

FALL FILM SERIES HIGHLIGHTS
JOHN BROWN, MARRIAGE DISCRIMINATION & SLAVERY

KEENE VALLEY, N.Y. -- Marking the 155th Anniversary of John Brown's raid, the Keene Valley Library kicks off a special fall film series Monday, Oct. 20, focusing on America's ongoing struggles with civil and human rights.

The series opens with a showing of "The Abolitionists," and a discussion led by John Brown State Historic Site Manager Brendan Mills. Brown's Harpers Ferry raid was Oct. 16-18, 1849, and was a violent watershed for the anti-slavery movement.

Attendees are invited to stay after the screenings to discuss issues raised in the film, and connections to current events.

Second, on Monday, Nov. 10, also at 7 p.m., will be "The Loving Story," the moving drama about the rural couple arrested in the middle of the night for the "crime" of violating Virginia's ban on interracial marriage. Their successful challenge to that law is now seen as precedent in the struggle over gay marriage. Monique Weston of Keene, who taught constitutional law in college and was part of the Freedom School movement in Mississippi in the 1960s, will lead the discussion.

Weston will also lead the discussion on Monday, Nov. 24, following "Freedom Riders," a powerful documentary about the small band of activists who challenged segregation in the Deep South in 1961 and forced the nation to confront its Jim Crow realities.

The series wraps up on Monday, Dec. 15, with the film "Slavery by Another Name," about the forced labor system that kept thousands of blacks in virtual bondage for decades after the Civil War supposedly ended slavery. Martha Swan, activist and director of John Brown Lives!, who is campaigning against present day slavery, will lead that discussion.

All screenings start at 7 p.m., and are free and open to the public. Registration is not required.

This series is co-sponsored by the Keene Valley Library Association and the North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association, in conjunction with the Clinton, Essex, Franklin Library System, which gained the grant for the series.

Created Equal is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities, as part of its Bridging Cultures initiative, in partnership with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. More than 470 institutions across the country were awarded the set of four films chronicling the history

of the Civil Rights movement, with a goal of bringing communities together to revisit our shared history and discuss the implications for today.

For more information about the series:

--Call the Keene Valley Library, 518-576-4335

--Call Peter Slocum of the North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association, 518-708-5607 or email at ugr@frontier.com

--Call the Clinton, Essex, Franklin Library System, 518-563-5190

--Visit www.northcountryundergroundrailroad.com