



FAIURE

A LOVE STORY

DRAMATURGICAL RESEARCH



Philip Dawkins

Production History

- Written by Chicago author & educator, Philip Dawkins.
- **What inspired Phil Dawkins to write *Failure: A Love Story*?**
 - His inspiration came from visiting a cemetery with a group of friends & finding multiple tombstones having the last name "Fail". He was curious & became convinced that he needed to write a play about them.
 - Phil's burning question: "What happened to the members of the Fail family?"
- World Premiere was Nov. 16 – Dec. 30, 2012
 - 295 total performances worldwide
 - 15 upcoming performances (to include CSUSM)

The World of the Play

The play takes place in Chicago in 1928 during an explosion of popular culture; entertainment included the radio, movies, music, sports, amusement parks, vaudeville, cabarets, & dance halls. Chicago at the time was also one of the largest manufacturing industries in the world. Chicago neighborhoods had high populations of hard-working, blue-collar European immigrants. Wealthier families, of which there were few, lived on the Gold Coast bordering Lake Michigan.



Chicago, 1920's



Eras

1920 - 1929

The prosperity of the 1920s was also known as **The Roaring 20's** or **The Era of Wonderful Nonsense**. This carefree era was filled with unprecedented economic growth, cultural development, & social change.

1929 - 1939

It's important to note that **The Great Depression** began in 1929, one year after the events of the play. This was a severe economic downturn marked by extreme financial hardships & widespread unemployment.

Prohibition, a federal ban on selling alcohol, was apart of the United State's Constitution for over a decade. Being the Roaring 20's, these laws were not effective & instead led to speakeasies & organized crime.

1920 - 1933

Chicago in the 1920's

Chicago in the 1920s was a vibrant & bustling city, known for its booming economy & manufacturing. The decade saw the rise of jazz music, speakeasies, & a nightlife fueled by economic growth, organized crime, & prohibition. The city & its skyline began to rapidly grow with the construction of large skyscrapers like the Chicago Tribune Tower & the Wrigley Building. As a result, Chicago was famously called "The City That Works". However, Chicago also grappled with poverty, racial tensions, & political corruption, including infamous gangsters like Al Capone.



Chicago River

The Chicago River is a man-made project that drew in explorers & immigrant laborers between 1889 & 1900. In 1908, the river was considered one of the cleanest man-made bodies of water in the United States; this drew in many swimmers & cemented the river as a place for annual swimming races. However, due to the continuous dumping of waste in the neighboring Lake Michigan, the once beautiful & clean Chicago River became heavily contaminated.





Eastland Riverboat Disaster

On July 24, 1915, the Eastland riverboat disaster occurred on the Chicago River. The SS Eastland, a passenger ship, capsized while attempting to embark, resulting in the deaths of over 800 people. Due to design flaws & overloading, the ship capsized before ever leaving the Chicago port & became one of the deadliest maritime disasters in American history.

Ellis Island

Home to 65 million immigration records, the Port of New York was used from 1820 to 1957. Ellis Island was considered the hub of immigration at the time, bringing immigrants from different parts of the world to the United States. In the play, The Fail parents migrate to America by passing through Ellis Island. After closing during WWI, the island was reopened in 1920; paperwork processing was restarted & had reached 560,000 immigrants per year by 1921.



Lake Michigan

Lake Michigan, although beautiful, is considered one of the deadliest lakes in the world. While animal species living in the area can be a threat, the bigger worry is the strong current of the lake; the water is irregular, unstable, & unpredictable. Since 2010, there have been 1,236 drowning reports all related to the strong current of the lake. It is directly adjacent to the Chicago River & the lake's average surface temperature is 34-38 °F.



Ohio Street Beach

The Ohio Street beach is one of 27 beaches lining Chicago's shore. The beach formed naturally but grew in size after the Jardine Water Purification Plant was built in the 1960s. Since it is the only beach in Illinois facing north, Ohio Street beach is the ideal training site for open water swimming. One could swim in deep water from here to Oak Street beach (roughly half a mile North) without ever being more than a few feet from the safety of shallow waters.





Chicago Dockyards

In the 1920s, Chicago's river harbor was very congested & polluted, but also very profitable. It was considered an economic engine, providing jobs for many, & being the city's doorway to the world. During the busy shipping season from April to November, the ships traveling within the docks commonly bumped into each other.

All along the Chicago River, there were many factories, wharves, & warehouses that provided employment for thousands of workers. Beyond the river, there were many commission offices, boarding houses, bars, & brothels.

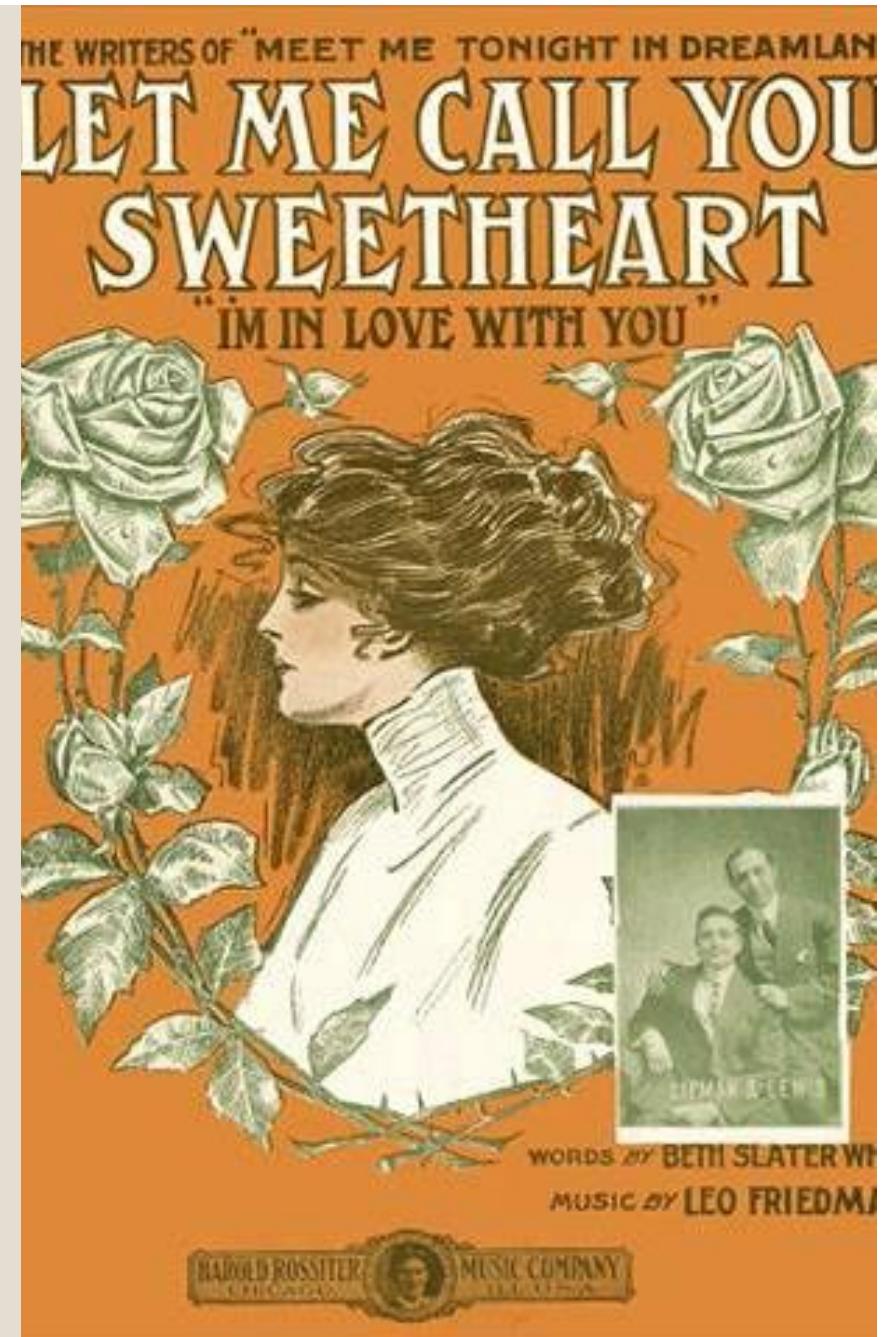


Chicago, 1920's

Music

- "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" by Leo Friedman & Beth Slater Wilson
 - This song appears every time there is a death.
- "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" by Jimmy McHugh & Dorothy Fields
- "I Guess I'll Have To Change My Plan" by Howard Dietz & Arthur Schwartz
- "Lover Come Back To Me" by Sigmund Romberg & Oscar Hammerstein II
- "How 'Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down On The Farm?" by Walter Donaldson, Sam M. Lewis, & Joe Young
- "The Feeling (Johnny W)"
- "I Don't Need Anyone"

[YouTube playlist
linked here!](#)



Dances of the Time

The Charleston

- The Charleston, a social jazz dance, was highly popular in the 1920s & is frequently revived. Characterized by its toes-in, heels-out twisting steps, it can be performed as a solo, with a partner, or in a group.

Lindy Hop

- The Lindy Hop, a variation of swing dancing, is an American dance which was born in the African-American communities of Harlem, New York City. Beginning in 1928, the dance style has continued to evolve to this day.

Swing

- Swing dances are a group of social dances that developed with the swing style of jazz music in the 1920s. However, each dance predated this popular "swing era".
- "Swing dance" was not used to identify a group of dances until the latter half of the 20th century. Historically, *swing* referred to the style of jazz music, which inspired the dance.

Clothing (Women)



Clothing (Men)



\$4.98 83N745—Gray and blue plaid.
83N746—Brown mixed plaid.
Hull sizes. Order better size as you would order in a shirt.
Sleeves, 34 to 17 inches neck measure.
State size. Shipping weight, 2 1/2 pounds.
These Extra Heavyweight All Wood Lumberjacks are
fast becoming the world's most popular outer garment
for rugged wear. Made of a high grade extra heavy weight
24-ounce all wool flannel in attractive plaid patterns. Some
fitting wool worked bottoms make these lumberjacks prac-
tically windproof. Two large button-downed flap pockets.



#3098



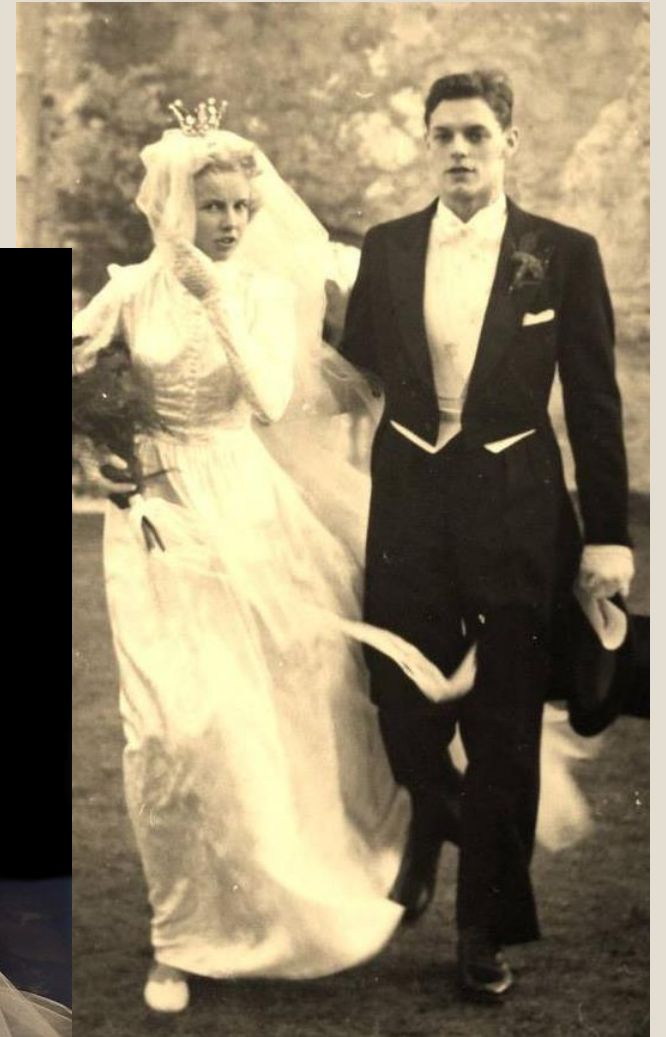
MrsDepew.com



Clothing (Swimwear)



Wedding Dresses



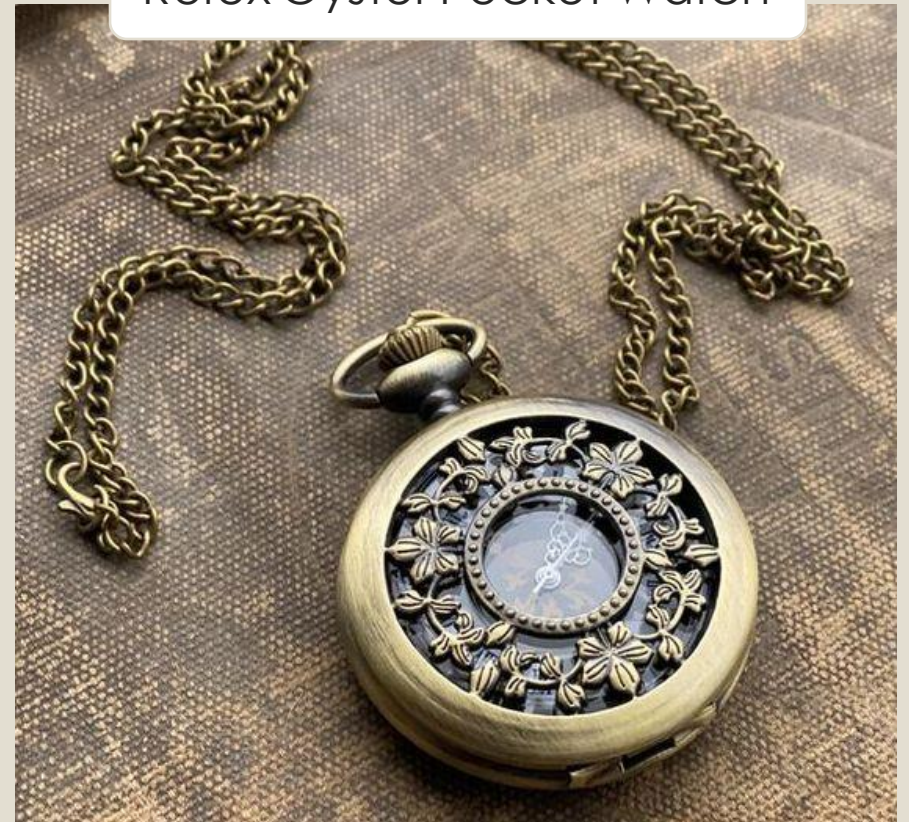
Watches & Clocks



Watches & Clocks Cont.

In the 1920s, Rolex released the Oyster, which was the first water resistant watch with a patented case & a screw-down crown & case back that Rolex still uses by name today. "Oyster" is still in the official name of many Rolex watches. The Oyster was not exactly a diving watch, but as a water-resistant timepiece, it was certainly good for boating & general wear. Most Oyster watches came with precious metal gold or sterling silver cases. A true classic, the Rolex was a pivotal part of Rolex's long-term success & would have certainly been on the wrist of active high-society men in the late 1920s. The home pendulum clock was replaced by less-expensive synchronous electric clocks in the 1930s & '40s.

Rolex Oyster Pocket Watch



watch
ember 1st 1897
ember 15th 1904
s assembled on four mechanism levels.
i indications, of which 17 directly
surement of time.
ame ter, weight 228 gm.

i Temp's, City of Besançon

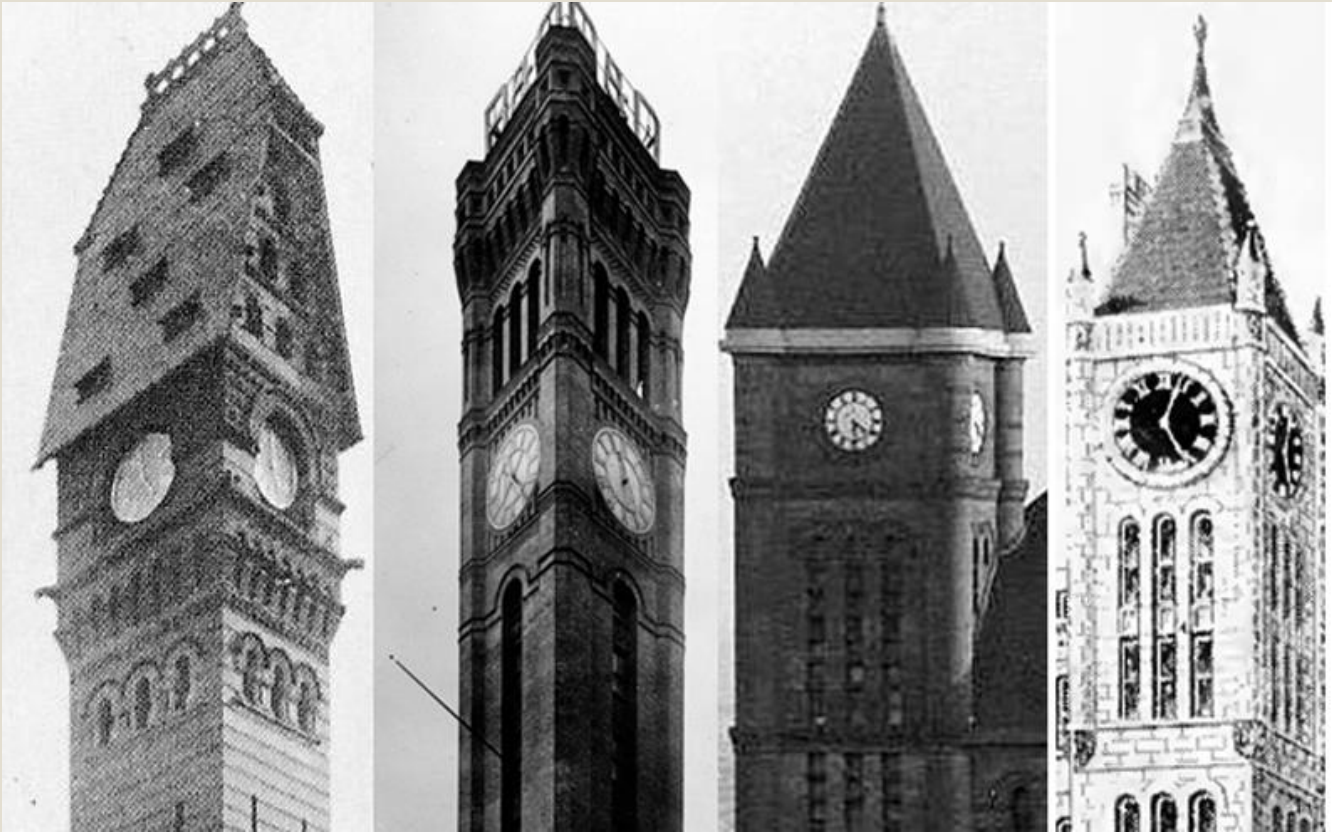


LeRoy Pocket Piece

The "Leroy 01" is a genuine global icon & is notable for winning of the Grand Prix Spécial du Jury at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1900. It remained the absolute standard-setter in terms of "ultra-complicated" watchmaking until 1989. For over a century, this watch symbolized the watchmaking expertise of the House of Leroy.

Since then, L. Leroy has become the gold standard for a traditional watch brand & beneficiary of an extraordinary inheritance which has been handed down from generation to generation ever since 1747, the year when Basile Le Roy began his apprenticeship in Paris.

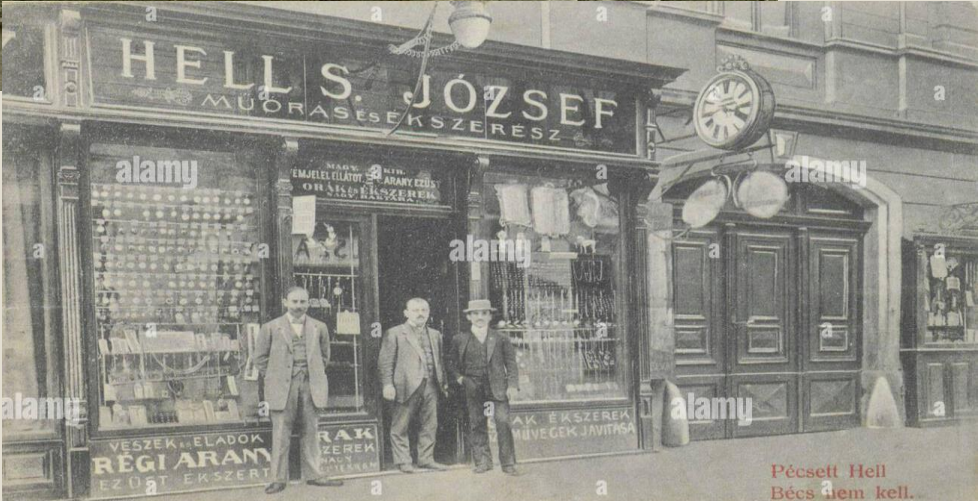
Clock Towers



Chicago contains multiple historical clock towers, serving as landmarks of the city's rich history.

Chicago has one of the greatest & most magnificent quarter-striking Westminster chime tower clocks that there is in the United States. It is in the tower of the St. Francis German Catholic Church, on Twelfth street.

Clock Shops



Pécsett Hell Bécs nem kell.



Gramophone

The Gramophone is one of the first devices that allowed music to be played on metal 'phonographic' discs. First developed in the late 1880's, the first gramophones had a conical device that was a sheet metal horn made for acoustic amplification. In the 1910s, the phono-suitcases were developed, & the acoustic amplification was from a conical cavity placed inside the case.

By the 1920s, gramophones were popular & had completely replaced the phonograph. The devices were widely produced, affordable, & had variations including picnic-gramophones.

Stutz Bearcat



Common with racing & sports cars of the period, it featured minimal bodywork consisting of a "doghouse" hood, open bucket seats, & a tiny "monocle" windscreen in front of the driver. It also featured a cylindrical fuel tank on a short rear deck. It was first mentioned in an ad in 1912. Within the same year, it won 25 out of 30 of the auto races in which they were entered. Owning one became a symbol of status & wealth during the era. This vehicle was priced at \$2,000, which is equivalent to around \$58,500 in 2022.



Johnny Weissmuller

Born on June 2, 1904, he is an American Olympian Swimmer, water polo player, & actor. He set his first two world records at the A.A.U. Nationals on September 27, 1921, in the 100m & 150yd events. On July 9, 1922, Weissmuller broke Duke Kahanamoku's world record in the 100-meter freestyle, swimming it in 58.6 seconds. He won the title for that distance at the 1924 Summer Olympics, beating Kahanamoku for the gold medal. He also won the 400-meter freestyle & was a member of the winning U.S. team in the 4×200-meter relay. Besides his amazing swimming skills, he was also quite a charmer, getting his first big break playing the role of "Tarzan" in 1932.

Lillian Gish

Lillian Diana Gish was born on October 14, 1893, in Spring Field, Ohio. Her parents were Mary Robinson McConnell & James Leigh Gish. Lillian had a younger sister, Dorothy, who also became a popular movie star.

In 1979, she was awarded the Women in Film Crystal Award in Los Angeles. In 1984, she received an American Film Institute Lifetime Achievement Award, becoming only the second female recipient (preceded by Bette Davis in 1977) & the only recipient who was a major figure in the silent film era. She has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1720 Vine Street.





Grantland Rice

Henry Grantland Rice was an early 20th century American sportswriter and announcer known for his elegant, passionate, & natural flow of speech. His inspirational & heroic style of sports commentary would raise games to the level of ancient combat. Rice would famously be known as the "Dean of American Sports Writers" & would have a positive impact on sports; he would play a great influence in the "Golden Age of Sports" happening in the 1920s.

Depression & Grief

Depression & grief are emotional states that deeply impact individuals, often including feelings of sadness, hopelessness, & loss. Depression is a condition characterized by reoccurring low moods, while grief stems from experiencing a significant loss of life. Both can lead to a range of physical & psychological symptoms, affecting one's ability to function in daily life; this can include emotional pain, physical fatigue, changes in appetite, disrupted sleep, low self-esteem & loss of overall motivation.

In the 1920s, societal understanding of depression & grief were limited compared to contemporary understandings, as well as treatment methods. Mental health issues were often stigmatized & misunderstood, with little support available. Instead, individuals often relied on personal or religious coping mechanisms. Formal psychological or medical interventions were rare, contributing to significant challenges for those struggling with these conditions during the era.

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AFFECTION
THE GERM OF
INFECTION**

TOWN OF HEMPSTEAD, W.H. RUNCIE MD. HEALTH OFFICER
WPA FEDERAL ART PROJECT DISTRICT 4

Consumption

The term "consumption" was historically used in place of tuberculosis (TB), a contagious bacterial infection that primarily affects the lungs. TB was often referred to as "consumption" because it appeared to consume & destroy the body of the infected person. However, due to medical advancements, the term is no longer used.

Enjoy the show!

TA 302 Theatre Criticism

Anson | Balajadia | Dominoni | Saldivar | Sugui | Tesch



Chicago, 1920's