

AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES



photo: Alex Rivera

CALIFORNIA
NEWSREEL

40th Anniversary Year
1968-2008



Forty Films on
Race in America

ZORA NEALE HURSTON: JUMP AT THE SUN

Zora Neale Hurston, path-breaking novelist, pioneering anthropologist and first black woman to enter the American literary canon, established the African American vernacular as one of the most vital, inventive voices in American literature. This definitive film biography, eighteen years in the making, portrays Zora in all her complexity – gifted, flamboyant, controversial but always fiercely original.



Producer/Writer: Kristy Andersen
 Director: Sam Pollard
 84 minutes, 2008, [CC](#)
 A co-production of Bay Bottom News and American Masters

Major funding provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Ford Foundation, the Southern Humanities Media Fund, the Maryland Humanities Council, the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs and the National Black Programming Consortium.

photo: Carl Van Vechten, Library of Congress

Zora Neale Hurston: Jump at the Sun intersperses insights from leading scholars and rare footage of the rural South (some of it shot by Zora herself) with re-enactments of a revealing 1943 radio interview. Hurston biographer, Cheryl Wall, traces Zora’s unique artistic vision back to her childhood in Eatonville, Florida, the first all-black incorporated town in the U.S. There Zora was surrounded by proud, self-sufficient, self-governing black people, deeply immersed in African American folk traditions. Her father, a Baptist preacher, carpenter and three times mayor, reminded Zora every Sunday morning that ordinary black people could be powerful poets. Her mother encouraged her to “jump at de’ sun,” never to let being black and a woman stand in the way of her dreams.

Zora’s mother died when she was thirteen and for the next fifteen years she hustled, moving from place to place, taking odd jobs as a maid or waitress. Finally, at 28, she achieved her goal of entering Howard University where she began to write. In 1925, at the height of the Harlem Renaissance, she arrived in New York “with \$1.50 in my pocket and a lot of hope.” Novelist Dorothy West, doyenne of that generation, remembers her as the self-anointed “queen” of the

“niggerati,” a term Zora coined. She became a close friend and collaborator of Langston Hughes, a Mid-westerner who found in Zora a link to the Southern black experience.

Zora next entered Barnard, becoming its first black graduate and a protégé of Franz Boas, the father of modern anthropology. He obtained a fellowship for her to document the disappearing folklore of the rural South. She returned to Eatonville with “a camera and pearl-handled revolver,” launching her career as one of the leading ethnologists of African American culture. She recorded over 200 blues and folk songs with legendary ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress and filmed “religious ecstasy” in the “sanctified” churches of Beaufort, South Carolina with anthropologist Margaret Mead. Zora combined her skill as a trained anthropologist with an inherent respect for the syncretic culture formerly enslaved people had created in the Americas. Where some saw superstition and ignorance, she saw people creating meaning and joy in the few spaces left open to them by white society.

Her ethnographic research lay the groundwork for the books and plays which secured her place as an essential voice in American letters. Zora was not ashamed to show everyday African American life, the life of rail yards, “juke” joints and the front porch of the Eatonville general store. Her work unabashedly embraced “incorrect” black English and celebrated the eloquence of its rhythms and rhetoric. Harvard scholar, Henry Louis Gates Jr, names her most famous novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, a classic because its use of black vernacular immerses readers in the consciousness of an oppressed people, exuberantly expressing their freedom, creativity and individual worth through everyday speech.

While Zora’s writing was by and large well received by the white press, it roused discomfort, if not outright hostility, from the emerging black intelligentsia. Her uncensored pictures of black life and speech, embarrassed some. Black writers were expected to confront their white readers with the injustice of racism as exemplified in

Richard Wright’s seminal novel *Native Son*. But Zora’s work is notably absent of white characters; she refused to write “protest novels” portraying blacks as victims. In the film, biographer Valerie Boyd suggests that while Wright represents the angry, sometimes self-destructive, side of the African American character, Zora expresses the exuberant resilience of black culture.

As the Civil Rights struggle gained momentum after World War II, Zora found herself increasingly out of step with her people. A boot-strap Republican and fervent anti-communist, she denounced the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* integration decision as “insulting to black people.” No court needed to order white people to associate with her; bigots were simply denying themselves the “pleasure of my company” and the riches of African American culture.

A turning point in Zora’s life came when she was falsely accused of molesting two pre-adolescent African American boys. Although the charges were thrown out of court, she was pilloried in the black press. Devastated, even suicidal, feeling her reputation ruined, she claimed, “My own race has sought to destroy me.” She lived out her life in relative obscurity and poverty in Florida. She died in 1960 at age 69 and was buried in an unmarked grave, leaving behind numerous unpublished works and seven out of print books.

As the reassessment of America’s literary canon has expanded to include the works of women and people of color, Zora Neale Hurston has been rediscovered. Alice Walker and Maya Angelou both recall how her work inspired their own while a younger generation of writers follow Zora’s lead to speak in their own voices without shame.

“(Finally) a high-quality documentary to demonstrate the complex and important life of Zora Neale Hurston. I can’t tell you how eye-opening your documentary will be to students.”

—**Lee Baker, Duke University, Author From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race**

“Jump at the Sun does a fine job out-lining Hurston’s life and her near-miraculous achievements, drawing on an unusually impressive and interesting group of talking heads.”

—**The New York Times**

“An exhilarating portrait of an exhilarating woman, and a cut above the usual American Masters portrait.”

—**Newsday**

“Zora Neale Hurston: Jump at the Sun... continues the revival of interest in this free-thinker who in death has gained stature as a leading literary figure.”

—**Orlando Sentinel**

TRACES OF THE TRADE:

A STORY FROM THE DEEP NORTH

In *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North*, one family's painful but persistent confrontation with the continuing legacy of the slave trade becomes America's. Filmmaker Katrina Browne uncovers her New England family's deep involvement in the Triangle Trade and, in so doing, reveals the pivotal role slavery played in the growth of the whole American economy. In this bicentennial year of the federal abolition of the slave trade, this courageous documentary asks every American what we can and should do to repair the unacknowledged damage of our troubled past.



photo: Amishidai Sackitey

Katrina Browne was shocked to discover that her Rhode Island forebears had been the largest slave-trading dynasty in American history. For two hundred years, the DeWolfs were distinguished public servants, respected merchants and prominent Episcopal clerics, yet their privilege was founded on a sordid secret. Once she started digging, Browne found the evidence everywhere, in ledgers, ships logs, letters, even a family nursery rhyme. Between 1769 and 1820, DeWolf ships carried rum from Bristol, Rhode Island to West Africa where it was traded for over 10,000 enslaved Africans. They transported this human cargo across the Middle Passage to slave markets from Havana to Charleston and beyond, as well as to the family's sugar plantations in Cuba. The ships returned from the Caribbean with sugar and molasses to be turned into rum at the family distilleries, starting the cycle again.

This film explains how the New England slave trade supported not just its merchants but banks, insurers, shipbuilders, outfitters and provisioners, rich and poor. Ordinary citizens bought shares in slave ships. Northern textile mills spun cotton picked by slaves, fueling the Industrial Revolution, and creating the economy that attracted generations of

immigrants. It was no secret; John Quincy Adams, sixth president, noted dryly that independence had been built on the sugar and molasses produced with slave labor. *Traces of the Trade* decisively refutes the widely-accepted myth that only the South profited from America's "peculiar institution."

Browne invited two hundred descendants of the DeWolfs to join her on a journey to explore their family's past; only nine came, ranging from a 71 year old Episcopal priest to a County Commissioner from Oregon. Intrepid, intellectually and morally engaged, and a little too polite and "Protestant" for at least one among them, they retrace the Triangle Trade from their ancestors' Bristol cemetery to the slave forts of Ghana and the ruins of a family plantation in Cuba. In Ghana, they discuss the impact of the slave trade on Africa with leading scholars, meet students who pointedly ask if they are ashamed of their family's past, and encounter African-Americans on homecoming pilgrimages. They are surprised and humbled when their good intentions are sometimes met with hostility but, exhausted and shaken, they press on.

On their return they have a clearer insight into this country's persistent racial chasm,

why black and white Americans have two versions of their common history. They join the growing discussion around restorative justice and racial reconciliation. Harvard law professor, Charles Ogletree, co-chair of the Reparations Coordinating Committee, argues for a fund to benefit the descendants of slaves still excluded from American prosperity. Brown economist, Glenn Loury, counters that reparations might alienate more Americans than it would attract. But Harold Fields, facilitator of a ten year long multi-racial, city-wide dialogue in Denver, points out that "maybe reparations is a process not necessarily an event." This compelling film has become a valuable part of that process.

Katrina Browne concludes: "In *Traces of the Trade*, we were trying to decide: what is our responsibility? It's important to roll up our sleeves to deal with what we have inherited from our country's history." This film especially asks what the legacy of slavery is for white Americans. It points to the fundamental inequity and institutional racism that persists and to the broken relationship between black and white Americans. It invites every viewer to consider what it will take to move beyond the guilt, defensiveness, fear and anger which continue to divide us.

"A far-reaching personal documentary examination of the slave trade. . . . The implications of the film are devastating."
—Stephen Holden
The New York Times

"This film presents important scholarship, reminds us where we come from, and then invites us to step into new relationships, as individuals and as societies."
—Maxwell Amoh
**Council of African Studies
Yale University**

"What viewers will find [in the film] are Americans who evolve from clumsy cowardice about our original sin, to the courageousness needed to move us forward."
—Eugene Holley, Jr.
TheBlackWorldToday.com

*"Powerful is an inadequate word to describe the impact of Katrina Browne's *Traces of the Trade*. . . . [Her] clear-headed film represents an intense and searing call for national dialogue."*
—Kirk Honeycutt
The Hollywood Reporter

"...A valuable and penetrating teaching tool that goes right to the core of the most difficult - and too seldom discussed - issues concerning racial conflict and reconciliation. From high school to graduate school, the film is sure to motivate a deep and probing engagement with America's racial history."
—Goodwin Liu
University of California-Berkeley

For another film on restorative justice please see **Banished** (page 14). For additional films on slavery and resistance please see **A Son of Africa** and **Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property** (page 22).

Producer/Director: Katrina Browne
Co-Directors: Alla Kovgan, Jude Ray
Co-Producers: Elizabeth Delude-Dix, Juanita Brown
86 and 54 minute , CC versions plus DVD extras, including discussion guide (on one DVD), 2008

For family member Tom DeWolf's memoir of the journey, *Inheriting the Trade*, please see www.inheritingthetrade.com

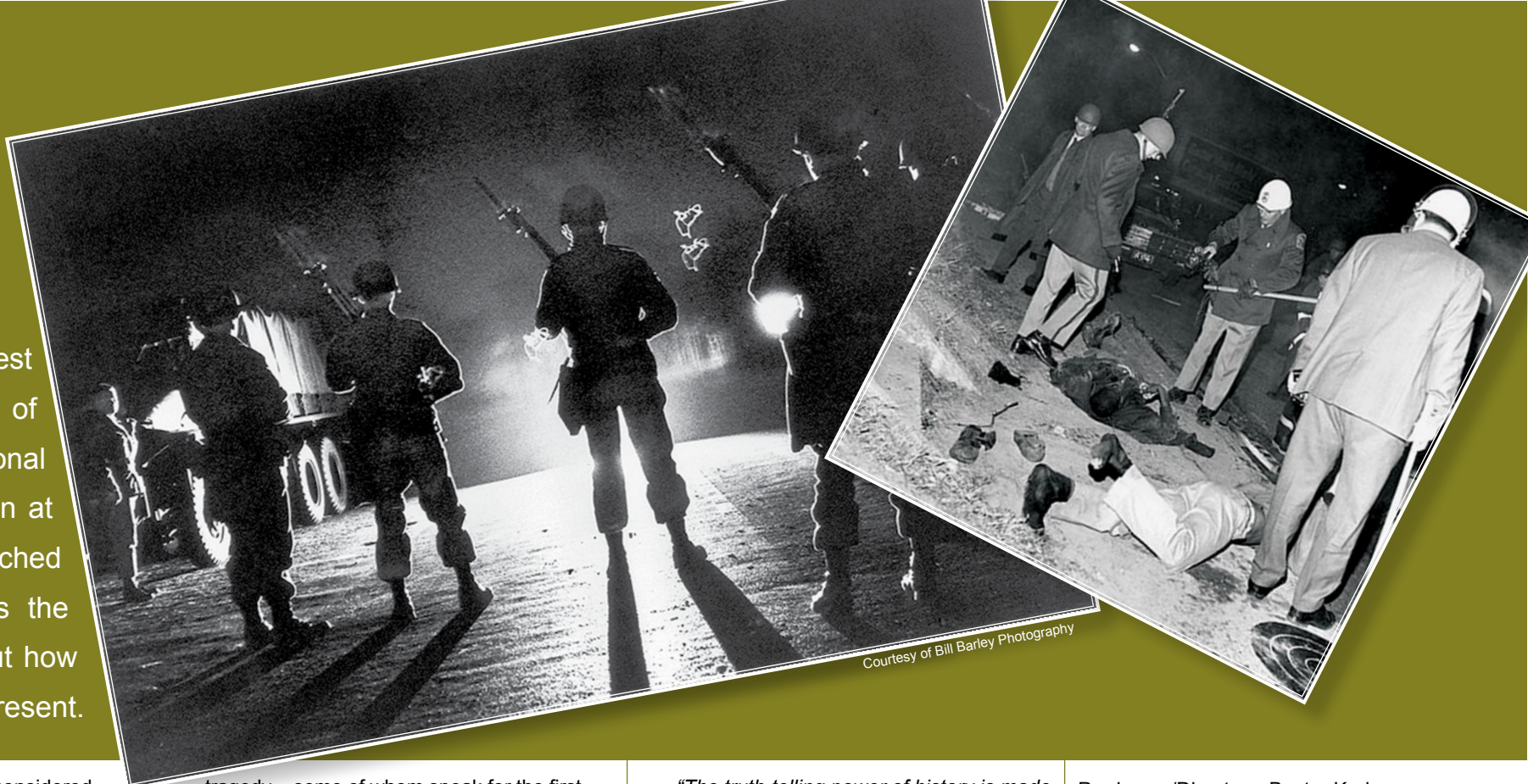
All Ebb Tide Productions' proceeds from DVD sales will be dedicated to social engagement or donated to relevant causes.

Funding provided by: the Ford Foundation, Akonadi Foundation, Animating Democracy Initiative (a project of Americans for the Arts), Threshold Foundation, Trinity Grants Program, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program, and many other institutions and individuals.

SCARRIED JUSTICE:

THE ORANGEBURG MASSACRE 1968

Scarred Justice: The Orangeburg Massacre 1968 brings to light one of the bloodiest tragedies of the Civil Rights era after four decades of deliberate denial. The killing of four white students at Kent State University in 1970 left an indelible stain on our national consciousness. But most Americans know nothing of the three black students cut down at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg two years earlier. This scrupulously researched documentary finally offers the definitive account of that tragic incident and reveals the environment that allowed it to be buried for so long. It raises disturbing questions about how our country acknowledges its tortured racial past and makes sense of its challenging present.



Courtesy of Bill Barley Photography

In 1968, Orangeburg was a typical Southern town still clinging to its Jim Crow traditions. Although home to two black colleges and a majority black population, economic and political power remained exclusively in the hands of whites. Growing black resentment and white fear provided the kindling; the spark came when a black Vietnam War veteran was denied access to a nearby bowling alley, one of the last segregated facilities in town. Three hundred protestors from South Carolina State College and Claflin University converged on the alley in a non-violent demonstration. A melee with the police ensued during which police beat two female students; the incensed students then smashed the windows of white-owned businesses along the route back to campus. With scenes of the destruction in Detroit and Newark fresh in their minds, Orangeburg's white residents, businessmen and city officials feared urban terrorists were now in Orangeburg. The Governor sent in the state police and National Guard.

By the late evening of February 8th, army tanks and over 100 heavily armed law enforcement officers had cordoned off the campus; 450 more had been stationed downtown. About 200 students milled around

a bonfire on S.C. State's campus; a fire truck with armed escort was sent in. Without warning the crackle of automatic rifle fire shattered the cold night air. It lasted less than ten seconds. When it was over, twenty-eight students lay on State's campus with multiple buckshot wounds; three others had been killed. Almost all were shot in the back or side. Students and police vividly describe what they experienced that night.

Journalists remember that the Governor and law enforcement officials on the scene claimed police had fired in self-defense. The Associated Press and other media spread the story of a student "riot" across the country; a retraction later that night by the AP reporter on the scene was not widely carried. A subsequent FBI investigation found no evidence of weapons on the State College campus.

In Orangeburg, police fingered Cleveland Sellers as the inevitable "outside agitator" who, they claimed, had incited the students. Twenty-three years old, he had returned home, leaving his position as Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) program director, to organize black consciousness groups on South Carolina campuses, focused on African American and

African history and culture. He considered integration of a bowling alley a low priority. Sellers had already attracted the attention of law enforcement officials as a friend of SNCC head Stokely Carmichael, who had frightened many Americans with his call for "Black Power." It represented the Movement's shift from a focus on integration to one of gaining political and economic power within the black community. South Carolina officials therefore saw Sellers as a direct challenge to their power. Wounded in the Massacre, Sellers was arrested at the hospital and charged with "inciting to riot." Though students made clear he was only minimally involved with their demonstrations, Sellers was tried and sentenced to one year of hard labor. He was finally pardoned 23 years after the incident. The U.S. Justice Department charged the nine police officers who admitted shooting that night with abuse of power. However, neither of two South Carolina juries would uphold the charges.

The Orangeburg Massacre has been erased from most histories of the Civil Rights Movement. But forty years later, some remember the tragedy as if it happened only yesterday. The film interviews the most important participants on both sides of the

tragedy – some of whom speak for the first time about the Massacre. The survivors are still visibly traumatized by that night, while the Governor and one of the accused policemen remain convinced they had no other choice. Two prominent Southern white journalists, authors of *The Orangeburg Massacre*, discuss their revealing, independent investigation. At an historic conference about South Carolina's Civil Rights Movement, white officials try to evade discussion of the Massacre, arguing that an investigation isn't warranted because "it is time to move forward." However, African Americans insist that true reconciliation cannot begin without an investigation and report that finally sheds light on the many unanswered questions. Cleveland Sellers, now president of Voorhees, an historically black college in South Carolina, and his son, Bakari, at 21 the youngest state legislator in South Carolina history, call on us to remember those slain in Orangeburg with the other Civil Rights martyrs. With a resonance that carries us far beyond the tragedy itself, the film is a powerful antidote to historical amnesia.

For other films on students' role in the Civil Rights Movement please see **February 1** and **Freedom on My Mind** (page 18).

"The truth-telling power of history is made manifest in this profoundly moving and healing documentary... This stunning documentary places the Orangeburg Massacre at the center of a long series of events that are critical to our understanding of the American civil rights era.

—**Darlene Clark Hine**
Northwestern University

"This masterful film tells a story previously known by too few. Among its many lessons is the truth of the phrase "no justice, no peace." Fortunately, the film is powerful enough that it will cast a brilliant light on events shamefully obscured for decades."

—**Julian Bond, Chair, NAACP**

"This documentary should be shown in every schoolroom in America. We might then create a new generation of activists, emulating the heroic young people of that time, moving this country towards new levels of equality and justice."

—**Howard Zinn**

Producers/Directors: Bestor Krebs, Judy Richardson
56 minutes, 2008, [CC](#)

Scarred Justice: The Orangeburg Massacre 1968 is a co-production of Northern Light Productions, the Independent Television Service (ITVS) and the National Black Programming Consortium, with funds provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Sally Jo Fifer Executive Producer for ITVS.

TULIA TEXAS

Tulia, Texas, through its scrupulous investigation of a landmark case, uncovers the deep-rooted assumptions about race and crime that still permeate our society and undermines our system of justice. The film convincingly shows how the “war on drugs” has become a war on due process, waged against African Americans. Today America has the largest prison population in the world; in some states as much as 15 percent of the black male population is incarcerated. **Tulia, Texas** shows one reason why.



The film tells the story from multiple points of view, presenting the evidence in the order in which it came to light, putting viewers in the same position as the jury, judging the credibility of the prosecution’s case. Then, as new facts surface after the trial, the audience is forced to question its own beliefs about the criminal justice system and the disproportionate number of African Americans it convicts.

Tulia appears to be a typical American small town located in the Texas Panhandle. Vacant storefronts line a “Main Street” straight out of the 1950’s, suggesting that Tulia has been left behind by the tidal economic and cultural changes of the past fifty years. It has a small African American community, known as “Black Town”, originally made up of agricultural laborers, since displaced by modernization. Many local black youth are unemployed; good jobs are still closed to them and some have turned to drugs. But it was only when drug use was perceived to have “crossed the tracks” to white neighborhoods that Tulia’s civic leaders became alarmed. Here, as throughout the country, black youth became scapegoats for simmering white anxiety over social forces beyond their control and comprehension.

In response to drug hysteria fanned by the media and politicians, Tulia’s sheriff called in a federally trained undercover agent, Tom Coleman, to conduct a sting operation. In a July 1999 dawn raid, local law enforcement rounded up dozens of people in Tulia and threw them behind bars. Of the 46 arrested, 39 of them were black, all charged with selling Coleman cocaine. Eight were prosecuted, found guilty and sentenced to unusually stiff jail terms of twenty to ninety-nine years. The rest, fearing similar punishment, agreed to plea bargains. Most had been represented by ill-prepared court appointed attorneys; the trials were quick and perfunctory; the juries convicted based on the time-honored Texas tradition of accepting the uncorroborated testimony of a law enforcement officer as proof of guilt.

And there matters would have stood had it not been for a determined group of townspeople, and a crusading Amarillo defense attorney, Jeff Blackburn, who decided to take a closer look at the evidence. He discovered numerous inconsistencies in Coleman’s investigation: physical descriptions of perpetrators bore

no resemblance to the actual defendants, crimes were allegedly committed on days Coleman was off-duty, sales were reported at times when defendants were at work or out of town. When these revelations started to leak out, the case attracted national media attention; a multi-racial coalition, the “Friends of Justice,” was even formed in Tulia. Soon, Blackburn was joined by attorneys from the NAACP and ACLU, as well as one of the top law firms in the country, who helped win a hearing before the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals to present new evidence on behalf of several defendants. The lawyers revealed that Coleman himself had a criminal record. At the time he was working in Tulia, he was wanted on a warrant for theft in another county. The Sheriff and regional narcotics taskforce covered up these charges and put Coleman back to work. Coleman, it was revealed, had an even shadier past; he’d left several towns owing merchants thousands of dollars; one community where he had worked asked that he be removed; fellow officers testified that he had made frequent racist comments.

How could a man with such a record be empowered to put 46 people in prison, some for what amounted to life? **Tulia, Texas** convincingly argues this was an inevitable consequence of the mass hysteria and vigilante law enforcement whipped up by the “War on Drugs.” In the waning years of the Reagan administration, the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program was created to provide federal grants to special regional narcotics taskforces that partnered with local Sheriffs and police departments. Grants were renewed largely on the basis of the number of arrests, changing the strategy of law enforcement from apprehending drug kingpins to sweeps targeting low-level drug users. Undercover agents were hurriedly recruited often without background checks and sent into poor, mostly black communities. As one agent recalls, “it was all a question of numbers,” a built-in mechanism for giving short shrift to due process, allowing racial stereotypes to trump reasonable doubt.

As a result of the revelations about Coleman, all the defendants were eventually set free and pardoned by the Texas governor. Coleman himself was convicted of perjury, but the West Texas jury gave him only a suspended sentence. As one of the former defendants sadly observes many white residents of Tulia will always think Coleman’s targets were guilty as charged. Neither the local sheriff nor regional narcotics officials have been held accountable for hiring Coleman to begin with, and robbing so many innocent people of years of their lives. The underlying prejudices and policies that made the real crimes of Tulia possible are still widespread in American society. As of 2008, despite scandals involving more than 30 taskforces, 600 operations like the one in Tulia remain. **Tulia, Texas** challenges viewers to question the deep ties between race, poverty and the criminal justice system in this country.

*“A solidly crafted account of a disgraceful miscarriage of justice **Tulia, Texas**, compels interest with complex subjects and a fascinating narrative.”*

—**Variety**

*“**Tulia, Texas** shows how the ‘War on Drugs’ became a virtual war on African Americans. It will make viewers think twice whenever they see a black person accused of a crime.”*

—**Eva Paterson, Equal Justice Society**

*“**Tulia, Texas** explains how racism becomes manifest in powerful, penetrating, and deleterious ways when institutional authorities and bureaucracies are caught up in public hysteria about a social problem that is overwhelmingly inscribed in race and poverty.”*

—**Alford A. Young, University of Michigan**

Producers/Directors: Cassandra Herrman and Kelly Whalen
58 minutes, 2008,

Tulia, Texas is a co-production of Cassandra Herrman and Kelly Whalen and the Independent Television Service (ITVS), with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Sally Jo Fifer, Executive Producer for ITVS

BRICK BY BRICK:

A CIVIL RIGHTS STORY

Brick by Brick: A Civil Rights Story shows that segregation has been as virulent and persistent in the North as in the South and that it too has resulted from deliberate public policies based in deep-rooted racial prejudice. The film uses the bitter struggle over equal housing rights in Yonkers, New York during the 1980s to show the “massive resistance” the Civil Rights Movement confronted when it moved North. **Brick by Brick** is not only a brilliant legal history of one of the most important cases in civil rights law, it tells this story through the passionate experiences of Yonkers residents on both sides of the issue. The film demonstrates how courageous citizens and dedicated lawyers can enforce the constitutional rights of African Americans in the face of dangerous demagogues fomenting racial hatred.



Yonkers in the 1980s was typical of most American cities in its pattern of housing segregation. Just across the city line from the Bronx, it had transformed itself from a mill town into a bedroom community. Most neighborhoods were occupied exclusively by middle class whites. Seven thousand poor blacks and Latinos were herded into huge public housing projects jammed into a square mile ghetto. One pocket of middle class African Americans was cut-off from surrounding white neighborhoods by a four foot wide no man's land where all streets dead-ended. Real estate agents only showed black people houses in all-black neighborhoods.

The housing struggle in Yonkers began as a struggle for school integration since school and housing segregation are so inextricably linked. Spurred by the local NAACP, the Carter Administration's Justice Department charged the City of Yonkers with a consistent pattern of school and housing segregation for over 40 years. The NAACP's Winston Ross and Keith Herman joined the suit as co-plaintiffs with the help of a crusading NAACP attorney Michael Sussman. The trial began in 1983 with 84 witnesses and 140

depositions, resulting in 1985 in the longest opinion in civil rights history. It held that there was overwhelming evidence that Yonkers was guilty of school and housing segregation and, in a landmark ruling, held the city responsible, a decision with implications nearly as far-reaching as *Brown vs Board of Education*.

While the school board adopted a successful desegregation plan based on magnet schools, the City Council defiantly appealed the decision eventually to the Supreme Court, where it was denied a re-hearing. In 1988, when the Council refused to comply, the court found the city in contempt and ordered it to pay fines up to \$1,000,000 a day and held the individual councilmembers liable for fines and imprisonment as well. Politicians, who, like Orville Faubus and George Wallace before them, had built their careers fueling racial hostility, framed the issue as one of “judicial dictatorship” - not racial equity. Stereotyping poor blacks as violent criminals, drug users and welfare

mothers, they pledged not to let Yonkers “turn into another Bronx.” Inflamed white mobs stormed City Council meetings, threatening black residents and other integration supporters. Eventually, faced with bankruptcy, drastic curtailment of city services and massive lay-offs, the Council caved-in ending many politicians' careers.

After much foot dragging, in 1992 two hundred units of low income townhouses were built in small clusters spread throughout the city; 600 more were built subsequently. Property values did not decline and some former opponents even worked to build cohesive interracial neighborhoods. The former mayor went so far as to apologize to

a member of the NAACP for “the monster” he had helped create and pledged to help transcend the racial polarization of the city. Yonkers represents only a small, painfully slow first step. American cities are more segregated today than they were 100 years ago. As NAACP lawyer Sussman says, until we face this fact, racism will remain “the defining American issue.”

“Brick by Brick is an engrossing window into a titanic constitutional struggle that consumed an otherwise typical urban community. It depicts the full sweep of the human condition: passion, courage, love, hatred, fear, betrayal, redemption, hope, bitterness, and struggle.”
—Peter H. Schuck, Yale Law School

“One comes away with a new awareness of the complex factors motivating racial segregation, and the extent to which governments and politicians are sometimes complicit.”
—Christopher Serkin
Brooklyn Law School

“Fascinating... particularly for those too young to remember Yonkers' relatively recent role as the Birmingham of the North. It should be a sober warning about the present day. America still grapples with unsettled issues of poverty and race, and until that conundrum is resolved, it will keep reasserting itself in new and troubling ways.”
—New York Times

Producer/Director: Bill Kavanaugh,
53 minutes, 2007,

Brick by Brick will be of special interest to legal scholars, law students, law school recruitment and retention programs and lawyers. Other films in this catalog on civil rights and the law include **Tulia, Texas** (pg. 6) **Soul of Justice** (pg. 21) and **Road to Brown** (pg. 21)

UNNATURAL CAUSES

IS INEQUALITY MAKING US SICK?

Unnatural Causes reveals, for the first time on film, how racism, class and power impact the health of every American, especially African Americans and other people of color. This seven-part series sounds the alarm about our glaring racial and socio-economic health inequities—and searches for their root causes. They are not what we might expect. It turns out there's much more to our health than bad habits, health care or unlucky genes. The social conditions in which we are born, live and work profoundly affect our well-being and longevity.



The U.S. spends more than two times as much per person on health care than the average rich nation, yet American life expectancy ranks 29th in the world. Infant mortality? Cyprus, Slovenia and Malta do better. One third of Americans are obese. Chronic illness now costs American businesses more than \$1 trillion a year in lost productivity.

Unnatural Causes proves that at each step down the class pyramid - from the rich to the middle class to the poor—people tend to be sicker and die sooner. It's not CEOs who are dropping dead from heart attacks, but their subordinates. Poorer smokers are more likely to get sick than rich smokers.

Yet at every step on the pyramid, African Americans tend to be worse off than their white counterparts. In many cases, so are other communities of color. And the mortality gap has been growing. African Americans live on average almost six years less than white Americans. Why?

The series' first segment, *In Sickness and In Wealth*, travels to Louisville to find the answer. It compares the lives of white and black residents linked through their

ties to a single employer. The white CEO of the hospital lives in a quiet residential neighborhood with plentiful recreation spaces and stores featuring expensive but nutritious food. He has many responsibilities but sets his own schedule. Two of his black employees, one an administrator, the other a janitor, have more stressful lives, juggling jobs and family, constantly having to respond to crises whether managerial or medical.

African Americans' increased mortality is not the result of drug overdoses, gunshot wounds or even poor medical care, as is commonly believed. Nor, despite the newspaper headlines, is there anything different about the genes of people of color. We are introduced to a growing body of research which is shaking up the conventional wisdom about what really makes us healthy – or sick. It indicates that the biggest health risk of all may be our social environment - our jobs, schools, built spaces, transportation and, of course, persistent discrimination. All these produce

constant stress which over a lifetime can translate into chronic diseases: stroke, heart disease, asthma, hypertension, diabetes, even cancer.

Another episode, *When the Bough Breaks*, explores why infant mortality rates among black Americans are twice as high as whites. Even African American women with college degrees are at greater risk of having pre-term, low birth-weight deliveries than white mothers who haven't finished high school. The daily pressures of coping with a racist society take their inevitable toll.

Solutions, the show suggests, lie not in more pills, but in better social policies and more racial and economic equality. Harvard Professor of Public Health and African and African American Studies, David Williams, points out, investing in our schools, improving housing, integrating neighborhoods, better jobs and wages, giving people more control over their work - these are as much health issues as diet, tobacco, and exercise.

"Riveting... Explores why your bank account, race and zip code are more powerful predictors of healthiness than your medical coverage, habits and genes."

—USA Today

"Provides dramatic evidence that we need new prescriptions. Unless we make provisions for all Americans to lead healthier lives, the chronic disease epidemic will continue to grow."

—Dr. David Satcher
former U.S. Surgeon General

"A quietly withering attack on...the cult of the individual which fractures any sense of community [and] the fetishistic worship of the so-called free market that increases the distance between the poor and the tax-averse rich... Makes clear that only political will can provide a remedy."

—Los Angeles Times

"The filmmakers offer plenty of background...but the film's power comes not from experts or statistics but stories of real people.... They powerfully reinforce the fact that where you live can predict not just how well you live but also how long."

—Newsweek.com

"An eye-opening series everyone should watch and discuss. It reveals the links between living conditions, public policy, and health. A powerful and long-awaited resource."

—Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino

Produced by California Newsreel in association with Vital Pictures Presented on PBS by the National Minority Consortia Seven-part series (1 x 56 min plus 6 x 28 min) on one DVD 224 minutes, 2008,

DVD MENU allows customized use of individual scenes as well as episodes. Visit the companion web site for interactivities, discussion guides, policy guide, fact-sheets, charts, backgrounders, podcasts, handouts, and more...

www.unnaturalcauses.org

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BANISHED

Banished recovers the largely forgotten history of racial cleansing in America. Between 1860 and 1920, thousands of black Americans were driven from their homes and communities by violent, racist mobs in hundreds of U.S. counties. The phrase “sundown towns” described towns where African Americans could not be seen after dark without fearing for their lives. This scrupulously researched, eye-opening documentary looks in depth at three contemporary cases where relatives of the dispossessed have sought some form of reparations for these human rights abuses



Banished chronicles three of these mass expulsions in Forsyth County, Georgia, Pierce City, Missouri and Harrison, Arkansas. In each, a black man was rumored to have assaulted a white woman was lynched and then white rioters attacked black neighborhoods with guns and firebombs. Few black property owners had time to sell their properties and dared not return to repossess them. Whites then illegally assumed ownership. African Americans not only lost their hard-won homes, farms and businesses, but saw their communities and families dispersed, their very right to exist violated.

The film features three black families determined to gain a measure of justice and closure for their ancestors and themselves. When they return to these three towns, they find each still has virtually no black residents and harbors active white supremacists. White citizens deny knowledge of their communities’ past and any responsibility to make restitution. Sherrilyn Ifill, Professor of Law at the University of Maryland, stresses that meaningful reparations for the financial and emotional losses of four hundred years of racism require a continuing process of recompense whenever and however possible.

Racial cleansing is still rampant in America, it just takes more subtle forms: red-lining, redevelopment, gentrification, gated communities, all-white suburbs, the Katrina Diaspora. This powerful but not rhetorical film makes evident that any reconciliation and healing between the races will only be possible once the willful banishing of our nation’s racial history has itself been banished.

Traces of the Trade (page 4) is another valuable resource for American History, cultural competency, prejudice reduction and restorative justice programs.

Producer/Writer/ Director: Marco Williams
84 minutes, 2007,

Banished is a co-production of Two Tone Productions, the Center for Investigative Reporting, the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the National Black Programming Consortium, with major funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Sally Jo Fifer, Executive Producer for ITVS

FAUBOURG TREMÉ: THE UNTOLD STORY OF BLACK NEW ORLEANS

New Orleans’ Faubourg Tremé is arguably the oldest African American neighborhood in the United States, the birthplace of the black civil rights struggle in the South and the home of jazz. Its unique, little known past adds a revealing new dimension to black history from slavery, through Reconstruction and Jim Crow, to the problems of racial inequality today. While the Tremé district is still recovering from Hurricane Katrina, this is not another Katrina film. Every frame is a tribute, elegiac and celebratory, to what African American communities have achieved under even the most hostile conditions.



Louisiana Poet Laureate Brenda Marie Osbey and noted historians John Hope Franklin and Eric Foner explain why New Orleans provided uniquely fertile ground for African American civic life. Originally a French and Spanish city, its more relaxed Latin and urban attitude towards slavery resulted in the largest population of free people of color in the Deep South. The Faubourg Tremé neighborhood, clustered around St. Augustine’s Church, the oldest predominantly black Catholic parish in the country, and Congo Square, a center for African American commerce, gave birth to a unique hybrid Creole culture.

With Emancipation and Reconstruction, Faubourg Tremé became the center for African Americans’ political aspirations as articulated in the pages of the *Tribune*, the oldest black-owned daily in the country. Black citizens organized sit-down strikes to integrate the street cars and the city had the only desegregated schools in the South. At one point, more than half the state’s legislators were African Americans. In the 1890s, a local “Citizens Committee” fought the imposition of Jim Crow laws all the way to the Supreme Court but the resulting *Plessy vs Ferguson* decision legalized 60

years of American-style apartheid.

Jazz legend and New Orleans native, Wynton Marsalis recounts how New Orleans resilient black community found a new voice for their grief and hopes in jazz. This new idiom soon swept the world to become America’s most lasting contribution to music. Tremé was again a focus for civil rights activism during the ‘50s and ‘60s but with its success local residents began to move away resulting in the too-familiar problems of inner city blight, crimes and drugs. Then Katrina struck. When the filmmakers returned to survey the damage, they found local residents angry at the indifferent and incompetent federal response; as with slavery and Jim Crow, America seemed once again to have turned its back on its black citizens. This loving film portrait is part of Faubourg Tremé’s rich legacy to African Americans’ struggle for equal rights.

“A powerful piece of work on our beloved New Orleans! Don’t miss it!”

—**Cornel West, Princeton University**

“Flat out brilliant...This new documentary captures the real New Orleans on film. Richer and far more nuanced than Spike Lee’s When the Levees Broke.”

—**The New Orleans Tribune**

Executive Producers:
Wynton Marsalis and Stanley Nelson
Producers: Lucie Faulknor, Dawn Logsdon and Lolis Eric Elie
Director: Dawn Logsdon
Writer: Lolis Eric Elie
Composer: Derrick Hodge
Filmmakers website, www.tremedoc.com
68 minutes, 2007,

REVOLUTION '67



Photo donated by Corbis-Bettmann

Revolution '67 looks beneath the urban explosion in Newark, New Jersey, in July 1967, to reveal the long-standing racial, economic, and political forces behind inner city poverty. Newark residents, police, officials, and commentators, including writer/activist Amiri Baraka, journalist Bob Herbert and '60s activist Tom Hayden, recall those six traumatic days and discuss their causes.

The spark igniting this firestorm of pent-up rage was the arrest and beating of a black taxi driver for a minor traffic infraction. When (unfounded) rumors of his death spread through the black community, crowds rampaged through the streets vandalizing and looting white-owned businesses. The mayor panicked and called in the New Jersey National Guard. It occupied black neighborhoods with tanks, barbed wire and police checkpoints, firing indiscriminately into the projects at purported snipers. Later analysis found 13,000 rounds of ammunition had been fired by law enforcement, while fewer than 100 could have come from the alleged snipers. In all, 26 people died, 24 of them African American, and 725 were wounded during those six days in July.

REVOLUTION '67 directly links the Newark tragedy to the "racialization" of American society which made it impossible for Southern blacks to follow the classic immigrant's path to the "American Dream." Corporate disinvestment from

the industrialized North to low wage, non-union states and now off-shore left Newark without jobs, a tax base or a future. Post-war federal housing and transportation policies encouraged whites to abandon urban centers for the sprawling suburbs. Public and private investment followed, starving the inner cities "White flight" became a stampede after July '67 and Newark was discarded to its African American poor.

The 1968 Kerner Commission's definitive report on the urban disturbances of the '60s recommended massive federal investment in the inner cities. But the film's postscript finds that by 2007, the 40th anniversary of the insurrection, the city's population had dropped from 450,000 in 1950 to 277,000. Unemployment was more than double the national average, as was the poverty rate. **Revolution '67** makes clear that the underlying causes and consequences of Newark's 1967 rebellion still haunt us.

Other films in this catalog on the African American urban experience include **Brick by Brick** (page 10) **Faubourg Tremé** (page 15) and **July '64** (page 19).

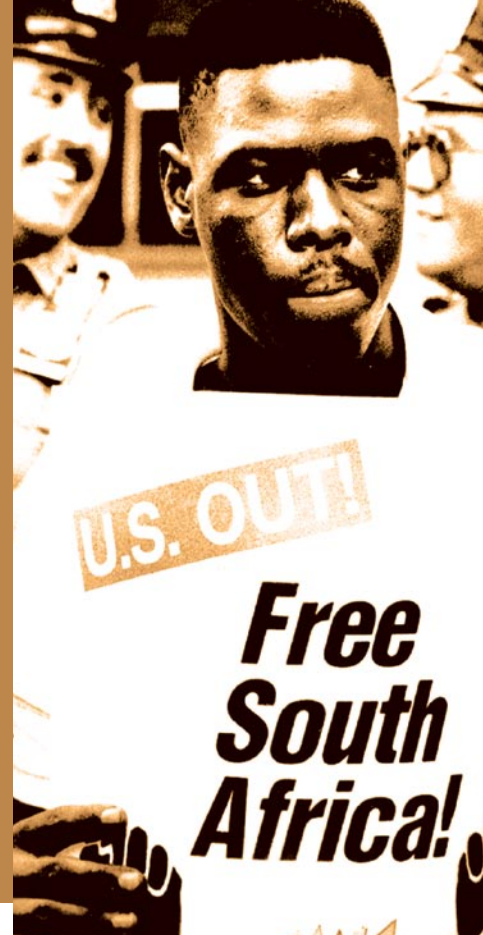
*"Here in Newark, we partnered with **Revolution '67** to bring this insightful documentary to our community."*

—Cory A. Booker, Mayor of Newark

"A powerful film...Should be mandatory viewing for anyone affiliated with Urban Studies or working in the field of Planning."

—Brenda Kayzar
Urban Studies Program
University of Minnesota

Producer/Director: Marylou Tibaldo-Bongiorno
Cinematographer/Editor/Animator: Jerome Bongiorno
90 minute version and 83 minute PBS version on one DVD, [CC]
On-line facilitator's guide available
Filmmakers' website: www.revolution67.com



HAVE YOU HEARD FROM JOHANNESBURG?: APARTHEID AND THE CLUB OF THE WEST

In the 1980s, African American activists spearheaded a nation-wide campaign of civil disobedience, campus protest and ultimately legislative action, which reversed American foreign policy toward South Africa. **Have You Heard from Johannesburg?** offers an inspiring civics lesson in how a grassroots movement can place a global issue on the national agenda and eventually triumph over the most powerful institutions in our society.

In the early 1980s, conservative leaders, Ronald Reagan in the U.S. and Margaret Thatcher in the U.K., steadfastly blocked UN resolutions calling for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa, in favor of "constructive engagement," encouraging overseas investment in the apartheid regime. One of the few centers of resistance to the Reagan Revolution was the 7000 black officials elected in the wake of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Another focus of dissent was TransAfrica, a small policy center giving African Americans a voice in U.S. policy towards Africa. In late 1984 TransAfrica devised a brilliant strategy to keep South Africa in the news by staging "designer arrests" of dignitaries and celebrities including Rosa Parks, Harry Belafonte and Paul Newman, in front of the South African Embassy. In the succeeding months, over 4000 people were taken into custody in what became the longest-running civil disobedience campaign in U.S. History.

South African exiles and Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu tirelessly spread the movement across America. Students successfully demanded that their

university endowments divest themselves of stocks in companies doing business in South Africa.; Similarly, black elected officials forced more than twenty-five state pension funds to divest billions of dollars.

Each evening a now attentive media brought bloody images of the increasing brutality of the South African regime into every home. By 1986, the groundswell of anti-apartheid sentiment reached Congress. The House and Senate overwhelmingly passed sanctions bills and the other Western powers were compelled to follow suit, isolating the apartheid regime, ultimately forcing it to accept majority rule in 1994.

For Connie Field's classic film on the Civil Rights Movement, **Freedom on My Mind**, please see page 18. For another view of the impact of the anti-apartheid struggle in the U.S., see **Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela** (page 30.)

"This film captures a slice of one of the most important historical moments of the 20th Century...A vital lesson and a clarion call for future generations – collective, concerted action does make a difference."

—Charlayne Hunter-Gault
National Public Radio

"Absolutely superb. As one of the leaders of the Free South Africa Movement, I can vouch for the fact that the filmmakers got the story just right."

—Roger Wilkins
George Mason University

Producer/Director: Connie Field
87 minutes, 2007

Have you Heard from Johannesburg? **Apartheid and the Club of the West** is the first completed segment of a six-part series on the world-wide anti-apartheid movement. For more information please visit www.clarityfilms.org/joburg

Freedom On My Mind



This landmark film tells the story of the Mississippi freedom movement in the early 1960s when a handful of young activists changed history.

When Bob Moses, a young Harvard student, came to Mississippi in 1961 to head up the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee's voter registration drive African-Americans were denied the right to vote. The first man to accompany Moses to the courthouse to register, a farmer named Herbert Lee, was later shot dead by a state legislator.

In 1964, organizers recruited 1,000 mostly white college kids from around the country to join them for Freedom Summer. Volunteers recall the culture clash between the largely white, middle class outsiders and the poor black residents whose homes and dinner tables they shared. Although three students were murdered, the drive signed up 80,000 members for the insurgent Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and sent an optimistic delegation, led by sharecropper Fannie Lou Hamer, to the 1964 Democratic convention.

Freedom Summer transformed political power in the South forever, leading to passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Today Mississippi has more black elected officials than any other state. Those who participated in the struggle took away a profound sense of possibility and a deepened commitment to justice. So too will viewers of this film.

"Conveys the human dimensions of the fight with such sensitivity and intelligence and pure emotional insight that ...this amazing work chases away despair."
—Washington Post

"A compelling and eloquent film. This is history at its very best, illuminating, entertaining and disturbing."
—Leon Litwack
University of California, Berkeley

Producers/Directors: Connie Field and Marilyn Mulford
110 minutes, 1994

February One



In one remarkable day, four college freshmen changed the course of American history. **February One** tells the inspiring story of the 1960 Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins that revitalized the Civil Rights Movement. This moving film shows how a small group of determined individuals can generate a mass movement and focus a nation's attention on injustice.

The Greensboro Four were close friends at North Carolina A&T University before they became political activists. They recount how the idea for the sit-in grew out of late night "bull sessions." On the night of January 31, 1960 the four dared each other to do something that would change the South and their own lives forever. They decided to sit-in at the whites-only lunch counter at Woolworth's in downtown Greensboro the next day. When the sit-ins spread to other cities and campuses, it galvanized the formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the vanguard of the Civil Rights Movement of the '60s.

February One not only fills in one of the most important chapters in the Civil Rights Movement, it reminds us that this was a movement of ordinary people motivated to extraordinary deeds by the need to assert their basic human dignity. It provides an eloquent argument to today's generation of students that involvement in the politics of our own time is a vital part of any college education.

"Tremendous! An excellent teaching tool that I wish had been available when I was in the classroom. A MUST for those teaching and studying American history."
—John Hope Franklin

"This splendid documentary tells how four sit-in students risked everything to start an unprecedented non-violent revolution. Inspired by their incredible bravery, many of us followed their lead -- and the result was the first national mass movement to eliminate the scourge of racism."
—Congresswoman
Eleanor Holmes Norton

Executive Producer: Dr. Steven Channing
Producer: Rebecca Cerese
61 minutes, 2004

Negroes With Guns



Robert F. Williams was the forefather of the Black Power movement and broke dramatic new ground by internationalizing the African American struggle. **Negroes with Guns** is an electrifying look at a leader erased from our history. It provides a thought-provoking examination of black radicalism and serves as a launching pad for the study of Black Liberation philosophies.

Robert Franklin Williams was born in Monroe, North Carolina in 1925 and learned how to use arms as a draftee in the U.S. Army. After the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Klan activity in Monroe skyrocketed nearly shutting down the local chapter of the NAACP. Williams revived it to nearly 200 strong by reaching out to everyday laborers and to fellow black veterans. When repeated assaults on black women in the county were ignored by the law, Williams filed for a charter from the NRA; the Black Armed Guard was born.

Pursued by FBI agents on trumped-up kidnapping charges, Williams and his family spent five years in Cuba where he wrote his electrifying book, *Negroes With Guns*, and produced Radio Free Dixie for the international airwaves. Williams helped link the black liberation struggle in this country to anti-colonial movements around the world.

*"Robert Williams' insistence on armed self-defense in response to racist terrorism inspired hundreds of followers. **Negroes with Guns** revives the powerful words and actions of this legendary black leader and restores him to his central place in the black struggle for dignity and human rights."*
—Kathleen Cleaver, former Black Panther, Professor of Law,
Yale University

"Rob Williams was a legendary spokesperson for the black struggle during the 1950s and 1960s. With militancy paralleling Malcolm X, Williams boldly linked the African American freedom struggle with Third World liberation."
—Manning Marable, Columbia University

Writer/Co-Director: Sandra Dickson; Co-Director: Churchill Roberts
Sponsor: The Documentary Institute, University of Florida
53 minutes, 2005,

July '64



The night of Friday, July 24th, 1964 started off normally enough in Rochester New York, stiflingly hot and humid; but by the next morning no one would look at race relations in the North the same again. **July '64** takes a penetrating look at the underlying causes of the urban insurrections that swept through black communities like wildfires that summer and in years since.

It started that night with the arrest of a drunken black man at a block party – or perhaps it was the rumor that a young black girl had been bitten by a police dog. The streets filled with young people throwing bricks, stones and Molotov cocktails at the police and trashing stores along the main artery of the black neighborhood.

Langston Hughes famously wrote, "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or does it fester like a sore and then run... Or does it explode?" Rochester, Newark and Watts represented cries of inchoate rage and frustration because this country has yet to address the vital needs of its black citizens.

*"**July '64** presents, with remarkable images and striking words from the people who were there, a dramatic moment in the history of Rochester. The realities of racial discrimination and economic injustice in all of America are revealed in one violent summer, in one city."*
—Howard Zinn

"Those who made this film deserve ample credit for portraying such complexities with honesty and grace...I enthusiastically recommend this film to sociologists, political scientists, historians and, particularly students..."
—Dennis E. Gale, Rutgers University

Director: Carvin Eison
Producer/ Writer: Chris Christopher
54 minutes, 2006,

At The River I Stand



Memphis, Spring 1968, marked the dramatic climax of the Civil Rights movement. **At the River I Stand** skillfully reconstructs the two eventful months that transformed a local labor dispute into a national conflagration. It disentangles the complex historical forces that came together with the inevitability of tragedy in the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This 58-minute documentary brings into sharp relief the connection between economic and civil rights, the debate over violent vs. nonviolent change, and the demand for full inclusion of African Americans in American life.

In the 1960s, Memphis' 1,300 sanitation workers formed the lowest caste of a deeply racist society, earning so little they qualified for welfare. In the film, retired workers recall their fear about taking on the entire white power structure when they struck for higher wages and union recognition. But local civil rights leaders, the national black leadership and the labor movement soon realized the strike was part of the struggle for economic justice for all African Americans. Dr. King himself came to Memphis and delivered his prophetic *I Have Been to the Mountaintop* speech. One day, a placard appeared on the picket lines which in its radical simplicity summed up the meaning of the strike: "I am a man."

"One of the most clearheaded, evenhanded documentaries about the Civil Rights movement you'll ever see, and a piece of gripping storytelling as well."
—Dallas Observer

"More than any other Civil Rights documentary, this is a deeply emotional, riveting narration of black working-class resistance that speaks to the current crisis and jars our collective memory."
—Robin D.G. Kelley
University of Southern California

Directors: David Appleby, Allison Graham and Steven Ross
56 minutes, 1993

Color Adjustment



Color Adjustment traces 40 years of race relations through the lens of prime time entertainment, scrutinizing television's racial myths and stereotypes. Narrated by Ruby Dee, this 88 minute documentary allows viewers to revisit some of television's most popular stars and shows, among them *Amos and Andy*, *The Nat King Cole Show*, *I Spy*, *Julia*, *Good Times*, *Roots* and *The Cosby Show*. The result is a stunning examination of how the American prime time family was integrated, while excluding the daily reality of most African Americans.

Clips from the shows that captivated, amused, and sometimes angered audiences are interwoven with the parallel story of the Civil Rights movement as brought into our living rooms on the evening news. Writers and producers - such as Hal Kanter (*Julia*), Norman Lear (*All in the Family*, *Good Times*, *The Jeffersons*), Steve Bochco (*Hill Street Blues*, *LA Law*), David Wolper (*Roots*), and others - take us behind the scenes of their creations. Esther Rolle, Diahann Carroll and Tim Reid ruminate upon the meaning and impact of the roles they played in shaping prime time race relations. Cultural critics Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Herman Gray, Alvin Poussaint, and Patricia Turner point out that these programs both made African Americans more visible but left the causes of black anger invisible.

"Marlon Riggs, with his usual éclat, traces the evolution of black images in American television...An important ninety-minutes of media self-scrutiny."
—Erik Barnouw, author, *Tube of Plenty*

"Surveys the strange history of TV's various racial fantasies, taking us from the early days of Amos 'n' Andy to the advertising idyll of The Cosby Show. With its witty visuals and enlightening interviews, Color Adjustment tells us just the story we most need to hear and raises precisely the questions that must be raised."
—Mark Crispin Miller, New York University

Producer/Director: Marlon Riggs
Narrator: Ruby Dee

Producer: Vivian Kleiman
88 minutes, 1991

The Road to Brown



The Road to Brown reveals that the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling was just the culmination of a protracted, brilliant legal assault on segregation that launched the Civil Rights movement. It is also a moving and long overdue tribute to a visionary but little known black lawyer, Charles Hamilton Houston, "the man who killed Jim Crow."

The Road to Brown plunges us into the nightmare world of Jim Crow that robbed former slaves of the rights granted by the 14th and 15th Amendments. Under the "separate but equal" doctrine of the Supreme Court's 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, black citizens were denied the right to vote, to attend white schools, to get sick in white hospitals or to be buried in white cemeteries. Those who objected were liable to be lynched.

The Road to Brown then provides a concise history of how African Americans gradually won full legal equality under the Constitution. Its depiction of the interplay between race, law and history opens up a discussion of the true significance of the *Brown v. Board* decision. The example of Charles Houston's persistence and determination will inspire today's students to take America further down the long road to social justice.

"Charles Houston's legal campaign opened the doors of opportunity for me, my children and countless others...This dramatic portrayal should be seen by every young American."
—Douglas Wilder, former Governor of Virginia

"A moving and most important documentary about the struggle to desegregate the schools. I liked it very, very much."
—John Hope Franklin

"The Road to Brown does as much as a film can do to accurately locate a great case within its historical context, chart its litigation strategy, and vividly present its human dimensions."
—Vincent Robert Johnson, Journal of Legal Education

Producer/Director/Writer: William Elwood
Director: Mykola Kulish
Sponsor: University of Virginia

Senior Producer: Larry Adelman
56 minutes, 1990

Soul Of Justice:

Thelton Henderson's American Journey



Few judges provoke the ire of conservatives more than Thelton Henderson, Senior Judge of the Federal District Court of Northern California. His career in many ways parallels the larger historic arc of the Civil Rights movement and the changing vision of government — from Jim Crow laws to Civil Rights victories and back again with recent attacks on affirmative action. The changes and conflicts in judicial philosophy during those 40 years are reflected in Henderson's decisions on affirmative action, environmental protection and prison reform — and the furors that surrounded them.

Henderson was recruited from Boalt Law School in 1962 to diversify the all-white Justice Department team monitoring the Civil Rights struggle. In his role at the Justice Department, Henderson embodied the tension described by Andrew Young as being an "arm of the law in a sometimes lawless society." Decades later, Henderson brought these life experiences and tensions with him to the bench.

"Through the inspiring example of a luminous biography, Soul of Justice demands that each of us consider anew the tensions between securing the rights of society's dispossessed and fidelity to judicial impartiality and the rule of law. A must view film."

—Christopher Edley, Boalt Hall School of Law
University of California, Berkeley

"The intricate relationship between black citizenship and American legal history is dynamic, fraught and ever-changing. Thelton Henderson was at the forefront of many of the most important issues of our time - affirmative action, prison reform and environmental regulation. His story and this film provide an indispensable chapter in any study of American jurisprudence."
—Shauna Marshall, Academic Dean, Hastings College of Law

Producer/Director: Abby Ginzberg
60 minutes, 2005,

Son Of Africa



The Interesting Narration of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African was the first influential slave autobiography. It caused a sensation when published in 1789, fueling a growing anti-slavery movement in the U.S. and England. This BBC production employs dramatic reconstruction, archival material and interviews with scholars such as Stuart Hall and Ian Duffield to provide the social and economic context of the 18th century slave trade.

Equiano's narrative begins in the West African village where he was kidnapped into slavery in 1756. He vividly recalls the pestilence and horror of the Middle Passage: "I now wished for the last friend, Death, to relieve me." Slavery, he would write, brutalizes everyone - the slaves, their overseers, plantation wives, the whole of society. Sold to a British naval officer, he learned to read and write, became a skilled trader, and eventually managed to buy his freedom.

Equiano's adventures eventually brought him to London where he married into English society and became a leading abolitionist. But it was Equiano's book that would prove his most lasting contribution to the abolitionist movement, a book which vividly demonstrated the humanity of Africans as much as the inhumanity of slavery.

"Powerful and evocative, this superb film is faithful to the single most important personal account ever written by a victim of the slave trade...Wonderfully instructive for high school and college students."

—Winthrop D. Jordan, University of Mississippi

"A superb biography and treatment of slavery and the early abolition movement."

—John W. Blassingame, Yale University

"Will make students want to read Equiano's amazing narrative...Tells us as much about the 18th century Atlantic world as Ben Franklin's autobiography."

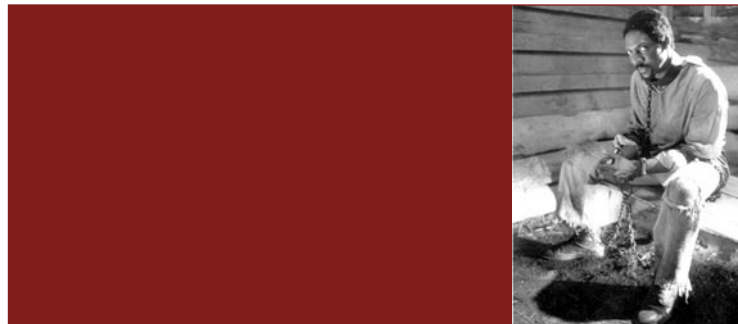
—Peter H. Wood, Duke University

Producer: Aimimage Productions

Director: Alrick Riley

28 minutes, 1996

Nat Turner



Nat Turner's slave rebellion is a watershed event in America's long and troubled history of slavery and racial conflict. **Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property** tells the story of that violent confrontation and of the ways that critical moment in American history has been continuously re-told during the years since 1831. Nat Turner was a "troublesome property" for his master and he has remained a "troublesome property" for the historians, novelists, dramatists, artists and many others who have struggled to understand him.

To emphasize the fictive component of historical reconstruction, the film intersperses documentary footage and interviews with dramatizations of different versions of the story, using a new actor to represent Nat Turner in each version. As literary critic, Henry Louis Gates, explains in the film, "There is no Nat Turner to recover; you have to create the man and his voice." The filmmakers chronicle an extraordinary history of attempts to create and to recreate the man from Turner's autobiography to William Styron's controversial novel.

"This film about the historic figure, Nat Turner, is magnificent. It is required viewing by all who are deeply concerned about the nature of race relations in America."

—Cornel West, Princeton University

"Brilliant work. The myth and reality of this slave rebel are both explored in an unblinking and historically informed way. ... Finally, the elusive Nat Turner story, and the multiple ways of representing it, has been captured in this stunning and original film."

—David W. Blight, Yale University

Director/Writer: Charles Burnett

Producer/Writer: Frank Christopher

Co-Producer/Writer/Historian: Kenneth S. Greenberg

60 minutes, 2002,

The Language You Cry In



The Language You Cry In tells an amazing scholarly detective story that searches for -and finds- meaningful links between African Americans and their ancestral past. It bridges hundreds of years and thousands of miles from the Gullah people of present-day Georgia back to 18th century Sierra Leone. It recounts the even more remarkable saga of how African Americans have retained links with their African past through the horrors of the middle passage, slavery and segregation. The film dramatically demonstrates the contribution of contemporary scholarship to restoring what narrator Vertamae Grosvenor calls the "non-history" imposed on African Americans: "This is a story of memory, how the memory of a family was pieced together through a song with legendary powers to connect those who sang it with their roots."

The story begins in the early 1930s with Lorenzo Turner, an African American linguist who cataloged more than 3000 names and words of African origin among the Gullah of coastal Georgia and South Carolina. It ends when, Amelia Dawley, a Georgia woman who still remembered the words of a Mende dirge without knowing their meaning, returns to Africa and is reunited with people who sing this song today. **The Language You Cry In** shows the significant benefits of multi-disciplinary research and provides a striking example of scholars working with their informants as colleagues.

"Informed by the expertise of anthropologists and linguists, and with echoes of Alex Haley's Roots, this film is the kind of breath-taking detective story that will not let you go. ... See it! And be moved!"

—Johnnetta Cole, former President, Spelman College

"They all come together in this deeply moving film - the intellectually trained and driven investigators, the cultural carriers, and survivors of a people on two continents. And this film becomes the griot touching me in the deepest places, creating spiritual sacred ground watered with my tears."

—Bernice Johnson Reagon

Producer/Directors: Alvaro Toepke and Angel Serrano

Writer: Joe Opala

52 minutes, 1998

Ethnic Notions



Ethnic Notions is Marlon Riggs' Emmy-winning documentary that takes viewers on a disturbing voyage through American history, tracing for the first time the deep-rooted stereotypes which have fueled anti-black prejudice. Through these images we can begin to understand the evolution of racial consciousness in America. This film helped launch the drive for a multi-cultural perspective on the history and culture of this country which swept higher education in the '90s.

Loyal Toms, carefree Sambos, faithful Mammies, grinning Coons, savage Brutes, and wide-eyed Pickaninnies roll across the screen in cartoons, feature films, popular songs, minstrel shows, advertisements, folklore, household artifacts, even children's rhymes. These dehumanizing caricatures permeated popular culture from the 1820s to the Civil Rights period and implanted themselves deep in the American psyche.

Narration by Esther Rolle and commentary by respected scholars shed light on the origins and devastating consequences of this 150 year-long parade of bigotry. **Ethnic Notions** situates each stereotype historically in white society's shifting needs to justify racist oppression from slavery to the present day. It is the first part of Riggs' trilogy on race consciousness which includes **Color Adjustment** (page 20) and **Black Is...Black Ain't** (page 30).

"Decades of studying Afro-American history did not prepare me for the devastating impact of one-and-one-half centuries' worth of vicious racial stereotyping. Anyone claiming to understand our nation's past must see this documentary."

—Nell Irvin Painter, Professor Emeritus, Princeton University

"Downright superb! Because it covers the entire course of American history from the 1820s, it will be useful for US history survey courses, as well as sociology and social psychology. I can think of very few people who would not benefit from seeing it."

—Winthrop Jordan, University of Mississippi

Producer/Director: Marlon Riggs

56 minutes, 1987

The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow



The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow offers the first comprehensive look at race relations in America between the Civil War and the Civil Rights movement. This definitive four-part series documents a brutal and oppressive era rooted in the growing refusal of many Southern states to grant slaves freed in the Civil War equal rights with whites. A life of crushing limitation for Southern blacks, defined by legal segregation known as “Jim Crow” - after a minstrel routine in which whites painted their faces black - shaped the social, political and legal history of the period. In 1954, with the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Jim Crow laws and way of life began to fall.

The series begins by asking: how did Jim Crow begin? As Reconstruction ended, African Americans’ efforts to assert their constitutional rights began to be repressed at every turn, betraying the promises of Emancipation. The early rise of a successful black middle class inflamed the determination of white supremacists to destroy fledgling black political power.

The years between the two world wars marked a time of massive black migration out of the Jim Crow South. The series concludes with the surge of black activism after World War II which launched the Civil Rights movement. This definitive series fills an important gap in the history of this country’s tortured racial memory.

“Essential educational viewing... disconcerting, illuminating and riveting. Highlights a history of betrayed promises and civil disobedience, of racial terror and aspiration, of faith and nihilism.”
—Wall Street Journal

“Must see! Even more powerfully than The Civil War or Eyes on the Prize, it demonstrates why we can’t hope to understand current issues of race and prejudice without facing up to our own ungodly brutal past.”
—Newsday

Writers/Directors: Bill Jersey and Richard Wormser
Producer: Richard Wormser, Bill Jersey and Sam Pollard
4 x 56 minutes, 2002

The Black Press: Soldiers without Sword



The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords is the first film to chronicle the history of the black press, including its central role in the construction of modern African American identity. It recounts the largely forgotten stories of generations of black journalists who risked life and livelihood so African Americans could represent themselves in their own words and images.

The Black Press takes viewers “behind the veil” of segregation to recover a distinctly black perspective on key events from ante-bellum America to the Civil Rights movement. It offers an intimate social history of African American life during these turbulent years.

From the founding of the first black newspaper, *Freedom’s Journal*, in 1827, black abolitionists like Frederick Douglass recognized the press as a powerful weapon against the enforced silence of slavery. This tradition of crusading journalism was carried on by pioneering scribes like Ida B. Wells, one of the first female newspaper owners in America, and Robert S. Abbott who built *the Chicago Defender* into the most powerful and successful black-owned newspaper of all time.

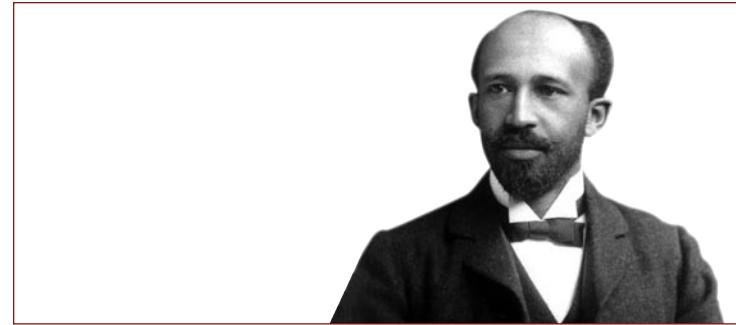
The Black Press will convince students that it is as important today as in the past for black media professionals to play a vigorous role not just in print media but in the rapidly evolving information technologies of the future.

“Retrieves an important missing page from American history and brings it virtually to life. It’s beautifully produced and directed and tells a story as only a powerful film can.”
—Bill Moyers

“Stanley Nelson’s stellar documentary masterfully tells the tale of the scribbling pioneers to whom we owe so much and of whom each black writer today is an heir.”
—Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Harvard University

Producer/Director: Stanley Nelson
86 minutes, 1998,

W.E.B. Du Bois: A Biography In Four Voices



The remarkable life of Dr. William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B) Du Bois (1868-1963) offers unique insights into an eventful century in African American history. Born three years after the end of the Civil War, Du Bois witnessed the imposition of Jim Crow, its defeat by the Civil Rights Movement and the triumph of African independence struggles.

Du Bois was the consummate scholar-activist whose path-breaking works remain among the most significant and articulate ever produced on the subject of race. His contributions and legacy have been so far-reaching, that this, his first film biography, required the collaboration of four prominent African American writers.

Du Bois was a founder of sociology and his masterful *The Souls of Black Folks* still sets a standard for the discipline. But Du Bois was also an activist, a founder of the NAACP, spiritual father of the Pan-African movement and a prominent participant in the Harlem Renaissance. His anti-racism and anti-colonialism made him a target for McCarthyism and he died, age 95, in exile in a newly independent Ghana.

“An absolutely incredible job! This film on Du Bois nears perfection . . . A resonantly full work of art. I can’t imagine that Du Bois himself would not weep in gratitude upon seeing the work.”
—Houston A. Baker Jr., University of Pennsylvania

“W.E.B. Du Bois succeeds in capturing this remarkable man and his significance. It will enlighten anyone - student scholar or general viewer - fortunate enough to see it.”
—Eric Foner, Columbia University

Producer/Director: Louis Massiah
116 minutes, 1995

Goin’ To Chicago



Goin’ to Chicago chronicles one of the most momentous yet least heralded sagas of American history - the great migration of four million African Americans from the rural South to the cities of the North and West after World War II. **Goin’ to Chicago** traces this history through personal stories of a group of older Chicagoans born mostly in the Mississippi Delta. They share their bitter recollections of sharecropping – owing each crop to the landowner, beginning back-breaking labor in the fields at ten years old. A steelworker, newspaper editor, blues musician and others movingly recall their journeys up Hwy. 61 to Chicago in search of comparatively well-paying factory jobs. On the South Side they built a vibrant city-within-a-city of thriving black businesses and civic institutions, proudly referred to as “Bronzeville.”

But just as the American Dream was coming into reach for some of them, the steel mills and stockyards closed, leaving newer immigrants trapped in decaying public housing projects and inner-city despair. **Goin’ to Chicago** is a moving tribute to a generation of African Americans who struggled - and triumphed - over odds as great or greater than other immigrant groups.

“Goin’ to Chicago is a saga...It glows with insight, humor in adversity and hope. It’s a beaut!”
—Studs Terkel

“Adds tremendously to our understanding of one of the largest human migrations...A compelling story all Americans should see.”
—Earl Lewis, Provost, Emory University

Producer/Director: George King
71 minutes, 1994

Strange Fruit



Strange Fruit is the first documentary exploring the history and legacy of this Billie Holiday classic. It tells a dramatic story of America's radical past using one of the most influential protest songs ever written as its epicenter. The saga brings viewers face- to- face with the terror of lynching even as it spotlights the courage and heroism of those who fought for racial justice when to do so was to risk ostracism and livelihood if white - and death if black. It reveals the social forces that would come together in the Civil Rights movement.

"A devastating yet inspiring reminder of when racial terror raged through this country and when blacks and whites worked together to stop it. This film can help strengthen this same struggle in our own era."

—**Morris Dees, Co-Founder, Southern Poverty Law Center**

Producer/Director: Joel Katz
57 minutes, 2002, [CC](#)

Wild Women Don't Have the Blues

Wild Women Don't Have the Blues recaptures the economic and social transformation of African American life early in this century. It recaptures the lives and times of legendary women who made the blues a vital part of American culture. Ma Rainey, first put this folk idiom on stage in 1902. Ida Cox and Bessie Smith, took songs like "Downhearted Blues" and "Jailhouse Blues" on the road with traveling vaudeville and minstrel shows. Later performers like Ethel Waters and Alberta Hunter recorded the blues, bringing them to a "cross-over" market, making them an essential part of American popular culture. This film brings together for the first time dozens of rare, classic renditions of the early blues.

"A superb look at the idiom and its origins."

—**Los Angeles Times**

"Teaches tremendously moving lessons about race, gender and class...Invaluable in women's studies, history and music courses."

—**Pat Gozemba, National Women's Studies Association**

Producer/Director: Christine Dall

58 minutes, 1989

Brother Outsider:

The Life of Bayard Rustin



He was there at most of the important events of the Civil Rights Movement - but always in the background. **Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin** asks why? One of the first "freedom riders," an adviser to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and A. Philip Randolph, organizer of the March on Washington, intelligent, gregarious and charismatic, Bayard Rustin was denied his place in the limelight for one reason - he was gay.

"In the struggle for African American dignity, he was perhaps the most critical figure that many people have never heard of. It's worth taking a look at the life and lessons of one Bayard Rustin."

—**Time**

Producers/Directors: Nancy Kates and Bennett Singer
Executive Producer: Sam Pollard
83 minutes, 2002, [CC](#)

Miles Of Smiles, Years Of Struggle

Miles of Smiles chronicles the organizing of the first black trade union - the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. This inspiring story of the Pullman porters provides one of the few accounts of African American working life between the Civil War and World War II. **Miles of Smiles** describes the brutal discrimination which lay behind the porters' smiling service. After a 12 year struggle led by A. Philip Randolph, the porters won the first contract ever negotiated with black workers. **Miles of Smiles** both recovers an important chapter in the emergence of black America and reveals a key source of the Civil Rights movement.

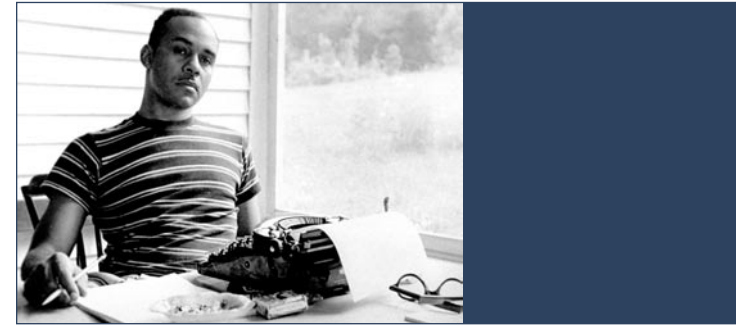
"One hundred years of history is spanned in an enlightening portrait of admirable dignity."

—**New York Times**

Producers: Paul Wagner and Jack Santino
58 minutes, 1983

Ralph Ellison:

An American Journey



Ralph Ellison: An American Journey is the first documentary on one of the most gifted and intellectually provocative authors of modern American literature. It establishes Ellison as a central figure in contemporary debates over art, politics, race and nationhood. Narrated by actor Andre Braugher, with moving readings by Nobel Prize winner, Toni Morrison, and commentary by Cornel West, this film includes the first dramatizations of Ellison's landmark novel *Invisible Man*. Inspired by the spirit of jazz, it tells the story of a man determined to invent an identity for himself despite the racism of the society around him.

"A richly layered portrait of Ralph Ellison and a sensitive examination of the relationship between race and Ellison's artistic aesthetic. The dramatized scenes from Invisible Man become strong visual reminders of the book's ferocity and beauty."

—**The New York Times**

Producer/Writer/Director: Avon Kirkland 87 minutes, 2002, [CC](#)
Director Dramatic Scenes: Elise Robertson

Richard Wright Black Boy

Richard Wright - Black Boy is the first film on the life, work and legacy of Richard Wright. Born in 1908, Wright overcame a childhood of poverty and oppression to become one of America's most influential writers. His first major works, *Native Son* and *Black Boy*, were runaway best sellers that are still mainstays of high school and college literature and composition classes. This film follows his journey through the Chicago black cultural Renaissance of the '30s, the Communist Party during the Depression, the witch-hunts of the McCarthy era and the American expatriate community in Paris in the '50s.

"Revealing and moving...expands our understanding of a genuine literary genius. Enthusiastically recommended."

—**Charles Johnson**

Producer/Writer/Director: Madison D. Lacy
Executive Producers: Guy Land and Jef Judin 86 minutes, 1994, [CC](#)

James Baldwin

The Price of The Ticket



James Baldwin was at once a major twentieth century American author, a Civil Rights activist and a prophetic voice calling Americans, black and white, to confront their shared racial tragedy. **James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket** captures on film the passionate intellect and courageous writing of a man who was born black, impoverished, gay and gifted. The film skillfully links excerpts from Baldwin's major books - *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, *Notes of a Native Son*, *Another Country*, *The Fire Next Time*, *Blues for Mister Charlie*, *If Beale Street Could Talk* - to different stages in black-white dialogue and conflict.

"A brilliant film which magnificently evokes Baldwin's spirit."

—**Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Harvard University**

Producer/Director: Karen Thorsen
87 minutes, 1990

Aimé Césaire Une Voix Pour L'histoire

This monumental three-part study introduces American audiences to the celebrated Martinican author who coined the term *negritude* and launched the literary movement called the "Great Black Cry." Euzhan Palcy, internationally acclaimed director of *Sugarcane Alley* and *A Dry White Season*, weaves Césaire's life and poetry into a vast tapestry featuring many of the most important artistic and intellectual figures of the past six decades. André Breton, the high priest of surrealism, describes Césaire as "a black man who embodies not simply the black race but all mankind, who will remain for me the prototype of human dignity."

"Beautifully captures the fighting yet gentle spirit, humanitarian insight and humor, of a very complex man thriving through very complicated times."

—**Danny Glover**

3 x 50 minutes (on one DVD), 1994
Director: Euzhan Palcy

Race

The Power Of An Illusion



The division of the world's peoples into distinct groups - "red," "black," "white" or "yellow" - has become so deeply imbedded in our psyches, so widely accepted, many would promptly dismiss as crazy any suggestion of its falsity. Yet, that's exactly what this provocative, influential three-hour series proves. **Race - The Power of an Illusion** traces the comparatively recent origin of "race" as an ideological justification for slavery and colonialism. It then explodes the pseudo-science of sociobiology by examining the most recent discoveries in genetics showing there is more diversity within any population than between them. It shows how American society "makes" race by channeling wealth and resources to white people.

"By far the best documentary series on race of the last decade."
—**Troy Duster, former President**
American Sociological Association

"This eye-opening look at why race is not biologically meaningful yet nonetheless very real needs to be seen by all scientists and the general public."
—**Donald Kennedy, Editor-in-Chief, SCIENCE**

"Racists have often used pseudo-science to justify their socially damaging views. Watch these films and see how science, by replacing ignorance with knowledge, can undo that damage."
—**James Watson, Nobel Laureate**

"A marvelously intelligent documentary. A timely reminder that social divisions are made, not inevitable."
—**Patricia Williams, The Nation**

Produced by: California Newsreel
Executive Producer: Larry Adelman
Episode Producers: Christine Herbes-Sommers,
Tracy Strain, Llewellyn Smith
Series Co-Producer: Jean Cheng
3 x 56 minutes (on one DVD,) 2003,

What's Race Got to Do with It?

Social Disparities and Student Success



What's Race Got to Do with It? is a 49-minute documentary film that goes beyond identity politics, celebratory history and interpersonal relations to consider social disparities and their impact on student success in today's post-Civil Rights world. This film follows a diverse group of students at the University of California, Berkeley, in a 16 week long inter-racial dialogue. During the semester, students come to appreciate how social inequities impact student outcomes. They discuss issues like affirmative action, multiculturalism and how the university could be more welcoming to students who come from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds.

Given the paucity of films whose subject is our own complex set of racial beliefs, **What's Race Got to Do with It?** has quickly become a key resource for educators, youth leaders and advocates concerned with strengthening young people's commitment to a more equitable democracy - one that works for everyone.

"Contains a wealth of pedagogy and substance about race relations on campus. Well-crafted and highly recommended."
—**Lester P. Monts, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs**
University of Michigan

This film will help anyone —counselors, student affairs directors, faculty, parents and especially students— realize that tension around race is not something to be ashamed of or denied but can be confronted and worked through as leaders of the future.."
—**Gwendolyn Dungy, Executive Director**
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators

"What's Race Got to Do with It?...Everything if you are a person of color! Students of different racial identities share their experiences of race and class. A great resource for college student educators who want to understand and act."
—**Greg Roberts, Executive Director**
American College Personnel Association

Producer: Jean Cheng
Executive Producer: California Newsreel
49 minutes, 2006,

NO!

Confronting Sexual Assault in Our Communities



No! Confronting Sexual Assault in Our Communities is a new documentary film about the impact of sexual violence on black women and girls. As the incidents of violence and sexual assault continue on campuses and in communities across the country, this film can be used to support both women and men, regardless of race, as they learn to navigate the challenging terrain of sexuality --without violence. **NO!** artfully combines socio-historical inquiry with messages from violence prevention advocates and first person testimonial from survivors. This film is the one tool you need to help students of all colors understand the complex dynamics of sexual assault.

No! features national violence prevention leaders and speaks directly to the needs of communities of color. Insights from sociologists, historians and other scholars make the program complex, thoughtful and interdisciplinary. A media literacy framework offers a lens through which to view popular culture, from music videos to blockbuster movies. Survivors of sexual assault span the spectrum of nonconsensual activity and make real the impact of violence. Spoken word poets, hip hop artists and cultural workers discuss how art can help move beyond trauma to healing.

"If the black community in the Americas and in the world would save itself, it must complete the work this film begins."
—**Alice Walker**

"This ground-breaking work creates needed space to debate the issue of how violence against women harms black women and those who love them."
—**Patricia Hill Collins, University of Maryland**

"Speaking truth to power' was often reserved solely for black men. Filmmaker Aishah Shahidah Simmons dares to 'speak truth to power' with the emphatic power that the very exclamation NO! is intended to convey."
—**Mark Anthony Neal, Duke University**

Producer/ Director: Aishah Shahidah Simmons
Co-Producers: Tamara L. Xavier, Gail M. Lloyd
94 minutes, 2006,

A Question Of Color



A Question of Color is the first documentary to confront a painful and long taboo subject - the disturbing feelings many African Americans harbor about themselves and their appearance. African American filmmaker Kathe Sandler digs into the often subconscious world of "color consciousness," a caste system based on how closely skin color, hair texture and facial features conform to a European ideal.

A Question of Color traces "colorism" back to the sexual subjugation of black women by slave owners and the preferential treatment their mixed-race children received. The film is especially sensitive to the burdens borne by black women who often feel devalued by white standards of beauty. Disturbing scenes with teen-age rappers, a Harlem plastic surgeon, a television news anchor and a writer indicate the color problem is still very much with us, affecting employment, friendship and marriage.

This unusually sensitive film can help viewers examine the complex interplay between racial identity, culture and self-image in society and within themselves.

"An extraordinary accomplishment... This documentary is unforgettable. I urge you to see it."
—**Michelle Wallace**

"Its sensible, positive messages about self-acceptance in the face-of racism resonate strongly."
—**New York Times**

"A free-flowing conversation within the extended family that is black America. Sandler's tone, by itself, can begin healing the wounds it uncovers."
—**Newsday**

Producer/Director: Kathe Sandler
Executive Producer: St. Clair Bourne
Co-Writer: Luke Harris
56 minutes, 1993

Black Is ... Black Ain't



The final film by legendary filmmaker Marlon Riggs (see pages 20 and 23 for other titles), **Black Is...Black Ain't...**, jumps into the middle of explosive debates over black identity. **Black Is...Black Ain't** is a film every African American should see, ponder and discuss.

White Americans have always stereotyped African Americans. But the rigid definitions of "blackness" that African Americans impose on each other, Riggs claims, have also been devastating. Is there an essential black identity? Is there a litmus test defining the real black man and true black woman?

Riggs uses his grandmother's gumbo as a metaphor for the rich diversity of black identities. His camera traverses the country, bringing us face to face with black folks young and old, rich and poor, rural and urban, gay and straight, grappling with the paradox of numerous, often contested definitions of "blackness." Riggs mixes performance art, interviews, music and history into a flavorful stew of black experiences. Especially compelling is his own perspective as a gay black man living and, sadly, dying with AIDS.

Black Is...Black Ain't marshals a powerful critique of sexism, patriarchy, homophobia, colorism and cultural nationalism in the black family, church and other institutions. Cornel West concludes, "We've got to conceive of new forms of community. We each have multiple identities and we're moving in and out of various communities at the same time. There is no one grand black community."

*"Like Marlon himself, **Black Is...Black Ain't...** is brilliant, thoughtful, undaunted by anticipated criticism, and profoundly salutary to our health. It's a powerful, interesting, riveting film."*

—Alice Walker

*"Riggs' eye turns pain into poetry, ordinary people into prophets. To put it simply: **Black Is...Black Ain't...** is moving and brilliant."*

—Gloria Naylor

Producer/Director: Marlon Riggs
Co-Producer: Nicole Atkinson
Co-Director/Editor: Christiane Badgley

87 minutes, 1995

Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela:

A Son's Tribute to Unsung Heroes

Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela: A Son's Tribute to Unsung Heroes is Thomas Allen Harris' bittersweet eulogy to his stepfather, Benjamin Pule Leinaeng (Lee), and to the thousands of other South Africans who went into exile to keep the freedom struggle alive during the harshest years of apartheid. Through the stories of 12 young comrades from Bloemfontein, this film shows how over 30 years the African National Congress (ANC) built a successful worldwide movement that eventually toppled the white supremacist regime. At the same time it provides a unique, intimate look at the painful trade-offs between a public and private life, which almost all the political activists and their families experience.

The film focuses on Lee's own tortuous path: his harrowing escape from South Africa in 1960 to Tanzania as one of the first group of young ANC activists to go into exile, the military training of his comrades in Cuba and his own study of journalism in East Germany and the United States.

The film also offers the director, Thomas Allen Harris, a chance to come to a final reconciliation with a step father he had sometimes rejected. "He had raised me since I was nine years old, yet I had never called him father...I realized I had followed Lee: I had become a political journalist; I had become a filmmaker, I have a revolutionary attitude towards my work."

"A fascinating glimpse not just of the early campaigns of the ANC, but also of the way childhood memories can obscure larger truths."

—New York Times

"Harris' trademark elegant visual style...is put into the service of dramatic recreations that flesh out documentary commentary from old friends and political allies while family photos and home video become potent artifacts in the transformation of grief into celebration."

—LA Weekly



Writer/Director: Thomas Allen Harris
73 minutes, 2006, CC

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