

1896: Anti-Corset Campaigner

Cora Gaillard, the wife of a doctor in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and a mother of three daughters, was concerned about the health risks associated with wearing corsets.

Life at Home

- Cora Gaillard had heard about the attacks on wearing corsets for years.
- At times it seemed that every speaker who could spell “M.D.” had a reason to condemn the sturdy undergarment, revered for its ability to fashion an hourglass figure.
- Some doctors blamed tightly laced corsets for weak stomach muscles in girls, fainting spells, numbness of the legs, and even infertility.
- Others emphasized the impact on the respiratory system of women, which was widely understood to be different from that of men.
- Cartoonists and stereographic card manufacturers loved to show sisters pulling the lacing so tight on one another that a foot braced on the back was often required.
- The conversion of Cora Gaillard began with her concern over the health of her three teenage daughters and was supported by her husband, a medical doctor in Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- Fashion dictated, and vanity decided, that corsets must create continuous and severe constriction.
- Even waists that naturally measured 25 inches could be cinched back to 19 inches when a French-designed back-fastening corset with a long steel busk down the front was worn.
- Cora remembered well the sacrifices she had made as a teenager to achieve a waist smaller than was normal for her age using a modern steam-molded, spoon busk corset with enough boning and cording to create a perfect hourglass shape.
- Whenever she rebelled against this confining garment, her mother invariably reminded her that wearing a corset was “the hallmark of virtue” and that “an uncorseted woman reeked of license.”
- But Cora now had another motivation: healthy teenage children, nearing marriageable age and the bearing of healthy grandchildren.
- She was also concerned that fainting, poor circulation, and lethargy in women were all a result of tightly laced corsets.



Cora Gaillard suspected that corsets were damaging to women's health.

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, NEW YORK

Timeline of Phlebotomy *(continued)*

1860s

Louis Pasteur (who discovers microorganisms as the cause of disease) and Robert Koch conclusively prove that inflammation results from infection and is not susceptible to bloodletting.

Late 1800s

Advances in evidence-based medicine lead to the rapid decline of the practice of bloodletting as a cure for disease, and phlebotomy evolves into an important diagnostic tool.

Laboratory science introduces a new, microscopic, view of blood that leads to a modern scientific understanding of blood and its function in the body.

Early 1900s

Karl Landsteiner demonstrates that not all blood is the same, identifying three distinct types: A, B, and C (now known as O). AB is discovered a year later by his students Adriano Sturli and Alfred von Decastello, and further experimentation classifies blood as positive or negative. These discoveries make blood transfusion a viable medical treatment.

Geoffrey Keynes develops a portable machine for storing blood to enable blood transfusions at locations outside of medical facilities.

1930s

Blood plasma and red blood cells are separated so they can be stored for longer periods.

The Soviets are the first to establish a network of facilities to collect and store blood for use in transfusions at hospitals.

New techniques of refrigeration and plasma storage lead to the creation of blood banks and emergency transfusions.

1947

Joseph Kleiner invents a modern glass vacuum tube, called the Evacutainer; the vacuum pressure ensures that the correct amount of blood enters the tube from the needle, making venipuncture safer and easier and the results more accurate.

1950s

American biochemist Leonard Skeggs invents the AutoAnalyzer, which can perform one blood test per minute.

HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT

2006-2007

- NASA's Stardust mission successfully returned dust from a comet
- The Blu-ray Disc format was released in the United States
- Massive antiwar demonstrations, including a march down NYC's Broadway marked the third year of war in Iraq
- The Military Commissions Act of 2006 was passed, suspending habeas corpus for "enemy combatants"
- A Pew Research Center survey revealed that 81 percent of Americans believed it was "common behavior" for lobbyists to bribe members of Congress
- More than a million immigrants, primarily Hispanic, staged marches in over 100 cities, calling for immigration reform
- Liquids and gels were banned from airplane baggage after London Police made 21 arrests in connection with an apparent terrorist plot to blow up planes traveling from the United Kingdom to the United States
- The International Astronomical Union defined "planet," demoting Pluto to the status of "dwarf planet" more than 70 years after its discovery
- President George W. Bush, on the fifth anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks, asserted "if we give up the fight in the streets of Baghdad, we will face the terrorists in the streets of our own cities"
- Former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was sentenced to death by hanging after an Iraqi court found him guilty of crimes against humanity
- Massachusetts enacted Universal Health Coverage, requiring all residents to have either public or private insurance
- Smoking was banned in all Ohio bars, restaurants, workplaces and other public places
- Live Earth, a worldwide series of concerts to initiate action against global warming, took place
- The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement adopted the Red Crystal as a non-religious emblem for use in its overseas operations
- The final book of the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, sold over 11 million copies in 24 hours, the fastest-selling book in history
- Track and field star Marion Jones surrendered the five Olympic medals she won in the 2000 Sydney Games after admitting to doping
- Beats headphones debut and become a sensation, marking the launch of a multi-billion dollar brand



Photo by Ajay Suresh, via Wikimedia Commons.



During the COVID-19 pandemic people across the nation posted signs thanking health care first responders. Photo by iStock/nycshooter. [Used under license.]

- Over the years, Kevin developed partnerships with community-based organizations to provide referrals as necessary. This included various specialists such as oncologists, rheumatologists, psychotherapists, physical and occupational therapists, and more.
- Kevin found the pandemic’s impact varied among his coworkers. Some felt a renewed sense of strength and purpose. Others felt incredibly discouraged. Most days, he experienced the latter.
- The pandemic exposed weaknesses in the country’s healthcare system, including severe shortages of hospital beds, equipment, medication, supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE). The administrative complications caused daily frustration. Kevin struggled to separate his sense of responsibility to his patients from the things that were out of his control. There was nothing he could do about not having enough ventilators. But there was nothing worse than telling a patient who was uncomfortable and scared that the hospital was not properly equipped to help them.
- He and his coworkers were being stretched thin. Breaks were constantly being interrupted; a shortage of PPE became a growing concern for their safety.
- The emotional trauma was the main focus of Kevin’s therapy sessions. Because visitors were extremely limited, patients were without their loved ones. This meant the nursing staff were patients’ only support system. Kevin would sit with patients as often as he could, holding their hand and sharing his philosophy on meditation and the accuracy of *Grey’s Anatomy*.
- When Kevin went for walks in his neighborhood, he couldn’t help but notice all of the signs in storefronts and brownstone windows that celebrated frontline workers for their efforts. Most of the signs were made by kids—lots of glitter and backwards Ks in “Thank You.” Every sloppy letter made him smile.
- He hoped the increased public awareness of nursing’s value and the integral role of nurse practitioners within the healthcare system would continue long after the pandemic had ended.
- One silver lining he held onto tightly was that the pandemic brought nurse practitioners closer to full independent practice authority. His profession’s full potential was being recognized, and with it came resounding optimism.



NYC Pride. Photo by Fulbert, via Wikimedia Commons.

participants, and focused on supporting Black transgender lives. As much as Kevin supported the movement, he couldn't justify participating in such a large gathering while the ICUs all over the state of New York continued to be overwhelmed as the pandemic was still in full swing.

- Nearly 50 percent of national cases were in the state as of March 2020, with one-third of total U.S. cases being in New York City.
- One year later, in March 2021, the city had recorded over 30,000 deaths from COVID-19-related complications.
- The state of New York is bordered by New Jersey and Pennsylvania to the south, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont to the east, as well as an international border with the Canadian provinces of Quebec to the north and Ontario to the northwest.
- It was established as a royal colony in 1686, meaning it was one of the thirteen original colonies.
- In the early nineteenth century, the development of the Erie Canal greatly enhanced the economy of many of New York's major cities, including New York City, Albany, Syracuse, and Buffalo. The canal, the second-longest in the world at the time of its completion in 1825, provided unparalleled advantages over the other regions of the East Coast and New York's long-lasting political and cultural dominance is attributed to it.
- New York has generally supported Democratic candidates in national elections since the second half of the twentieth century.