

MOVIE RESOURCE LIST FOR IMPROVING RACE RELATIONS

This is a listing based on recommendations from community members.

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Banished: African-American documentarian Marco Williams recounts the fascinating true story of three American towns in which the white residents drove black residents away by force in the early 20th century in order to restore racial purity. Revisiting these towns today, Williams traces the still-lingering effects of this grave injustice and explores whether the wounds of the past can be repaired.

The Trials of Darryl Hunt: This poignant documentary details the story of Darryl Hunt, a black North Carolina man who spent 20 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit. After the rape and murder of a young white journalist in 1984, public outcry and intense media scrutiny -- along with simmering racial tensions -- pressured officials to close the case. Hunt was quickly convicted. In 1994, DNA evidence proved his innocence, but Hunt wasn't exonerated for 10 more years.

Mario's Story: Shot over the course of seven years, this documentary from filmmakers Susan Koch and Jeff Werner relates the inspiring true story of Mario Rocha, an East L.A. teen who unlocked his talent for writing while serving out a murder sentence behind bars. As his family and a team of pro bono attorneys labor on the outside to clear his name for a crime he didn't commit, Mario keeps himself grounded on the inside by writing poems, short stories and plays.

The Journey of Man: The origins of mankind are put under the microscope of this riveting PBS documentary film in which geneticists, historians, anthropologists and other theorists try to trace the beginnings of the human race. Could the seed, in fact, have begun with a man in Africa who roamed the Earth tens of thousands of years ago? Or have scientists merely found yet another descendant of a prehistoric predecessor?

Crash: A 36-hour period in the diverse metropolis of post-Sept. 11 Los Angeles is the theme of this unflinching drama that challenges viewers to confront their prejudices. Lives combust when a Brentwood housewife and her D.A. husband, a Persian shopkeeper, two cops, a pair of carjackers and a Korean couple all converge. Director Paul Haggis's Best Picture Oscar winner stars Sandra Bullock, Brendan Fraser, Don Cheadle, Matt Dillon and Jennifer Esposito.

Lost Boys of Sudan: This award-winning documentary follows two Sudanese refugees throughout their intense journey from their native Africa to the United States. As orphans living in the middle of a brutal civil war, Peter and Santino dealt with dangers like lion attacks and gunfire from militia. But even more daunting are the challenges they face in suburbia after they're chosen to start a new life in America.

God Grew Tired of Us: After raising themselves in the desert along with thousands of other parentless "lost boys," Sudanese refugees John, Daniel and Panther have found their way to America, where they experience electricity, running water and supermarkets for the first time. Capturing their wonder at things Westerners take for granted, this documentary, an award winner at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival, paints an intimate portrait of strangers in a strange land.

Voices of the People's History of the United States: An impressive roster of celebrities -- including Lili Taylor, Paul Robeson, Sarah Jones, Brian Jones, John Sayles and Wallace Shawn -- lend their voices to this performance of readings inspired by Howard Zinn's best-selling book. Segments bring to life Tecumseh's speech to the Osages, Frederick Douglass' thoughts about July 4 and Paul Robeson's Unread Statement before the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

Making Peace: Facing Racism: At the beginning of a three-day Unlearning Racism workshop led by community therapist Lee Mun Wah, a European American tells a joke which offends an African American participant. The incident expands as other African-American participants confront the offender, and white participants express their frustrations about that reaction. This video traces the processes of sharing feelings - and learning - that took place. Written and produced by Tom Weidlinger; narrated by Ruby Dee.

The Color of Fear: The director, Lee Mun Wah, takes a grassroots approach to ending racism, one person at a time. The goal is to change people's core beliefs first, hoping positive actions will follow. The movie shows a small group of men discussing racism. It turns out that much of what the group in the film talks about in the context of racism is actually fear. The story of these men and their journey has been seen by half a million people so far.

Rabbit Proof Fence: Australia's aboriginal integration program of the 1930s broke countless hearts -- among them, those of young Molly (Evelyn Sampi), Gracie (Laura Monaghan) and Daisy (Tiana Sansbury), who were torn from their families and placed in an abusive orphanage. Without food or water, the girls resolve to make the 1,500-mile trek home. Meanwhile, a well-intentioned tracker is trying to return the girls to the authorities.

Ethnic Notions: This documentary traces the deep-rooted stereotypes which have fueled anti-black prejudice.

Dare Not Walk Alone: The War of Responsibility. Dare Not Walk Alone uncovers the untold story of the “war of ideas” in St. Augustine, Florida that led to the passage of the first civil rights bill on July 2nd, 1964 and the continued war 40 years later where “we are still losing lives everyday”. War was declared on the injustice of the Jim Crow South by millions of Americans. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was determined to use non-violence as his weapon to change a Nation. In 1964 he raised a non-violent army and brought his ideas to lay siege against to racial establishment in St. Augustine, Fl. The city's beaches, streets, and businesses became the battlefields for this epic struggle. However, the swimming pool of one small motel, at the center of town, proved to be the tuning point in the conflict. The battle over whom this motel would serve became the primary objective for both sides of the racial divide. In the face of repeated integration attempts, its segregationist policies represented the South's unwillingness to give any ground on racial equality. The motel was owned by James Brock. Throughout the summer of 1964 Brock found himself in a one on one show down with Dr. King. The drama was a daily skirmish on the steps of his motel which resulted in the violent arrest of many including Dr. King. But the defining moment was when James Brock poured acid into the motel's swimming pool that was filled with young black and white demonstrators. Photographs taken of this horrific incident made front-page news around the world and helped break the filibuster in the U.S. Senate, leading to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, known as the Open Accommodations Act. This was the first piece of civil rights legislation. The film looks at the reflections, then and now, of the ideologies of Dr. King and his supporters, against those of the segregationist James Brock. This leads us to ask the ultimate question, who were the winners and losers in our great battle for racial equality? With 1,000,000 black men in jail nationally and with 1/3 of St. Augustine's African Americans living below the poverty line, was the war of ideas won? Although the film celebrates a moving moment of racial reconciliation in 2004, it also looks closely at casualties of the continued war for equality. To do this we follow several African American teenagers in St. Augustine who dream of a better life while trying to survive impossible home situations, failing schools, and an unfair criminal justice system. Their escape from these harsh realities is to turn to the world of Hip Hop, which they feel is their only voice in society. It is our experience that the vast majority of young people have little or no knowledge about the Civil Rights Movement and the fight has therefore become irrelevant. This film attempts to bridge the gap between the ideals of the Civil Rights generation and the new struggles of the Hip Hop generation. At a time when most Americans feel like issues of race and equality were solved in the 1960's, Dare Not Walk Alone reminds us that the War of Responsibility for poverty, education and justice, is still ours to win.