don't care if it was just one can of salmon. I bought it and I put it there and he went into my pantry and took it and he never said a word. I leave him plenty of food every day and I always tell him exactly what it is. They are like having little children in the house. They want something so they just take it. Not a smidgin of manners. No conscience. He'll never admit this. "Nome," he'll say, "I doan know nothin' bout that." And I don't like it! I don't like living this way! I have no privacy.

### DAISY: Monologue Two

I was thinking about the first time I ever went to Mobile. It was Walter's wedding, 1888. I was twelve. We went on a train. And I was so excited. I'd never been on a train, I'd never been in a wedding party and I'd never seen the ocean. Papa said it was the Gulf of Mexico and not the ocean, but it was all the same to me. I remember we were at a picnic somewhere – somebody must have taken us all bathing – and I asked Papa if it was all right to dip my hand in the water. He laughed because I was so timid. And then I tasted the salt water on my fingers. Isn't it silly to remember that?

### DAISY: Monologue Three

(*Daisy is weak, disoriented, upset.*) Hoke!? Hoke!? Where are my papers? My Papers! I had them all corrected last night and I put them in the front so I wouldn't forget them on my way to school. What did you do with them? The children will be so disappointed if I don't give them their homework back. I always give it back the next day. That's why they like me. Why aren't you helping me? Give me the papers. I told you. It's alright if you moved them I won't be mad with you. But I've got to get to school now. I'll be late and who will take care of my class? They'll be all alone. Oh God! Oh Goddy! I do everything wrong. It doesn't matter. I'm sorry. It's all my fault. I didn't do right. It's so awful! Oh God! I'm so sorry. It's all my fault I can't find the papers and the children are waiting. Oh, it doesn't make any difference. Go on. Just go on now. I can't! I can't snap out of it. No! No! It's all a mess now. And I can't do anything about it! I'm being trouble. Oh God, I don't want to be trouble to anybody. Oh God. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Those poor children in my class. (A moment of clarity.) Hoke, do you still have that Oldsmobile? You do? Well, you ought not to be driving anything, the way you see. (beat) Hoke? You're my best friend. No. Really. You are. You are. (*She gently takes his hand and starts to cry.*)

### HOKÉ: Monologue One

Yassah, my name's Hoke Coleburn. Yessah, been outta work since back befo' las' November. Yessah, Mist' Werthan, dat is a long time. But you try bein' me and looking for work. They hirin' young if they hirin' colored, an' they ain' even hirin' much young, seems like. Mist' Werthan? Ya'll people Jewish, ain' you? Good, 'cause I druther drive for Jews. People always talkin' bout they stingy and they cheap, but don' say none of that 'roun' me. No suh, ya see, one time I workin' for this woman over near Little Five Points. What was that woman's name? I forget. Anyway, she president of the Ladies Auxilliary over yonder to the Ponce De Leon Baptist Church and seem like she always bringing up God and Jesus and do unto others. You know what I'm talkin' about? (beat) Well, one day, Mist' Werthan, one day that woman say to me, she say "Hoke, come on back in the back wid me. I got something for you." And we go on back yonder and, Lawd have mercy, she have all these old shirts and collars be on the bed, yellow, you know, and nasty like they been stuck off in a chiffarobe and forgot about. Thass' right. And she say "Ain' they nice? They b'long to my daddy befo' he pass and we fixin' to sell 'em to you for twenty five cent a piece." Now what was that woman's name? Any way, as I was goin' on to say, any fool see the whole bunch of them collars and shirts together ain' worth a nickel! Them's the people das callin' Jews cheap! So I say "Yassam, I think about it" and I get me another job fas' as I can.

**HOKE: Monologue Two**

*(Hoke climbs behind the wheel of the car. Daisy is in the back seat over his right shoulder.)* Sorry I done take so long, but I couldn't help it. Big mess up yonder. Looks like you cain' go to Temple today, Miz Daisy. Somebody done bomb the Temple. *(She says something.)* Yassum. Dat why we stuck here in traffic so long. That what the policeman tell me up yonder. Say it happen about a half hour ago. Din say if anyone hurt. *(She says something.)* You know as good as me who done it. Always the same ones. It done matter to them people what kinda Jew people might be. A Jew is a Jew to them folks. Jes like light or dark we all the same nigger. *(She says something.)* I know jes' how you feel, Miz Daisy. Back down there above Macon on the farm – I 'bout ten or 'leven years old and one day my frien' Porter, his Daddy hangin' from a tree. And the day befo', he laughin' and pitchin' horseshoes wid us. Talkin' bout Porter and me gon' have strong good right arms like him and den he hangin' up yonder wid his hands tie behind his back an' the flies all over him. And I seed it with my own eyes and I throw up right where I standin'. You go on and cry.

**HOKE: Monologue Three**

*(Hoke is behind the wheel of the car. Daisy is in the back seat over his right shoulder. A thought comes to Hoke and he pulls the car over.)* Nome. Ain' nothin' wrong wid the car. I got to bixcused. *(She says something.)* I got to make water. *(She says something.)* Yassum, we did stop already, Miz Daisy, but colored cain' use the toilet at no Standard Oil... you know dat. *(She says something.)* Wait till we get to Mobile? Yessum. *(He drives on for a minute then stops the car again.)* Nome. Yassum. I hear you. How you think I feel havin' to ax you when can I make my water like I some damn dog? I ain' no dog and I ain' no chile and I ain' jes' a back of the neck you look at while you goin' wherever you want to go. I a man nearly seventy-two years old and I know when my bladder full and I gettin' out dis car and goin' off down de road like I got to do. And I'm takin' de car keys dis time. And that's de end of it.

**BOOLIE: Monologue One**

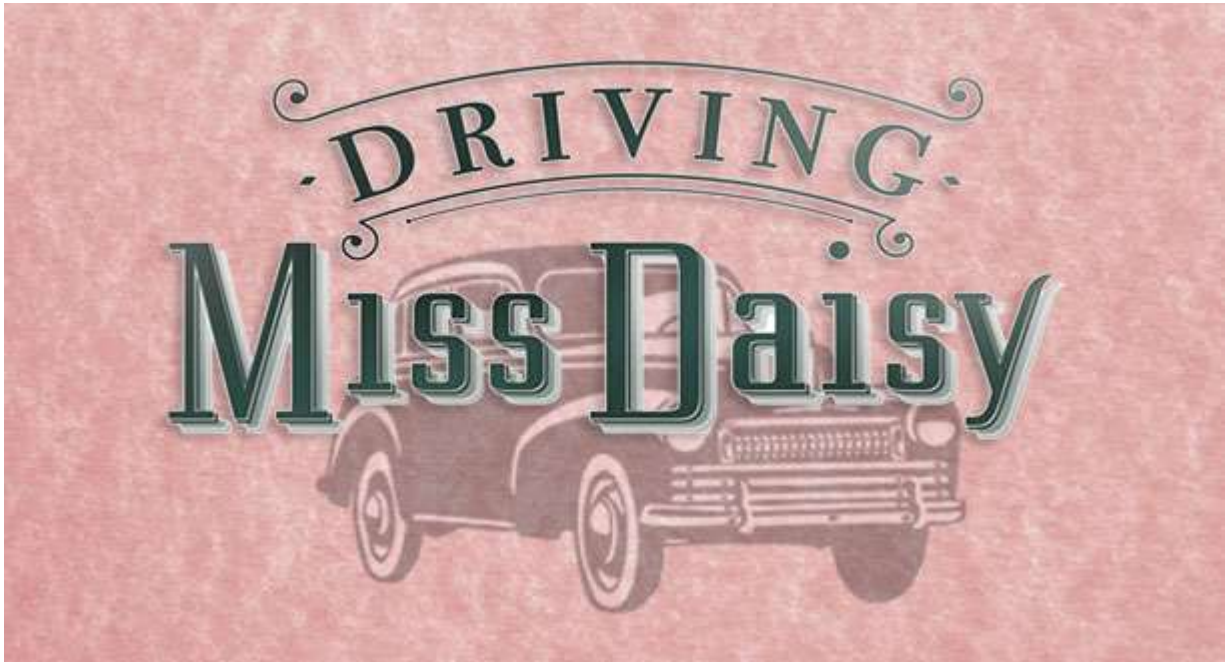
*(Boolie delivers an acceptance speech. He holds a large silver bowl in his hands.)* Thank you, Red. And thank you all. I am deeply grateful to be chosen man of the year by the Atlanta Business Council, an honor I've seen bestowed on some mighty fine fellas and which I certainly never expected to come to me. I'm afraid the loss here, *(He touches his hair.)* And the gain here, *(He touches his belly)* have given me an air of competence I don't posses. But I'll tell you, I sure wish my father and my grandfather could see this. Seventy-two years ago they opened a little hole-in-the-wall shop on Whitehall Street with one printing press. They managed to grow with Atlanta and to this day, the Werthan Company believes we want what Atlanta wants. This award proves we must be right. Thank you. *(Applause.)* One more thing. If the jackets whup the dawgs up in Athens Saturday afternoon, I'll be a completely happy man.

**BOOLIE: Monologue Two**

Yes, Miss McClatchey gave me your message. It's very kind of you to invite Florine and I to the United Jewish Associations Banquet for Dr. King. But we have to talk about the feasibility of all this. You know I believe Martin Luther King has done some mighty fine things. No, no, I want to go. You know how I feel about him. No, Florine has nothing to do with it. I still have to conduct business in this town. No, I will not go out of business if I attend the King dinner. Not exactly, anyway. But a lot of men I do business with wouldn't like it. They wouldn't come right out and say so. They's just snicker and call me Martin Luther Werthan behind my back – something like that. And I'd begin to notice that my banking business wasn't being handled by the top dogs. Maybe I'd start to miss out on a few special favors, a few tips. I wouldn't hear about certain lunch meetings at the Commerce Club. Little things you can't quite put your finger on. And Jack Raphael over at Ideal Press, he's a New York Jew instead of a Georgia Jew and as long as you got to deal with Jews, the really smart ones come from New York, don't they? So some of the boys might start throwing business to Jack instead of ole Martin Luther Werthan. I don't know. Maybe it wouldn't happen, but that's the way it works. If we don't use those seats, somebody else will and the good Doctor King will never know the difference, will he?

RETRIEVED FROM: <http://www.mponstage.com/auditions/daisy/scenes.php>

## LESSONS





## Exploring Monologues

By Karel Sloane-Boekbinder

### Description

To read various monologues given by the three characters in DRIVING MISS DAISY and explore the meanings behind these monologues.

### Materials

- Pencil
- **The New Georgia Encyclopedia Driving Miss Daisy** (found in this study guide)
- Monologues from DRIVING MISS DAISY (found in this study guide)
- Monologue note taking sheet (See below)

Begin by explaining to students that DRIVING MISS DAISY is a play and a film that explore the unlikely relationship between an aging, white Southern lady and a proud, soft-spoken black man. Also provide them with the following background information: The idea of ordinary people in the civil rights movement is something that was recently capitalized upon in the Broadway production of *Driving Miss Daisy*. James Earl Jones, who played the role of Hoke in the Broadway production, stated in an interview on the Today Show, that the reason playwright *Alfred Uhry* wanted to bring "*Driving Miss Daisy*" to Broadway was because "*the young people knew about Martin Luther King but didn't know about the ordinary people that were surviving during those days.*" And then there's its depiction of the changing face of American race relations, rendered in microcosm in the dynamic between a lady and her driver. The characters, inspired by Uhry's grandmother Lena Fox and her chauffeur, Will Coleman, are universal figures that appeal to a wide audience. Miss Daisy and Hoke struggle to determine their personal and social roles as the world they have always known changes before their eyes. When Alfred Uhry wrote "*Driving Miss Daisy*," he was in part reminiscing about his headstrong grandmother. He was also chronicling a crucial period of social history in a slice of the South. The story touches on several issues such as black-white relations, anti-Semitism, mother-son ties, aging and loneliness. Explain that students will be reading and discussing monologues from the play.

Distribute **The New Georgia Encyclopedia Driving Miss Daisy** to every student. Ask students to take turns reading aloud to the class. Read one paragraph per student.

Next, distribute the Monologue note taking sheet to all students. Select eight students to read the monologues from DRIVING MISS DAISY. Distribute the monologues. Have the students with the monologues take turns reading them aloud to the class. Following each reading, as a class, analyze the monologue. As the class analyzes each monologue, in addition to the who, what, when, where and why prompts on the note taking sheet, ask students the following questions: 1) was this monologue an example of black-white relations, anti-Semitism, mother-son ties, aging or loneliness? 2) why do you think that? Ask students to record responses using the Monologue note taking sheet.



## Exploring Monologues

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

WHO is speaking?								
WHAT are they talking about?								
WHEN are they speaking (what time period)?								
WHERE are they speaking?								
WHY are they speaking?								

## LOUISIANA STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

### LOUISIANA COMMON CORE

#### Key Ideas and Details

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- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2** Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3** Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.8** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.9** Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.



Mayor William Hartsfield with Rabbi Jacob Rothschild after bombing. Photo courtesy of [The Temple](#) (Hebrew Benevolent Congregation in Atlanta).

Analyze how power and privilege shape our relationships and involvement in social justice and activism, using sources including clips from the film *Driving Miss Daisy*.

### **Jewish Women's Archive - Living the Legacy**

<http://jwa.org/LivingtheLegacy>

### **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Keywords:

[Interracial relations](#); [Racial discrimination](#); [Class](#)

Enduring understandings:



- One's power and privilege shape one's relationships and one's involvement in social justice and activism.

Essential questions:

- How did systems and personal experiences of power, privilege, responsibility, and dignity affect individual relationships between American Jews and African Americans in the era of the Civil Rights Movement?
- How do power and privilege operate in contemporary movements?
- How do power and privilege operate in your own life?

### **Jewish Women's Archive - Living the Legacy**

<http://jwa.org/LivingtheLegacy>

### **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Notes to teacher:

You will need to get hold of a copy of the film *Driving Miss Daisy* for part II of the lesson plan. The clips are *not* available on the JWA website. The scene numbers indicated in this lesson *may not* correspond to the scene selections in your copy of the DVD, and/or you may need to manually stop your DVD/video in the right spot. (The two clips used in this lesson occur immediately after one another.)

You may want to begin this lesson by introducing the concepts of power, oppression, and privilege. We suggest using the definitions in the [Vocabulary](#) section below. (These concepts are also found in [Unit 1, Lesson 2](#). If you already taught that lesson, ask students to help define these terms.)

You may want to point out that power and privilege are not always visible to those who have them. Because privilege is generally unearned and may have always been part of one's experience, they can easily be taken for granted as "just the way things are" or not even noticed. Additionally, some individuals who possess power and privilege for reasons beyond their control, i.e. being born white or inheriting wealth, may be self-conscious of their position when faced with others' suffering, oppression, or experience of injustice. You can ask students if they can think of examples of power or privilege in their own lives/communities.

Though the documents in this lesson (the letters as well as the film) explore how power and privilege play out within interpersonal relationships, you should also emphasize that power, oppression, and privilege are social *systems*. Though they certainly shape and influence our interpersonal relationships, they do not originate there, but rather are larger structures that help organize all the ways society operates. (The systemic nature of power and privilege also contributes to their invisibility.) These larger systems can be broken down into different kinds of power and privilege – such as patriarchy (the social system based on governance by or dominance of males) or white supremacy.

Depending on the sophistication of your students, they may be more or less attuned to issues of power and privilege, so you may need to devote some time to unpacking these concepts and helping students become aware of how power and privilege operate in their own lives. You may want to use Peggy McIntosh's classic article "[White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)" to help with this conversation.

In teaching this material on power and privilege, it is important to be aware of differences in power and privilege among your students. For example, if you have non-white students, make sure that discussions of white privilege do not assume shared whiteness (i.e. through using terms like "we" when discussing the experiences of white people). Also be careful to avoid putting students on the spot; though it is natural for students to be curious about the experiences of peers who come from different backgrounds, some may not feel comfortable answering questions about whether they feel oppressed or resentful toward people with more power or privilege, and students who have not considered their own privilege and power before may feel guilty when they recognize what they take for granted.

### **Jewish Women's Archive - Living the Legacy**

<http://jwa.org/LivingtheLegacy>

### **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Introductory essay(s):

#### **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Judith Rosenbaum, Jewish Women's Archive

Introductory Essay for [Living the Legacy](#) Unit 1, Lessons 1-4

In every generation, people shape their sense of themselves and their place in society within the frameworks defined by their local community and the larger national community. What does it mean to be white? What constitutes Jewishness? (Is it a race? An ethnicity? A religion? A nationality?) The answers to these questions are not fixed but rather are constantly shifting, especially in a modern context in which people have multiple, sometimes competing, identities.

Race may, at first glance, seem to be the most immutable identity – existing "in the blood" or written on one's skin – but it is actually fluid. Before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, European immigrants to the United States were mostly absorbed into the white population, and Jews – though considered religiously "other" and often socially separate – were not viewed in racial terms. But the rise of mass immigration from Europe, beginning in the 1840s, brought in a new wave of immigrants too large to be easily assimilated, and this new social reality of large urban populations with a heavy European immigrant flavor led to a recasting of

racial categories and relations. The ruling elite classes (predominantly wealthy, American-born Protestants) expressed their fears of "race suicide" as the "native" stock was infiltrated and overrun by these "inferior races" first from Ireland and then from Eastern and Southern Europe. This immigration wave brought nearly 2 million Jews to the United States, outnumbering the German Jewish elite who had arrived in the mid-19th century and transforming the American Jewish community, which had been predominantly Sephardic (of Spanish/Portuguese origin), into a predominantly Ashkenazi population, as it remains today.

The new racism that arose in response to the immigration wave was rooted in supposed science – intelligence tests and a eugenics movement that focused on breeding "better" people, as opposed to the "feebleminded" Eastern Europeans, Mexicans, Asians, Native Americans, and African Americans. This "scientific racism" justified the passage of legislation that outlawed Chinese immigration (Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882) and heavily restricted immigration except from Northern Europe (Johnson Act of 1924). The government and businesses limited the social mobility of those "inferior races" who had already settled in the US through policies such as quotas in higher education, corporate hiring restrictions, and, in the postwar period, federal housing loan policies that enforced racial segregation and subsidized the suburbanization of white populations.

In this context of changing perceptions of race, the racial identification of Jews underwent significant shifts. On one level, most Jews were always considered white in that they were permitted to become naturalized citizens – a right reserved only for "free white persons," according to the 1790 law set in place by the first Congress. But during the years of the large wave of immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe (roughly 1880-1924), Jews were counted among the many European groups (the 1911 Dillingham Commission Report on Immigration identified 36 different European races) classified as not quite white, or racially "other." (Some Jews, for example, were classified as "Hebrew.") Who fell into this racially suspect category depended on who was seen as different, unassimilable, or a threat to the nation, as well as who was perceived as providing essential (though devalued) labor. In the 1860s, the Irish were singled out for their savagery and racial weakness; by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jews often bore the brunt of anti-immigration racism, targeted as the racial scourge overrunning and infecting urban areas. Political cartoons, for example, often depicted Jews as dirty, diseased, and criminal. Though expressed in racial terms, this anti-immigrant sentiment also intersected with fears of the rising working class and of political radicalism.

This racial definition of Jewishness, though derogatory when applied by non-Jews, could also serve a positive purpose for Jews. Many Jews embraced race as something that united them – a kind of identity deeper than belief or religious practice, something primal, defying assimilation. Racial identification resonated with a Jewish sense of peoplehood – an identification that was not entirely captured by the definition of Jewishness as solely a religious identity – and fulfilled the desire to preserve a minority identity.

Soon after the Johnson Act effectively closed the door on immigration from anywhere but Northern Europe, conventional wisdom on racial classification moved toward the recognition of three main races: Caucasian, Mongoloid, and Negroid. This meant that the many different European races – including Jews – were consolidated into a monolithic category of Caucasian whiteness, and the primary racial distinction in America became the black/white binary.

Several factors led to this consolidation of whiteness. In light of the severe immigration restriction, those formerly considered "racially other" now posed less of a threat. Without a steady stream of new immigrants, the Eastern and Southern European populations were now predominantly American born, not immigrants themselves, and thus seemed less different and more easily assimilable. At the same time, the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to urban North and West between 1910s and 1940s threw the distinction between black and white into sharper relief.

The involvement of African Americans in World War II also caused a major shift in racial issues on the home front. The dissonance African Americans experienced between fighting for democracy abroad but being denied its benefits at home led to a surge in civil rights activism, particularly around segregation of the armed forces and the defense industries. As segregation (also known as "Jim Crow") became the central American racial issue, racial differences among whites became less important. By emphasizing the black/white binary, Jim Crow could work to solidify the whiteness of certain groups, such as Jews, who had previously been considered ambiguously white. Finally, Nazi Germany served as a sharp reminder of the horrific dangers of race-based classifications.

After World War II, Jewishness remained a social distinction but no longer a racial one. For example, Jews were allowed to move into white suburban neighborhoods that the Federal Housing Authority policy determined were only for people of the "same social and racial classes" (though some communities instituted housing covenants that excluded Jews). "Ethnicity" became the new language to describe difference among whites, now seen as cultural – a distinction that further entrenched the black/white divide by implying that racial differences go deeper than cultural differences. The new racial system defined whiteness as the "normal" American state, and blackness as a racial problem.

Many scholars have argued that Jews in the South were the first Jews to see themselves as white, but the case of Leo Frank makes clear that they occupied an ambiguous middle category of racial outsider. In April 1913, a 14-year-old white girl was murdered in a pencil factory in Atlanta, and Leo Frank, a Jewish part-owner and manager of the factory, was convicted of the crime based on the testimony of a black janitor. When his sentence was commuted by the Governor in August 1915, a mob pulled him out of the prison where he was being held and lynched him. That a supposedly white man could be convicted based on the testimony of a black man, and the use of lynching as the method of (illegally) meting out his punishment, demonstrates the contingency of Frank's perceived whiteness.

Throughout the postwar period, the social position of Jews in the South was precarious, despite the fact that Southern Jews were among those Jews with the longest roots in the US. Jews in the South were accepted as part of the social fabric, and in many cities were prominent business people who often ran the local store, but they were also seen as different from other whites and somewhat suspect, and in some cases excluded along with blacks. They had to work hard to fit in, and many Jews were reluctant to take action that would set them apart from the other white community leaders. They felt they needed to assure their own equality and security first, and therefore were often hesitant to engage in overt, public civil rights activism, though some supported civil rights in quiet, private ways.

While for some Southern Jews, association with the Civil Rights Movement confirmed for their white neighbors a lingering sense that Jews were racially tainted, for many Northern Jews, involvement in the Civil Rights Movement served to further solidify Jewish whiteness. Allying themselves with blacks cast into sharper relief the whiteness of Jews – ironically, since many Jews were motivated to civil rights activism by a sense of identification with African Americans and a persistent sense of "otherness" despite having, by and large, "made it" in America.

Today, many American Jews retain an ambivalence about whiteness, despite the fact that the vast majority have benefited and continue to benefit from white privilege. This ambivalence stems from many different places: a deep connection to a Jewish history of discrimination and otherness; a moral imperative to identify with the stranger; an anti-universalist impulse that does not want Jews to be among the "melted" in the proverbial melting pot; an experience of prejudice and awareness of the contingency of whiteness; a feeling that Jewish identity is not fully described by religion but has some ethnic/tribal component that feels more accurately described by race; and a discomfort with contemporary Jewish power and privilege.

And of course, while there is a tendency in the US, where the majority of Jews are of Eastern European descent, to assume a shared white racial identity for Jews, many Jews are in fact not white. Throughout history, Jews have come in all colors and from all places, and have almost always lived multicultural lives. The "mixed multitude" of the Jewish people include Jews from Arab lands (Mizrahi Jews), Jews with roots in Spain and Portugal (Sephardic Jews), and Jews from India, Asia, and Africa, some of whose ancestors may have been separated from the rest of the Jewish community many centuries ago. There are many Jews of color whose families have been Jewish for generations, if not centuries. In an American context that increasingly values diversity, the backgrounds and colors of the Jewish community are also enriched by adoption, intermarriage, and conversion. The Institute for Jewish and Community Research, an organization that studies the demography of the Jewish people, estimates that at least 20% of the American Jewish population is what they term "racially and ethnically diverse, including African, African American, Latino (Hispanic), Asian, Native American, Sephardic, Mizrahi and mixed-race Jews by heritage, adoption, and marriage."

Just as the definition of racial categories in America is always shifting, as illustrated by changes in the options for racial self-definition on the US Census, so, too, does the definition of Jewish identity and the image of what Jewish looks like continue to change.

## Jewish Women's Archive - Living the Legacy

<http://jwa.org/LivingtheLegacy>

## Power, Privilege, and Responsibility

Lesson plan:

### 1. Text Study: Letters Home

1. Distribute the "[Letters Home](#)" [Document Study](#) to your class. Review the italicized introduction with your students. Share some basic facts about Freedom Summer (see [Unit 2, Lesson 4](#) for more information).
2. Have a student read Lew's letter out loud. Using the questions on the Document Study, discuss this document with your class. Try to emphasize the issues of privilege and power present in the relationships between white and African American activists in the North, and that while Jews might identify with African Americans they didn't really know what it was like to be African American. Emphasize that while the documents in this lesson explore these issues of power and privilege at an interpersonal level, they resulted from larger social structures and institutions.
3. Have a student read Ellen's letter out loud. Using the questions on the Document Study, discuss this document with your class. Try to emphasize the issues of distrust between African Americans and whites and the difference that sometimes occurs between what we say we believe or are committed to and what our actions say.
4. After reading both letters, ask your students the following wrap-up questions. (You may want to write their responses on the board for reference later in class.)
  1. What type of relationship did these white activists want to have with their African American counterparts? In what ways was this type of relationship realistic? In what ways wasn't it realistic? Why? What personal experiences and larger social structures got in the way of the ideals whites brought to their civil rights activism?
  2. What issues came between many white and African American activists?

### 2. Driving Miss Daisy

1. Introduce the movie using information in the synopsis and scene descriptions below.
2. Show Clip #1, Temple Bombing. (In some versions of the DVD the Temple Bombing is scene 18.) After showing the clip, ask a couple of students to describe what happened objectively, in their own words, and then discuss some of the following questions:
  1. When Miss Daisy asks who would bomb the Temple, Hoke responds, "You know as good as me. Always be the same ones." To whom do you think Hoke is referring?
  2. Why do you think the Temple bombing made Hoke think of the lynching of his friend's father? How are these events similar and/or different?
  3. Does Miss Daisy see herself and her experiences as similar to or different from Hoke and his experiences? What evidence do you have? How similar or different do you think they are? What is the biggest difference between them?
  4. Describe where you see power and privilege at work in this scene. At what points do you think Miss Daisy and/or Hoke seem especially aware of these issues?
3. Show Clip #2, King Dinner. (In some versions of the DVD the King Dinner is scene 19.) After showing the clip, ask a couple of students to describe what happened objectively, in their own words, and then discuss some of the following questions:

1. Recall the reasons Boolie gave for why he didn't want to go to the King dinner. Are you sympathetic towards him? Why or why not?
  2. Miss Daisy says she's not prejudiced. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
  3. How does Hoke react to Miss Daisy's last minute mention of a possible invitation to hear Martin Luther King, Jr. speak at the dinner? What did you think about his reaction?
  4. Describe where you see power and privilege at work in this scene. At what points do you think Miss Daisy and/or Hoke seem especially aware of these issues?
4. After showing both clips, you may want to discuss some of the following questions with your students:
1. Do you think Miss Daisy treats Hoke with respect and dignity? Do you think Hoke treats Miss Daisy with respect and dignity? What accounts for the differences in the ways they treat each other?
  2. Miss Daisy has the power in this relationship both in the sense that she is Hoke's boss, and in the sense that as a white Jew she has more power in society than does Hoke as an African American. Do you think Miss Daisy's actions reflect what she says about herself and her beliefs? How could Miss Daisy better wield her power? What, if anything, do you think Miss Daisy learns from her encounters with Hoke?
  3. Return to the student responses you wrote on the board after the previous activity. Ask your students:
    1. How are the issues raised by *Driving Miss Daisy* different and/or similar to the issues raised by Lew and Ellen's letters?
    2. The letters were written by real people, while the movie is a fictional story. What can we learn from facts? What limitations are there to learning from facts? What can we learn from fiction? What limitations are there to learning from fiction?

### Synopsis:

Based on Alfred Uhry's Pulitzer-prize winning play of the same name, *Driving Miss Daisy* tells the story of Miss Daisy, a southern widow from a well-to-do family, who lives alone except for her African American maid and driver. The movie focuses on the relationship between Miss Daisy and her driver, Hoke. It is set against the backdrop of the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, GA. While Miss Daisy and her son, Boolie, appear to support the Civil Rights Movement in a general way, their actions on a more personal level are complicated by their position in the community and their own assumptions about race, class, and social roles at times appear inconsistent with this support.

### Clip #1:

Temple Bombing (Scene 18)

Miss Daisy is sitting in her car, stuck in traffic. It's raining outside and we see her driver, Hoke, carrying an umbrella, returning to the car after finding out the cause of the traffic jam). Hoke explains that Miss Daisy cannot go to the temple today because it has been bombed. At first, Miss Daisy doesn't want to believe Hoke. Then she asks, rhetorically, "Who would do something like that?" Hoke responds to the question, saying "You know it's always the same ones." Later in the scene, Hoke tells a story from his youth when a friend's father was lynched. He explains that

the temple bombing reminded him of the story; however, Miss Daisy refuses to see a connection between the two events.

## Clip #2

### King Dinner (Scene 19)

Boolie, Miss Daisy's son, arrives at her house. He tells her that while he supports Martin Luther King, Jr., he can't go to the dinner where King is speaking because it might not be good for his business. If people think he supports King, Boolie explains, they might call him names behind his back, throw business to other businessmen, and not let him know about other business deals or events. Boolie is also surprised that Miss Daisy is so committed to going to the dinner. She responds, "I've never been prejudiced in my life." Boolie suggests that maybe she should invite Hoke, her driver, to go to the dinner with her. Shortly thereafter, we see Hoke driving Miss Daisy to the King dinner. On the way, Miss Daisy tells Hoke about her conversation with Boolie and how silly it is that he would think that Hoke would want to go to the dinner. She also assumes that Hoke knows King. Just before they arrive at their destination, Hoke suggests that in the future if Miss Daisy wants to invite him to attend a function with her that she invite him properly and not wait until they are in the car on the way to the function. As the scene ends, we see Miss Daisy listening to Martin Luther King, Jr. speak, while she sits at a table with well-dressed people and an empty seat at an elegant dinner and then we see Hoke sitting in Miss Daisy's car listening to the same speech on the radio.

### 3. Journaling Exercise

1. Make sure that your students have blank, lined paper, and a writing implement. Prepare them for a journaling exercise. You may choose to have the students keep their journaling exercise or hand it in.
2. Ask the students to consider the story that Ellen tells about her family's African American maid and the scenes from Miss Daisy about the Martin Luther King, Jr. dinner. Remind your students that these are examples of people's words and actions not quite matching (or examples of the limitations of people's beliefs about their own lack of racism). Explain that this is also a challenge in our world today.
3. Have your students reflect and write on one of the following:
  - Describe a situation today in which you or someone you know or a public figure has proclaimed certain values and then acted in ways that did not reflect those values. How could this person better align his/her actions with his/her beliefs? Which do you think speak louder, words or actions? Why?
  - How do power and privilege shape your life? Give a specific example.

### 4. OPTIONAL: Text Study: Power, Privilege, and Social Justice

1. Remind your students that one of the issues between some African Americans and whites that we've already discussed is one of power and privilege. The white activists whose letters we read were from middle-class backgrounds. Their families had "made it" and since they didn't have to fight for their own rights they could fight for someone else's rights. However, not all Jews in America have power and privilege.
2. Distribute the [Power, Privilege, and Social Justice Document Study](#) to your students.



3. Have a couple of students take turns reading aloud the introductory material and the excerpt from Paul Cowan's book *An Orphan in History*. Stop them occasionally to clarify terms or phrases, or provide a little extra background information.
4. Discuss the document with your class using some or all of the questions provided. Emphasize what Cowan discovers about how power and privilege relate to social justice issues, while encouraging your students to share their own responses to the situation he describes.

Vocabulary:

## **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Power

The ability to control circumstances

## **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Oppression

A system that gives certain people power and privilege at the expense of other people

## **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Privilege

Generally unearned advantages and beliefs that benefit some, often at the expense of others.

## **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Mississippi Freedom Summer

A community organizing project that took place during the summer of 1964, in which northerners went South to help African-Americans register to vote, run Freedom Schools, and to build the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. The project was sponsored by SNCC, CORE, COFO, and the NAACP. Approximately half of the white northerners who participated in Freedom Summer were Jewish.

## **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

SNCC

(Pronounced "snick") The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was founded at Shaw University in North Carolina in 1960. SNCC played a major role in the Civil Rights Movement, organizing and participating in many projects including Freedom Ride, Freedom Summer, and the March on Washington. SNCC focused on issues including desegregation of public facilities and voter registration using techniques of grassroots organizing and civil disobedience.

## **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

### Atlanta Temple Bombing

On October 12, 1958, the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation Temple in Atlanta, GA, known simply as The Temple, was bombed. The bombing took place early in the morning and no one was injured. Claiming responsibility for the bombing, a voice identified as "General Gordon of the Confederate Underground" told a member of the press: "We bombed a temple in Atlanta. This is the last empty building in Atlanta we will bomb. All nightclubs refusing to fire their Negro employees will also be blown up. We are going to blow up all Communist organizations. Negroes and Jews are hereby declared aliens." The group is thought to have been targeting The Temple's Rabbi, who was a known supporter of civil rights. This bombing is referenced in *Driving Miss Daisy*.

### **Jewish Women's Archive - Living the Legacy**

<http://jwa.org/LivingtheLegacy>

## **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Document studies:

## **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

### **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

In 1964, many young northern white activists participated in a civil rights project called Mississippi Freedom Summer. Some of these activists shared their feelings and experiences in letters they wrote home to families and friends. While the letters below may not have been written by Jewish civil rights activists, they express views shared by many. (Note that the orientation and training program for Freedom Summer was held at Western College in Oxford, OH.)

### **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Oxford, Ohio

Dear Mom and Jo,

The reception at Western College was not warm. I was surprised at how unfriendly and unextending people were. Small groups formed or had been formed and people seemed concerned with “fitting in.” I went to bed. Later that day (today) I went to register. I still felt uncomfortable but attempted to shake a few hands. (It wasn’t too bad.) Some people were friendly and helpful. Tremendous enthusiasm was generated when we all began singing after dinner. It was the spiritual revival type of singing and you know how I love that. We all must have sung for about 2 hours, and the previous in-grouping of Negroes and reservedness of whites seemed to disappear – but not really...Maybe we’ll be able to at the end of the summer, but right now we don’t know what it is to be a Negro and even if we did, the Negroes here would not accept us. It’s the old case of having to prove ourselves. In their eyes we’re rich middle or upperclass whites who have taken off a summer to help the Negro.

Intellectually, I think many of us whites can understand the Negroes’ resentment but emotionally we want to be “accepted” at face value. We want this acceptance because this is part of our reason for going down south, i.e., the basic worth of the individual. I’ve always thought that my relations with Negroes have been fairly honest. I’ve gone to a predominantly Negro high school and participated in athletics with them. I’ve gotten to know Negroes in college... I haven’t gone out of my way to meet them but those I have met I have gotten along well with, if not intimately. What I mean to say is that I never detected a “difference,” or an inability to communicate with one another... But what I am finding here is a different situation and perhaps a more honest one...

Love, Lew

Martinez, Elizabeth Sutherland, ed. *Letters from Mississippi: Reports from Civil Rights Volunteers* (Brookline, MA: Zephyr Press, 2002), 5. Permission granted by Zephyr Press.

### **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

1. Who wrote this document?
2. When was this document written? (At the time of the events described? After the events described took place?)
3. What type of document is this? Who was the intended audience for this document? How might this have influenced the content of the document?
4. What kind of reception did Lew receive at Western College? How might you describe the atmosphere of in-groups and out-groups? Does it remind you of any experiences you've encountered?
5. What kind of reception do you think Lew wanted/expected?

6. According to Lew, how did the African American volunteers view the white Northern activists? How do you think Lew and the other white Northern activists viewed themselves? How might the difference between these perceptions cause tension between the two groups?
7. Lew writes that "right now we don't know what it is to be a Negro." Does he think this is an important thing to know? If so, why? Why do you think this lack of knowledge could be a source of tension among the white and black activists?
8. At the end of the letter Lew says, "But what I am finding here is a different situation and perhaps a more honest one..." How is it more honest? What issues divided whites and blacks in the Civil Rights Movement? How did the tensions Lew describes compare to the ideals and idealism of the Civil Rights Movement?

## **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

Dear Peggy:

... All whites who read [James] Baldwin ask, "Is he right? Do they really hate us?" I have never before talked to a Negro about his feelings towards whites. A wonderful Negro man from Detroit named Joe Harrison told me here at Oxford, "I always feel much more comfortable with Negroes than with whites. But I can become good friends with white people."

And one SNCC worker – Frank Smith – said, "I grew up hating all white folks. It wasn't until a couple of years ago that I learned that there could be good whites – and even now I sometimes wonder."

So there is this great reluctance and distrust, born of generations of oppression and slavery... It seems that if more whites understood this – especially white liberals – race relations might be a lot less strained.

I have also discovered a lot about my own feelings about race. I grew up in an upper middle-class Westchester home, where my parents were good liberals, but I never knew any Negroes except the woman who cooked and cleaned for us. I loved her very much and she, me... We all called her "Sarah" while she called me "Ellen" and my parents "Mr. and Mrs."

Consequently, although my parents told me that Negroes were just as good as whites – I must have seen them in the role of servants. Once, my mother tells me, when I was little, we were driving along a road near our house and passed a Negro woman waiting for a bus. "There's somebody's maid," I said.

To arrive in Ohio, when there were 60 or 70 Negro kids my age – all close friends and rather cliquish at first – was a frightening experience. It was not that I looked down on them at all – quite the contrary: I was awed by them. For the first few days, I mostly hung around with the kids from Harvard. I sat with them at meals or in meetings, walking by the groups of Negro kids who also sat together at the table or under a tree on the grass... But as the week wore on, things began to change.

Ellen

## Power, Privilege, and Responsibility

1. Who wrote this document?
2. When was this document written? (At the time of the events described? After the events described took place?)
3. What type of document is this? Who was the intended audience for this document? How might this have influenced the content of the document?
4. According to discussions that Ellen had with a few African American volunteers, how did they view white people? To what does Ellen credit their attitude? What does slavery have to do with it?
5. What does Ellen mean when she calls her parents "good liberals"? What assumptions does that phrase carry?
6. As "good liberals," what message do you think Ellen's parents gave her verbally about whites and blacks? What do you think is the difference between the liberalism of her parents and Ellen's own view of race relations?
7. What kind of contact/relationship did Ellen have with African Americans growing up? What difference in respect/power/dignity are suggested by the ways that her family addressed their black maid and the way their maid addressed Ellen's family?
8. What message was conveyed by her parents' actions and by the social context in which Ellen grew up? How was this message different from the verbal message her "good liberal" parents gave her?
9. What are some examples from today of differences between someone's convictions, as expressed by what they say, and their actions?

## Power, Privilege, and Responsibility

### Power, Privilege, and Responsibility

*Paul Cowan grew up in an upper-middle-class American Jewish family where he absorbed the Jewish values of his mother, Polly Cowan, who believed that Jews had a special responsibility to help those who were less fortunate. Like his mother, Paul Cowan lived these values when he became a civil rights activist. But his experience also taught him that acting on Jewish values of social justice was a privilege not available to all American Jews. Working as a journalist, Cowan encountered many different people and situations that at times led him to reconsider his world views. Here he recounts an encounter with Jewish refugees from Europe, who opposed the building of low-income housing projects for blacks and Puerto Ricans in their neighborhood.*

I spent one afternoon walking on the picket line with an elderly Jewish couple, Romanians who had fled to Russia during World War II, then migrated to Newark, Greenwich Village, and Forest Hills, where they owned a grocery store. They had been chased and harassed all their lives – first by Hitler, then by the Communists, then by blacks in Newark and Italians in the Village. They were convinced that people were better off among their own kind – an idea that sounded reactionary to me. When I mentioned that I was

Jewish, the old woman asked me, “Do you think we will all be chased from New York?” What gruesome experience lingered in her mind, producing that question? Surely her desire for security wasn’t merely a form of bigotry...The crowd’s chant brought me back to Mississippi. Those white kids at the swimming pool had been muttering similar invectives as they drank their beer and looked at Polly’s motel room. So I asked the couple from Romania if the crowd’s chant about black people awakened memories of the chants that were directed at them because they were Jews?

“No,” the man said.

“You see, we’re trying to protect ourselves here. I wish the Jews had done the same thing in Europe.”

How could I see them as any more – or any less – oppressed than the blacks and Hispanics who might move into the project they were protesting so vehemently? Talking with them, and with others in their position, I realized that my flashbacks to Mississippi were inappropriate. The issue in Forest Hills involved two competing claims, not right and wrong.

When I published my article, I was afraid that my mother would think I was too soft on the Romanians and their counterparts; that I was explaining their racism away. In fact, she agreed with my article. But the chain of thought that began during those days in Forest Hills produced new questions, new sympathies that I could never quite explain to her, though my father understood them completely. For, though she has remained my political conscience, I realized that there was a contradiction in the belief she and I had always shared, that all Jews were mandated by history to be more ethical than other people. It allowed the Cowans, with our wealth, to argue that Jews with less money, less mobility, less access to powerful people than we had were somehow immoral if they organized their lives around their own self-interest. If they were survivors, we romanticized them without understanding them – or, on the other hand, assumed that their years in the camps should have made them less bigoted. If they were American-born people, who wanted the same security for their families as we had on Park Avenue, we tended to dismiss them as selfish business people or as bigots.

Excerpts are from *An Orphan in History: One Man's Triumphant Search for His Jewish Roots* Copyright 2002 by Paul Cowan (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing). Permission granted by Jewish Lights Publishing, [www.jewishlights.com](http://www.jewishlights.com).

## **Power, Privilege, and Responsibility**

### **Assessment**

1. Who wrote this document? What was his role in the events he describes?

2. When was this document written? (At the time of the events described? After the events described took place?) Why might when the document was written matter in what we learn from this document?
3. What experiences does Paul Cowan bring to this event? How do they shape his initial view of the issues?
4. Who are the picketers? What are they protesting? Why?
5. What experiences do the picketers bring to this event? How do these experiences shape their view of the issues?
6. In what ways are Paul Cowan and the picketers the same? In what ways are they different?

## Analysis

1. How does Paul Cowan's view of the issues change as a result of his experience on this picket line?
2. Near the end of the document, Paul Cowan says, "I realized that there was a contradiction in the belief she and I had always shared, that all Jews were mandated by history to be more ethical than other people." What do you think the contradiction is that Cowan has discovered? How might you rewrite the phrase "all Jews were mandated by history to be more ethical than other people" to make it more accurately reflect the reality that Paul Cowan has discovered on the picket line?
3. If, as in this case, none of the parties has power (Jews, Hispanics, and blacks are all portrayed as oppressed), is there a way to resolve the issue? Who else (present or not) might have the power to resolve the issue of competing claims? What is their responsibility?
4. What other situations or conflicts does this story make you think of? Who has power in those situations? How, if at all, have they been resolved?

## Jewish Women's Archive - Living the Legacy

<http://jwa.org/LivingtheLegacy>

## Power, Privilege, and Responsibility

Traditional Jewish texts:

[Traditional Jewish text - Exodus 2:11-22 \(Moses kills Egyptian/intervenes in Jewish argument/gets water for Zipporah\)](#)

[Traditional Jewish text - Shabbat 54b \(Responsibility for the sins of others\)](#)

[Traditional Jewish text - Texts on the Ger \(stranger\)](#)

[Traditional Jewish text - Esther 4:1-17 \(Mordechai's plea to Esther\)](#)

[Traditional Jewish text - Texts about responsibility to help people](#)

[Traditional Jewish text - Texts about Tokh'ha \(rebuke\)](#)

## Jewish Women's Archive - Living the Legacy

<http://jwa.org/LivingtheLegacy>

## Power, Privilege, and Responsibility

Teacher resources:

Cowan, Paul. *An Orphan in History: Retrieving a Jewish Legacy*. (NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1982).

Martinez, Elizabeth Sutherland, ed. *Letters from Mississippi: Reports from Civil Rights Volunteers*. (Brookline, MA: Zephyr Press, 2002).

Green, Melissa Faye. *The Temple Bombing*. (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1996).

Webb, Clive. "[Counterblast: How the Atlanta Temple Bombing Strengthened the Civil Rights Cause.](#)" Southern Spaces 22 June 2009.

Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities*, <http://www.isjl.org/history/archive/>. Includes rich encyclopedia entries on individual Jewish communities across the South.

Brodkin, Karen. *How Jews became white folks and what that says about race in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

McIntosh, Peggy. "[White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.](#)" Copyright 1988.

Kivel, Paul. *Uprooting racism: How white people can work for racial justice*. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2002.

Pittelman, Karen, and Resource Generation. *Classified: How to stop hiding your privilege and use it for social change*. Brooklyn, NY: Soft Skull Press, 2005.

[Jews for Racial and Economic Justice](#). This New York-based organization has organized campaigns related to the rights of domestic workers and affordable housing, among other issues.

RETRIEVED FROM: Jewish Women's Archive. "Living the Legacy - Lesson: Power, Privilege, and Responsibility." (Viewed on May 9, 2013) <<http://jwa.org/teach/livingthelegacy/civilrights/power-privilege-and-responsibility>>.



# LOUISIANA STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

## LOUISIANA COMMON CORE

### Key Ideas and Details

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- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2** Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3** Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.8** Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.9** Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

### Text Types and Purposes

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1a** Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1b** Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1c** Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., *for instance, in order to, in addition*).
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1d** Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2a** Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2b** Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2c** Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., *another, for example, also, because*).
  - **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2d** Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2e** Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3a** Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3b** Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3c** Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3d** Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3e** Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.



## Developing Monologues

### about the Jewish and African American Experience

By **Karel Sloane-Boekbinder**

#### Description

To create and perform a “monologue” from the life experiences of either a Jewish immigrant or an African American in early New Orleans.

#### Materials

- Paper and pencil.
- THE GOLDRING WOLDENBERG INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN JEWISH LIFE [Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities](#),
- 19th-century American Women, **Voodoo & Tignon Laws in Louisiana**
- **Oy! Such a Home, from MULTICULTURAL HISTORY**
- [Jewish Virtual Library Louisiana](#) (found in this study guide)
- The Code Noir (found in this study guide)
- Article note taking sheet (See below)
- List of thought-provoking questions. (See below)
- Open-mind and willingness respond to one or more questions

Prior to this lesson, record the 14 questions from “The Actor’s Personal Biography” [RAISING THE CURTAIN, “Creating Charismatic Characters,” pp. 204-205]. These questions are provided as a prompt to help students brain storm. Record the questions where the whole class will be able to see it, such as on a Promethean board or a dry erase board.

Begin by explaining to students that DRIVING MISS DAISY is a play and a film that explore the unlikely relationship between an aging, white Southern lady and a proud, soft-spoken black man. Also provide them with the following background information: The idea of ordinary people in the civil rights movement is something that was recently capitalized upon in the Broadway production of Driving Miss Daisy. Explain that students will be reading and discussing information about Jewish life and African American life in early Louisiana and exploring Louisiana history. Also explain that they will be using these explorations to develop their own monologues.

Distribute **Oy! Such a Home, from MULTICULTURAL HISTORY**, THE GOLDRING WOLDENBERG INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN JEWISH LIFE [Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities](#), The Code Noir and 19th-century American Women, **Voodoo & Tignon Laws in Louisiana** (found in this study guide) to every student. Distribute the Article note taking sheet to every student. Begin by reading THE GOLDRING WOLDENBERG INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN JEWISH LIFE [Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities](#). Ask students to take turns reading aloud to the class. Ask students to fill in their responses to the article using the note taking sheet. Next, read The Code Noir. Ask students to take turns reading aloud to the class. Ask students to fill in their responses to these laws using the note taking sheet. Next, distribute 19th-century American Women, **Voodoo & Tignon Laws in Louisiana**. Ask students to take turns reading aloud to the class. Ask students to fill in their responses to the article using the note taking sheet. Then distribute **Oy! Such a Home, from MULTICULTURAL HISTORY**. Ask students to take turns reading aloud to the class. Ask students to fill in their responses to the article using the note taking sheet.

Read over the questions, adapted from “The Actor’s Personal Biography” [RAISING THE CURTAIN, “Creating Charismatic Characters,” pp. 204-205]. These questions are provided as a prompt to help students brain storm. Students should select three questions and answer them from the point of view of their character. To answer these questions, students will be using their notes from the articles the class has read and their own imaginations. Next, distribute the character development venn diagram to all students. Ask students to record each of the questions they select on their character development venn diagram.

Ask students to answer the questions on their character development venn diagram using their notes from their Article note taking sheets and their imaginations. Once they have answered all the questions, ask students to create a five paragraph monologue for their character. The monologue will begin with the character’s name and description. The second paragraph will be a description of the character’s time period. Each of the other three paragraphs will answer one of the questions they selected. This lesson will give opportunities for students to explore how a time period can affect the life of a person.



## Developing Monologues about the Jewish Experience

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Article	Notes	Comments

## Monologue Questions to Consider

\* Taken from *“The Actor’s Personal Biography”* (pp. 204-205, *RAISING THE CURTAIN, “Creating Charismatic Characters;” Perfection Learning*)

1. Describe some of the different places you have lived in your life. How do you feel about them?
2. Recall any serious accidents or illnesses you have had.
3. Who gave you your first kiss? How did it make you feel?
4. Write about other important firsts.
5. Tell about a sad memory of your life.
6. What was your favorite security object as a child? What happened to it?
7. Have you reached a turning point in your life? If so, describe the moment or time and how it changed the direction of your life.
8. What defenses do you use to keep people from knowing you?
9. What is the most daring thing you have done?
10. What behavior would you like to stop?
11. What is the greatest joy in your life?
12. What is the one memento or piece of memorabilia you will never throw away?
13. What is your higher power? Who inspires you?
14. What is something else you would like to tell about yourself?

\* The book includes 58 different questions. This is a selection with some adjustments.

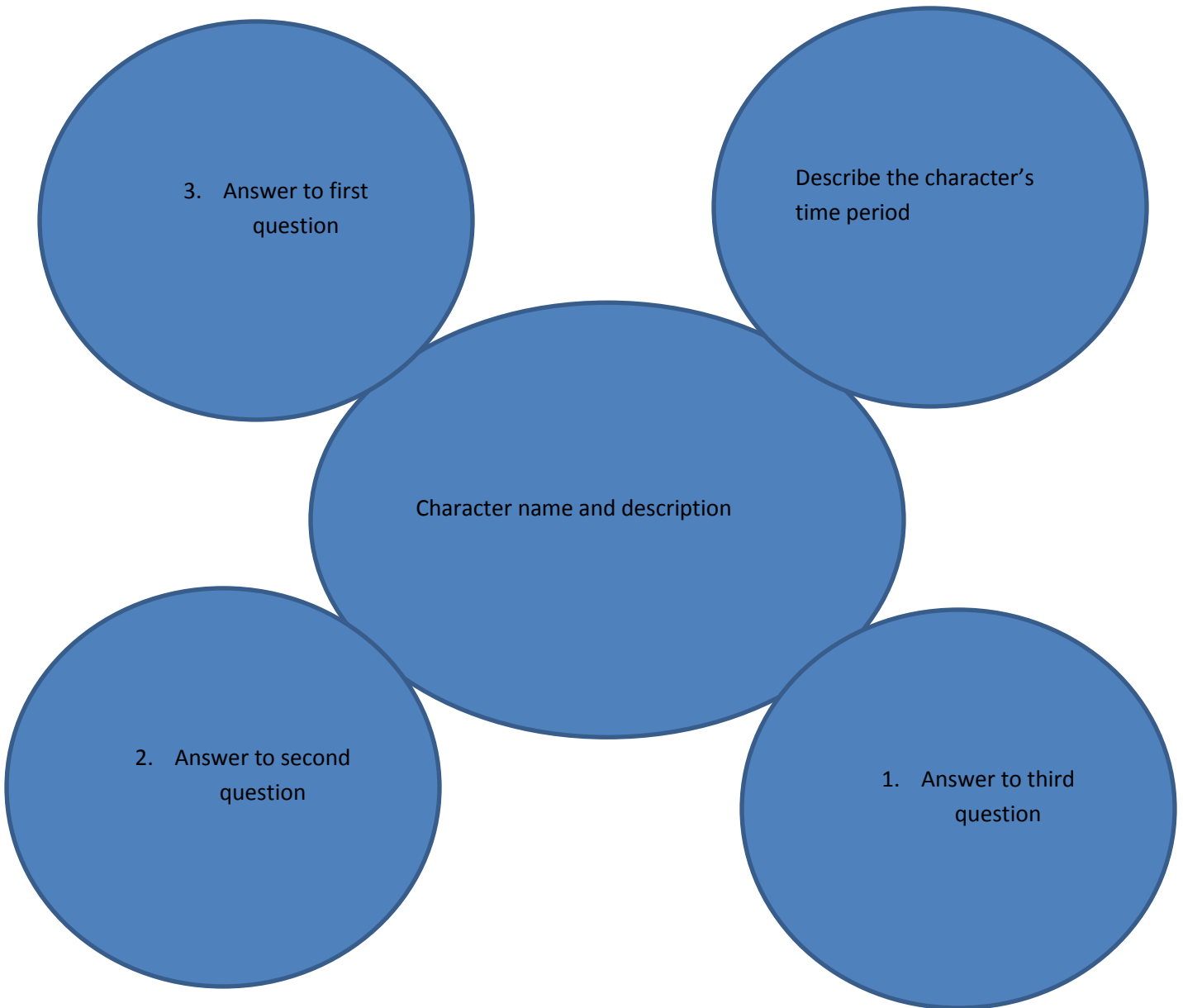
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND IDEAS FOR MONOLOGUE CREATION CAN BE FOUND HERE:

<http://www.theatreteachers.com/lesson-plans/creating-your-own-monologue>



## Developing Monologues: Character Analysis

NAME-----



## LOUISIANA STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

### LOUISIANA COMMON CORE

#### Key Ideas and Details

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- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3** Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

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- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.9** Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

#### Text Types and Purposes

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3a** Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3b** Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3c** Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3d** Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.



## RESOURCE LIST

<http://www.bookrags.com/lessonplan/drivingmissdaisy/>

<http://www.enotes.com/driving-miss-daisy>

<http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Driving-Miss-Daisy-Lesson-Plans>

<http://parentpreviews.com/movie-reviews/discussion/driving-miss-daisy>

<http://www.lessonplanet.com/search?keywords=driving+miss+daisy>

[http://www.lessonindex.com/Driving\\_Miss\\_Daisy\\_by\\_Alfred\\_Uhry.htm](http://www.lessonindex.com/Driving_Miss_Daisy_by_Alfred_Uhry.htm)

<http://www.scribd.com/deleted/10075627?query=lesson+plan+driving+miss+daisy>

[http://www.antistudy.com/free\\_book\\_notes/Driving\\_Miss\\_Daisy.php](http://www.antistudy.com/free_book_notes/Driving_Miss_Daisy.php)

<http://www.bookrags.com/lessonplan/drivingmissdaisy/calendar.html>

<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Driving-Miss-Daisy>