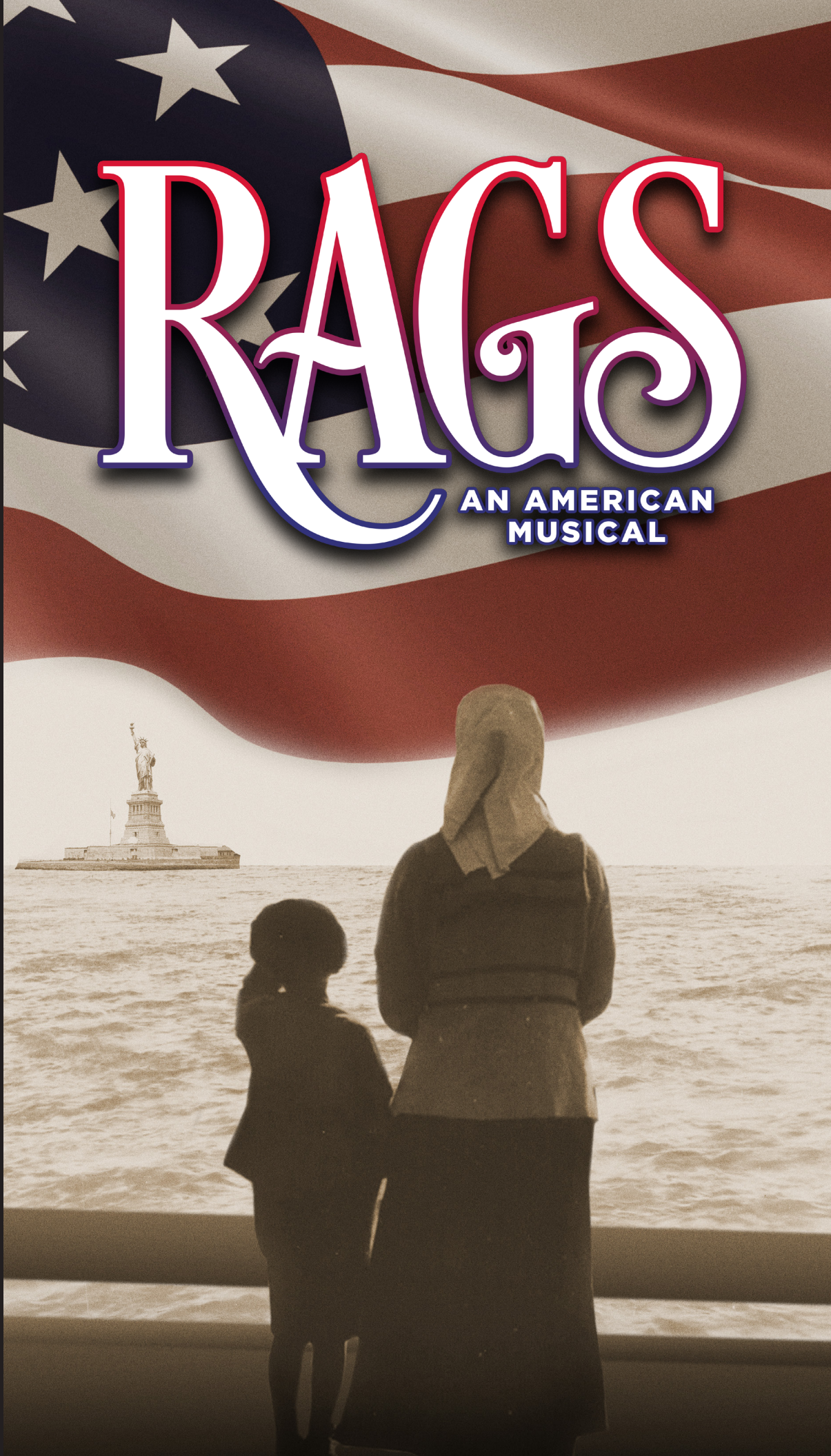


GOODSPEED MUSICALS

STUDENT GUIDE TO THE THEATRE

RAGS

AN AMERICAN
MUSICAL





MICHAEL GENNARO
Executive Director

presents

RAGS

AN AMERICAN
MUSICAL

Book by
JOSEPH STEIN

Music by
CHARLES STROUSE

Lyrics by
STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

Revised Book by
DAVID THOMPSON

Scenic Design by
MICHAEL SCHWEIKARDT

Costume Design by
LINDA CHO

Lighting Design by
JOHN LASITER

Projection Design by
LUKE CANTARELLA

Wig & Hair Design by
**MARK ADAM
RAMPMEYER**

Fight Director
RON PIRETTI

Assistant Music Director
WILLIAM J. THOMAS

Orchestrations by
DAN DeLANGE

Vocal Arrangements by
DAVID LOUD

Sound Design by
JAY HILTON

Dialect Coach
BEN FUREY

Casting by
**PAUL HARDT
STEWART/WHITLEY
CASTING**

Production Stage Manager
BRADLEY G. SPACHMAN

Associate Producer
BOB ALWINE

Line Producer
**DONNA LYNN COOPER
HILTON**

General Manager
RACHEL TISCHLER

Music Direction by
MICHAEL O'FLAHERTY

Choreographed by
PARKER ESSE

Directed by
ROB RUGGIERO

OCT 6 - DEC 10, 2017
THE GOODSPEED

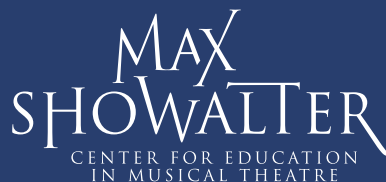
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Goodspeed’s Student Guides can be found on our website:
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Audience Insights for *Rags* was prepared by:
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Student Guide updated 10.04.17

CHARACTER & SHOW SYNOPSIS

THE CHARACTERS

REBECCA HERSHKOWITZ: A young woman fleeing pogroms and violence in Russia, looking to make a new life for herself and her son in America.

BELLA COHEN: Rebecca's friend whom she meets on the ship to America. She is 18 years old and looking forward to her independence in America.

DAVID HERSHKOWITZ: A curious young boy, David is Rebecca's 9-year-old son.

AVRAM COHEN: Bella's father who has been living with his sister and brother-in-law in New York for some time.

JACK BLUMBERG: Avram's brother-in-law who runs a dress shop out of his tenement apartment on the Lower East Side.

ANNA BLUMBERG: Avram's sister who, while she never had children of her own, has always wanted a big family.

BEN LEVITOWITZ: A young man who works in Jack's dress shop.

MAX BRONFMAN: The factory owner who employs Jack and his family as dressmakers.

RACHEL BRODSKY: A pushcart peddler who befriends Avram.

SAL RUSSO: A neighbor who lives downstairs of Jack and Anna's tenement. He is a progressive reformer and also acts as the family's Sabbath Goy.

QUINTET: 3 men and 2 women who make up the ensemble and play minor characters throughout the story.



Christian Michael Camporin as David and Samantha Massell as Rebecca in Goodspeed's Rags. ©Diane Sobolewski.

Rebecca and Bella sit on the deck of a ship as it enters New York harbor while Rebecca's son, David, sleeps nearby. After a long journey from their native Russia, Rebecca confesses to Bella that she and David do not have the \$20 necessary to enter the country; neither do they have a relative to meet them at the dock. Rebecca is prepared to improvise, however. After all, she did bribe their way onto the ship at the dock in Danzig in the first place. She gives Bella a lace collar she has made as a parting gift. As day breaks, the Statue of Liberty comes into view.

The ship docks at Ellis Island, and the passengers begin processing through immigration. Through the chaos, Bella finds her father, Avram, while Rebecca and David are stopped by a customs officer. Rebecca sees Bella with Avram, and she tells the officer he is her Uncle Mordecai. Avram initially resists helping a woman he has never met, but when he sees little David peek from behind Rebecca's skirt, he plays along. Grateful to Avram for his kindness, Rebecca and David go with him and Bella to his home.

Avram lives with his sister, Anna, and his brother-in-law, Jack, in a tenement on the Lower East Side, out of which they also run a dress shop. Jack, the shop foreman, anticipated the arrival of Avram's daughter, but when he returns with not one, but three, new additions, Jack is furious. Rebecca explains that she is a seamstress and can help with his business, but Jack

refuses to listen until Bella shows him the collar Rebecca made for her. Reluctantly convinced, Jack lets Rebecca and David stay, and they all settle in for the night.

The next morning, everyone prepares for their new jobs. With the new additions in the dress shop, Jack rents a pushcart for Avram to sell goods on the street. Avram never enjoyed sewing, but he does not wish to be a peddler either; in Russia he was a teacher and a scholar. Ben, a shop worker, takes Avram's place at the sewing machine while David replaces him as schlepper. Bella is the new baster and Rebecca, the finisher. When Jack shows Rebecca and Bella the dress pattern, Rebecca recommends altering it to be more interesting. Jack interrupts her; he tells her that Jews are paid to sew, not to think. He warns Rebecca that Bronfman, the factory owner, is demanding and that she should not question him.

On the street below, Avram sits by his cart reading a book. Rachel, another pushcart peddler, approaches him. She points out that he has not sold anything sitting quietly, but Avram does not relish yelling in the street to sell things. Rachel teaches him to bargain, eventually making his first sale. Moments later, David arrives at Avram's cart with a small flag; it was a present from a stranger. Rachel, suddenly very serious, warns David to stay in his own neighborhood. She reads the flag's message aloud: "No Dogs, No Jews."

A few days pass, and the family prepares for the Sabbath. As they arrange the dinner table, David finds an old piano being used as a shelf. Ben rushes over and begins to play while Anna calls for the downstairs neighbor Sal, a Catholic progressive reformer and their Sabbath Goy. He introduces himself to Rebecca. When he learns she works in the shop, he tells her that Bronfman exploits them; he pays \$1.50 per dress when they are worth at least \$2.25 a piece. Sal leaves for mass, and the family begins their Sabbath prayers.

That night, David cries out in his sleep from nightmares. Bella sits with Rebecca as she watches her son and listens to her memories of hiding in the fields of her village during a pogrom. She found her husband, Nathan, badly hurt and bleeding. This is David's nightmare. As Rebecca reminisces about life in Russia, she grows frustrated and complains about Bronfman's insistence on producing plain, ordinary clothing. She and Bella fantasize about opening their own dress shop someday. Bella returns to sleep, and Rebecca attends to a half-finished dress on the shop's dummy.

After working all night, Rebecca awakens to

Jack, irate that she refashioned a dress from factory materials. While Jack yells at Rebecca, Bella and David gather the dresses and put them in bundles to be schlepped to the factory, including the new dress Rebecca created. David takes the bundles to the factory, passing through an anti-immigration rally chanting: "Take our city back!"

Later, Bronfman unexpectedly visit the tenement, wielding Rebecca's redesigned dress. Jack is humiliated, but Rebecca remains firm; she tells the men that no woman wants to be ordinary. Bronfman is not angry, though. In fact, he wants them to make more of Rebecca's design. He offers them \$1.75 a dress, but Rebecca quickly negotiates to \$2.50 a dress. Impressed, Bronfman enlists Rebecca to design a dress for a wealthy, uptown client. She agrees, and after Bronfman leaves, everyone dances in celebration.

Avoiding the heat, the family sits on the rooftop while Ben shows off his new gramophone. Sal arrives just in time for Rebecca to reveal her new design. In celebration, Ben plays a song on the gramophone and dances with Bella until Avram tells him to leave. Bella finally expresses her pent-up frustration with Avram; his protectiveness keeps Bella from living the free, American life she dreams of. Bella runs downstairs, and Avram follows her, leaving Rebecca alone with Sal. She tells Sal they should not be alone together – after all, he is Catholic and she is Jewish. When Sal protests, Rebecca tells him that when her husband Nathan fought injustice in Russia like Sal does here, he was killed and she was left alone with a young child. Sal and Rebecca look out at the city, he kisses her, and he leaves.

Now it is the 4th of July, and the whole family is at the beach on Coney Island. Much to David's dismay, Bronfman joins them on the trip. To cheer him up, Ben sings a song he wrote for Independence Day called "Yankee Boy." When a beachgoer asks Ben where to purchase his song, Ben has a revelation: Americans buy songs! Bronfman discusses future plans with Rebecca; he wants to help her move uptown, and to do that he says she should change her last name to Harris and go into business with him. They will make and sell custom dresses for uptown clients.

A few days later, the family waits anxiously for David to return after being gone over two hours. Finally Avram returns with the young boy, delayed by The Great Revolt happening throughout the city. The strike shut down all the factories, and the workers march in the streets. Concerned, Jack and Anna recall the last labor protest which resulted in no work for six months and zero progress for the workers. They have little faith this strike will amount to any improvements in their lives. Rebecca leaves to find Sal.

When Rebecca finds him amongst the strikers, she accuses Sal of jeopardizing everyone's jobs. She has gained momentum with her uptown clients and finally managed to save some money. To Rebecca, this strike threatens her family's livelihood and reminds her of the unrest she left behind in Russia. Sal reminds her that her success is due to Bronfman's connections; not everyone has someone looking out for them.

The strike continues for months. Seasons change from summer to fall to winter. It begins to snow.

Avram tells the others that people are being evicted all over the city. The strike has resulted in hardship for many, many people. Jack even sells their piano. Luckily, Rebecca is still able to work fitting dresses for women uptown, and she returns with

whatever money she makes. This time, she also returns with the news that Bronfman found a job for Bella in a factory that is about to settle with the strikers, but Avram adamantly opposes his daughter working in a sweatshop. David comes in from the strike, and Rebecca scolds him. He knows he is not supposed to go to the strikes, but he likes spending time with Sal. David tries to convince Rebecca that she likes Sal, too. There is a knock on the door; Bronfman has come to take Rebecca out.

As Bella heads to the factory for work, she passes Ben without recognizing him; he shaved his beard and wears a derby hat. Delighted to see her, Ben escorts Bella to her new job at the factory. He has big plans for himself and Bella. He will sell his songs, then they will get married and live uptown – in the Bronx! From afar, Avram and Rachel watch; Avram still disapproves of Ben. Rachel sees that Avram needs help with Bella, and eventually she persuades him to marry her.

Uptown, Bronfman is at a fitting with Rebecca, whom he calls "Miss Harris." When the client asks Rebecca about her future plans, Rebecca tells her that she plans to open her own shop someday; Bronfman interjects that they will open a shop together. As they finish, David runs in looking for Rebecca. Anna sent him; there was a fire at Bella's factory.

Bella has died in the fire, and mourners gather for the Kaddish. Avram refuses to speak to Rebecca. She dons the collar she made for Bella on the ship to America.

Fueled by the tragedy of Bella's death, Rebecca stands amid the protesters. Bronfman finds her and tells her to leave, but she refuses. Finally she sees the truth about Bronfman's plan for their business; he is only using her talents to make money for himself. She tells Bronfman that from now on, she will fight back against men like him in Bella's honor. Through the crowd, Rebecca spots Sal, and he helps her onto a platform where she addresses the crowd. Bronfman leaves.

It is moving day at the tenement. Anna and Jack are heading to Chicago, Rebecca has found a location for her shop, and Avram is moving into Rachel's home. A parting gesture to Rebecca, Jack leaves the shop's sewing machine to her business. Still mourning Bella, Avram barely speaks and considers returning to Russia. When Ben comes to say goodbye, he announces that he has sold a song: "Bella's Song." Avram refuses to acknowledge Ben, and Rebecca yells at him for wasting the life and fortune he has when all Bella wanted herself was to live a full and independent life. Finally, Avram wishes Rebecca luck, and he leaves with Rachel and David. Rebecca stands alone in the tenement when Sal comes to say his goodbyes. He is leaving that night for Boston to organize more labor unions, but he will return. He kisses Rebecca goodbye.

Rebecca and David collect their belongings and prepare for a new adventure in a new neighborhood. Out in New York harbor, a new group of immigrants, hopeful for a bright future in America, disembarks a ship.



JOSEPH STEIN (*Original Book*) was born on May 30, 1912 to Russian immigrants Charles and Emma Stein in the Bronx, New York. An avid reader as a child, Stein turned to writing and editing for his school papers in both high school and college, though he never anticipated pursuing a career as a writer. He graduated from the City College of New York in 1934 and went on to receive his Master's degree in Social Work from Columbia University in 1937. Stein built a career as a social worker for nearly a decade before turning to writing full time. His first break as a writer came when he met then-budding comedian Zero Mostel at a luncheon given by a mutual friend. When Mostel mentioned he needed new material for his radio show, Stein volunteered a few jokes for which Mostel paid him \$15. Soon, Joseph Stein was penning Mostel's monologues week after week. Still maintaining his career as a social worker, Stein's work for Zero Mostel led to an opportunity to write for Sid Caesar's television variety show, *Your Show of Shows*. It was while he was working with Caesar that Stein was presented his first opportunity to write for the theater. A producer approached him to write a musical about Pennsylvania, and from there, *Plain and Fancy*—Stein's first musical—was born. Joseph Stein went on to write numerous comedies and musicals for Broadway and the big screen, including *Enter Laughing*, *Mrs. Gibbons' Boys*, *Mr. Wonderful*, *The Body Beautiful*, *Take Me Along*, *Zorba*, *Irene*, *King of Hearts*, and, of course, his seminal *Fiddler on the Roof*. Throughout his career, Stein accrued many honors and awards such as Tony Awards for Best Musical and Best Author of a Musical (*Fiddler on the Roof*, 1965); New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical (*Fiddler on the Roof*, 1965); the prestigious York Theatre Oscar Hammerstein Award for Lifetime Achievement in Musical Theatre (2007); and the Dramatists Guild of America Lifetime Achievement Award (2008). He was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame in 2008. Mr. Stein passed away on October 24, 2010 and is survived by his wife, Elisa, five children, and six grandchildren.



CHARLES STROUSE (*Music*) was born in New York City on June 7, 1928. His mother, Ethel, was an amateur pianist, and his father, Ira, was a traveling salesman. He began studying piano at age 10 when he attended Camp Wigwam (other notable alumni of this camp include Frank Loesser, Richard Rodgers, and Stephen Sondheim). By age 15, Strouse had graduated high school and moved on to attend the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York as a composition major. In the summer of 1948, he studied with Aaron Copland at Tanglewood in the Berkshires; he would also study with notable music educators Nadia Boulanger and David Diamond early in his career. In 1949 he met lyricist Lee Adams, and the two formed the partnership that would bring to Broadway such shows as *Bye Bye Birdie*, *All American* (with book by Mel Brooks), *Golden Boy*, *It's a Bird... It's a Plane... It's Superman*, *Applause*, *A Broadway Musical*, and *Bring Back Birdie*, as well as numerous revues and special material for performers like Kaye Ballard, Carol Burnett, and Jane Morgan. Additionally, Strouse has had multiple successes separate from his partnership with Adams, most notably the Broadway hit, *Annie*, first produced at Goodspeed Musicals. Throughout his career, Charles Strouse has been awarded numerous honors, including two Tony Awards for Best Musical (*Bye Bye Birdie* and *Applause*), the 1977 Tony Award for Best Original Score (*Annie*), induction into the Rochester Music Hall of Fame (2012), the ASCAP Foundation Richard Rodgers Award, the York Theatre Oscar Hammerstein Award for Lifetime Achievement in Musical Theatre, and membership in both the Theater Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. In 1977, Strouse founded the ASCAP Musical Theatre Workshop in New York which continues its mission of providing a forum for songwriters to receive professional critique of their original works.



STEPHEN SCHWARTZ (*Lyrics*) was born on March 6, 1948 in New York City to Sheila Lorna and Stanley Leonard Schwartz. While attending high school at Mineola High School, he also studied piano and composition at the Juilliard School of Music. He ultimately graduated with a BFA in Drama from Carnegie Mellon University in 1968, where a student group performed an early version of his future-hit musical, *Pippin*. After his graduation, Schwartz returned to New York and worked as a producer for RCA Records but quickly turned to a career on Broadway. In the early seventies, Stephen Schwartz's career exploded with *Godspell*, *Pippin*, *The Magic Show*, and *The Baker's Wife* all premiering between 1971 and 1976. There was even a period of time during which *Godspell*, *Pippin*, and *The Magic Show* were running on Broadway simultaneously. Also during this time, Schwartz collaborated with Leonard Bernstein on the English texts for Bernstein's *Mass*, which opened the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Stephen Schwartz consistently has brought hits to Broadway stages with shows such as *Working*, *Children of Eden*, and, perhaps most notably, *Wicked*. Schwartz has been awarded three Oscars (*Pocahontas*, *The Prince of Egypt*); four Grammys (*Godspell*, *Pocahontas*, *Wicked*); four Drama Desk Awards (*Godspell*, *Working*, *Wicked*); a Golden Globe Award (*Pocahontas*), and two Broadcast Film Critics' Awards (*Pocahontas*, *The Prince of Egypt*). Additionally, he has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (2008) and was inducted into both the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Theater Hall of Fame (2009). Mr. Schwartz has been the recipient of numerous lifetime achievement awards, most notably the Isabelle Stevenson Special Tony Award in 2015, the Oscar Hammerstein Award in 1997, the ASCAP Foundation President's Award in 1999, the Dramatists Guild Career Achievement Award in 2016, and the ASCAP Founders Award in 2017. He was also presented the Goodspeed Award for Outstanding Contribution to Musical Theatre in 2006.



DAVID THOMPSON (*Revised Book*) is a professional writer and graduate of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. He has written the books for Broadway musicals such as *Steel Pier*, *Thou Shalt Not*, and *The Scottsboro Boys*, which received 12 Tony nominations (including Best Book), a London's Critics' Circle Award, and Outer Circle Critics and Lucille Lortel Awards for Best Musical. He also created the new script adaptation for the revival of *Chicago*, the longest-running American musical in history. Off-Broadway, he wrote *And the World Goes 'Round* (Drama Desk and Outer Circle Critics Awards) and the revival of *Flora, the Red Menace*. Mr. Thompson has also written for a number of television specials: *Sondheim: A Celebration at Carnegie Hall* and PBS specials: *Razzle Dazzle*, *Bernstein on Broadway*, *The Music of Richard Rodgers*, and *Great Performances' My Favorite Broadway*. Additionally, he wrote and produced James Taylor's critically-acclaimed Perspective Series for Carnegie Hall. Thompson received the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Book of a Musical in 2010 (*The Scottsboro Boys*), and he won the Tony Award for Book of a Musical in 1997 (*Steel Pier*) and 2011 (*The Scottsboro Boys*).

HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM: THE STATUE OF LIBERTY AND ELLIS ISLAND

TIMELINE

- 1865:** Edouard de Laboulaye proposes the construction of a liberty monument for the United States as a gift from France, and he enlists sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi to begin planning a design
- June, 1871:** Bartholdi visits New York and determines a small island in New York Harbor—then called Bedloe’s Island—would be the ideal location for a liberty statue
- 1875:** Sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi is formally commissioned for the liberty monument project
- Engineer Alexandre Gustave Eiffel recruited for project
- Determined that the project would be a joint effort between the US and France in which the US would design and build a pedestal for the sculpture given by France
- Multiple fundraising campaigns are launched in both countries, including an editorial published by Joseph Pulitzer in his newspaper *The World* which takes subscriptions from individual readers
- July, 1884:** Statue of Liberty completed in France
- June 1885:** Statue of Liberty **arrives in New York Harbor**
- April 1886:** Statue of Liberty pedestal construction completed
- October 28, 1886:** President Grover Cleveland oversees dedication of the Statue of Liberty accompanied by thousands of spectators gathered for the dedication
- 1890:** President Benjamin Harrison designates Ellis Island to be the location for the United States’ **first federal immigration station**
- January 1, 1892:** Ellis Island opens as the federal **immigration station**
- June 15, 1897:** A fire burns Ellis Island’s immigration facilities to the ground; the source of the fire remains a mystery

December 17, 1900: Reconstruction of Ellis Island facilities is completed (with fireproof materials) and the station reopens for immigration processing

1903: “**The New Colossus**” plaque placed on Statue of Liberty pedestal

1907: A record year for Ellis Island with the highest number of immigrants (approximately 1.2 million people) processed through the station

World War I: Ellis Island used to detain suspected enemy aliens from across the country

1919: US Navy and Army medical units take over Ellis Island complex for the duration of the war

1920: Ellis Island reopens as an immigration station

October 15, 1924: Statue of Liberty and surrounding Fort Wood are named a National Monument

1933: Maintenance of the Statue of Liberty National Monument is transferred to the National Park Service

World War II: Ellis Island used to detain enemy merchant seamen; United States Coast Guard trains approximately 60,000 servicemen on the island

1954: The last detainee is released and Ellis Island officially closes; by the time it closes, over 12 million immigrants have entered the United States through its doors

1956: Bedloe’s Island, home to the Statue of Liberty, is renamed “Liberty Island”

May 11, 1965: Ellis Island is transferred to the National Park Service and incorporated into the Statue of Liberty National Monument

May 1982: Ronald Reagan appoints Lee Iacocca to head private sector effort to **restore** the Statue of Liberty

July 5, 1986: The newly restored Statue of Liberty reopens to the public during Liberty Weekend, celebrating her centennial

THINGS TO KNOW

STATUE OF LIBERTY ARRIVES IN NEW YORK HARBOR: For transportation, the statue was broken down into 350 individual pieces packed into 214 crates. These crates were sent by ship to New York Harbor, where they were reassembled over the course of 4 months on Bedloe’s Island.

FIRST FEDERAL IMMIGRATION STATION: Prior to 1890, all immigration into the United States was managed by individual states rather than the federal government. For example, Castle Garden was New York State’s immigration station from 1855 to 1890.

IMMIGRATION STATION: The first people to enter the United States through Ellis Island were a teenaged girl named Annie Moore and her two brothers. They came to the US from Ireland.

THE NEW COLOSSUS: Flip to page 13 to read the poem that appears on the plaque.

RESTORE THE STATUE OF LIBERTY: The restoration of the Statue of Liberty was a joint effort between the National Park Service and The Statue of Liberty—Ellis Island Foundation. It cost \$87 million and was one of the first successful private/public partnerships to raise money for such a project. During the restoration, the Statue of Liberty’s torch was replaced with an exact replica of Bartholdi’s design and gilded according to the original plans.

HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM: THE STATUE OF LIBERTY AND ELLIS ISLAND (CONTINUED)



Edouard de Laboulaye

A FRENCH STATUE FOR AN AMERICAN MONUMENT

Edouard de Laboulaye, a French scholar of law and politics, had such an affinity for United States politics and its form of government that he proposed a gifted monument from the people of France to the people of America in 1865. He was inspired by the founding history of the nation and the country's commitment to individual liberties and representative government, particularly in light of Abraham Lincoln's recent Emancipation Proclamation and the passing of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which Laboulaye believed to be revolutionary examples for the modern world. Slavery was a global issue, and he felt that President

Lincoln and the United States had taken the first drastic steps toward eliminating it. Additionally, Abraham Lincoln's recent assassination was not just a national issue; the impact of his death was felt globally

and, particularly, in France. Many French citizens felt personally invested in the success of the United States following their involvement in the American Revolutionary War, and in the mid-1860s, France was likewise fighting for a representative government and individual

liberties after a string of oppressive autocratic regimes. The statue was a gift of kinship in the continued pursuit of enlightened democracy world-wide.

Symbols embedded in the statue are reflective both of the principles upon which the United States was founded as well as the principles upon which it was reunited after the Civil War: the tablet Lady Liberty cradles in her left arm is marked with the date of the Declaration of Independence,

she holds a torch of enlightenment overhead in her right arm, and beneath her feet she tramples a broken chain. Her torch and tablet demonstrate to the world that freedom was won not with "sword and shield" but rather "with law and light" and that the foundation of freedom is the universal opportunity for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." While the broken chain beneath her feet is widely recognized as a symbol of justice, it is unclear to what event the chain specifically refers. It could be a reference to the triumph over Britain in the American Revolutionary War or to the more contemporary Emancipation Proclamation and 13th Amendment. Regardless of the specific intention, it is a call to fight for the liberties of those who live in oppression. Even her stance—*contrapposto*, in sculpture—gives further meaning to the statue; she is mid-step though perfectly balanced, both standing firm in her convictions and moving forward into the future. The collection of these symbolic elements of the statue were intended to synthesize traditional liberty symbols with contemporary ideas specific to the history and culture of the United States.

IMMIGRATING THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND

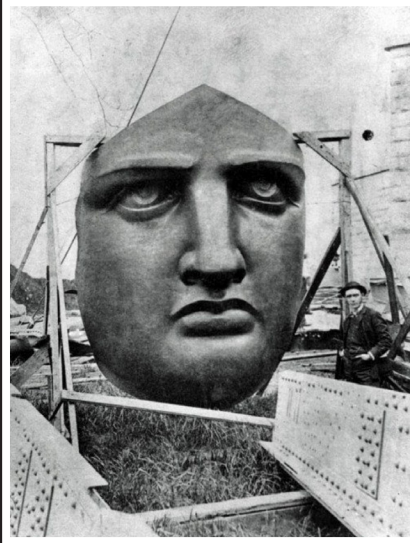
At the height of European immigration to the United States in the early 20th century, immigrants faced no fewer than three obstacles to starting their new lives in America: securing passage on a ship, crossing the Atlantic, and official processing once on US soil. Depending on a person's socioeconomic status, however, this journey looked and felt quite different.

Transatlantic ships offered three classes of tickets to passengers: first class, second class, and steerage. These tickets determined not only a person's travel accommodations once on board the ship but also how he or she would be processed upon docking in New York. First and second class passengers were swiftly inspected by officers aboard the ship; if the travelers passed this abbreviated inspection, they were released from the boat not at Ellis Island but at a smaller port on the Hudson or East River. First and second class passengers were only sent to Ellis Island if



Immigrants in line at Ellis Island, 1892.

HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM: THE STATUE OF LIBERTY AND ELLIS ISLAND (CONTINUED)

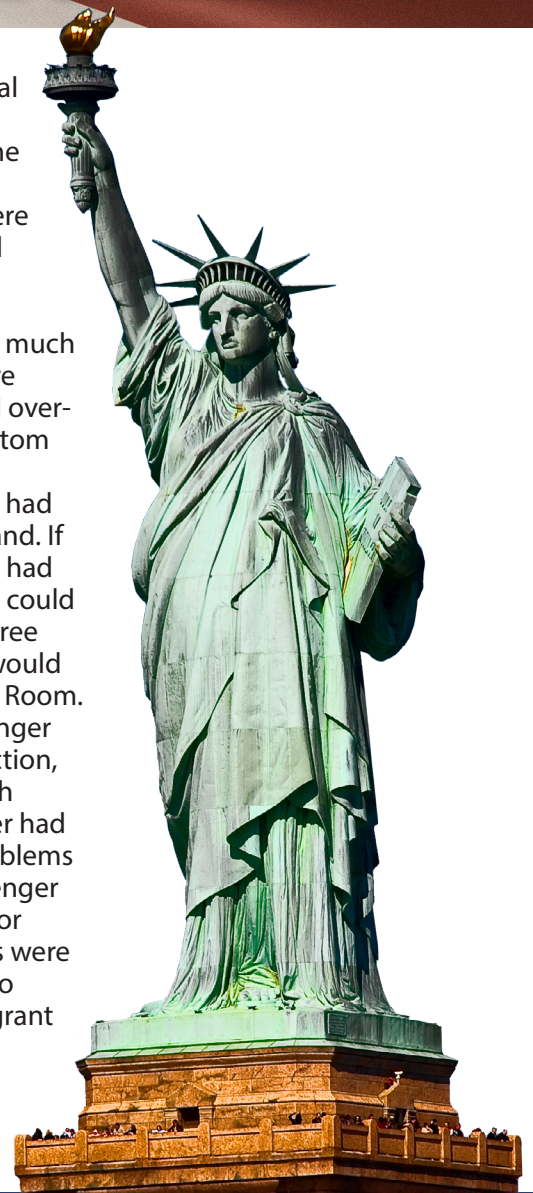


The face of the Statue of Liberty during its construction.

the on-board inspection revealed medical or legal issues. Predictably, the vast majority of first and second class passengers never saw Ellis Island; the general assumption was that if these individuals could afford a first or second class ticket, they were unlikely to become a public charge in the United States as a result of medical or legal issues.

Third class, or steerage, passengers underwent a much different immigration process than did their more affluent counterparts. These individuals endured overcrowded and unsanitary conditions near the bottom of the ship during the five-day journey overseas. Then, once the first and second class passengers had disembarked, their journey continued to Ellis Island. If a passenger had full and proper documentation, had no criminal history, and was healthy, that person could expect an inspection process lasting between three and five hours. During this time, the passenger would be inspected by a doctor in the facility's Registry Room. Once through the medical inspection, the passenger would undergo legal inspection. For legal inspection, immigration officers used the manifest log, which contained answers to 29 questions the passenger had answered at the point of embarkation. If any problems arose during medical or legal inspection, a passenger could be admitted to the hospital on Ellis Island or turned away altogether. About 2% of passengers were denied admission to the United States and had to return to their home countries; over 3,000 immigrant hopefuls passed away on the island while being held for medical reasons.

During its life as an immigration station, Ellis Island was the gateway to America for over 12 million immigrants, two-thirds of whom came from European countries. Today, between 30 and 40 percent of the population of the United States—over 100 million people—can trace their ancestry to immigrants who first arrived to the US through Ellis Island.



Visit the link below to watch a documentary about Ellis Island.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8X4CypTaOQs>

THE NEW COLOSSUS

by Emma Lazarus

(inscription on the Statue of Liberty plaque)

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glowes world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE UNDER TSAR NICHOLAS II



Tsar Nicholas II

From November 1894 until March 1917, Russia was ruled by Tsar Nicholas II, also known by his adversaries as Nicholas the Bloody. His reign was characterized by anti-Semitic policies and pogroms, the ill-fated Russo-Japanese War, the 1905 Revolution, and, later, the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that would force his abdication, all contributing to an increasingly volatile economic and political environment that existed prior to his accession to the throne. As a result of policies and events under Nicholas II's rule, Russia experienced a mass emigration of Jewish people fleeing the oppression and violence during this period.

Beginning in the early 1880s—when Nicholas II's father, Emperor Alexander III, was in power—Russian Jews were the victims of targeted, violent attacks by their fellow, non-Jewish, citizens. While recent scholarship has disproven the previously held theory that the tsarist government and its police forces organized, implemented, and instigated these anti-Semitic pogroms, it is true that the administration largely ignored the massacres, giving pogromists the impression that the government supported their actions. Coupled with the Tsar's explicitly anti-Semitic platform and policies—ranging from restricting where Jewish families could live and outlawing the use of Yiddish in official publications to forcing Jewish businesses to close on Sunday mornings and other Christian holidays—turning a blind eye to the widespread violence reinforced the belief that Russian Jews were not equal citizens in their own country.

The Kishinev pogrom on Easter Sunday of 1903 was one such attack that became a turning point in Russian Jewish history and solidified the anti-Semitic legacy of Tsar Nicholas II. Following the Easter morning festivities, upwards of twenty bands of rioters took to the streets of Kishinev, destroying Jewish homes and businesses with iron bars and axes and looting any Jewish property they encountered. Again, the monarchy—now led by Tsar Nicholas II—turned a blind eye to the

violence. The Kishinev pogrom was well organized, and citizens discussed the impending attack openly in the weeks leading up to the event as retaliation for the death of a young boy rumored to have been murdered by Kishinev Jews in preparation for the Passover holiday. (It since has been disproven that they boy's death was in any way related to Passover or religiously motivated.) The region's only daily newspaper printed erroneous notices announcing that Christians were permitted to commit violent acts against Jews during the three holy days of Easter, and armed groups from Albania and Moldova arrived in Kishinev days before Easter Sunday in preparation for the pogrom. The local police and religious leaders, like the national government, did not interfere for three days. In fact, the city's Orthodox bishop blessed the attackers as he passed through the streets in his carriage. By nightfall, destruction and looting devolved into murder, mutilation, and massacre. At the end of two days of rioting, almost 50 Jews were killed, 600 people were injured, 700 Jewish homes were destroyed, and 600 Jewish-owned stores were pillaged. The results of the pogrom, in addition to multiple deaths and extensive destruction of property, were widespread international criticism of and protest against the Romanov regime and a strengthened sense of community among Jewish populations, particularly in the United States. Additionally, the Jewish Socialist Bund of Russia and Poland, formed six years earlier in 1897, caught many people's attention with its position of answering violence with violence. While many Jewish people fled violence and persecution in Russia, the Bund urged them to take up arms and defend themselves against anti-Semitic violence.

While certainly a troubling, dangerous, and discriminatory aspect of his regime, Nicholas II's treatment of the Russian Jewish population was far from the only criticism he faced from his citizens and from abroad. From 1904 to 1905, Russia was engaged in military conflict with Japan over their competing interests in the Pacific, particularly Manchuria and Korea. Despite Japan's attempts at diplomacy

Visit the link below to watch the the documentary "The Jewish Americans"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M52S1A6k4c0>

THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

and compromise with Russia, Tsar Nicholas II rejected negotiations, and Japan launched the first attack of the Russo-Japanese War. Nicholas II was confident, convinced Russia's army would easily defeat the Japanese. However, his military endured multiple early losses, and the tsar refused to back down. The war quickly became a point of pride; despite the evidence to the contrary, Nicholas II refused to believe a small nation like Japan could take down the Russian military. Ultimately, Japan did prevail over Russia, solidified by the sinking of Russia's naval fleet at Port Arthur, and the war ended with the Treaty of Portsmouth, mediated by United States President Theodore Roosevelt. Russia's defeat came as a shock not only to the Russian people but also to the rest of the world. Soon, Russian citizens began to question the monarch's reign and ability to maintain Russia's position as a military power.

In the middle of the Russo-Japanese War, yet another Russian group sought to express discontent with the tsar: industrial workers. On January 9, 1905, thousands of striking workers and their families, led by Father Gregory Gapon, met at six different points on the outskirts of St. Petersburg to process and eventually converge at the tsar's winter palace. They carried with them copies of a petition they intended to present to the tsar that listed grievances they held as the burgeoning industrial class. These grievances included horrifically low wages, oppressive attitudes of employers, unsafe working conditions, and long work days. The protesters were peaceful and unarmed; in fact, as they processed they were instructed by Gapon and his fellow leaders to remain silent, though some groups sang hymns or hummed patriotic tunes. Many of the marchers, however, never made it to the winter palace. In advance of the march, military units numbering up to 10,000 men were stationed at every possible entrance to the city, as well as in front of the palace itself. Even though the Tsar himself was not present at the palace as the protestors believed he would be, every attempt was made to keep the march from reaching the palace. The workers paid little attention to rumors that the military might interfere in their demonstration; they knew themselves to be peaceful, and they were certain they could convince any soldiers to stand down because they were unarmed. However, when they refused to be intimidated or blocked on their path the military units did open fire on the protestors or charge into crowds on horseback. While reports of the number of people killed or wounded vary from 100 to 4,000, the events of the day, often referred to as "Bloody Sunday," demonstrate not only the working class's dissatisfaction with Russian leadership and Tsar Nicholas II but also the tsar's profound distrust of his own citizens. The tsar so feared a demonstration in front of his palace that he both fled the city and ordered troops to protect the palace against the peaceful protestors. While Nicholas II did not directly give the orders to fire into the protest, Bloody Sunday resulted in further widespread distrust of him and

of autocratic rule. Following Bloody Sunday, workers' strikes grew throughout the country, with over 400,000 people striking across Russia.

In the midst of the 1905 Revolution that followed, the tsar's administration made some attempts to pacify its citizens' grievances, but they fell short in a number of ways. First, Alexander Bulygin replaced the previous Minister of the Interior after the tragedy of Bloody Sunday. Beginning in February 1905, Bulygin began work on a proposal for a new constitution; it was issued on August 6th. His solution to discontent with autocratic rule and a plea for representative government was to create an advisory Duma, or parliament. However, this Duma had no law-making ability and would not be elected on the basis of universal suffrage and, therefore, did not satisfy the demands for a representative, legislative assembly. Again, strikes broke out across the country. That October, under the influence of Sergei Witte, Tsar Nicholas II reluctantly issued his infamous October Manifesto, promising basic civil rights and an elected Duma, which would have legislative power, though the tsar retained veto power. At first, the October Manifesto seemed to pacify the masses, who felt they had won a representative government and limited the power of the tsar. However, they realized quickly that the tsar would continue to use his influence to silence dissenters and oppress the working class, and once again strikes and pogroms plagued the country. It is estimated that the October pogroms in response to the October Manifesto resulted in upwards of 5,000 dead or injured. The tsar largely blamed the Jewish people and revolutionaries themselves for the violence perpetrated against them; by expressing discontent with the government, Nicholas II felt they had brought their fates upon themselves. For much of 1906 and 1907, Russia was under martial law. Over the next ten years, revolutionaries would continue to organize, educate, and prepare for the overthrow of autocratic rule during the Bolshevik Revolution, which resulted in the forced abdication of Tsar Nicholas II on March 15, 1917.

Through the unrest of the early 20th century in Russia, Jewish people were forced to make impossible choices that would impact the rest of their lives and the futures of their families. Many remained in Russia, joining various political and revolutionary factions that contributed to the end of the Romanov regime, but many also fled the violence and sought asylum elsewhere, usually in Palestine or the United States. In fact, it is estimated that between 1881, the year that Alexander III took the throne and widespread pogroms began in earnest, and 1917, well over 2 million Jews emigrated from Russia. In *Rags*, Rebecca, David, and Bella are examples of those people directly affected by the anti-Semitism of Nicholas II's reign who made the difficult choice to begin again in a new place.



Strike pickets from Ladies Tailors, during the New York shirtwaist strike of 1909.

When Rebecca, her son David, and Bella arrive in New York Harbor in 1910, they expect to find an America prospering with economic and social opportunity on the other side of Ellis Island. As they make their way across the Atlantic, they dream of the so-called Promised Land, with plenty of jobs, fancy clothes, and adventure in abundance. Little do they know that within the

year, dissatisfied laborers will organize and launch The Great Revolt, the New York City labor strike that would change American industry forever.

restrooms and fire safety equipment. In short, the women sought “democracy in industry,” a way for workers and employers to collaborate to create a better working environment. Instrumental in accruing support and positive press for the strikers was the Women’s Trade Union League (WTUL), comprised mostly of middle- and upper-class women. Once women of society joined the picket lines, reporters and private citizens alike paid more attention to the plight of the workers and were more prone to cast them in a sympathetic light. This was especially true after one such WTUL member, Mary Dreier, was arrested for her participation in the strike. While Dreier was picketing in front of one of the factories, a “rough” began taunting her. When Dreier turned to a police officer for support, he arrested her for picketing instead. Though Dreier was released once police learned who she was, the experience opened her eyes and those of many other women to the fact that police brutality existed and directly affected these working-class women for whom they were advocating. Mary Dreier’s situation was not unique, however; countless ILGWU women were arrested on the picket lines and harassed by thugs hired by factory owners to disrupt the demonstrations. With the WTUL firmly on their side, though, the strikers now had 65 additional picketers, access to press conferences, legal aid, the support of local news organizations, and an organized strike fund providing financial assistance throughout the duration of the strike.



A 1910 cartoon by Leon Israel depicting the Protocols of Peace.

The 1910 strike that came to be known as The Great Revolt was preceded by the 1909 Uprising of 20,000, a workers’ strike primarily aimed at The Triangle Shirtwaist Company and Leiserson’s, two of the largest factory-based clothing manufacturers in New York City at the time. The vast majority of the strikers were immigrant women and girls who worked in the factories but had no avenue for filing grievances or combating unjust employers. These women faced innumerable problems in the workplace, but the main issues that spurred the strike were multiple instances of employer espionage; tyrannical supervisors; poor pay; compulsory payment by workers for needles, thread, and electricity used to complete assignments; fines against workers; and the **ticket system**. On November 22, 1909, over 2,000 factory workers met at Cooper Union for a meeting of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU), and after speeches by labor leaders like Samuel Gompers, then-president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), a young and instrumental organizer of the ILGWU named Clara Lemlich ascended the stage and finally declared a strike.

The primary goals of the strike were to increase wages, gain union recognition from the factories, and implement health and sanitary provisions like clean

The strike lasted thirteen weeks. The union was able to negotiate contracts with most of the smaller factories, but unfortunately, with little in the way of organization on the union’s part, the provisions of these contracts proved difficult to enforce. Additionally, the two major factories, Triangle Shirtwaist and Leiserson’s, refused to cooperate. In fact, the owners of **Triangle Shirtwaist Company**, Max Blanck and Isaac Harris, suggested to other factory owners that they form a mutual protection organization to protect their interests as employers against strikers and unionization. They even encouraged smaller factories that had already settled with the union to

THINGS TO KNOW

TICKET SYSTEM:

The ticket system was one method many factories used to determine a worker's daily earnings. Rather than pay employees at an hourly rate, factories paid them based on the number of garments completed. For each completed garment, a worker would receive a ticket, and at the end of the day, the workers turned in their tickets in exchange for payment. However, the ticket system was used largely to subvert employees and pay them less than they earned. Employers provided no method for collecting the tickets, and many of them ended up lost or destroyed, resulting in lower wages for the workers.

TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST COMPANY:

Refusing to negotiate following the 1909 strike proved to be a devastating and fatal mistake on the part of The Triangle Shirtwaist Company. In 1911, by which time many shops had come to agreements with unions under the Protocols of Peace, Triangle was still noncompliant with basic demands such as fire safety measures. Tragically, the factory caught fire, and 146 people—most of whom were immigrant women and girls—were killed as a result of improper insulation and locked doors preventing workers' escape. The fire prompted the formation of the Factory Investigating Commission, which revealed the extent of the abuses towards factory workers and ultimately proposed aggressive safety and wage regulations.

openly break their contracts and join the association. While very few shops broke their contracts—the smaller shops were actually benefitting from the strike, as they took on extra business in the absence of their larger competitors—the association did come to fruition and came to be known as the Association of Waist and Dress Manufacturers. Despite the resistance of the large factories, union membership grew exponentially with recognition by smaller employers across the industry, and the female workers' success emboldened their male counterparts in the garment industry.

With unionization on the rise, factory owners did everything they could to keep them out of their shops. They fired union members and invented a system of security deposits in which workers would pay a deposit or have it deducted from their earnings as security that they would not join a union. If they did, they would lose their deposit. The owners developed blacklists with the names of union organizers and activists, and they implemented lock-outs to flush the factories of union workers and reopen with nonunion employees. Clearly, the unions' work was far from finished.

The next strike was planned in accordance with the most high-production, high-profit season for the factories, ensuring that the owners would feel the economic effects of the strike. Only months after the conclusion of the Uprising of 20,000, between 60,000 and 75,000 workers struck in what would be called "The Great Revolt." Union members and leadership alike agreed that this strike would not end with individual shop contracts as the previous one did but rather with an industry-wide agreement. In preparation for the massive strike, the ILGWU and AFL stressed unity, organization, orderly conduct, efficiency, and bureaucracy as their membership and bargaining power grew. They elected additional leadership and formed focused committees, thus becoming a more effective and respectable organization in the eyes of the press and the public. All of this member organization proved to be effective; once on strike, union leaders were prepared with job assignments and

responsibilities for each of its members. The strikers were organized, mobilized, and very visible in the public eye.

The unions were far more successful in securing binding contracts adhering to union standards following The Great Revolt than they were after the Uprising of 20,000, but it took the full power of the unions' leadership to achieve them. After months of striking and negotiation, the unions and the factory association arrived at an agreement known as the Protocols of Peace, mediated by Louis Brandeis. Brandeis's initial negotiation caused a major rift in the AFL when he encouraged the union to back down on its demands for recognition and instead focus on the immediate issues they sought to resolve. This suggestion lacked support from a majority of union members, and they became irate when one of their leaders agreed to this without putting it to a vote. Over the coming weeks, this rift devolved into two distinct factions: one advocated union recognition as a top priority whereas the other sided with Brandeis. Realizing that negotiations would halt altogether without full union support, Brandeis developed a compromise that he called the "preferential shop." In this scenario, shops would not be confined to hiring only union workers but rather would give hiring preference to union members over nonunion workers.

It took at least four rewrites, continual striking, and fighting an injunction by the factory association against the union, but they eventually arrived at agreed-upon language which stated that as long as the union could supply workers, the shops would be required to hire them in favor of nonunion ones. Additionally, the Protocols established a 50-hour work week, paid holidays, the abolition of homework and charges for electricity and supplies, minimum-wage scales and three Joint Boards: one for Grievances, one for Sanitary Control, and one for Arbitration. By 1912, 98 percent of New York City shops were unionized under the Protocols of Peace.

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Seeing a musical at The Goodspeed is a unique and exciting experience. All the members of the production, both cast and crew, work hard to give you a great show. As an audience member, you also have an important job. You must help the performers give their best performance possible. You can do this by practicing these rules of theater etiquette:

- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when the performance is over. Applause is how you say “thank you” to the performer. The actors will bow as you applaud. That is how they say “Thank you for coming.”
- Do stand and applaud if you thought the show was outstanding.
- Don’t forget to turn off your cell phone. A ringing or buzzing phone can be very distracting. It can also be embarrassing for you if it is your phone that is disrupting the show!
- Don’t text during the performance.
- Make sure to visit the restroom before the production begins.
- Don’t speak or whisper during the performance. Whispering is still speaking, so only in an emergency should whispering occur.
- Remember that the overture (introductory music) in musical theatre is part of the performance, so remain silent when the show begins.
- Don’t take pictures during the performance. It can be very distracting to the actors and it can result in an accident.
- Don’t put your feet up on the seats or kick the seat in front of you.
- Do sit ONLY when your seat is in the folded down position.
- Do remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, calmly walk toward the nearest exit.