Delve Deeper Into American Civil Rights And The Question Of Race

This multimedia resource list provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by four upcoming P.O.V./PBS programs: “Fenceline: A Company Town Divided” by Slawomir Grünberg with Jane Greenberg (July 23rd 10pm), “Sweet Old Song” by Leah Mahan (July 30th), “Two Towns of Jasper” by Whitney Dow and Marco Williams (Fall special), and “Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin” by Nancy Kates and Bennett R. Cerf (Fall special). Each of these explores civil rights and civil discrimination in the United States. (check local listings).

ADULT NONFICTION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

These accounts of the Civil Rights Era are just a few of the books that portray a momentous time of great social change in America’s history.


WEBSITES TO FIND INFORMATION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The civil rights websites listed below have been selected from the “Librarians’ Index to the Internet” site at http://ili.org/, a resource used by librarians to help the general public as an efficient and reliable guide to Internet resources.

http://www.aclu.org
American Civil Liberties Union Freedom Network.

http://www.tulane.edu/~amistad
Amistad Research Center.

http://www.civilrights.org/
Civil rights news and organizations.

http://www.sitlins.com/
Greensboro Sit-Ins: Launch of a Civil Rights Movement.

http://www.usdoj.gov/kids/page/in dex.html
Justice for Kids and Youth.

http://www.aboj.org/lit57.org/
Little Rock Nine.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/ gaybattleground.scottsboro/
“Fenceline” by Slawomir Grünberg with Jane Greenberg

Norco, Louisiana is a true company town. Named after a refinery now owned by Shell Oil, Norco is home to two distinct communities—one black and one white. Though separated by mere blocks, their realities are worlds apart. Nowhere is this clearer than in each community’s response to possible links between the company’s activities and the townpeople’s illnesses. African-American residents, who believe pollution is increasing as their health goes downhill, demand to be relocated, led by the indefatigable Margie Richard. The white neighborhoods, largely home to employees of Norco, see no problems, and neither does the company. A modern David and Goliath story, “Fenceline” shows how one small community and one big corporation struggle to come to terms. An Independent Television Service (ITVS) and National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC) Co-presentation.

A P.O.V. premiere on PBS, Tuesday, July 23, 2002, 10:00 p.m. (check local listings).

ADULT FICTION

These novels include compelling stories of racial injustice and discrimination based on geographical location and biases cultivated by ignorance and hatred.


ADULT NONFICTION

From Frazier’s 1957 classic “Black Bourgeoisie” to Luke and Foster’s 2002 publication of “From the Ground Up,” these titles provide engrossing reading on racism viewed from environmental, geographical, and socioeconomic standpoints. Racial issues in small towns as well as big cities are documented.


BOOKS FOR YOUNGER READERS

These stories aimed at teenagers and adults provide rich, sensitive portraits of people who are unfairly disadvantaged due to racial, economic, or geographical discrimination.


POPULAR MOVIES

These three commercially successful feature films provide gripping plots that pit communities against powerful corporations.


“Sweet Old Song” by Leah Mahan

Howard “Louie Bluie” Armstrong has been performing for most of his 91 years, ever since his father carved his first fiddle from a wooden crate. “Sweet Old Song” plays like one of the ballads that flow effortlessly from the funny and irresistible Armstrong. At the film’s center are the two great loves of Howard’s life: his music and artist Barbara Ward, age 60. Their two-decade romance has been a creative partnership yielding new work and an outpouring of memories. Their experiences are captured in Armstrong’s lively paintings and stories of nearly a century of American life. As they take on life’s challenges, Howard and Barbara defy our most basic assumptions about what it means to grow older. An Independent Television Service (ITVS) and National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC) Co-presentation.

A P.O.V. premiere on PBS, Tuesday, July 30th, 2002, 10:00 p.m. (check local listings).

ADULT FICTION

With the exception of Major’s Dirty Bird Blues that relates the tough, gritty life of a young, black musician, these novels revolve around aging issues among African-Americans.


ADULT NONFICTION

Most of these titles, including Maya Angelou’s classic autobiographical work, provide facts and insights regarding aging and its related ramifications and stereotypes.

Peretti’s “A” is a nice complement to the musical background of “Sweet Old Song.”


BOOKS FOR YOUNGER READERS

Children will embrace these stories that portray the aging process with grace, dignity, and honesty.


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**POPULAR MOVIES**

"Golden Threads" provides the viewer with a groundbreaking, intergenerational discussion of sexuality, life choices, and aging. The other three films show the strong ethnic influences that have molded American music.


"Two Towns of Jasper." by Whitney Dow and Marco Williams.

In 1998 in Jasper, Texas, James Byrd, Jr., a black man, was chained to a pick-up truck and dragged to his death by three white men. The town was forever altered, and the nation woke up to the horror of a modern-day lynching. In "Two Towns Of Jasper," two film crews, one black and one white, set out to document the aftermath of the murder by following the subsequent trials of the local men charged with the crime. The result is an explicit and troubling portrait of race in America, one that asks how and why a crime like this could have occurred. An Independent Television Service (ITVS) and National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC) Co-presentation and an Active Voice selection

A P.O.V. premiere on PBS, in the Winter (check local listings)

**ADULT FICTION**

The life and writings of Bayard Rustin and other courageous leaders are highlighted in these works that detail the civil rights movement. Rustin’s non-violent philosophy was based on the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, which can be explored in William Borman’s book.


**BOOKS FOR YOUNGER READERS**

These books treat racial violence and prejudice in a format that children can relate and comprehend.


**POV POPULAR MOVIES**

The two Stonewall films provide rousing historical documentaries of the gay and lesbian rights movement from the 1940's to 1969 (Before Stonewall) and from 1970 to the end of the century (After Stonewall). "Tongues Untied" revolves around the derogatory accusations, judgments, and labels that society places on black male homosexuals. "Eyes on the Prize" consists of 14 videos telling the story of America’s civil rights years from 1954 through the mid 1980’s. Spike Lee’s production and direction of the movie about civil rights activist Malcolm X is excellent as is Attenborough’s depiction of Gandhi and his non-violence philosophy.


