

Perspective: African American Life circa 1900

VOCABULARY LIST

DOMESTIC (ADJ)/(N)

- (adjective) Of or relating to the home, the household, household affairs or the family.
- (noun) a hired household servant.

SERVANT (N.)

- A person who is employed to help clean and maintain the home.

BUTLER (N.)

- A male servant hired to manage domestic staff, serve food, polish silver among other tasks. If more than one, rank is described by “Head”, “Second” or “Under”

HEAD BUTLER (N.)

- The highest ranked butler, in charge of managing staff, including the second or under butler

UNDER BUTLER (N.)

- The second highest ranked butler, also referred to as “second butler”. Is the assistant to the head butler.

MAID (N.)

- A female domestic employee, usually in charge of cleaning the home.

KITCHEN MAID (N.)

- A female domestic employee, in charge of cleaning the kitchen and maintaining the stove. Under the management of the cook

LADIES MAID (N.)

- A female domestic employee in charge of her female employers clothing and accessories and hair styling. She helps her female employer get dressed and is managed directly by the lady of the house and the housekeeper if there is one in the home.

NURSE MAID OR NANNY (N.)

- Female in charge of taking care of her employer’s children, more than a babysitter, she is in charge of raising and ensuring the education of the children in her care.

COOK (N)

- A traditionally female domestic employee in charge of cooking meals for her employer's family and her coworkers.

LAUNDRESS (N)

- A female domestic employee who washes the laundry of her employer, usually works in multiple homes, rather than just one.

HOUSEKEEPER (N)

- A female domestic employee who is in charge of the maids who clean the house. She also serves as a domestic accountant.

CHAUFFEUR (N)

- A male domestic employee who is in charge of maintaining the vehicles of the household for which he is employed and for driving his employers to their destinations.

VALET (N)

- Can be pronounced as Val-ley, val-let or Val-a. A male domestic employee who attends to the personal needs of his male employer. Assists him with dressing and maintains his wardrobe. **Note:** Not to be confused with a modern valet who parks cars.

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VOCABULARY LIST (CONTINUED)

ANCESTRY(N)

- Family or ancestral descent. Lineage

ANTI-MISCEGENATION LAWS

- A law that makes marriage or cohabitation between two people of different races illegal.

BLACK CODES

- Any law that defined or limited the rights of previously enslaved people in the United States.

CENSUS

- The process of counting every person in a country. In the United States it is completed every 10 years.

COURTING; TO COURT

- Predates “dating”. Behavior designed to persuade someone to marry under the supervision of a chaperone.

INFLATION

- Economic term that helps describe the buying power of money, the increased value of money.

MINIMUM WAGE

- A law, created by a state or national government that defines the lowest amount a worker can be paid by the hour. Current national minimum wage is \$7.25. The first minimum wage law was enacted in 1938.



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Denise Gammon, History Educator | Hillary Parkhouse, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education | Ma'asehyahu Isra-UI, Ed.S (C&I), K-12 Instructional Specialist-History/Social Science, Richmond Public Schools
Michael Hasley, Secondary Social Studies Specialist, Henrico County Public Schools | Gabriel Reich, Assistant Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education