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NOTES FROM LEADERSHIP & DIRECTOR

LEADERSHIP

As we end one season and welcome another, we find ourselves in a time of change. This summer we made some bold announcements, including the sale of our building. And while there are sentiments out there that would look at that news and see fear, we see opportunities for growth and positive change; shifts that bring us in alignment with our highest potential.

I have always been fascinated by the change a caterpillar goes through in the chrysalis. Everything that the caterpillar has ever known is wholly stripped away, reduced to ooze as it slowly reforms. For some that change could seem scary. To a caterpillar, it is a simple progression. Curious is in that stage in the chrysalis, redefining, rebuilding, and wholly transforming into "a beautiful butterfly" in the words of Eric Carle. A progression that doesn't mean letting go of what has served us and made us who we are today but truly a progression that builds upon the richness of what has come before.

Native Americans have considered butterflies as symbols of transformation and hope. Our hope for this season is that you have theatre-going experiences that transforms you. From a chaotically funny political romp, to an unpacking of parallel experiences of institutional racism, to a search for hope and human connection, to a playwright who asks us through his play, "...who we are willing to extend ourselves to...give compassion to? Or tolerate?" and ending with a one-woman powerhouse of a show that tells the story of Iris, an African American woman who recalls pieces of her childhood as she integrated a school in Muskogee, Oklahoma. A fresh, incendiary, and high-voltage season indeed!

As friends, advocates, and supporters who believe in the transformative power of theatre, we welcome you to Season 27! Enjoy!



Jada Suzanne Dixon
Artistic Director

DIRECTOR

A confederate is an ally – someone who's on your side, anyone who supports you and works toward the same goal with you. Such a simple word and such an understandable definition. But in this country where we are experiencing such division how do we determine who our confederates really are?

Are our confederates someone who shares our political views or religious values? Someone who belongs to the same race, gender, or sexual orientation as us? Someone who understands that Black Lives Matter, but isn't black themselves? Someone who believes that Love Is Love but goes home to their heteronormative partnership at the end of the day. Someone who knows that no human is illegal, but is also a proud 7th generation American native? How do we find our own confederates so the isolation doesn't destroy us?

In writing about Confederates Dominique Morrisseau says, "Sometimes existing in the middle of racism, sexism, classism, and the insanity of it all is like living through a farce." As a black, queer, woman, that statement resonated with me to my bones. That is the statement that drives the production you will see tonight. What might it be like to live in a world where the farce is your life, and you don't know who, if anyone, is on your side. This play asks what might it be like to look back over the centuries and get a glimpse of the same farce being played out on a southern plantation, then to be jettisoned forward in time to the present and realize that the same societal structures that were designed to put and keep you in "your place" have only been given a renovation of sorts over time. Where the same systems of racism, sexism, and classism not only thrive, but are still deeply woven into the society that you must live and survive in?

A confederate is an ally – someone who is on your side. Wouldn't it be something if being on "our side" could be as simple as seeing all people as full human beings? All of us are worthy of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Wouldn't that be the real revolution?

Huge thanks to the confederates of **Confederates** Kenya, Tresha, Cameron, Rachel, Kristina, Zach, Cambria, as well as the design and leadership team who worked on this project.

Enjoy the show!

Marisa D. Hebert
Director

Curious Theatre Company

Presents

Confederates

by

Dominique Morisseau

Directed by Marisa Hebert

SETTING:

Sandra's Office. Sara's House

CAST

SANDRA.....Kenya Mahogany Fashaw
SARA.....Tresha Farris*
ABNER/MALIK.....Cameron Davis
MISSY SUE/CANIDCE.....Rachel Turner
LUANNE/JADE.....**Kristina Fontaine***

PRODUCTION TEAM

Scenic Designer.....Matthew S. Crane
Costume Designer.....Nicole Watts
Lighting Designer.....**Richard Devin****
Sound Designer.....Patrice Mondragon
Properties Artisan.....Krystal Brown
Stage Manager.....Zach Madison*
Assistant Stage Manager.....Cambria Bartlett
Scenic Coordinator.....Steven McDonald

CONFEDERATES will be performed without an intermission

BOLD = Curious Artistic Company Member

* = Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, Curious Theatre Company, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

** = Member of the United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829

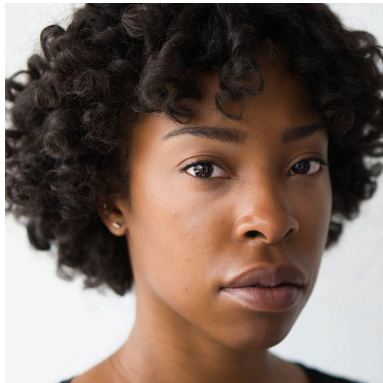


ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Cameron Davis (he/him) is ecstatic and honored to be making his Curious Theatre Company debut! At Other Theatres: Algernon – *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Dr. Watson – *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*, Charlie – *Mountain Octopus*, The Sheriff – *Sherwood: The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Creede Repertory Theatre) Fish – *The Royale* (Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company) Jim – *The Glass Menagerie* (Vintage Theatre) Romeo – *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare & Company) Donalbain – *Macbeth*, Stokes – *How To Catch Creation* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); Belize – *Perestroika*, Father Kenny – *A Man of No Importance* (Oregon Center for the Arts) Other productions: *Your Best One*, *I Can Go*, *Dance of the Fluxons*, *Knockout Mouse*, *Even*

Flowers Bloom in Hell, *Sometimes*, *Certain Aspects of Conflict in the Negro Family* (Ashland New Plays Festival); *Oedipus* (Isolation Theatre); *Our Utopia* (Bag&Baggage Theatre) Education: 2019 BFA Recipient, Southern Oregon University



Tresha Farris (she/her) is excited to be appearing in her first Curious Theatre Company production. A multidisciplinary theatre artist and Denver native, Tresha's most recent roles include Lily Louise Jackson in *The Book Club Play* and Howie Newsome in *Our Town* (Arvada Center). Audiences may also remember her as Boo Hag in *One Way-Back Day*, Susan White in *United Flight 232*, and Somebody in *Everybody* (The Catamounts), Bree Becker in *The Family Tree* (Arvada Center), Nina in *The Nina Variations* and Abraham Lincoln in *JQA* (BETC Theatre), Pearl in *Bull in a China Shop* (Benchmark Theatre Company), Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* and Cordelia in *King Lear* (Fearless Theatre Company). She is represented by Wilhelmina Denver. treshafarris.com

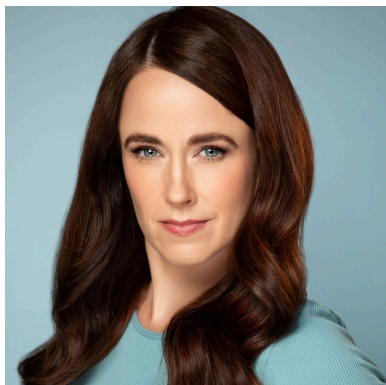


Kenya Mahogany Fashaw (she/her) is an actress, professional spoken word artist, educator, director, producer and playwright. She is the founder and owner of Black Artists Amplified which aims to amplify the voices of the youth through theater, poetry and music. She has written and directed the Henry Award winning play *Colorism, Breaking The Chains of Complexion*, Produced by (5280 Artist Co-Op). Kenya was Honored as one of Colorado's Creative in the Denver Westword. Her recent theater work includes: Aurora Fox Art Center's production of *Toni Stone* and Vintage Theatre's production of *Cadillac Crew*. And the direction of Firehouse Theaters production of *The Nacirema Society*. Kenya's passion is to create and be a part of stories that

normalize BIPOC people and deliver experiences that capture the imagination and build awareness, and education. Kenya is excited to be taking on the role of Sandra, in Curious Theater's production of *Confederates*!



Kristina Fountaine (she/her) A Denver-native, she was last seen as Chris in POTUS at Curious Theatre where she is an Artistic Company Member. Other credits include: Ainee in *cullud wattah* (Curious Theatre), Chris in *Amerikin* (Curious Theatre), David in *Theatre of the Mind* (DCPA Off-Center), Cheryl in *StickFly* (Arvada Center), Isabelle/Sabine in *The Liar* (Arvada Center), Muriel/Minorca in *Animal Farm* (Arvada Center), Vanessa in *Fairfield* (Miners Alley Playhouse), Shanita in *Skeleton Crew* (Curious Theatre), Lisa in *Corduroy* (DCPA Theatre Company), Nessa in *District Merchants* (Henry Award Nominee, Best Supporting Actress) (Miners Alley Playhouse) and *The Social Dilemma* (Netflix). She holds a BFA from SUNY Purchase College.



Rachel Turner (she/her) has performed in Denver Stories and Curious New Voices for Curious Theater Company. She is thrilled to join this incredible team for *Confederates!* Colorado credits include: *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Elf*, *She Loves Me*, *A Wonderful Life*, *I'll Be Home For Christmas*, *Camelot*, *Curtains*, *Tarzan*, *Big River* (Arvada Center); *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (Colorado Shakespeare Festival); *Silent Sky* (BETC); *The Squirrels*, *Consider the Oyster*, *Annie*, *Big Fish* (Aurora Fox); *A Little Night Music*, *Beau Jest*, *Jest A Second!* (Cherry Creek Theatre); *Singing in the Rain*, *Into The Woods*, (Candlelight Dinner Playhouse); *White Christmas*, *The Hobbit* (Town Hall). Awards: Marlowe Award for the role of Cinderella in *Into the Woods* (Candlelight), Henry nomination for the role of Sarah in *Jest A Second!* (Cherry Creek Theater).

Cinderella in *Into the Woods* (Candlelight), Henry nomination for the role of Sarah in *Jest A Second!* (Cherry Creek Theater).

Krystal Brown (she/her) This is Krystal's fifth time working with Curious Theatre Company and she is very excited to come back and work with all of these wonderful and talented people. She graduated from Red Rocks Community College and is currently pursuing a second degree in props from RRCC. Krystal loves sharing stories with people, and she hopes that all of you will enjoy this story.

Cambria Bartlett (she/they) is a recent graduate from the University of Northern Colorado. She is thrilled to be working with Curious on *Confederates*. At UNC, Cambria directed and choreographed multiple shows, but found a passion for stage management. They aim to continue growing her skills and meeting new people as she begins her career.

Matthew S. Crane (he/him) is a Colorado based scenic designer. He is excited to be joining the Curious team on *Confederates!* Locally, Matthew's designs have been seen at Colorado Shakespeare Festival, The University of Denver Theater, Lamont Opera at DU, Boulder Ensemble Theatre Company, Parker Arts/Veritas Productions, Vintage Theatre, and Central City Opera. In addition to theatrical design, Matthew is an associate designer with Lionfish Design, providing design and art direction for live events, broadcasts, and corporate clients. MFA Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts.

Richard Devin (he/him) has designed lighting for many Curious productions including *The Minutes*, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, *Refuge*, *American Son*, *Passover*, *Skeleton Crew*, *The Cake*, *Detroit '67*, and *Appropriate*. He designed *Disgraced*, *Fade*, and *The Christians* for the Denver Center Theatre Company. Dick also worked with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival for 17 years as

Producing Artistic Director, and 26 years as lighting designer. He has designed lighting for 250 productions at 36 of America's regional theatres, as well as designing Off-Broadway and in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Cairo. He was Managing Director and Lighting Designer with Massachusetts' Williamstown Theatre Festival for eight years and is past president of the United States Institute for Theatre Technology. He is honored to be a Fellow of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre. Dick received his BA in Drama from the University of Northern Iowa and an MFA from the Yale School of Drama. He is a Member of the United Scenic Artists of America.

Marisa D. Hebert (she/her) is an Actor, Director, Playwright, and Intimacy Coach located in Colorado Springs, CO where she lives with her wife and rescue dogs. Marisa is a first time Director for Curious Theatre and is thrilled to be a part of the 27th Season. Marisa had the pleasure of directing *RENT*, *It's a Wonderful Life – A Live Radio Play*, *The Legend of Georgia McBride*, and *The Stone Garden* for The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. At THEATREWORKS, her directorial works include *King Hedley II*, and *Every Brilliant Thing*. Onstage productions include, *Steel Magnolias*, *The Mountaintop*, which won her the 2020 CTG Henry Award for Best Actress. *Tiny Beautiful Things*, which won her the 2020 Colorado Henry Award for Best Supporting Actress, *Vera Stark*, *In The Heights*, *Amadeus*, *Raisin in the Sun*, *Love Lost and What I Wore*, *9 to 5 The Musical*, *In The Next Room*, and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Marisa penned *Just Keep Breathing*, and *Love in the Hate State* for the Of Spacious Skies radio series. Her first full-length play *Pieces of Him* won the 2013 Rough Writers New Play festival, and selections from her lyrical autobiographical play *High Yellow* have been performed at UCCS and The Millibo Arts Theatre.

Zach Madison (he/him) At Curious: *The 24-Hour Plays* Other Credits: *Hamlet*, *Twenty50*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Bite Size* (Denver Center); *Noises Off*, *Cinderella*, *Beautiful*, *Damn Yankees*, and *Into the Woods* (Arvada Center); *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, and *The Little Prince* (Denver Children's Theater); *Freaky Friday*, *Hurricane Diane*, and *Wonderland* (Aurora Fox); *The Portrait*, *The Pitch*, *The Phoenix*, and *The Trespassers* (Ellis & Fortmiller Productions); *The Polar Express* (Colorado Railroad Museum); *Recent Tragic Events* (Stage 33 Productions); and over 10 productions with Phamaly Theatre Company.

Patrice Mondragon (any pronoun) is excited to return to Curious Theatre Company as the Sound Designer for this production of *Confederates*. Previously they first sound designed for Curious earlier this year on their production of *Cost of Living* (2024). Other sound design credits include The Aurora Fox's production of *Around the World in 80 Days* (2024), Theatreworks Colorado Springs' productions of *King Hedley II* (2023) and *Dream House* (2024), Vintage Theatre Company's production of *Fun Home*. (2024), Phamaly Theatre Company's productions of *The Silhouette's Indescribable* (2023) and *Spring Awakening* (2023), and Fearless Theatre Company's productions of *In The Next Room* (2020) and *Stopkiss* (2019).

Nicole Watts (she/her) is a freelance Designer and Technician. Her other Curious Theatre Company design credit is *Alma*. Other companies she has worked for include Denver Center Theatre Company, The Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities, Creede Repertory Theatre, Glimmerglass Festival, The Catamounts, McLeod Summer Playhouse, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Ohio Light Opera, New Orleans Shakespeare Festival, NETworks, Loyola University, Southeastern Louisiana University, and Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Training: BFA; University of Wyoming, MFA; Tulane University www.nicolekwatts.com

University of Denver Theatre Tech Intern Program. The Theatre Technical Internship Program provides DU students with paid opportunities to work with professional companies and designers in a supportive setting that prepares them for work in the entertainment industry. During the build process, students are engaged in the construction shop with working professionals, and then

experience the challenges of moving the show elements to a professional venue, working with the theatre company's team to install and present the show.

Between July 2023 and July 2024, the Tech Interns have built fourteen productions for professional companies across Colorado.

Projects for Curious include *Confederates*, *POTUS*, *Cullud Wattah*, *Truth Be Told*, *The Minutes*, *Letters of Suresh*, *On The Exhale*, *Alma*, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, and *American Son*.

Other projects include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Phamaly Theatre Company (in the Kilstrom Theatre at DCPA), *Legally Blonde*, *School of Rock*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Sound of Music*, *Footloose*, *Matilda*, and *The Full Monty* for Parker Arts, *Enemy of the People*, *Holly Alaska!*, *Coal Country*, *The Children* and two seasons of the Summer Theatre Truck with BETC, *Acts of Faith* and *Stockade* for Local, *Box* at the Edinburgh Fringe, *The Paul Reiser Big Font Tour* (video), *Reunion* for NYC-based Creative Endeavor, and three full productions for Lamont Opera Theatre.

Go Deeper: *Confederates*

Compiled by Christy Montour-Larson

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AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU

Excerpts from Signature Theatre Interview with Andrea Ambam



What inspired this particular play, and how did it come to be?

I like to know where I am in my own freedom story. Where were the examples of me or the unsung? I thought, "Well if I'm going to look at the past, I can't look at through a vacuum. I have to look at the past in relationship to the present." I don't want to be distant. I want to be up-close and personal and overt. I wrote this play to look at the relationship between the past and present not knowing that eventually that kind of thinking was going to be banned in 15 states in this country.

Do you remember your own education of the Civil War? Was there anything you learned by writing this show that shocked you, or that you couldn't believe hadn't been covered in school?

My knowledge of the Civil War came mostly from school, where you're taught a very limited curriculum about the Civil War and the reasons for it. To be someone who writes a lot about history, I was really bored with it in high school. I definitely don't remember it as something that felt personal and alive to me. I knew Sojourner Truth's name, I knew Harriet Tubman's name, but I didn't know about union spies, and I didn't understand how we were architects of our own freedom. I wanted to know the intricate details of that, so that's why I started studying that for this [play].

Confederates is radically different than anything I've ever written, and it is radical to me in its DNA. I think there's always some kind of fear and aversion if a story is going to have something about slavery. I think people get really, "we're over it." All I can say is that we're aware of that, and the story is aware of that, so come and know that you're in some safe hands. I don't

believe in the inhumanity of the enslaved. I believe the same complex feelings that we have going on today, they also had going on back then. I believe that the same way we have to navigate patriarchy or white fragility or class issues, they also had to figure that out and deal with that and put on a face here and then take it off there. We're playing with genre to really be able to humanize the enslaved and also those of us in the present.

Sandra and Sara are two powerful Black women in this show on parallel liberation journeys. How much of yourself do you see in these women? What does it mean to be a Black woman writing and telling stories at this time in the American Theatre, and how do you seek your own internal and external liberation in this industry and beyond? In this play these two Black women, one who is an enslaved rebel woman trying to get free from literal, physical bondage and the other who is a Black woman professor at a contemporary university- a predominantly white institution- is trying to get free mentally. From that mental restriction and that mental oppression that she's experiencing. These two Black women feel, because of who they are, wanting to be free inside of themselves, wanting to live without being underneath a gaze that suffocates them; they feel that they have a target on their backs and they do they literally have a target on them.

And I feel that way as a Black woman theatre maker that writes what I write unapologetically. It just feels like a looming target on my back and I never know when somebody is going to take fire. I feel like I have it on me all the time. And " I'm sure I'm not the only one who feels that way. I think we are in the time where we are burning books, banning books in states, banning ideas. I definitely feel unsafe. And I also feel unwilling to cower to that feeling. I feel vulnerable and unsafe and courageous because I'm gonna keep going. Obviously, we all have to keep telling the stories that we are moved to tell, but telling them at this time feels particularly Dangerous.

Why is calling in the ancestors important to the process of Confederates? There are some bold, courageous things that have to happen in this play, and to know that you're doing that in partnership with your ancestors, that they're there with you, and the ancestors that went through some of the things that we're gonna enact in this play - not necessarily traumatic things, but boldness - that you're not doing those things in a vacuum; you're doing those things with the ancestors present.

PLAYWRIGHT'S RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

By Dominique Morisseau

You are allowed to laugh audibly.

You are allowed to have audible moments of reaction and response.

My work requires a few "um hmms" and "uhn uhns" should you need to use them. Just maybe in moderation. Only when you really need to vocalize.

This can be church for some of us, and testifying is allowed.

This is also live theatre and the actors need you to engage with them, not distract them or thwart their performance.

Please be an audience member that joins with others and allows a bit of breathing room. Exhale together. Laugh together. Say "amen" should you need to.

This is community. Let's go.

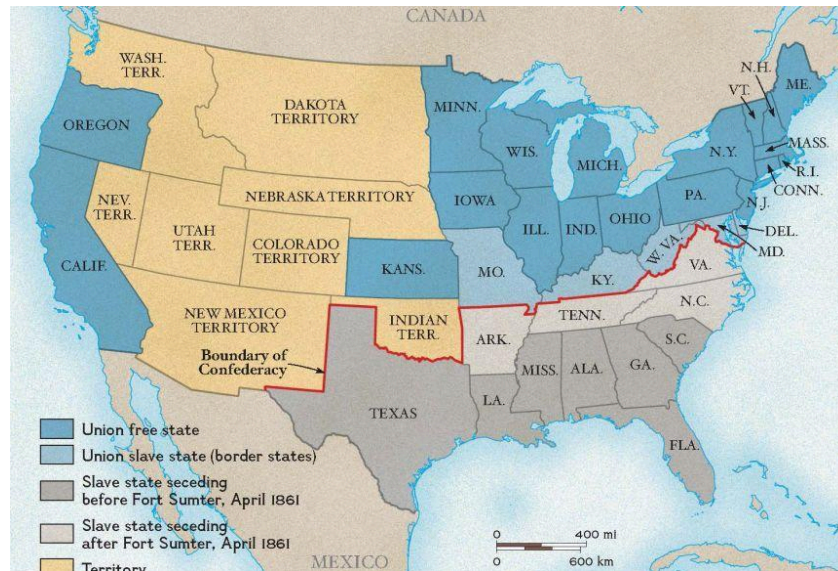
CIVIL WAR TIMELINE

1860

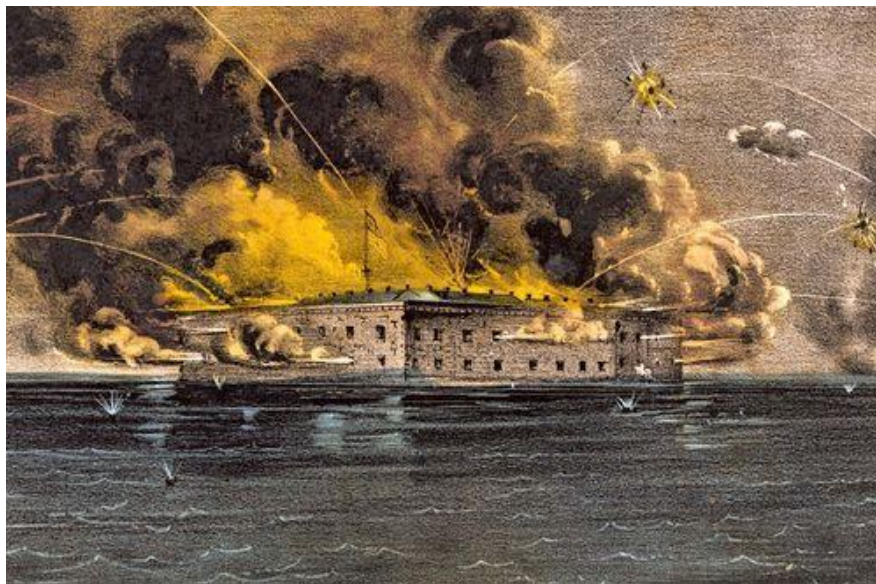
November 6: Abraham Lincoln, a known opponent to slavery, is elected President.

1861

January: South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas are the first states to secede from the Union and form the Confederate States of America. They're later joined by Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina.



April 12: The first shots of the Civil War are fired at Fort Sumter at the entrance to the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina



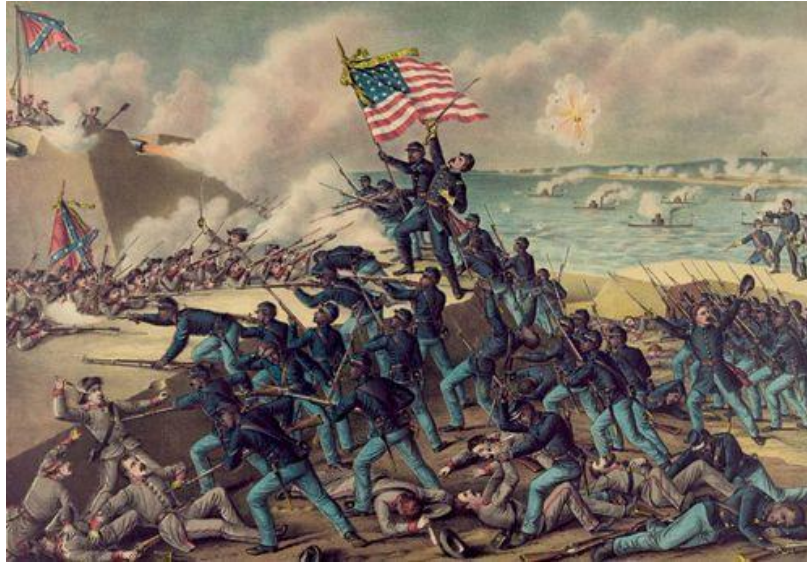
Battle of Fort Sumter

July – The South sustains a victory at the First Battle of Bull Run at Manassas Junction, Virginia.

1862

January 27: President Lincoln issued General War Order No. 1, ordering all Union soldiers to advance on the Confederacy.

September 17 Confederate and Union forces fight at Antietam, the bloodiest day of the Civil War.

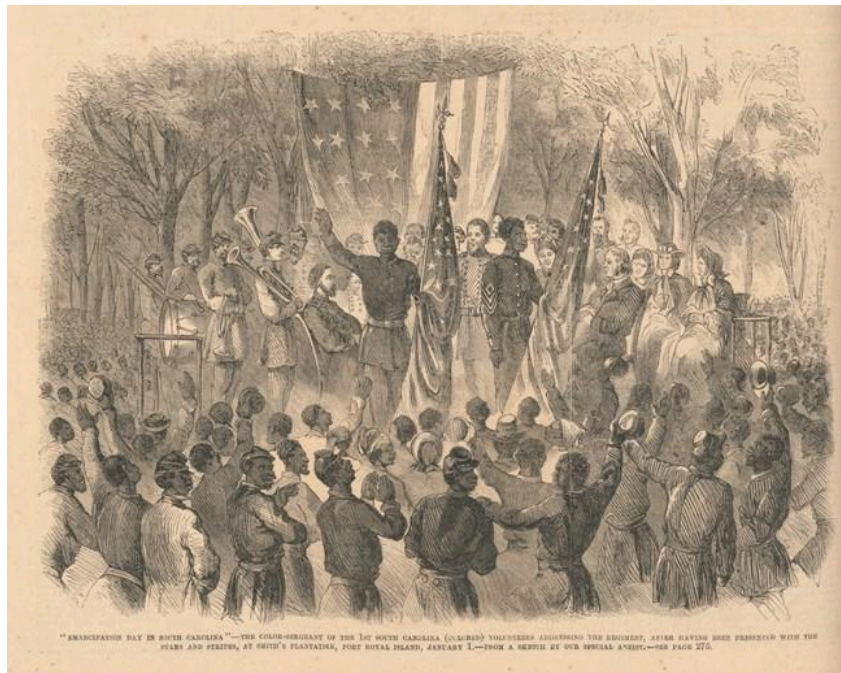


Battle of Antietam

September 22: President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring all enslaved People in rebel territory were free as of January 1st, 1863. The proclamation did not, however, free all enslaved people, and honored slavery in slave-holding states that had remained loyal to the Union.

1863

January: The First South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment, composed of Black soldiers and authorized by President Lincoln, organized in South Carolina to fight for the Union. Harriet Tubman served as a cook and nurse, and eventually as a spy and scout with the regiment.



The 1st South listened to the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

May Union General Grant captures Port Hudson, Louisiana during the Vicksburg Campaign, gaining control of the Mississippi River and splitting the Confederacy in two

July 1 – 3: In the Battle of Gettysburg, Union forces fend off Confederate soldiers and halt their invasion of the North. Following the battle Lincoln delivered the famous "Gettysburg Address."
June 15: Congress rules that Black soldiers must receive equal pay.

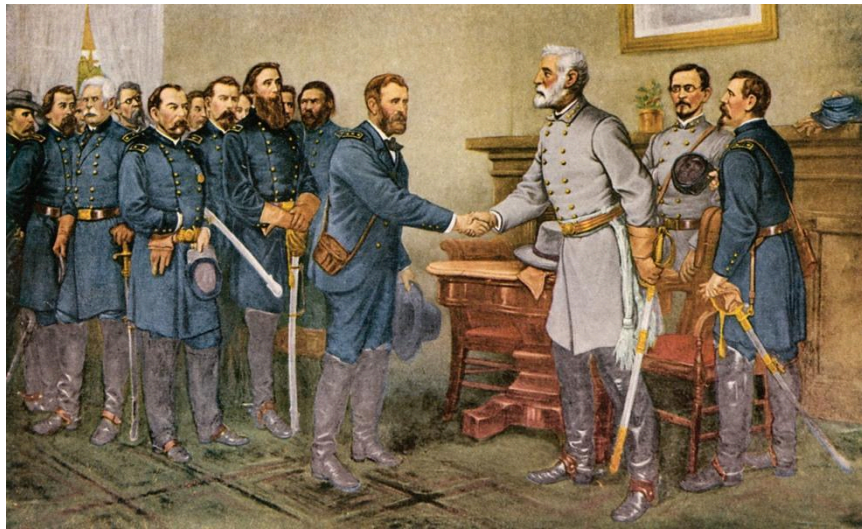


107th U.S. Colored Infantry Fort Corcoran near Washington, D.C.

September – After months of battles, the Confederacy surrenders Atlanta to the Union.

1864

April 9: Confederate General Robert E. Lee and Union General Ulysses S. Grant meet at Appomattox Courthouse and agree on terms of a Confederate surrender.



The surrender of General Lee to General Grant at Appomattox Court House

April 14: President Lincoln is assassinated by actor John Wilkes Booth during a performance of *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater in Washington D.C.

June 19: Two and half years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas (where slavery largely persisted) to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people were freed. "Juneteenth" honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running Black holiday. Juneteenth became a federal holiday in 2021.



Woman in a decorated carriage on Juneteenth, in Houston's Fourth Ward, ca. 1900

IMPORTANT VOICES OF RESISTANCE IN THE CIVIL WAR

Many brave Black American men and women risked their lives to learn and share intelligence vital to the success of the Union, playing an important role in the outcome of the Civil War. Slaves and freed African Americans were an invaluable resource to the Union, providing information on the Confederate forces. They became known as the "black dispatches."

Mary Elizabeth Bowser



A formerly enslaved woman, Bowser infiltrated the Confederates White House as servant, providing crucial information to Union forces by eavesdropping on conversations. She gained access to lists of troop movements, Union prisoner locations and military strategy and treasury reports.

Abraham Galloway



A prominent Black Union spy who provided critical information about Confederate coastal defenses and helped recruit African American soldiers. One of the first African Americans elected to the North Carolina Senate.

Mary Louvestre

Mary Louvestre was a free Black woman living in Norfolk, VA, where a Confederate ship was being built in a port across the river where she worked as a housekeeper in Norfolk for one of the engineers. Facing certain death as a spy if caught, she treks two hundred miles during the bitter winter of 1862 to reach the office of Union Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, where she hands over the plans.

Harriet Tubman



While well-known for her work on the Underground Railroad, Tubman also played a significant role in gathering intelligence for the Union army, utilizing her knowledge of the South to infiltrate Confederate territory.

EXPLORING CRITICAL RACE THEORY THROUGH CONFEDERATES

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an academic framework developed in the 1970s and 1980s by legal scholars like Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado. Its purpose is to examine how racial inequality is embedded in legal systems, policies, and institutions rather than solely in individual prejudices.

"Confederates" invites audiences to reflect on the structural and systemic nature of racism, the intersectionality of identities, and the ongoing impact of historical injustices in shaping contemporary society

Historical Context and Structural Racism

CRT emphasizes that racial inequality is embedded in the legal and social systems rather than being merely a product of individual prejudice. *Confederates* examines the historical context of slavery and its enduring impact on African American lives today, reflecting how systemic racism shapes the characters' experiences.

Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality, introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is central to CRT and highlights how different forms of oppression overlap. In *Confederates*, characters navigate multiple identities—race, gender, class—showing how these intersect to create unique experiences of oppression and resilience.

Interest Convergence

Derrick Bell's principle of interest convergence suggests that progress for racial justice occurs only when it aligns with the interests of those in power. The play examines moments of compromise and negotiation regarding race, showcasing how true progress is often contingent on broader societal interests.

Legacy of Racism

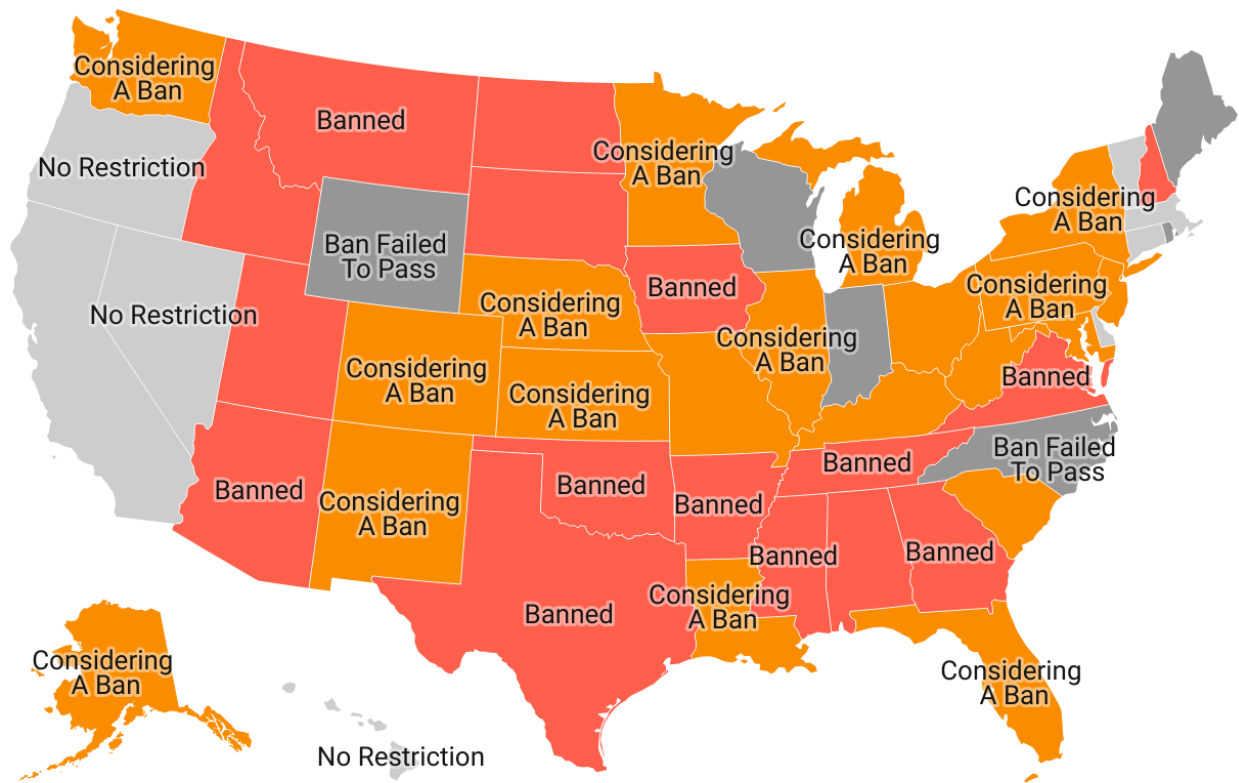
CRT argues that the legacy of racism continues to influence contemporary societal structures. *Confederates* delves into how the past informs the present, illustrating how historical injustices continue to affect the lives of the characters and their Communities.

Critique of American Identity

The play challenges conventional narratives of American identity, paralleling CRT's critique of how history is taught and understood. It confronts the notion of a unified national identity by addressing the painful truths of America's past regarding race and Equality.

Dialogue and Understanding

CRT advocates for dialogue around race and racism to foster understanding and healing. *Confederates* uses dialogue among its characters to explore complex issues of race and identity, encouraging audiences to engage with these difficult conversations.



Created with Datawrapper

States that have banned Critical Race Theory 2004

Sources:

- Derrick Bell: *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* (1992)
- Kimberlé Crenshaw : *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color* (1991)
- Richard DeAngelo: *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (2017)
- New York Times: *What Is Critical Race Theory, and Why Is It Under Attack?*
Published on July 14, 2021

BLACK WOMEN IN ACADEMIA

Black women in academia have made significant strides but still face substantial disparities in representation, advancement, and experience. Here are some key statistics and trends related to Black women in higher education:

Faculty Representation

Tenure-Track and Tenured Positions: Black women hold only about 2% of tenure-track and tenured faculty positions, with Black faculty (all genders) making up about 6% of faculty nationwide. In contrast, white faculty make up approximately 75% of tenured and tenure-track positions, with higher representation in prestigious institutions.

Full Professorships: Black women are even rarer at the full professor level, making up only about 1% of full professors nationwide. White men and women, in comparison, hold about 85% of full professor positions, with white men significantly outnumbering white women.

Adjunct and Non-Tenured Roles: Many Black women in academia are employed in adjunct or non-tenure-track positions, which often come with lower pay, fewer benefits, and less job security compared to tenured positions.

Experiences in Academia

Discrimination and Bias: Studies indicate that Black women faculty face frequent instances of discrimination and bias. They often report experiences of racial and gender discrimination, including feeling marginalized or undervalued compared to their white colleagues.

Service Burden: Black women in academia are more likely to be asked to serve on diversity-related committees or participate in "invisible labor," such as mentoring students of color, which can take time away from research and publishing, both critical for tenure.

Pay Disparities: Black women in academia generally earn less than both their male counterparts and women of other racial backgrounds, with Black female professors earning, on average, 84 cents for every dollar earned by white male professors.

Leadership Roles

Administrative Positions: Black women remain underrepresented in academic leadership, holding fewer roles as deans, provosts, or college presidents. As of recent data, only about 5% of college presidents are Black, and an even smaller percentage are Black women.

Pipeline to Leadership: The lack of Black women in senior roles is often attributed to systemic barriers in the tenure track, limited access to mentorship, and fewer networking opportunities compared to their white peers.

Sources:

National Center for Education Statistics; The American Council on Education; The Chronicle of Higher Education ; The Association of American Colleges & Universities

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of the play's title, *Confederates*? Who are the confederates in the two stories?
2. The first thing we see in *Confederates* is a century-old photograph of a breastfeeding woman. How did it make you feel? Did your feelings of the photograph change by the end of the play? Why or Why not?
3. Compare and contrast the journeys of Sandra and of Sara. In what ways are the two women similar? In what ways are they different?
4. The characters of Abner and Malik are played by the same actor. In what ways does this double casting give information about both characters? What wars are they both fighting?
5. In what ways does female infertility or "being barren" impact Sara, Missy Sue, and Sandra in the play? In what ways is it disempowering and for which characters? In what ways is it empowering and for which characters?
6. What kind of power does Missy Sue have over Sara? What power does Sara have over Missy Sue?
7. The characters of LuAnne and Jade are played by the same actor. Compare and contrast their journeys in the play. In what ways does this double casting give information about both characters?
8. Why does the playwright juxtapose slavery with academia in this play? How are they similar? In what ways are they different? What is learned from experiencing the two worlds side by side? What parallels, if any, can be drawn?
9. Malik's paper is about the links between what he calls the "modern-day plantation" of corporate America and the antebellum South. Where do you see the links? What is different?
10. What are the different freedoms desired in the play? What sets Sandra free? Sara?
11. Malik/Abner is the only male presenting character in the play. What do you think those two characters, and the role of masculinity/male privilege play in this piece?
12. How did you feel the set, lights, costumes and sound added to your experience of the play?

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Thank you to our founding Artistic Company Members whose dedication, hard work and artistic vision has helped make Curious the amazing theatre it is today.

Dee Covington
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