

News Release



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'CREATED EQUAL' FILM SERIES

Plattsburgh, N.Y. -- Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday, the 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, and Black History Month, four Plattsburgh-area institutions are joining forces to present four documentaries with riveting footage illustrating the history of civil rights in America.

Created Equal: America's Civil Rights Struggle, is being co-sponsored by the North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association, the Martin Luther King Jr. Commission, the Clinton Essex Franklin Library System and the Plattsburgh Public Library. A grant to the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System from the National Endowment for the Humanities will fund the five-part film series, featuring community discussions after each movie, beginning Feb. 1.

The Plattsburgh series begins on Saturday, Feb. 1 at 1:00 p.m., with ***The Abolitionists***, the story of a small group of moral reformers who in the 1830s launched the movement for immediate emancipation of enslaved African Americans. The films and community discussions are free and open to the public, and will be held Saturdays at 1 p.m. at the Public Library, 19 Oak St.

The other films are: ***Freedom Riders***, an inside look at a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights struggle, when a brave band of activists challenged segregation in the Deep South; ***The Loving Story***, the moving account of Richard and Mildred Loving, who were arrested in 1958 for violating Virginia's ban on interracial marriage; and ***Slavery By Another Name***, which explores the systems of forced labor that kept blacks in bondage long after the Civil War.

Created Equal is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), as part of its Bridging Cultures initiative, in partnership with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. *Created Equal* uses the power of documentary films to encourage community discussion of America's civil rights history.

The Plattsburgh sessions will feature conversations/discussions about the themes raised in these historic films. Local community leaders will introduce the films, and help lead the discussions. The full schedule of the film and discussion series is as follows:

Saturday, Feb. 1

"The Abolitionists." Part One.

Synopsis: A small group of reformers in the 1830s launched one of the most ambitious social movements imaginable: the immediate emancipation of millions of enslaved African Americans. Discussion leader: Dr. J.W. Wiley, Director of the Center for Diversity, Pluralism and Inclusion at Plattsburgh State University, writer and commentator.

Saturday, Feb. 8

"The Abolitionists." Part Two.

Synopsis: A small group of reformers in the 1830s launched one of the most ambitious social movements imaginable: the immediate emancipation of millions of enslaved African Americans.

Discussion Leader: Dr. J.W. Wiley (see above)

Saturday, Feb. 15

"Freedom Riders."

Synopsis: An inside look at a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights struggle, when a brave band of activists challenged segregation in the Deep South.

Discussion Leader: Jackie Madison, President of the North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association.

Saturday, Feb. 22

"Slavery By Another Name."

Synopsis: Even after slavery was legally abolished, new forms of forced labor kept thousands of African Americans in bondage until the onset of World War II.

Discussion Leader: J.W. Wiley (see above)

Saturday, March 1

"The Loving Story"

Film Synopsis: Richard and Mildred Loving were arrested in 1958 for violating Virginia's ban on interracial marriage. Their struggle culminated in a landmark Supreme Court decision, *Loving v. Virginia* (1967).

Discussion Leaders: Robin Caudell, reporter, Plattsburgh Press Republican, who has written about the Loving story and other interracial marriages in this area. Portia Allie-Turco, professor of psychology at Plattsburgh State University, originally from South Africa, where she and her husband wed in an interracial marriage shortly after the end of apartheid.

For more information about attending the series:

--call the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System at 563-5190; email: wever@cefls.org or ugr@frontier.com.

--www.northcountryundergroundrailroad.com

More than 470 institutions across the country were awarded the set of four films chronicling the history of the civil rights movement. Each of the films in the *Created Equal* series was produced with NEH support, and each tells remarkable stories of individuals who challenged the social and legal status quo of deeply rooted institutions, from slavery to segregation. *Created Equal* programs bring communities together to revisit our shared history and help bridge deep racial and cultural divides in American civic life. Visit www.neh.gov/created-equal for more information.

Media inquiries: call Peter Slocum, North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association, 518-708-5607.