U.S. History

Including 3 New Releases and 5 Films on DVD for the First Time!

An Empire of Reason

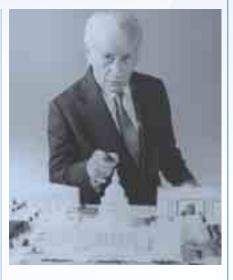
A Film by Muffie Meyer & Ellen Hovde

What would it have been like if television had covered the debates over ratification of the U.S. Constitution? AN EMPIRE OF REASON offers an imaginative look back at that process, which ultimately gave birth to the United States of America.

Walter Cronkite appears as the anchorperson of CTN (Continental Television Network) nightly news. In the TV-news style of the late twentieth century, he reports the vociferous battle between the Federalists and anti-Federalists whether to ratify the Constitution and become the United States, or to not ratify and remain affiliated but autonomous states.

The debate rages on the airwaves. Alexander Hamilton, one of the authors of the Constitution, and anti-Federalist Melancton Smith duke it out on William F. Buckley Jr.'s *Firing Line*. Heated arguments on the necessity of a Bill of Rights take place on *The MacNeil-Lehrer Report* and *The Phil Donahue Show*.

The filmmakers explain that they chose this contemporary format because, "The way history is presented is cut-and-dried. It has nothing to do with us. It's people in period costume." AN EMPIRE OF REASON seeks to elucidate the issues so vital to that time—the benefits of a unified nation vs. the fear of a big, distant government; the pros and cons of a single currency, federal income tax, and a Bill of Rights—in such a way as to reveal the continued presence of these issues in contemporary American political discourse.



"A super way to learn about our history!"

—Marvin Kitman, Newsday

"Teaches as it entertains... so that a wide range of ages and educational levels can learn from it."

—The Atlanta Journal and Constitution

"You'll never have more fun learning!"

—The Daily News

1989 Emmy Award

Best of Festival, 1989
Athens Film Festival

Gold Camera, 1989

U.S. Film Festival

Chapters:

Introduction
 Mar 1, 1787

3. Sep 28, 1787

4. Apr 5, 1788

5. Jun 18, 1788

6. Jul 2, 1788

7. Jul 28, 1788

58 minutes | color | 1988 | **Order #US08-01**Sale/DVD: \$285

Breaking the Ice, The Story of Mary Ann Shadd

A film by Sylvia Sweeney
Produced by Peter Raymont, Lindalee Tracey & Maria Pimentel



BREAKING THE ICE sheds new light on the remarkable, little-known story of the abolitionist, suffragette and integrationist Mary Ann Shadd. Living in Windsor, Ontario, she fought for integrated education, battled segregationists and started the first integrated school in Canada. Shadd later became the first female newspaper editor and the first black female attorney in North America.

Shadd grew up free in Delaware where her father's shoemaking store was part of the Underground Railroad that helped escaped slaves flee to Canada. Moving to Canada herself in 1851, to teach escaped slaves, Shadd succeeded in opening the first racially integrated school against the wishes of a powerful opposition. Most abolitionists, black or white, favored separate but equal communities.

Shadd's fight for education and equality for blacks led her to study law. Graduating from Howard University, she began practicing at the age of 60. The legacy of her efforts in law, publishing and education are a testament to her refusal to accept socially imposed limits.

Using interviews with Shadd's familial and ideological descendants, BREAKING THE ICE recreates the experiences of the early black community in Canada, while opening an engaging chapter on black Canadian and African-American history.

"Useful for classes in African American history, civil rights issues, and women's studies... Shadd's contributions show what perseverance and refusal to accept the status quo can achieve."

-School Library Journal

"Will inspire present and future generations of students... An indispensable pedagogical tool for generations of visually oriented students."

—Abafazi Journal

"A worthy addition to comprehensive black history collections."—Booklist



23 minutes | color | © | 1999 | **Order #US08-02** Sale/DVD: \$225

Milk in the Land: Ballad of an American Drink

A film by Ariana Gerstein & Monteith McCollum

MILK IN THE LAND traces the history of the national consumption of milk, from the mid-19th century swill cow stables—an urban byproduct of distilleries, when Americans drank more beer than milk—to today's industrialized production of homogenized and pasteurized milk, which produces vast surpluses of dairy products stored in underground government depots.

The film surveys the role of milk throughout American history, politics and popular culture—from government price support programs, links with eugenics and political scandals, to infant feeder collector conventions and cow beauty contests. MILK IN THE LAND imaginatively blends archival footage, period graphics, animation, stop-motion and time-lapse photography, commercials, cartoons, WWII propaganda films, and newspaper clippings.



MILK IN THE LAND also features interviews with historians, sociologists, physicians, farmers, philosophers, activists, ethicists, and authors, including Melanie Dupuis (Nature's Perfect Food), Noel Foster Feliciano (Early History of American Dairying), Robin Mathers Jenkins (A Garden of Unearthly Delights), Ron Schmid (The Untold Story of Milk), and Daniel Block (Hawking Milk).

"This inventively historicized documentary unearths the sundry political, moral, and scientific platforms that got milk to its current post as beleaguered alpha beverage."—Flavorpill

"Truly captivating... makes clear that nature's perfect food is inextricably bound to the social history of America."

—Lisa Tucker, Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture



"Fascinating... a truly haunting portrait of industrialization."

—HotDocs Festival program

HotDocs International Documentary Festival

Nashville International
Film Festival

75 minutes | color | 2007 | **Order #US08-03** Sale/DVD: \$398

Chapters:

- 1. Early History
- 2. Milk as Foster Mother
- 3. All-American Product
- 4. Milk Politics
- 5. Dairy Support Program
- 6. Small Dairy Farming
- 7. Milk Arguments

My American Family

A Film by Jerzy Sladkowski



MY AMERICAN
FAMILY is a charming, heartwarming portrait, enlivened by imaginative 'Wild West' style animation of old family photos, illuminating views of Merenda family life in both Italy and America, Antonio's slyly humorous voice-over commentary, and a surprising solution,

at last, to the mystery of 'Pirune,' the black sheep of the Merenda clan.

More than a century ago most members of the Merenda family emigrated to America from Paterno Calabro, a small village in southern Italy. Over the decades, the growing family's ties to their homeland deteriorated. In 2002, in an effort to restore the broken link, 70-year-old Gaetano Merenda and his wife decide to fly from Italy to Kansas to attend a family reunion.

MY AMERICAN FAMILY shows them being joined by their son, Antonio, a documentary filmmaker living in Sweden, who first helps his father make a videodiary of the village to show to relatives in the U.S. and then chronicles their journey to America. During the trip they hope to answer questions surrounding Francesco "Pirune" Merenda, the black sheep of the family, and one of the first to emigrate to America, but whose activities there remain cloaked in mystery.

Gaetano and his wife, with their broken English and new video camera, become happily acquainted with American relatives, young and old, while their research into family history leads to revelations—of both a historical and personal nature—that none of them expected.



"Highly Recommended! This delightful documentary explores the strength of that unseen bond that can only be created by sharing family ties. IThe film's warmth and vitality... are infectious."

-Educational Media Reviews Online

2005 Northern Lights

Documentary Festival

2004 Amsterdam International Documentary Festival

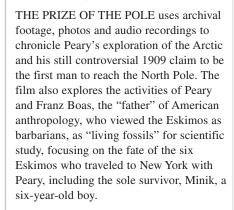
70 minutes | color | 2004 | **Order #US08-04** Sale/DVD: \$348

The Prize of the Pole

A Film by Staffan Julén

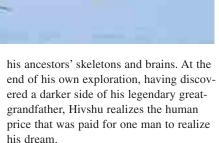
This documentary combines biography and history as it accompanies the Inuit hunter Hivshu, a.k.a. Robert E. Peary II, on a quest to trace the story of his great grandfather and his other ancestors, including the Eskimo family the famous Arctic explorer brought back with him to New York as part of an exhibit at the American Museum of

Natural History in 1897.



Peary's great-grandson meets with tribal elders in Greenland, who recount ancient stories of the Arctic explorer's extended expeditions, his fathering of two children with an Inuit woman, and the often unethical zeal with which he pursued his scientific interests. In New York he meets with officials at the American Museum of Natural History and The Explorers Club.

Along the way Robert E. Peary II visits research libraries and other historical sites in an effort to learn the truth about mysteries surrounding the preservation of



***½ "A genuine tragedy, characterized by racism in the name of science. A wellmade and often poignant documentary... highly recommended."—Video Librarian

"A valuable addition to college anthropology and Native American Studies departments and libraries... Highly and enthusiastically recommended."

-Educational Media Reviews Online

2008 Best Expedition Film at the Explorers Club Film Festival

Amnesty Award, 2007
Copenhagen Dox Festival

78 minutes | color | 2006 | CC | Order #US08-05 | Sale/DVD: \$440

Chapters:

- 1. Robert E. Peary II
- 2. Minik
- 3. New York
- 4. Franz Boas
- 5. The Explorer in Love
- 6. Living Fossils?
- 7. Dr. Ales Hrdlicka
- 8. Wallace and Minik
- 9. Perry's Last Expedition
- 10. Minik's Last Days



An Injury To One

A Film by Travis Wilkerson

AN INJURY TO ONE relates the history of political conflict and environmental disaster in Butte, Montana, revealing the toxic footprints of a modern megacorporation.

The city of Butte was once considered the richest region on Earth. At the height of WWI ten percent of all copper was mined there. In the process, however, Butte became the most polluted site in the nation. The dramatic rise and fall of the city, and the environmental destruction left behind, is traced back to the Anaconda Mining Company.

Anaconda rose to power in the last century by systematically trampling Butte's townspeople and workers. The company's extreme indifference to safety (mortality rates in the mines were higher than in the trenches of Europe) led to Frank Little's arrival. Little, an International Workers of the World (Wobblies) organizer, arrived in 1917 during a heated struggle between miners and their bosses. As his popularity increased, so did the company's distaste for him. In August 1917, Little was abducted by still-unknown assailants who lynched him on a railroad bridge.

The murder provides AN INJURY TO ONE with a taut narrative, but it isn't the only story. Butte's history is bound with the destruction of the environment, the history of the American left, the rise of McCarthyism, and even the birth of the detective novel.





"An astonishing document: part art and part speculative inquiry, buzzing with ambition and dedication... This is stirring, must-see stuff."—Austin Chronicle

"A deft, ambitious exercise in old-school socialist agitprop crafted with the precise multimedia flair of a corporate Powerpoint presentation... retells the gritty class struggles of the previous century through smoothly contemporary digital means."

—The Village Voice

"The most exciting documentary of the season. Passionate, persuasive, and beautifully designed."—The New York Sun

- Big Sky Award, 2004
 Big Sky Documentary Film Festival
- Screening Committee's Choice
 A for Narrative Integrity, 2003
 Ann Arbor Film Festival
- Gold Prize, 2002 Big Muddy

 Film Festival

53 minutes | color/b&w | 2002 | **Order #US08-06** Sale/DVD: \$390

Clara Lemlich A Strike Leader's Diary

A Film by Alex Szalat

On November 22, 1909, New York City garment workers gathered in a mass meeting at Cooper Union to discuss pay cuts, unsafe working conditions and other grievances. After two hours of indecisive speeches by male union leaders, a young Jewish woman strode down the aisle and demanded the floor. Speaking in Yiddish, she passionately urged her coworkers to go out on strike. Clara Lemlich, a fledgling union organizer, thus launched the "Uprising of the 20,000," when, two

days later, garment workers walked out of shops all over the city, effectively bringing production to a halt.

Lemlich's story is movingly recounted through interviews with her daughter and grandchildren, dramatic readings from her diary, family photos and archival footage, strike songs in Yiddish, an interview with labor historian Alice Kessler-Harris, a visit to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, and excerpts from silent films of the era.

In addition to its biographical portrait, CLARA LEMLICH also chronicles the historic ILGWU strike, which demonstrated to the male leadership that women could be good union members and strikers.

The union negotiated a settlement in February 1910 that led to improvements in wages as well as working and safety conditions. One of the companies that refused to sign the agreement was the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, where, the following year, a fire resulted in the death of 146 young women, a tragedy that galvanized public support for the union movement.



"Highly Recommended! Well worth viewing for a glimpse into the history of the labor movement and to discover the struggles involved."

-Educational Media Reviews Online

"Lemlich helped bring a new dimension to the male-dominated world of socialism and labor organizing in the early twentieth century...Her story is one that needs to be told."—Booklist

"Powerful! A fascinating viewing experience."—Association of Jewish Libraries
Newsletter

- 2006 National Women's Studies
 Association Film Festival
- Gold Hugo, 2005 Chicago

51 minutes | color/b&w | 2004 | **Order #US08-07** Sale/DVD: \$375

Chapters:

- 1. Start
- 2. Birth & Youth in Ukraine
- 3. ILGWU Strike
- 4. The Lower East Side
- 5. Education
- **6.** Labor Historian Alice Kessler-Harris
- 7. Triangle Shirtwaist Factory

Dear Dr. Spencer

A Film by Danielle Renfrew and Beth Seltzer



From the early 1920s until his death in 1969, Dr. Robert Douglas Spencer practiced medicine in a small town in the anthracite coal region of Pennsylvania. Dr. Spencer treated colds, set fractures, and provided basic medical care. But he was also unique during that period because he performed illegal abortions.

Dr. Spencer performed his first abortion, for a poor coal miner's wife, in 1923. Soon after, the doctor's reputation spread. He began receiving letters from women across the country, asking, sometimes pleading, for his help. Ashland, Pennsylvania, a town of churchgoers, grateful to him for his dedication to the mining community, quietly allowed the doctor to practice.

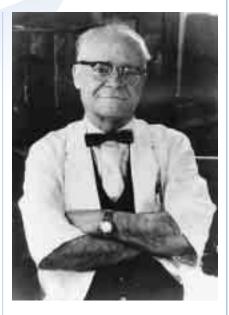
The citizens seemed to ignore the steady stream of young women going to and from his office, the out-of-state license plates, the ever-increasing number of one-night guests at the town's hotel. They even protected him each time the state police tried to shut his practice down.

Dr. Spencer was arrested three times but never convicted. Historians estimated that he performed more than 40,000 safe abortions during the course of his career.

- Emmy Nomination, National Academy

 of Television Arts & Sciences
- Bronze Apple Award. National

 Educational Media Network
- Special Achievement Prize,
 Huntington International Independent
 Film Festival



"A model of an illuminating documentary."

—Kevin Thomas, Los Angeles Times

"It is stirring to see the faces of ordinary elderly working men and women as they talk with candor about a community that recognized, respected, and rallied around a principled man who was breaking the law."

—New York Business Women's Calendar

25 minutes | color | 1998 | **Order #US08-08** Sale/DVD: \$225

Sermons and Sacred Pictures:The Life and Work of Reverend L.O. Taylor

A Film by Lynne Sachs
In Association with the Center for Southern Folklore

SERMONS AND SACRED PICTURES profiles Reverend L.O. Taylor, a Memphisbased Baptist minister who in the 1930s and '40s built a fiery reputation by lacing his sermons with parables, fables and dramatic visual descriptions.

Taylor was also an inspired photographer and filmmaker with a keen interest in preserving a visual and aural record of the fabric of black American life. He photographed and filmed businesses and schools, the National Baptist Convention, baptisms, funerals, and individuals in the quiet dignity of their everyday lives. Over the years he compiled an extraordinary record of

Chapters:

- 1. Play
- 2. The Reverend L.O. Taylor
- 3. The Olivet Baptist Church in Memphis
- 4. A Preservationist of Black Culture
- **5.** The National Baptist Convention
- 6. The Church on Film
- Credits

Southern black life before the Civil Rights movement.

This film is an innovative combination of Taylor's films and audio recordings,

images of contemporary Memphis, and commentary by his widow and others who knew him, forming an intertwined narrative about the pioneering documentarian and social activist.

"Recommended! Fascinating! Provide[s] a link to an important piece of African American history and life."

-Educational Media Reviews Online

"A dramatic portrait that will be especially useful for teachers and students interested in the black experience and the American South."—Professor William Ferris, Director of the Center for Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi

"The highlight of the Margaret Mead Film Festival."—J. Hoberman, Village Voice

- **1991 Honoree**,
- American Anthropological Association
- **(a)** 1990 Award Winner,
- National Education Film Festival
- 1990 Honoree,
- Black Cultural Expo (Memphis)

29 minutes | color/b&w | 1989 | **Order #US08-09** Sale/DVD: \$225



The Uprising of '34

A Film by George Stoney, Judith Helfand & Susanne Rostock



THE UPRISING OF '34 tells the story of the General Strike of 1934, a massive but little-known strike by hundreds of thousands of Southern cotton mill workers during the Great Depression. The mill workers' defiant stance—and the remarkable grassroots organizing that led up to it—challenged a system of mill owner control that had shaped life in cotton mill communities for decades.

After three weeks, the strike was stopped... put down with intimidation, National Guard troops, and even murder. Many of its leaders were fired, blacklisted, evicted from their homes, and ostracized by their communities.

Sixty years later, a dark cloud still hangs over this event. Even in towns where it took place, the uprising of '34 is spoken of only in whispers, if at all. And for those who do know about it, a mythology has spread which tells only of danger and violence.

Through the voices of people on all sides of the remarkable story, and a rare portrait of the dynamics of life in mill communities, THE UPRISING OF '34 offers a penetrating look at class, race, and power in working communities throughout America, and invites the viewer to consider how those issues affect us today.

"This film brings home to us vividly the anguish, terror, and courage displayed by working people in a crisis that deserves to be remembered and understood."

-C. Vann Woodward, Professor of History, Yale University

"An inspired portrayal... Shows the intimate relationship between people's lives, social movements, social change and the law."

-June Starr, Associate Professor, **Indiana University School of Law**

"A stirring account of the general textile strike, perhaps the largest labor protest in the United States... Remarkable!"

—The Journal of American History

- Gold Hugo, 1995 Chicago International Film Festival
- **6** Best of Festival, 1995 Big Muddy Film Festival
- Outstanding Use of Oral History in a Nonprint Format, **Oral History Association (1995)**

87 minutes | color | 1995 | Order #US08-10 Sale/DVD: was \$490 now \$398

Chapters:

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Company Town
- 3. Working Conditions
- 4. A Revolution of Hope
- 5. Enforcing the Law
- 6. On Strike
- 7. The Consequences
- 8. Legacy

Ducktators

A Film by Wolter Braamhorst and Guus van Waveren



DUCKTATORS is a unique look at the use of cartoons during World War II.

American propaganda during the war had to obey one golden rule: it had to be entertaining. Cartoons proved to be an excellent way to deliver propagandistic and educational ideas in a seemingly innocuous manner to the general public and armed forces alike.

DUCKTATORS not only offers a rare glimpse at forgotten cartoon material from this moment in history, but also goes further to reveal insights about the psyche of the public at that time. Many of these cartoons have gathered dust in archives because today they are not deemed "politically correct."

The film blends documentary war footage with animated material and music from the period. The attack on Pearl Harbor, for instance, is intertwined with a Japanese cartoon about the attack. As the 1940s was the period during which the American cinema was most heavily attended, the screening of these cartoons every week guaranteed that most Americans would be exposed to the messages.

Among those interviewed in the film are Sody and Bob Clampett, the wife and son of animator Bob Clampett, and Chuck Jones.

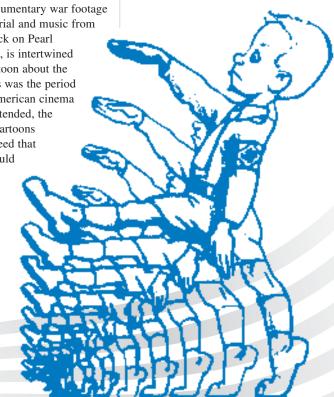
"A great way to illustrate propaganda comes in many forms... The information is presented well and is a valuable insight into how we as a society use propaganda during wartime."

-MC Journal: The Journal of Academic Media Librarianship

"Legendary animator Chuck Jones, together with the wife and son of cartoonist Bob Clampett, plus historians and scholars discuss these extensively excerpted works as seen in their proper context."-Booklist

1997 Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival

46 minutes | color | 1997 | Order #US08-11 Sale/DVD: \$375



Joe Polowsky: An American Dreamer

A Film by Wolfgang Pfeiffer



When U.S. and Soviet troops met on the banks of the Elbe River in 1945, they took their meeting to signify the end of Hitler's Germany, fascism and war. Archival footage and photos of that historic encounter show the soldiers as they joyously celebrate. They promised each other to do everything they could to prevent another war.

One of the American soldiers, Private Joe Polowsky, later a cab driver in Chicago, took that promise so seriously that he dedicated the rest of his life—and even his death—to promoting understanding between Soviets and Americans, and to the friendship of the Elbe veterans.

Interviews with Polowsky's friends and colleagues are combined with archival footage and photos to chronicle his moving campaign for international peace.

"An extraordinary document... One of those rare films with a message of such deep humanity that they cannot fail to warm the hearts of every kind of person, no matter what part of the world or political system they come from."

-Hollywood Reporter

"It's appropriate that a German filmmaker should make this film, and Pfeiffer aptly finds the haunting resonance to convey this forgotten, committed man who took on the prevailing sentiments of the Cold War era and succeeded in touching the hearts of many in both his life and death."—Los Angeles Times

"A lovely, touching little tribute to a passionate 'common' man with a noble vision."—Library Journal

1992 Human Rights Watch Film Festival

Peace Prize, 1987

Berlin Film Festival

Golden Dove, 1986
Leipzig Film Festival

 $\frac{84 \text{ minutes} \mid \text{color} \mid 1986 \mid \textbf{Order \#US08-12}}{\text{Sale/DVD: }\$298}$



An American Ism: Joe McCarthy

A Film by Glenn Silber





AN AMERICAN ISM examines the making of America's most notorious demagogue, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, whose name coined a term for a ruthless, persecutory political style that is still in use today.

A little-known junior senator from Wisconsin, McCarthy became one of the most feared and powerful politicians of the 20th century when from 1950 to 1954 he exploited the "anti-communist" delirium and fear that blanketed post World War II America.

Told through candid interviews with friends, associates, opponents and victims, as well as film of his speeches and hearings, McCarthy is seen as a brilliant but unscrupulous manipulator. He was as remorseless in the destruction of the careers of others as he was in the aggrandizement of his own.

McCarthy's political career ended in censure by the Senate, and he died prematurely at the age of 48, but, in many respects, the claims he made and the fears he engendered remain timely and his legacy is still debated today. More than just a film biography, AN AMERICAN ISM reveals much about the nature and fragility of America's democratic institutions.

"The story of his rise to terrifying power is fascinating... Mr. McCarthy is remembered at one point as 'a simple hearted country boy who got caught in something over his head.' That evaluation is generous. McCarthyism, the symbol of distrust and suspicion in the 50s, remains a nightmare."—The New York Times

"'It could happen again' became a fear and a threat. Perhaps it could, but that seems unlikely as long as IthisI film keeps alive the memory of a genuine American horror."—TV Guide

1980 Dupont-Columbia University
Award for Journalistic Excellence

Red Ribbon Winner, 1979

A American Film Festival

84 minutes | color | 1978 | **Order #US08-13** Sale/DVD: \$298



Am Become Death: They Made the Bomb

A Film by Arthur MacCaig

On July 16, 1945 at 5.30 a.m., in a remote site in the New Mexico desert, America successfully detonates its first atomic bomb. In El Paso, Texas, one hundred miles away, the city's residents are awakened by a silent but blinding light...

The Manhattan Project, after only four years but with a budget of \$2.2 billion and a work force of over 100,000, had created the ultimate weapon. Only a handful of people on the project were aware of its implications. This documentary is about a few of these people, cloistered away from 1943 to 1945 at Los Alamos, New Mexico: a place that officially did not exist.

Among them were many of the world's most brilliant scientists: the Americans Bob Wilson, Bob Serber, Bob Christy and Harold Agnew; the Europeans Hans Bethe, Stan Ulam, Enrico Fermi and Edward Teller. And above them all, was their charismatic but enigmatic leader, Robert Oppenheimer, who baptized the first bomb as "Trinity." I AM BECOME DEATH is a unique, rare view from within as several of these scientists speak of experiences on the path to their terrible shared destiny. None hesitated in the creation of the bomb. All did so without illusion.

As their lives and work at Los Alamos are revealed, they relate stories of contradictions and jealousies, and how each came to terms with the atomic era's most immediate consequence: the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And as their stories unfold, viewers become painfully aware that, even fifty years later, Trinity is with us today, as it will remain tomorrow.



"Excellent. The film is the best of any of the many documentaries which have been produced on the subject."—Harold M. **Agnew, Experimental Physicist**

"A thoughtful look at the development of the atomic bomb... presents rare personal perspectives."-Booklist

55 minutes | color/b&w | 1995 | Order #US08-14 Sale/DVD: \$390

Fundi: The Story Of Ella Baker

A Film by Joanne Grant



This classic documentary reveals CLASSICAL the instrumental role that Ella Baker, a dynamic and charis-

matic activist, played in the American civil rights movement.

By looking at the 1960s from the perspective of Baker, the "godmother of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee" and associate of Martin Luther King, Jr., FUNDI offers an essential understanding of this watershed period.

"FUNDI... can enrich us immeasurably, adding depth and texture to our understanding of an important part of our past, inspiring us with examples of lives lived fully and purposefully."—Harvard Educational Review

2005 National Women's S Association Film Festival 2005 National Women's Studies

First Prize Winner, Black Filmmakers
Hall of Fame (1981)

48 minutes | color | 1981 | CC | Order #US08-15 Sale/DVD: \$390

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