



Fences

Characters and Background

Fences: Setting and Background

Fences is about an African American community in the 1950's. Beginning in 1957, between the Korean and Vietnam wars, Fences ends in 1965, but the themes of the play directly place its consciousness in a pre-civil-rights-movement, pre-Vietnam-war-era psyche.

One character is Troy Maxson. His last name, "Maxson," is a reference to the Mason-Dixon line, considered as the imaginary line originally conceived of in 1820 to define the separation between the slave states and the free states.

Wilson purposefully sets the play during the season Hank Aaron led the Milwaukee Braves to the World Series, beating the New York Giants. When Fences takes place, blacks like Aaron proved they could not only compete with white ballplayers, but that they would be leaders in the professional league.



Troy

Troy Maxson - The protagonist of *Fences*, a fifty-three year-old, African American man who works for the sanitation department, lifting garbage into trucks. Troy is also a former baseball star in the Negro Leagues. Troy's athletic ability diminished before the Major Leagues accepted African Americans. Troy's life has been anything but easy, but he strongly values his responsibilities to his family.



Rose

Troy's wife and mother of his second child, Cory. Rose is a forty-three year-old African American housewife who volunteers at her church regularly and loves her family.



Bono

Troy's best friend of over thirty years. Jim Bono is usually called "Bono" or "Mr. Bono" by the characters in Fences. Troy and Bono meet in prison,



Cory

The teenage son of Troy and Rose Maxson. A senior in high school, Cory gets good grades and college recruiters are coming to see him play football. He and his dad have a difficult relationship.



Lyons

Troy's son, fathered before Troy's time in jail with a woman Troy met before Troy became a baseball player and before he met Rose. Lyons is a jazz musician.



Gabriel Troy's brother. Gabriel was a soldier in the Second World War, during which he received a head injury that required a metal plate to be surgically implanted into his head. Gabriel now believes that he is the angel Gabriel, and always carries a trumpet.



Raynell

Troy's illegitimate child, with his lover, Alberta.



Jermelle Simon and Mira-Sybil Aiki

Photo by Suzanne Mapes



Alberta

Alberta is never seen, but she has a huge presence in the play. She is Troy's lover, and he sees her as emblematic of his freedom. She is the mother of Raynell.