

lecture, she urged men to join with women to fight the corset fashion. "All who incline to have the change should unite in one conclusion: to have a hall secured, and to meet there twice a week, and to call it the Anti-Corset Society. ... Have [women] bring their corsets with them – not wearing them, but wrapped in paper – and you have a deep hole dug near by; and when they come, let them drop their parcels in, one by one, until the corsets all get there; then cover them up and let them stay there until the resurrection day ..."²³

She also railed against another unhealthy habit, drinking alcohol: "The lights were turned down and the lecture for a time accompanied by stereopticon views, consisting for the most part of pictures of the nervous and muscular systems; the organs in proper form and abnormal. Among other things, reproductions of the stomach normally and when inflamed by alcoholic stimulants were thrown upon the canvas."²⁴ Sometimes she gave separate lectures on temperance, and she extended her opposition to alcohol to the use of alcoholic patent medicines that flooded the market in the 1890s.²⁵

The concluding event in most of her lecture series was her famous lecture on 'Love, Courtship, and Marriage', which she delivered hundreds of times to mixed audiences all over the world (Fig. 6). Despite having been divorced from Mr Potts for many years, she set herself up as an expert on the subject. She instructed her audiences on the different forms of love, on the process of choosing and courting a prospective spouse, and the qualities of men and women that make a marriage successful. This lecture was very different from her medically-oriented talks. Instead of scientific facts about anatomy, physiology, health and disease, this lecture was an assortment of personal philosophy, opinions and anecdotes – an approach not well suited to illustration. Indeed, when she gave this lecture in New Orleans, the local paper stated that: "The skeletons, anatomical charts, stereopticon and other modes of illustration were taken down and both sexes were invited to sit together and listen to a lecture on 'Love, Courtship and Marriage.'²⁶

She dispensed homespun advice on the nature of love and requirements for successful courtship and marriage. Love she considered to be a universal force of attraction, found in everything from the elements in rocks to insects, birds and humans. She decried the superficial courtship involving a man calling upon a woman and discussing frivolous matters. Far more practical was courtship involving serious conversations about serious subjects, allowing a couple to really get to know each other. She complained about social conventions that placed men in the role of actively courting women, whereas women often had to choose a husband from a limited number of individuals.

She argued that couples mismatched in level of education would make for poor marriages and she advised people to not choose sickly or feeble-minded partners. She also managed to slip in ever-so-gentle comments on women's rights – the right of a woman to make her own choices, the right to equal access to household resources and, most of all, the right to vote. Although hardly a radical feminist, Anna Longshore-Potts had already broken new ground in two male-dominated professions, medical doctor and travelling stereopticon lecturer.

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IMAGES OF WOMEN IN SLIPPING SLIDES

As we know, these are not always complimentary! But they do tell us something about how women were viewed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Our thanks to Jennifer and Keith Utteridge and Gwen Sebus for these examples. *More on page 12.*

MY FIRST SLIDE

Gwen Sebus

If you ask me which is my first slide, I will answer that I have several 'first slides' – the first slide I saw, the first slide I bought, the first slide I owned and the first slide I showed. I was born in December between two Dutch holidays, the Feast of St Nicolas and Christmas Day. And it was always raining that day (so that is the way I remember my early birthdays). We had, and still have, two magic lanterns with slides in the family, bought by my two great-grandfathers. For my birthday parties my mother took out one of the lanterns and gave a magic lantern show. I loved it!

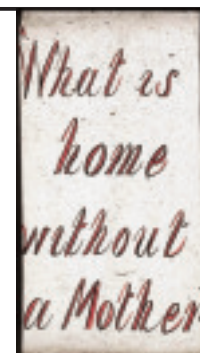


I was around four years old when I saw my first lantern show and I cannot recall which slide was the first I saw projected. But I do remember which story I liked best. For me that was the Primus set *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, especially slide number 7: Morgiana fills the 40 jars, with the thieves hidden inside, with burning oil. The brave woman! At the end my mother always showed two German-made slipper slides we had in the collection, a man with an expanding belly, drinking beer, and a woman with a very large nose and moving eyes, called Juffrouw Prikneus (Miss Pricknose). In the family collection there were also sets that lanternists nowadays will not show including the Primus set *The Elephant's Revenge*, with text on the slides, and the set *Ten Little Nigger Boys*. My mother always showed them in reverse, so that we could not read the text in the slide. She was a very good story teller and made up her own stories. A few years later *The Elephant's Revenge* set was replaced by a set without text and the *Ten Little Nigger Boys* set was not shown anymore.

Years later, my mother started to expand the collection, not knowing yet about the Magic Lantern Society. It was that far off time, long ago, without the internet. At that time she met Annet Duller who was also collecting and doing shows. My husband and I started to look for magic lantern articles in shops and markets. At a local market we found for her two long French magic lantern slides, probably from 1860, with images of soldiers. So these were the first slides



I ever bought. In 1986 at Camden Market in Beryl Vosburgh's shop in London we bought *The Ten Year Book* of the Magic Lantern Society, as a birthday present for my mother, possibly Beryl's own copy. Now we learned more about the Magic Lantern Society. From about 1988 I started buying slides for my own collection. One of the first slides that I bought at one of the meetings at the Architectural Association in London for myself (I don't recall in which order) was a slipper slide of a pie with frogs jumping out. This slide I showed at my children's birthday parties as their 'magic birthday pie'. I also bought four matching slides with a ship in full sail, in a storm, etc. I also show these slides frequently. My first motto slides, a set of three matching slides – 'Welcome', 'Silence' and 'Goodnight' – I have never shown. I bought them just because they were so beautifully painted. The slide with the frogs was the first slide I ever projected. None of these slides will I ever sell, for sentimental reasons, because they were the start of a still expanding collection and my career as lanternist.



IMAGES OF WOMEN IN SLIPPING SLIDES

(Continued from page 7)