



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities Film

As part of its mission, NEH supports radio, television, and film productions that make the humanities accessible and exciting to tens of millions of Americans. Many of those productions win the nation's most prestigious awards for content and artistic quality, and many become invaluable historical and cultural resources for use in classrooms. Selected productions are listed below.

- ***The Civil War*** -- a nine-part documentary series directed by Ken Burns. “What is most impressive about ‘Civil War’ is the way in which Burns has created a sense of immediacy about it . . . This is must-see television you won’t easily forget.” - *Seattle Times*; “‘The Civil War’ has been called a television masterpiece and the best American film of the year.” - *The New York Times*
- ***The Presidents*** -- fifty-two hours of programs that aired on PBS’ *American Experience* series. “American Experience has continued its compelling series on past presidents, giving nuance to the usually broadly drawn policies and people who have the world’s toughest job.” - *Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune*; [On FDR] “Here, packed into 4 ½ hours, is an impressionable, often startlingly vivid portrait of the political career of the century.” - *Wall Street Journal*
- ***We Shall Remain*** -- a five-part series about how Native peoples resisted expulsion from their lands, which aired on PBS’ *American Experience*. “There’s clearly a Shakespearean whisper in this western wind. The directors tell complex, important stories, rich with the elements of family and fate. . . . Discerning viewers will notice American themes, American tendencies of today’s current-events landscape consistently popping in the series.” - *Austin American-Statesman*; “Viewers will be amazed. If you’re keeping score, this program ranks among the best TV documentaries ever made. . . . Reminds us that true glory lies in the honest histories of people, not the manipulated histories of governments.” - *Boston Phoenix*
- ***The War*** -- a seven-part TV documentary about World War II, produced and directed by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick. “The War is a remarkable storytelling feat and a visceral television experience, a twinned accomplishment that, combined, does the nearly impossible—it allows the rebirth of an overly familiar story and freshens it in astounding ways.” - *San Francisco Chronicle*; “*The War* is a landmark achievement, as comprehensive a visual and personal record as we’re likely to get of the experience of soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen during World War II.” - *Chicago Tribune*
- ***The Buddha*** -- a two-hour documentary film biography produced, written and directed by David Grubin, which aired on PBS. “*The Buddha*, in keeping with its unadorned title, is a simple, straightforward introduction to the life and teachings of Siddhartha Gautama.” - *The New York Times*; “The Buddha is a cheerful film, gently paced, pleasant to watch and pretty to look at, its frames filled with ancient art . . . lovely North Indian landscapes, and animated sequences to represent ancient history and marvelous folk tales.” - *Los Angeles Times*
- ***The Rape of Europa*** -- a documentary about Nazi art theft during World War II. “[It] raises endlessly interesting questions: . . . Can a culture survive if its art is wiped out?” - *The New York Times*; “Europa covers a lot of territory and is packed with information. It also tells a lot of wonderful stories, many of which are fascinating enough to inspire movies of their own.” - *Los Angeles Times*.

- ***Partners of the Heart*** -- a feature documenting the story of Vivian Thomas and Alfred Blalock, the two-man interracial medical team that pioneered cardiac surgery amid racial tension in the mid-twentieth-century American South. "A moving and often highly dramatic documentary . . . uses interviews, narration . . . and recreations . . . to bring the story to life." - *The Tennessean*; "The movie is a gentle one, infused with understanding and compassion for both men . . . it reveals how in time of racial segregation, people of different ethnicities came together and changed medical history." - *Florida Today*
- ***Freedom Riders*** -- a two-hour documentary about the courageous black and white Americans who risked their lives in 1961 by violating Jim Crow laws throughout the South: "His [director Stanley Nelson's] film is one of the great social epics of our time. It deserves to win a huge audience when it plays on PBS' *American Experience* . . ." - *Baltimore Sun*; "Stanley Nelson's 'Freedom Riders' is a superb piece of filmic journalism. As it recounts the often astonishing story of the titular activists with a flair for telling details and a visceral degree of suspense, the pic declines to exploit the events for a quick motivational hit, and it's ultimately all the more inspiring for it." - *Variety*
- ***Louisa May Alcott: The Woman Behind 'Little Women'*** -- an award-winning examination of the reputedly prim and conventional writer who was in fact a committed free thinker and -- it has recently been learned -- the author of a series of pulp fiction thrillers written under a pseudonym. "*Louisa May Alcott: The Woman Behind 'Little Women'* manages to penetrate the facts of Louisa May Alcott's life (1832-1888) to get at her humor, her spirit, and her growth as a person. With smart, tasteful use of docudramatic recreations, director Nancy Porter gives us the story of a writer's interior world and genesis with more drama and color than you generally expect from a ninety-minute documentary." - *Boston Globe*; "Elizabeth Marvel completely owns this film with a performance that brings her from happy and bubbly to heartbroken and back again, with just the right touch of pixie-ish charm. Terrifically edited . . . as if the film didn't have enough panache, [it] also includes some hip and stylized animated sequences, just for fun." - *Cambridge Chronicle*
- ***Walt Whitman: Boisterous Voice of America*** -- a two-hour TV biography of the poet who is often poorly understood today, which aired on PBS' *American Experience* series. "A big, strapping beautiful film that brings Whitman and his world to life. . . . Designed to grab the viewer by the shoulders, shake them, then say: Whitman is the poet of blood, breath, appetites, lust, and life. Whitman is you." - *Newsday*; "An extraordinary act of intimacy . . . I can't remember the last time a TV biography brought me so near to the spirit of a man so long gone. . . . *American Experience* filmmaking opens up and adds resonance to Whitman's lines, dramatically putting them in the context of his life and times as well as our lives