



Smithsonian
*National Museum of African American
History and Culture*



C-SPAN3 Features Civil Rights Pioneers *In Their Own Words*

As Recorded by the National Museum of African American History and
Culture

August 19-23, 2013 at 8pm ET on C-SPAN3's American History TV

In collaboration with the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, C-SPAN3's American History TV presents the eyewitness accounts of the men and women who carried the civil rights movement forward through the tumultuous decades of the 1950s and 1960s.

Their stories are televised for the first time on C-SPAN3.

As the country marks the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington this August, American History TV brings the voices and stories of the civil rights movement to a national audience with five nights of prime time programming starting at 8pm on August 19.

Hear from...

August 19 at 8pm ET

- Joseph Lowery who describes how he was forced to hide in a Montgomery, Alabama hotel from the Ku Klux Klan just as he, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and others worked to create the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in hopes of taking the civil rights movement nationwide.

August 20 at 8pm ET

- Freeman Hrabowski – now the president of the University of Maryland Baltimore County – who recalls Dr. King’s 1963 appeal to children to march for civil rights and how, at 12, he answered the call only to be forced into a police wagon, detained behind bars in a juvenile facility and separated for five days from his parents.

August 21 at 8pm ET

- Sisters Dorie Ladner and Joyce Ladner who remember their friend Medgar Evers, the NAACP Mississippi field officer gunned down in his driveway by a sniper, and who explain their own field work and determination “to get their freedom” despite constant threats and intimidation.

August 22 at 8pm ET

- David and Satoko Ackerman, one-time classmates of the Rev. Jesse Jackson at the Chicago Theological Seminary, who answered Dr. King’s plea for “all people of goodwill” to go to Selma, Alabama to stand against racial segregation, and who soon realized how they – a white man and a Japanese woman – were being safeguarded by those they had traveled to Alabama to protect.

August 23 at 8pm ET

- Dorothy Cotton who went to work for the fledgling Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Atlanta and found herself working alongside a young preacher named Martin Luther King Jr. – whose 1968 assassination, as she remembers it, created “an incredible void that nobody could fill” within one of the nation’s most preeminent civil rights organizations.

“These stories go behind the headlines and beyond history book accounts to give us a ‘you were there’ experience of the civil rights movement as it was lived by men, women and even children,” said Susan Swain, C-SPAN Co-President and CEO.

“C-SPAN, through American History TV’s format and our collaboration with the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture is uniquely positioned to allow the American public to share in this first-person storytelling experience.”

“One of the reasons we decided to record the civil rights oral histories was to allow the stories of these brave pioneers to be heard by as many people as possible,” said Lonnie Bunch, director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

“So, we are delighted that C-SPAN will be airing them in the lead up to the 50th anniversary of the historic March on Washington. C-SPAN has been a valued partner with the museum for many years and we look forward to continuing that relationship.”

The oral history project, created by an Act of Congress in 2009, is a joint effort of the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Library of Congress. Museum director Lonnie Bunch and curator Elaine Nichols introduce the interviews to the C-SPAN audience, and place individual stories in the context of the larger movement.

“It is in the Nation’s interest to undertake a project to collect oral histories of individuals from the Civil Rights Movement so future generations will be able to learn of their struggle and sacrifice through primary, eyewitness material,” reads the Civil Rights History Project Act.

Interviews were conducted by Joseph Mosnier of the Southern Oral History Program in the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Since 2010, some 65 interviews have been conducted with the largely anonymous foot soldiers of the civil rights movement. Interviews with another 50 movement activists are now underway.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture was established by an Act of Congress in 2003 making it the 19th museum of the Smithsonian Institution. Scheduled for completion in 2015, it is under construction on the National Mall in Washington, DC on a five-acre tract adjacent to the Washington Monument.

Meanwhile, the museum is producing publications, hosting public programs and building collections. It is presenting exhibitions at other museums across the country and at its own gallery at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. An array of interactive programs and educational resources is available on the museum's web site nmaahc.si.edu.

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About C-SPAN: C-SPAN (Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network) is a private, non-profit company, created in 1979 by the cable television industry as a public service, and which programs three public affairs television networks.

About AHTV: American History TV (AHTV) airs on C-SPAN3 every weekend from 8am ET Saturday to 8am ET Monday – 48 hours of people and events that document the American story with event coverage, eyewitness accounts, and discussions with historians, authors and college professors. C-SPAN3 is currently available in 43 million digital cable TV households. American History TV is streamed live every weekend at c-span.org/history.