Television programming and Atlanta's black audience: a charter

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TELEVISION PROGRAMMING AND ATLANTA'S BLACK AUDIENCE: A CHARTER

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When viewed on the continuum of communications systems, television is a relatively new phenomena. Communication grew in its capacity to reach others, from simple drawings, signals by smoke or drum, to the development of alphabets and subsequent printing to present day telecommunications. When the airwaves began to be utilized not only for the delivery of vital messages but also for entertainment, a whole new communications genre was created. Radio became a source of information as well as a source for relaxation. Commercial television received government sanction in 1941. By the end of World War II there were 7,000 sets in the United States.\(^1\) By 1962 it was estimated that over 95% of American households owned at least one television set. "This phenomenal increase in television

ownership indicated that in less than a single generation television has become the most important means of communications in this country."\(^2\)

An added psychological significance of television was noted in the recent study of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Window Dressing on the Set: Women and Minorities in Television*.

Television does more than simply entertain or provide news about major events of the day. It confers status on those individuals and groups it selects for placement in the public eye, telling the viewer who and what is important to know about, think about, and have feelings about. Those who are made visible through television become worthy of attention and concern; those who television ignores remain invisible.\(^3\)

The visibility that blacks have received in television has been basically in the role of entertainer (singer, dancer, musician, comedian-buffoon), athlete or social deviant. By placing blacks in these categories, broadcasting stereotypes have been created. Criticism regarding racial stereotyping of blacks in television has been prolific. The increased visibility has been labeled by one such critic as a "front behind which to purvey old stereotypes

\(^2\)Ibid.

about blacks; as a front behind which to ridicule black behavior; as a front behind which to subtly belittle the problems the American system has visited upon black people."  

The prominence and consequent status that television bestows upon individuals is crucial. The appearance of blacks voicing their concerns or in the role of newsmakers is very limited, however. In a study of network television conducted five years ago, it was found that blacks appeared in approximately one-fourth of the news segments, but were not those who spoke regarding the issues. Essentially, they were seen but not heard.  

In critiquing television programming Ashley Montague wrote that "the principal fault of networks and the planners of programs have been an under-estimation of the needs of the great varieties of viewers actual and potential, of television."  

Television programming has created a chasm between racial myth and reality. Programs with informational content

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6 Montague, p. 128.
must be created to bridge that distance.

Knowledge regarding blacks in American history and culture is found in print communications resources primarily and is not readily accessible in the video arena. In an age where people are utilizing television as a major source of information about the world and their community, black life in all its varied aspects should be readily accessible. If not, the implicit psychological decision will be made that if subject matter regarding blacks is not available then it must not be worth knowing.

This thesis is an attempt in part to remedy the stereotypes of blacks projected by the media as well as confer importance to black culture, history and social concerns through television program proposals.

Research was conducted to explain the necessity for each of the particular programs that have been designed. The shows are functional and not meant solely for entertainment. They are structured to meet the need of combatting the persistent and destructive use of stereotyping that mass media relies upon as part of its formula approach to program presentations.

Chapter II traces the history of blacks in broadcasting on a national level including the role of blacks in the
Atlanta television market. Demographic information regarding the black Atlanta community is also incorporated in this section. This type of statistical information helps to reveal the broadcasting needs of the target group. The chapter also includes an assessment of the television viewing habits of the black community, indicating their mass media tastes and preferences.

Chapter III is comprised of a survey of blacks in motion pictures, a precursor of how television would handle the stereotypical treatment of minorities. A film series is proposed that would depict the initial image that portrayed black people in flat, one dimensional characterizations to a modern search for identity. A subsequent talk show is outlined that would serve as a forum for the black actor/director/writer.

Chapter IV details the treatment of black history and the role it must play to counter stereotypical images. Two types of history programs are presented. Both with the intention of informing viewers of the contribution of blacks to society. However, the second series is geared to reveal trends of black historical, cultural and social thought. It offers a panorama whereas the other program focuses on personalities.
A local television series designed to address the problems and concerns of the Atlanta black community is outlined in Chapter V. This public affairs program is intended to voice the needs, desires and viewpoint of those who traditionally have been unheard in broadcasting. In addition to exposing persistent problems the program will also facilitate the locating of sources that can aid individuals. It will also feature those whose lifestyles or occupations merit examination, thus presenting a well-rounded look at the black community.

Such programming in cultural, social and historical areas has been rare in broadcasting and obvious in its absence. A wealth of material exists to make these viable programs. They offer a fresh alternative to the redundancy of stereotype and its debilitating affect on viewers who are faced with no other choice in television programming.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

During the early radio days of the 1920's black subjects played a vital role in the entertainment aspect of broadcasting. Using the minstrel type caricature, "Amos N' Andy" was a highly successful radio program. Although not portrayed by black actors, the nightly spoof stereotyped the black man and woman, questioning their intellectual capacity. The program lasted only ten minutes and its 2,000 word pseudo-dialect script was written by the actors themselves. The 7:00-7:15 time slot was considered the beginning of the radio evening and was formidable opposition for any other stations.\(^7\) One of the originators of the series insisted they were "showing the Negro in a very good light."\(^8\) Later the program was aired on television and Walter White, a


National Association for the Advancement of Colored People official, lamented that "unhappy the system of segregation in the United States that permits far too many Americans no opportunity to know Negroes except through such a medium as television."  

Meanwhile in the "real" world of black life a volcano of creativity was erupting. A cultural re-birth was overflowing its banks. George Kent describes this as a time in which "the single most unifying concept which places the achievement of the Harlem Renaissance in focus is that it moved to gain authority in its portrayal of black life by the attempt to assert, with varying degrees of radicality, a disassociation of sensibility from that enforced by American culture and its institutions."  

It was not the musical or literary genius of the Harlem Renaissance that captured the country's imagination through the air waves. This period of self assertion and challenging of the racist status quo was totally ignored in favor of the old minstrel standby. Broadcasting was trying to make the myth the reality.  

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9Ibid., p. 237

10George Kent, Blackness and the Adventure of Western Culture (Chicago: Third World Press, 1972), p. 17.
CBS by 1935 had Jack Benny's comedy program with Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, a "sassy black butler," in essence another servile and demeaning role. Black roles in films were also comparable, designed to make mockery of a race. Such characterizations in both film and television became a two-edged sword which "has not only re-inforced and sharpened some of the prejudices of the white majority, but it has also to a great extent sharpened the often negative images blacks have had of themselves."  

Broadcasting historian, Erik Barnouw, noted the inherent difference that radio and television shared when dealing with black themes. "Radio had been close to lilly-white, but implicitly. Television was explicitly and glaringly white. A seeming mirror of the world, it told the Negro continually that he did not exist except in 'insults' like 'Amos N' Andy.'"

The development of news and its split from the entertainment aspect of broadcasting did not include the use of  

11Metz, p. 136.  


minority journalists even though there was a history of
blacks in that field, spanning over one hundred years.
Their brand of journalism, initially spawned to be a voice
against social conditions was evidently not considered to
be a viable source of information or resources.

Entertainers were more acceptable to the powers that
derivered broadcasting. Comedy and music were the name of
the game. But even that was with limited acceptance. Dur-
ing the fifties, three organizations--the Actor's Equity
Committee on Ethnic Minorities, the Negro Actors Guild and
the Co-ordinating Council on Negro Performers pooled their
energy, seeking to increase both job opportunities for
blacks in television as well as change discriminating cast-
ing concepts.\footnote{Langston Hughes and Milton Meltzner, eds., \textit{Black
Magic: A Pictorial History of the Negro in American Enter-
p. 293.} It was estimated that in 1953 blacks were
less than one-half of one percent of the total number of
performers on TV during a single week.\footnote{Ibid.} One must also keep
in mind the growing popularity of this form of communication
at this time. Over 100,000 television sets a week were
being sold in the United States.\textsuperscript{16}

The N.A.A.C.P. joined the ranks of those dissatisfied with the portrayal of blacks. "Besides objecting to the racial stereotypes, the N.A.A.C.P. also registered protest against television's alleged misrepresentations of Negro life."\textsuperscript{17}

In \textit{Black Magic: A Pictorial History of the Negro in American Entertainment}, Langston Hughes and Milton Meltzner traced the emergence of black participation in television broadcasting from when blacks were first seen in variety shows. "Their participation in dramatic presentations was almost nil until the late 1950's when major changes in our society began to occur on the racial front. Many half hour dramatic shows then initiated Negroes as guest performers."\textsuperscript{18}

Although stereotyping had been a major problem, the "invisibility" of blacks in television was equally important. A monitoring study conducted by the New York Society of Ethical Culture in 1962 found that black faces appeared once


\textsuperscript{17}Archer, p. 247

\textsuperscript{18}Hughes, p. 328.
every five hours.\textsuperscript{19}

Despite protestations, the television industry went on as usual, until the riots of the sixties. These outbreaks were landmarks in black history. They were violent, unforeseen explosions from crowded and neglected ghettos. The loss of life and of millions of dollars in damages made American society recognize that the true black community was an enigma, from East to West and North to South. In the subsequent \textit{Report of the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders} in 1968, it was "discovered" that television and newspapers offered their black audience an almost totally white world "in both appearance and attitude."\textsuperscript{20} It proceeded to make a scathing indictment that "by failing to portray the Negro as a matter of routine and in the context of the total society, the news media . . . contributed to the black-white schism in this country."\textsuperscript{21} The report goes on to place the responsibility of telling about race relations on the news media.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Window Dressing on the Set}, p. 10.


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 211.
According to surveys taken by the Commission in several cities which had experienced civil disorder, there were many grievances in the Black community that had not received public attention. Among the main concerns expressed in each city were police practices, unemployment/underemployment and inadequate housing. In the second level of intensity were concerns including inadequate education, poor recreation facilities and ineffective political structures. The third level consisted of white attitudes, discrimination in consumer and civil practices and inadequate welfare.\textsuperscript{22}

There had been no outlet to communicate these feelings of injustice and discrimination. The American Dream for many blacks was beyond being "deferred," it was non-existent. The result of these unvoiced frustrations had been a series of explosions.

The Commission recommended that reporters be permanently assigned to cover the black community and that there should be better communications with the black press. It was stated that employment must extend beyond tokenism and that blacks must be hired, trained and promoted, with special educational programs starting in high school, with intensification in college.

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 81.
Television, a broadcasting magazine, performed a survey of what was then current local programs operating as of June 1, 1968. After sending letters to all general managers of commercial television stations they received a response from 104 facilities. They wanted to see how many programs reflected the urban unrest of the time. They noted that there had been a shift in public affairs program topics. This shift had an orientation of wanting to maintain a semblance of homogeneity though. The underlying current to the programming was that "everyone has the same problems--only the degree is different." When one analyzes the responses of the stations, one sees that few black series programs were aired during that time. Most were one-time only local specials. Several programs however were begun to attack the employment situation. These programs served as job referral outlets. Of the seventeen black regular programs that emerged, most were described as created to communicate the problems of the ghetto, with little emphasis on culture.

June 1968 marked the beginning of "Black Journal," a nationally syndicated program aired on public television stations. It was "the first network series by, for and about

the black community." At first it was budgeted for four, one hour monthly programs but by 1971 it had been extended to a half hour series. "Soul" another public television series began in 1968 and served as a variety show.

The late '60's in Atlanta were marked by a burgeoning racial consciousness as students participated in the civil rights movement. There was a strong thrust to end segregation in all its forms as Atlanta was dubbed "the city too busy to hate."

A black journalism tradition had been established with the grandfather of black daily newspapers, the Atlanta Daily World, in 1928. The '60's saw the emergence of two additional papers, The Atlanta Inquirer in 1960 and the Atlanta Voice in 1966.

Moves to obliterate the vestiges of a white-only society was reflected in the action taken against the city's broadcasting media.

Atlanta emerged as a leader in the forefront of media citizen advocacy when an ad hoc coalition of twenty

25 Ibid. 26 Ibid. 27 Ibid., p. 82.
groups formed the Community Coalition on Broadcasting in 1969.28 By meeting with broadcasters they sought the employment of blacks on air as well as behind the scenes, scholarships, job-training programs, as well as joint ventures with black firms. They wanted to substantially "alter programming to more accurately reflect black life of the past and present."29

Public affairs programs designed to be an outlet for the problems of the community made their debut in Atlanta during this time. The ABC affiliate then was WQXI, which initiated a weekly hour program entitled "Ebony Beat" in 1971 according to station records. Two years later a second program was added, "Ebony Beat Journal," a weekly half hour program. (Sunday 12:30 p.m., Saturday 7:00 a.m.) Later "Ebony Beat's" name was changed to "Crossroads" (Sunday 1:00 p.m., 12:30 a.m., following Sunday 6:00 a.m.) and was cut to a half hour. In 1977 it was cancelled entirely. The CBS affiliate, WAGA, in response to Television magazine's survey reported that their program "Colloquim," which was done in conjunction with Morehouse College, was intended to discuss issues facing young Negroes. The early morning program

28 Ibid., p. 144. 29 Ibid.
(6:30 – 7:00 a.m.) had been on the air since 1962. They were planning a new series "Themes and Variations," as a discussion of "all facets of Negro life." Instead, WAGA had the "Xernona Clayton Show" which ran from 1967 to 1975. This program was inexplicably omitted from the Television survey. WSB, the NBC affiliate also had a public affairs program geared to the black community. "Dialogue," a half hour weekly show (Saturday 12:30 p.m.) began in 1972 and is still on the air. The public television station, WETV, had a similar program which began in 1975, "Black Atlanta Today." The station billed it as the only prime time local program specified to address the black community. "Black Atlanta Today" is no longer on the air. It should be noted here that WETV never broadcasted "Black Journal." Station management objected to what they considered as undesirable language and dubious program content.

Despite being on different stations all of the public affairs programs shared similar plights. They were (or are) low budget programs, primarily based in the studio, with small staffs, existing with virtually no promotion done by their stations and in non-prime time viewing hours.

30 Bradley, p. 45. 31 Stephens, p. 98.
Xernona Clayton's program, "The Xernona Clayton Show" was on the air by the summer of 1967. She set a precedent as the first black woman in the United States to host her own program. WAGA found that both the black and white audiences were receptive to her show and even initiated the possibility of syndication in eleven markets. But the Federal Communications Commission ruled that there should be access to local stations for their own community programs and that hindered plans for syndication. Even so, her show was a model and as such those involved in its production served as consultants to other stations all over the country who were setting up fledgling minority programs. She had demanded airtime that was accessible to many viewers. As a consequence hers has been the only prime time commercial public affairs program in Atlanta.

Ms. Clayton noted a gradual change in the station's commitment, as though they felt "we've done our deed." By 1975, frustrated by a low salary for her efforts, her contract was not renewed. She noted "there was no rousing reaction from the community." "The Xernona Clayton Show," a program that had a spectacular beginning had a quiet demise.

32 Interviews conducted with Xernona Clayton, Walt Elder and Ben Perry were conducted March 23, 1978.
Walt Elder, currently Community Affairs Director at WSB, produces "Dialogue." Until two years ago there was no assistant to perform many of the production tasks that needed to be done. The program does not have a cinematographer assigned to it. Elder admits that he has virtually "a shoestring budget" with which to produce a weekly thirty minute program. Such obstacles are frustrating and as a result he cannot achieve "the kind of look or tempo" that he envisions for the program. Essentially he claims that management "wants the most for less."

WXIA-TV's Public Affairs Director, Ben Perry, said that "rather than an escalation there has been a de-escalation of gains. He sees a trend of broadcasters wanting to hasten general audience programs in lieu of minority shows. He feels that there is "less being done today than 1971." Perry stated that the "fatality rate of black programming is astronomical."

Black programming is quantitatively on the decline in Atlanta with the absence of "Crossroads," "The Xernona Clayton Show" and "Black Atlanta Today." In addition, the frustration level is tremendous for those remaining in commercial television attempting to create programs for the black community.
Erik Barnouw stated in *Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television*, that even after the civil rights movement captured the attention of the broadcasting industry the issues seldom "penetrated the citadel of peak hours." Also, a false aura of relevance was created through the unrealistic portrayals of militants, draft evaders and others who went against the grain of American ideals in syndicated programs. "For all their genuflections towards social awareness, the networks intent . . . was to patently exploit (real issues) for purposes of delivering up to advertisers more of the young consumers than before, without alienating the older habitues of the medium." 

Eventually the major networks realized that there was a large audience for all-black situation comedies. The advent of these weekly "sit-coms" proved to be financially successful. Television comedy employed a formula in its ethnic comedies. It has been described as creating humour in a situation "... based on stereotypes associated with the characters ethnicity." So, the merry-go-round of

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35 *Window Dressing on the Set*, p. 22.
caricatures and their portrayal continues in broadcasting.

"Roots" a limited black dramatic series that aired in early 1977 proved to be a phenomena in broadcasting history. Estimations were that 80 million people watched the final two-hour episode, thus constituting the largest audience of any program in television history. The saga of an Afro-American's African and slave past had captured the pulse of this country's television viewers. Since it surpassed dozens of audience records the industry was grasping at new programmatic ideas. The talk centered around "long-form miniseries, new ways of scheduling events, and a renewed emphasis on big canvas novels embracing plots and themes that span generations." Executives were looking at the novels of Irving Wallace, Dashiell Hammett and John Erlichman. This, when viewed from the history of blacks in broadcasting was a virtual slap in the face. "Roots" was the first time a black theme project was given such a large multi-million dollar budget, using a black author's work that went beyond stereotype while delivering an overwhelmingly large audience. It was evident that the national audience was starved for a

37 Ibid.
new perspective regarding blacks in this country. As a response the executives saw only form and not content. Their reactions are almost as though they were brainwashed to the perpetuation of old portrayals despite evidence that their viewers are ready to go beyond what has previously been available.

In retrospect, although there was a demand for more serious local programming for the Atlanta community these programs are dwarfed by the shadow of entertainment. This aspect of programming has been virtually engrained in every viewer by the nature of the medium.

In order for a television station to program to the needs of its viewers, as it is required to do by the Federal Communications Commission, a demographic portrait must be drawn including personal statistical averages as well as the views of the needs of the community as seen by its residents. To insure program success it is important to know the viewing habits of the target audience. This applies especially when one is attempting to create programs to appeal to a special segment of the community.

Since this proposal is geared to the black community of Atlanta, the fifteen county Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) will not be used as a source of demographic
information. To go far beyond the boundaries of Atlanta or Fulton County dilutes the black population both in numbers as well as in their assessment of the priority and types of community needs they face. Most of the statistics used are from a study conducted by Georgia State University's Contract Research Division, School of Business Administration.

According to the 1970 Census of population, from which much of the subsequent data is extrapolated, Atlanta has a total of 496,973 residents. Of that number 51.3% were black. Those sixty-five and over constituted 9.1% of the population but the median age was 27.2.\(^{38}\)

Looking specifically at the 51.3% black community, 39.3% were under eighteen. A little over 6% (6.1%) were sixty-five and over. The 18-64 age group constituted the majority with the remaining 54.6%. The median age for black males was 22.0, while the average age for black females was slightly higher, at 24.4. This differs drastically compared to the median ages of the white population (male 29.7 and for females, the even older age bracket of 35.4).\(^{39}\)

\(^{38}\) John E. Tully, ed., Supplement to Atlanta Composition Study of July 1975 (Atlanta, Georgia: Georgia State University, 1975), pp. 2-3.

\(^{39}\) Tully, Atlanta Composition Study, July 1975 (Atlanta, Georgia: Georgia State University, 1975), p. 13.
An educational profile reveals that the median number of years completed by a black Atlanta resident is tenth grade with 34.1% graduating from high school. Of that total, 5.9% had one to three years of college. Graduates of college, including those with additional years of study were calculated at 6.7% of the total number who completed high school.\textsuperscript{40}

The average spending power or "effective buying income" within Atlanta was $8,838. Households with a yearly income of less than $3,000 were tabulated at 14.6%, with 23.9% making $15,000 and over. Information regarding the median black income was not available. However, public assistance cases numbered 21,943 involving 68,887 individuals.\textsuperscript{41} Almost 10% of the city's general population received social security income.\textsuperscript{42} Also, according to the Atlanta Composition Study, the unemployment rate was 6.1% black male and 9.6% black female.

For those who are employed, occupations in manufacturing lead as sources of employment. In descending order are elementary/secondary schools and colleges, public administration, wholesale trade, miscellaneous retail trade, construction, miscellaneous personal services, insurance/real estate/

\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 126. \textsuperscript{41}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 37. \textsuperscript{42}\textit{Ibid.}
finance, general merchandise retailing and personal households.\textsuperscript{43}

Community problems and concerns as stated by city leaders are defined by broadcasters as ascertainment. A study conducted by Georgia State University "ascertained" the concerns of the surrounding Atlanta fifteen county Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area as well as blacks, as a "partial fulfillment of requirements for the renewal of broadcasting licenses issued by the F.C.C. for the next three year period."\textsuperscript{44}

White respondents mentioned more frequently their concerns regarding crime, city government/leadership, taxes, business and economy, city/growth/annexation, race relations, utilities and schools. While blacks also cited crime as the number one problem, the other concerns listed were much different. They include unemployment, drugs, local services, recreational facilities, housing, poverty and transportation.\textsuperscript{45}

The uneasiness regarding city leadership and race relations was not expressed by the black population. Their

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid., p. 71.
\textsuperscript{44}Idem., General Public Ascertainment Study (Atlanta, Georgia, Georgia State University, October, 1975), p. v.
\textsuperscript{45}Ibid., p. 15.
day to day deprivations and inconveniences are of primary concern. Almost all of those are linked to a faltering economy. Further comparison shows that the minority viewpoint was less occupied with inflation, business/economy, energy problems, federal government, lack of leadership, political dishonesty and foreign issues but rather how these issues translate to their lives in a personal way.

In the verbatim replies to questions, the broader issues take on specificity. Crime, viewed as the primary issue, was linked to burglaries, rapes, drugs, guns and need for more police. Unemployment was seen as the major reason for crime. Joblessness also encompassed the inability to afford high prices, problems meeting monthly bills and insecurity. Probably due to the low median age range, many mentioned that young adults need jobs. Unpaved streets and short bus routes were problems in transportation. Local services were criticized for dirty streets, trash and sewerage. Under the drug category, pushers and their influence on young people as well as excessive drinking was mentioned often. Although not listed in the eight major problems of the community, education was cited many times. It was said that children were not learning and discipline was bad.

When it comes to media consciousness, the Atlanta
black population is "television-rich" in terms of television set ownership. Of the 107,800 black households in this city, it has been estimated that 104,200 have one or more televisions. The Nielsen Station Index made a special report of the black market in Atlanta surveying viewer preferences shown during February, March and May of 1975. In that sampling public affairs programs (designed to address community problems) all were considered the least viewed programs of their time periods. This was gauged on the basis of ratings and shares which are the standard criterion for judging a program's popularity (discussion of black critics objection to what they consider the inherent bias of these survey's will not be broached in this paper).

A rating is defined by Arbitron, a company that conducts the survey's for broadcasters, as "the estimated percent of television households, turned to a particular station for five minutes or more during an average quarter hour of the reported time period for the ADI (Area of Dominant Influence)." A share is "the percentage of the total households using television reached by a station at a specified

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In the Nielsen survey on the black market it was estimated that "Black Perspective on the News" a public television press forum featuring issues of concern to blacks with black journalists asking the questions, received a very poor showing. The rating was calculated at -.6 Friday evenings from 7:30-8:00 p.m. against daily game shows.

On commercial television station WSB, Saturday afternoon "Dialogue" received a household rating of 8 and a share of 18. "Dialogue," a minority public affairs program is an ironic lead-in to Tarzan at 1:00 p.m., which had a rating of 21 and a 48 share, far above other programs of this period. It should be observed that this is in reference to the black viewing audience and a program providing a view of Africa which is regularly the only one aside from features on animals on game preserves.

The nationally syndicated dance show "Soul Train" at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday airing on WAGA received a 37 rating and 66 share; it was especially popular with women 18-49.

On Sunday WXIA-TV's "Ebony Beat Journal" received a


48 Nielsen, p. 13.

3 rating and a share of 12. \(^{50}\) "Crossroads," another public affairs program that was on during the time of the survey was not listed in the afternoon slot. But in the late night repeat (12:30 a.m.) it receives a rating of 2 and an escalating share from 10 to 17 as viewers of other channels turn off their sets. \(^{51}\)

Syndicated comedy programs invariably led in their time periods. WAGA's "Good Times" was calculated at receiving a 60 rating and 81 share. That peak (the preceding program, "Ozzie's Girls with a 23 rating and 39 share and the following program "MASH" with 23 rating and 35 share) shows that viewers will turn to a specific program and not leave it on a station out of sheer laziness. \(^{52}\)

"That's My Mama," now off the air, received a 41 rating and a 58 share, \(^{53}\) also exhibiting a peak but not as dramatic as "Good Times." "The Jefferson's" also on WAGA at prime time received a rating of 48 and a share of 73. \(^{54}\)

"Sanford and Son" also did well with a 66 rating and 85 share.

Looking at the viewing habits of black children one see's the education oriented public television programs are

\(^{50}\)Ibid., p. 15. \(^{51}\)Ibid., p. 17. \(^{52}\)Ibid., p. 8.

\(^{53}\)Ibid., p. 10. \(^{54}\)Ibid., p. 14.
not watched in black homes. On Saturday morning, prime time for "kid-vid," WGTV, the only public station participating in this survey, is not on the air. It signs on at 7:00 p.m. According to the Monday through Friday trend, public broadcasts children's programs do not make a dent in the hours black Atlanta youth log in front of the television. Even recalling that it has the advantage of being on the VHF dial, Channel 8's educational programs are not chosen. "Sesame Street" at 4:00 p.m. has a rating of 2 and a share of 3. The action packed western, "Big Valley," sweeps all competitors at that time period. "Zoom" another "educational" program on public television for more advanced children receives a rating of 1 and a share of 2.55

Violence on many programs has concerned citizen's lobby groups throughout the United States. In a study made by the National Citizen's Committee for Better Broadcasting, programs were ranked according to their degree of violence. Two ABC programs, "SWAT" and "The Rookies" were labeled as depicting the largest amount of anti-social" behavior.56


56 Nielsen, p. 16.
According to the special market Nielsen survey "The Rookies" received a 37 with a 56 share. But "SWAT" fell far short with a rating of 6 and a 16 share.  

In conclusion, from the demographic statistics available, Atlanta's 51.3% black population consists primarily of a younger age range than the general population. Well over half have dropped out of school before the eleventh grade. Unemployment is a problem for a large percentage. Those who do have jobs are primarily "blue collar" workers in skilled and semi-skilled areas. The median family income is almost $2,000 less than those surveyed in the fifteen county Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. This includes nearly 70,000 individuals receiving public assistance, with 10% of the Atlanta black population receiving social security.

The outlook regarding problems is grim, faced with crime, unemployment and poor social services. City leadership and the implicit racial fears expressed by whites were not voiced at all by those in the minority community. When compared to the National Advisory Commission's list of grievances compiled in 1968 the similarity of problems ten years later is unfortunately often repeated.

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57 Ibid., p. 17.
58 Tulley, Atlanta Composition Study, p. 30.
For the majority of viewers, television is turned to as a form of entertainment. Syndicated programming featuring black casts has a loyal and enthusiastic following in Atlanta.

Low budget, local public affairs programs do not begin to share the reception of syndicated programs. Whether it is due to their being scheduled opposite sports programming or during Sunday church hours are possibilities for a poor viewer sampling. Nevertheless, their ratings go the way of all public affairs programs (including those that are nationally syndicated). However, the demands for programming specifically addressed to the black community through the Community Coalition on Broadcasting, nearly ten years ago, indicate there is (or was) a conscious desire for quality black programming.

If one subscribes to the violence criteria of the National Citizens for Better Broadcasting, the black audience of Atlanta does not accept violence for violence's sake. Comedy and entertainment are preferred far more than the urban action packed violence of police programs.

Broadcasting has presented an image of the black community based on an historically unsound foundation. It created a black image based on their perceptions (from "Amos
and Andy" portraying blacks as ignorant buffoons to the present day emphasis on broad characterizations found in situation comedies). As Daniel Leab points out "just about everything traditionally held to be of some value in the United States was absent from (these stereotypes).\(^{59}\)

The daily struggle of black life, the accomplishments as well as positive self images are impossible to find at prime viewing hours. This thesis outlines much needed program proposals that target the legitimacy of black history, culture (images), and social concerns and presents formats geared to entertain as well as "enlighten."

CHAPTER III

FILM SERIES PROPOSAL

Just as television has relied primarily upon stereotypes that make mockery of blacks, so has another major source of projecting images—films. Neither of these communication forms is restricted to viewing within the confines of this country. As programs are syndicated and films are released for world-wide distribution American blacks are dangerously misrepresented. "As the black men around the world seek their picture in our television and film they see only an occasional Negro—usually a waiter, janitor or comedy character. Such is the value set on them ... certainly no race is more consistently debased and slandered in U. S. mass media than the Negro."

The affect of continued misrepresentation can alter a race's own perceptions about themselves as well as mold other's attitudes on the fallacious basis of stereotype.

Other nationalities and minorities are also subjected to certain stereotypes—Italians are linked to organized crime, Chinese are relegated to laundries and railroad construction, Mexicans are wetback migrant workers. Evidently the image makers find it easier to deal with ready-made classifications than to find the human side to individuals different from themselves, or to allow minorities access to portray themselves as they see fit, hence having control over their own image. "Hollywood ... helped to perpetuate racial bias by retaining a tradition of demeaning blacks, thus making a sort of negative political statement."61

The black actor finds himself entangled in this conflict of myth versus reality. Even during the 1930's the early black actor, Clarence Muse, wrote of the dilemma facing those in his profession. They were torn between two desires, "the giving of his best talent in a serious way to Negro audiences, or the winning of financial success as a buffoon, clown and dancer before white audiences."62

Lawrence Reddick, during the 1940's, devised a checklist of "important" American films that included Negro themes

61 Null, p. 38.
or characters. Out of a total of one hundred movies, seventy-five were anti-Negro (utilizing stereotypes), thirteen were neutral and only twelve were beyond stereotype showing characters with the honorable attributes of courage and dignity.\(^{63}\)

He also viewed films before 1954 as depicting blacks as social problems. In the mid and late '50's a character began to emerge as a symbolic figure struggling against oppression and by the late '60's there was the beginning of fully articulated characters. As one looks with hindsight at the late '60's and '70's perhaps Reddick was overly optimistic. The hip dope pusher or super stud had been added to the list of classifications.

Film critic, Gary Null, offered a more detailed perspective of black movies in his book, *Black Hollywood, The Negro in Motion Pictures*. He wrote that during the early days of film the minstrel tradition lingered as white performers played black roles in black-face make-up.\(^{64}\) Silent films depicted blacks as "stupid, lazy, clownishly inefficient."\(^{65}\) In fact, not only were there personality stereotypes but occupational ones as well.


\(^{64}\) Null, p. 7.  

\(^{65}\) Ibid., p. 8.
In film after film, the same Negro stereotypes appear—the foolish and irresponsible citizen, the grinning bellhop or flapjack cook, the hymn singing churchgoer, the song-and-dance man, the devoted servant or contented slave, the barefoot watermelon eater, the corrupt politician, the hardened criminal, and the African savage. Thus emerged two broad categories into which the Negro can be fitted—the clown and the black brute.  

The films of the '20's and pre-World War I produced by both blacks and whites categorically ignored racial injustice. Emphasis was placed on the escapism of entertainment.

Null characterizes the films of the late '20's, or the early talking era, as sentimentalizing blacks. Although black-face acting continued, there was a growing number of black actors. The song-and-dance man became popular, later evolving to singing and dancing musical format programs.

The '30's, a time of social upheaval, was when blacks "began to object to the roles they were forced to play." The press as well as black entertainers demanded an end to racist themes in films.

The next decade featured segregated musicals. But it was not until the '50's that Null notes a trend toward the portrayal of blacks as "recognizable human people." Such portrayals were virtually an overcompensation for

66 Ibid.  
67 Ibid., p. 27.
previous roles.

The violence and strident militancy of the '60's reflected itself in film "as an attempt to free itself from the caution of the '50's . . . for the first time in film history, there was a serious attempt to portray the black experience." 68

The '70's, according to Null, mark the "emergence of truly black films, which are not merely vehicles for black actors but are directed by blacks and destined for a black audience . . ." 69 This sudden "emergence" has its foundation in the economic aspect of the film industry.

The black movie market potential was discovered nearly ten years ago. Television had sapped the movie audience from a peak of 80 million in 1946 to 17.5 million in 1971. The independent film "Sweet Sweet Back's Bad Assss Song" became the first black produced feature since the 1930's era of independent productions such as those of Oscar Micheaux, to draw audiences that were consistently in excess of 80% black. The year 1970 had only fourteen of four hundred major features that were black oriented. By late 1975 films geared to the black audience had grown to close to a

68 Ibid., p. 195.
69 Ibid., p. 206.
quarter of Hollywood's total planned production.\textsuperscript{70}

By utilizing low budgets, the films were bringing in millions of dollars in return. Blacks represent nearly one-half of the national movie going audience, or $110 million toward the total revenue taken in annually.\textsuperscript{71} According to Lindsay Patterson, the dilemma that Clarence Muse wrote of forty years ago has now changed to "whether a black actor gives the best of his talent before predominately white audiences or seeks financial success as a superstud, or nigger before black audiences."\textsuperscript{72}

There has never been a television vehicle that seriously discusses the works of black actors exclusively, and consequently the images of blacks as a minority. Instead, black actors have been compared in the past to their white counterparts--"The Black Valentino," "The Sepia Mae West," "The Colored Cagny," many with aborted careers ending up as hustlers, domestic workers, alcoholics and drug addicts.\textsuperscript{73} Never have the older actors stood on their own merit. The


\textsuperscript{71}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{72}Patterson, p. XII.

\textsuperscript{73}Donald Bogle, \textit{Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies and Bucks} (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), p. X.
new breed that is featured in the plethora of films today can speak to that as well as talk of their roles today.

Such a discussion is necessary because despite the fact that a large majority of black films lend themselves to classification "a number of talented people were dismissed or ignored or even vilified because no one knew anything about the nature of their work and the conditions under which they performed." 74

Through a film series and subsequent half hour interview program a forum would be created so the black actor, director or writer could discuss his/her craft in a serious manner. Although the series would want to show the historical underpinnings of blacks in films it would not focus on the syndrome of caricatures but would include films that are significant because of their realistic portrayal of the black experience.

A television season would include a package of twenty-six programs, beginning with older films that would provide an historical perspective. "Birth of a Nation" is considered a classic in the bastion of celluloid racism. Released in 1915 it created bitter controversy as the first feature film

74 Ibid., p. VIII.
to deal with a black theme. Roles featuring the happy slave, uncontrollable brutal bucks, mammies and mulattoes is admittedly a grim opening for a series on blacks in film. But according to film historian Donald Bogle, "Birth of a Nation" was significant due to its influence; "one can detect in this single film the trends and sentiments that were to run through almost every black film made for a long time." The strong protest against the film proves that civil rights organizations realized the danger of promoting blatant negative images.

The historical foundation would include early blacks who recognized the importance of film and tried to use the medium, thus the audience would become familiar with Oscar Micheaux. Although his films swung to the other side of the spectrum, focusing on the "professional" blacks, they were a beacon for promoting self image and independence.

"Emperor Jones" (1933) was considered by many as a "revolutionary" film. It was the first movie with a black starring role (played by Paul Robeson). It was also the "first major attempt to capture the essence of the American experience." This film became Robeson's best known movie

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75 Bogle, p. 15.  
76 Null, p. 71.
and "established his career and his special role in Hollywood as a living myth."\textsuperscript{77}

The forties were highlighted by segregated musicals. Carmen Jones (1954) was influenced by the trends of the previous decade. This film was considered the most successful of its genre.

The dramatic presentation of blacks as full fledged human beings can be seen in "The Edge of the City" (1957). Sidney Poitier befriends a white co-worker and ultimately dies defending him. The white friend avenges his "black brother's death." "In the context of the fifties . . . the noble dignified black man was a new departure from old images,"\textsuperscript{78} even though it may seem Uncle Tomish by today's standards.

Incidentally, Sidney Poitier was voted first in box office attractions in 1968 by exhibitors and commanded a salary twice that of any other black actor or actress.\textsuperscript{79} The list of his movie credits, in sheer volume, surpass that of any other black actor in film.

"Raisin in the Sun" (1961) was an "integrationist drama" reflecting the hopes and aspirations of that period.

\textsuperscript{77}Ibid. \textsuperscript{78}Ibid., p. 177. \textsuperscript{79}Murray, p. 251.
It showed an often prevalent role of the mother in the black family and "examined the emasculation of the black male by a hostile white society," ultimately paying homage to the American values of free enterprise and materialism. "Nothing but a Man" heralded the death of Rastus. The 1964 film marks the beginning of the contemporary film series. Its characters repeatedly are referred to as strong and unwilling to succumb to stereotypes.

Gordon Park's "Learning Tree" (1969) marked him as the first black man to direct a major American motion picture. Based on his autobiography, the film presents a boy "who is black but not tortured by his blackness . . . a lyrical and eloquent statement on the black experience in America." A play adapted to film, "The Great White Hope" (1970), provides historical characterizations. It portrays a previous era and personality, boxer Jack Johnson, in a very realistic manner.

"Cotton Comes to Harlem" (1970) has been considered by some critics as the opening of the new decade. Based on a novel by author Chester Himes, and directed by Ossie Davis, it showed that even with this black creative input, the world

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80 Bogle, p. 280. 81 Ibid. 82 Ibid., p. 321.
that was created was still populated by "a crew of congenial coons, toms and black whores," depicting Harlem as a playground. Nevertheless the film was financially successful, but this picture poses the key question--can a black production turn the tide of stereotypes? If not, why?

With "Sweet Sweet Back's Bad Ass Song" (1971) came the advent of the low budget, high grossing films. With a total of $500,000, independent film-maker Melvin Van Peebles grossed over $10 million within three months of release. "Sweetback's" controversy began the era of macho stud to the protestations of critics. Yet it was a totally black controlled product.

"Superfly" (1972) took the black movie goer by storm--depicting drug culture with a flair that captured the imagination of many an impressionable person looking for an identity. It created a "Superfly" mentality, a phenomena that needs to be explained now that time has elapsed.

In keeping with the political militancy of the time, several movies addressed themselves to the "black revolution." "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" should be among those featured in the series.

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83 Ibid., p. 327. 84 Murray, p. 252.
A popularization of the post Civil War period was depicted in "Buck and the Preacher" (1972). There is triumph as blacks defeat their white opponents creating "viable black folk heroes." In addition, the film went against the superstud vein that was running rampant in black films of that time.  

If a black male director is uncommon, a black female director is an even rarer breed. Maya Angelou opened that door when "Georgia, Georgia" came out in 1972. It was by a black woman, with black actresses. Taunted by fantasies, a symbolic murder takes place—the killing of dreams that seek to weaken rather than strengthen blacks.

Other films featuring women were also released in the early '70's. The television film "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pitman" gave the black woman her roots in slavery to the modern civil rights struggle. Gone was the tragic mulatto, the whore, the mammy and in its place was a strong black woman who had faced history and triumphed.

"Sounder" (1972) was another film featuring a family who was devoid of urban glamour but not relegated to servile obsequiousness. As a result, another strong woman emerges

85 Bogle, p. 327.
from this film.

Unable to let singer Billy Holiday's story go untold, Motown Records went to Hollywood for "Lady Sings the Blues" (1972) and tried to capture an historical era as well as personality. Again, it is a story of a woman who has lived life and has something to say.

On a somewhat lighter vein, "Claudine" (1974) features a female head of household and her relationship with a strong, non—tomming working man. In addition to her children, they try to build a family.

After a successful acting career Sidney Poitier branched into directing. The first of his comedy series "Uptown Saturday Night" (1974) could be aired. His recent comedies have a strong box office appeal.

Urban life depicted without glorification is portrayed in "Cooley High" (1976), which captures the mood of the early '60's with gang violence and survival of personal dreams. It is a sensitive portrayal.

Another excellent urban movie is "Cornbread, Earl and Me," based on Hog Butcher by Ronald Fair. It is the story of a basketball hero who is killed by the police and the subsequent dilemma of a young boy who witnessed the murder. It is a story of courage, love and justice.
One of the most popular current talents, Richard Pryor, recently starred in the dramatic film, "Blue Collar" (1978). It is a serious revelation regarding the frustrations of the working class who have to struggle to make ends meet. Pryor's acting philosophy embodies a new trend. In a recent interview he said, "Whatever I do on stage or on the screen is calculated—and its coming from my black experience. I'm not out to hurt anyone; I'm not interested in degrading people. What I am interested in is doing a good job from a black point of view." 86

While the American film industry made a cult hero out of drug pusher Superfly, in the early '70's another film from Jamaica addressed the narcotics problem. In addition to seeing the reality of Caribbean life, and corruption in the music industry, "The Harder They Come" is a must for showing the use of the medium with a message. While showing the Third World viewpoint, the African film "Bush Mama" would be another feature to include.

The program would wrap up with a discussion by critics. Admittedly this series omits the popular karate genre, female chain gang group and exorcism cult. But it

does include some controversial films that do not necessarily enlighten the audience. Entertainment that has been consumed by so many cannot be ignored. If critics turn their backs to these negative portrayals they will still exist, only devoid of analyzations and alternatives. The concluding program would assess blacks in film history, utilizing a backdrop that provided an historical perspective. Discussion would include the nature of changes of film roles for blacks and the future as it relates to those roles. As a result of this series, the black actor/writer/director would be legitimized as a force that is capable of going beyond the surface and one that will no longer have the black personality subjected to unrealistic apparitions based on someone elses perceptions. Perhaps it will also make many financially successful blacks realize that film is a lucrative market for investment.

Daniel Leab wrote in *From Sambo to Superspade* that "although movies are entertainment they are symbols and behind every shadow on the big screen is the struggle to impose definitions upon what is and what should be. The power of any single movie to influence a viewer permanently is limited although repetition has its affect."  

87 Leab, p. 203.
Gary Null, another film critic, writes that perhaps a cycle is at play regarding black films.

From the time that black faced white actors began appearing in the silent movies until the mid fifties, ... the roles portrayed by blacks were entirely reflective of white attitudes toward blacks ... then a new set of black stereotypes emerged ... they will be replaced in time by something else ... perhaps it is society that is changing and film makers are becoming more sensitive to the historical process.88

An enlightened public, armed with a sense of the black film image history may be able to spur this evolving historical process. (See Appendix B for treatment and series outline.)

88 Null, p. 230.
CHAPTER IV

HISTORY PROGRAMMING PROPOSALS

A major force in shaping self perception is cultural representations (as depicted through the various forms of media--radio, television, print and films). But equally important is the historical representation of a race. Psychiatrists William Grier and Price Cobbs wrote in *Black Rage* that:

> History is forgotten. There is little record of the first Africans brought to this country. They were stripped of everything. A calculated cruelty was begun, designed to crush their spirit. After they were settled in the white man's land, malice continued. When slavery ended and large-scale physical abuse was discontinued it was supplanted by different but equally damaging abuse. The cruelty continued unabated in thoughts, feelings, intimidation and occasional lynching. Black people were consigned to a place outside the human family and the whip of the plantation was replaced by the boundaries of the ghetto.89

Well over fifty years ago Arthur Schomburg realized the necessity for blacks to remember their collective history.

He insisted that "The American Negro must remake his past in order to make his future. . . . History must restore what slavery took away, for it is the social damage of slavery that the present generation must repair and offset."  

Historian Carter G. Woodson insisted on the need to know one's racial history for the feeling of self-worth that such knowledge brings.

The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worthwhile depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other peoples. The Negro thus educated is a hopeless liability of the race.

Woodson was emphatic in writing of the detriment caused by the systematic perpetuation of mis-educating a race regarding their role in history. "It was well understood that if by teaching of history the white man could be further assured of his superiority and the Negro could be made to feel that he had always been a failure and the subjection of his will to some other race is necessary the freedman then, would still be a slave."  

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92 Ibid., p. 84.
Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton wrote that society has self-serving accounts of history. Blacks are assigned the pejorative traits ranging from lazy and apathetic, to dumb, shiftless and goodtiming. They conclude that it's all for the purpose of being "vilified in order to justify their continued oppression. . . . If we accept these adjectives, then we see ourselves only in a negative way, precisely the way white America wants us to see ourselves." 93

Another historian, William Katz noted the affect that continued racism as well as stereotyping has when he stated that "the distortion of the Negro's past has always had a purpose. The assertion that the Negro has no history worth mentioning is basic to the theory that he has no humanity worth defending." 94

When viewed from the perspective of media, one finds blacks in an awkward position. They are caught in the double bind of "entertainments" biased portrayal and historical accounts that slander their role in society.

In 1968 the Opinion Research Corporation conducted a


survey of attitudes for CBS. One of their questions was
"Would you say Negroes have played an important or not very
important part in the history of this country? The results
are as follows: 95

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<th>Black</th>
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<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
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It is appalling that nearly a quarter of the blacks
polled do not view their race's history as significant. Of
the 32% of the whites sharing the same viewpoint, one was
quoted as saying "all you hear about is Uncle Tom's Cabin
and black Sambo and those kinds of things. They are just
here and we're stuck with them. They don't do much of any-
thing." Another respondent said "they are important for
nothing but prizefighting." 96 Again, the recurring myth
versus reality.

One black man among the 80% group said "we're part of
the society. We dig the ditches, planted the cotton. We've
played a big part." 97 True, black labor has been the

95 Raymond H. Giles, Black Studies Programs in Public
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
backbone of this country but black cultural and social achievement have been significant also.

In the early 1930's the United States Bureau of Education found that in the hundred's of black high schools only eighteen offered a course in Negro history. In colleges during that time "race (was) studied as a social problem or dismissed as of little consequence."98

Black studies courses and curriculum were incorporated in the educational system in some parts of the country as a result of a thirst for self knowledge and a militant push for this to be taught in the public schools. The Atlanta School System included black history in their courses in 1974, according to their personnel.

The objectives of this type of ethnic study is to enhance the self concept of blacks, as well as define their role in political, social, psychological, educational and economic systems. It also serves to delineate the relationship of Afro-Americans to the other peoples of the world by providing an accurate assessment of black heritage and culture.99

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98 Woodson, p. 1.

But despite accessibility, many young people today do not know exactly who or what constitutes the main forces of black history. "It is absolutely essential that black people know this history, that they know their roots, that they develop an awareness of their cultural heritage." \(^{100}\)

Statistically, the average median age level for a black Atlantan is tenth grade. The essential reading and math skills are often lacking so one can assume that an historical knowledge ranks low in terms of their education background.

Two quiz show format proposals are outlined in this thesis addressing themselves to separate approaches of conveying information about black history. The first, would feature what Raymond Giles terms "contributionism." This is basically the goal oriented depiction of a particular achievement that a personality has made in American history. Many black studies courses feature this aspect in presenting history.

Rather than make the program a contest between high school or college students, a random film sampling of people on the street responding to identification questions would be

\(^{100}\)Carmichael, p. 54.
utilized. For example, the question may ask, "Who was Frederick Douglass?" Many people will not be familiar with what is asked. Since this program is designed to inform, not merely embarrass, after each answer, right or wrong, the host (in studio) will describe in narrative form the particular background. Visuals would be used on the monitor beside him or her. Thus, there is immediate re-inforcement of information. So, continuing with the example of Frederick Douglass, the moderator would supply the brief background information saying "Frederick Douglass was a fugitive slave. In 1841 he attended an Anti-Slavery convention in Massachusetts. After eloquently speaking of his experiences he soon became a well-known abolitionist. Douglass was President of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. He started the North Star newspaper, was active in the underground railroad and was an advisor to President Lincoln. After the Civil War he served as Minister to Haiti." 101

The second quiz show follows a more traditional game show format with flashing lights, a spinning wheel and prizes. It is more advanced in terms of questions asked, going a step

101 Factual information regarding personalities featured in this quiz program was obtained from From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro American by John Hope Franklin.
beyond "contributionism," and through dated sections tries to convey movements, processes, political thought and trends in addition to "personalities."

Three contestants would compete for prizes arranged through trade-offs with black owned businesses (from travel agencies to car dealerships). They would have to successfully answer questions after spinning a wheel divided into seven categories: Africa, Women, The Arts, 1800's, Twentieth Century, Quotes and Mixed Bag.

Each section has a rationale for inclusion. "Africa" would establish the pre-slavery base of Afro-Americans, as well as deal with contemporary issues. It would be a substantive section in contrast to the "Tarzan" and game preserve image television consistently depicts of this continent. According to Arthur Schomburg a generation ago, there needs to be a re-opening of the African past. He claimed that the bigotry of civilization came from the "depreciation of Africa which has sprung up from the ignorance of her true role and position in human history and the early development of culture. The Negro has been a man without a history because he has been considered a man without a worthy culture."102

102 Schomburg, p. 237.
With the influence of the larger society's feminist movement much is being written of women's roles, "contributions," etc. A section on the black woman would add to an understanding of how she has perceived the race struggle and her own role as a female.

"The Arts" are to include music, writing, drama and the fine arts. Too long emphasis has been placed on a small percentage of talented blacks (primarily musicians playing commercial music). This would be an outlet for acknowledging the wealth existing in the creative fields.

The 1800's, another category of the game show, was a period of not only continued enslavement but also rebellion with three of the most well known revolts taking place in the first thirty years of that century. Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner led revolts that threatened the institution of slavery. It was also a period of emigration back to Africa, including the aid of Paul Cuffee. A concrete form of communication other than the grapevine was established with Freedom's Journal, the first black newspaper. There was a westward movement of Blacks, the Civil War, the ultimate emancipation of slaves and the beginning of elected black representation. These are just a few of the highlights of
of that period. 103

The twentieth century brought ideological controversy
from Booker T. Washington versus W. E. B. DuBois, the Marcus
Garvy brand of black nationalism, non-violent protest, the
call to black power. This period also encompasses growing
sophistication in the arts.

"Quotes" is included because it has been said, some-
times disparagingly, that blacks are full of rhetoric. Whether
this is true or not, the eloquence used in the struggle for
equality has been something that should be remembered just
as much as the rhetoric of Winston Churchill or John Kennedy.

Since there is so much that happens before the 1800's,
from the Portuguese enslaving the first Africans in the mid
1440's to black participation in the Revolutionary War and
the formation of the first black church, an additional sec-
tion entitled "Mixed Bag" would include this span of time.
It would also be a section that would extend the scope so
that the Caribbean experience could also be included.

Under the guise of entertainment, both these programs
seek to educate and re-define the historical perceptions of

103 Generalizations regarding the above historical
periods were abstracted from William Katz's Teacher's Guide
to American Negro History.
many who are unaware of blacks in-put in this country and the world in terms of cultural or social thought. By presenting history in this form, it is a step towards redressing and dispelling the negative stereotypes and images that media has projected toward blacks. (See Appendices C and D for treatment and scripts.)
CHAPTER V

PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM PROPOSAL

The needs of the community are designed to be addressed in television through public affairs programming. These programs are mandated by the Federal Communications Commission. "Many of the broadcast frequencies were allocated to locally based private licensees on the theory that such a system would best contribute to broadcast service attuned to local needs and interests and to the development of an informed electorate; public affairs programming would seem a key method of serving local needs and informing local citizens."104 The F.C.C. has defined such programming as "programs dealing with local, state, regional, national or international issues or problems including, but not limited to, talks, commentaries, discussions, speeches, editorials, political programs, documentaries, minidocumentaries, panels,

round-tables, vignettes, and extended coverage whether live or recorded of public events or proceedings, such as local council meetings, Congressional hearings and the like.\textsuperscript{105}

Broadcasts regarding issues of concern to the black community are a component of public affairs programming. Traditionally, due to low budgets and small production staffs the programs have not had the "look" of shows that are visual in presentation through extensive use of film or video. This program proposal seeks to rectify the dull step-child approach that has characterized public affairs shows on the local level.

By definition the central focus of community or public affairs programming is to address the needs, tastes and desires of the viewers it serves. Through the ascertainment process, television management has community leaders state to them what they view as the primary problems and concerns of the community. A subsequent listing is devised of the top ten community needs or problems that public affairs programming must address in its programming efforts.

Over the years the concerns of the Atlanta community have remained relatively constant. As of 1977 the ten major

\textsuperscript{105}Ibid.
problems as viewed by city leaders included:

1. Education
2. Unemployment
3. Taxes
4. Crime
5. Transportation
6. Urban Policy
7. Traffic
8. Economics
9. Health care
10. Environment

In a two year review of ascertainments gathered by WXIA-TV, other concerns that have been included in the quarterly reports included women, housing, senior citizens and race relations. Their absence in the current listing does not mean that they are no longer important. There appears to be a revolving cluster of concerns that must be addressed, including the above mentioned ones.

A "voiceless" segment of the Minneapolis-St. Paul population was studied by researchers Orville Walker and William Rudelius. They determined that racial minorities came under the heading of "past-out, future-out" groups because "they perceive that they are permanently removed from the mainstream of American life because of a lack of understanding or outright discrimination; consequently, their

106 As obtained from the Public File, WXIA-TV, 1611 West Peachtree St., N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30309.
primary desire is for broadcasting to communicate their side of the story . . . to point out positive values . . . to combat misconceptions and negative stereotypes that they feel radio and television has attached to them in the past.  

A specific type of program was desired by this group as a result of their previous broadcasting depictions. The recurrent suggestion was for a continuing series devoted to telling their perspective.

Equally important as knowing that such a program is desired by the projected group is some type of understanding of the psychological make-up of the audience. Using the intersection of data of fourteen studies, Bradley Greenberg and Brenda Dervin, authors of The Use of Mass Media by the Urban Poor, have drawn a psychological profile of the black low income city dweller. They determined that there were six key attitudes of that group. First was the sense of alienation, accompanied with a feeling that leaders were indifferent to their needs. This was coupled with a sense of an inability to control determining factors in their life. The authors state that "the poor lack the resources and knowledge that

would give them more control over their environment."\textsuperscript{108}

Secondly, there was a lack of belief in achievement. The poor perceived that there is an unbridgeable chasm between themselves and the rest of society. Thirdly, a low self-esteem characterized the urban poor with a subsequent use of fantasy to maintain illusions. Fourth, was an aspiration-expectation discrepancy, with expectations lower than aspirations. The authors also found, as a fifth factor, a present time orientation which made planning for the future unrewarding. Finally, the studies found there was a simplification of the experience world which was caused by limited association with life outside their community.

Even after recognition that poverty and the affects of discrimination leave a mark on personality development there is also a survival mechanism that occurs in which the "oppressed" often seems himself "differently than the oppressor" according to black sociologist Joyce Ladner. As a social scientist, she notes a trend in that body of research which characterizes blacks as "having a weak self-image, a lack of ego-strength; and a feeling of self hatred. . . . The traditional viewpoint has ignored the conception that

Afro-Americans regard themselves as highly resourceful people, not only capable of being acted upon, but also entirely qualified to create and shape the environment in which they live.109

This survival quality must be an integral part of the underlying foundation of the public affairs program. At the same time, one must also keep in mind the frustration level and its manifestations as blacks function in this society.

Since Atlanta is composed of a large percentage of the black urban poor, these psychological considerations must be taken into account. In addition to incorporating as topics the problems that continue to plague the black community as shown in the ascertainments, which also parallel those found by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in 1968, an effective and meaningful public affairs program must contend with not only social concerns but also positive psychological re-enforcement.

This thesis proposes a public affairs magazine format program that would encompass several topics in one show. In

keeping with the idea of a "magazine" format, regular titles would be used. The colloquial sub-headings would be graphically used over film segments and would capture the attention of the audience while substantively dealing with issues and services. The majority of features would utilize film for visual impact with hard-hitting controversial discussion often taped in the studio. The "packaging" of such a program would entice the viewer to look at a broadcast that traditionally receives low ratings. But the content would unequivocably address itself to the needs and interests of its black viewers.

The component, "On The Job" would feature occupations. It would serve as encouragement to job success as well as show the attitudinal orientation that is needed to cope with work. Many people involved with job placement of the hard core unemployed note the lack of role models who are gainfully employed as a big handicap. These role models featured in "On The Job" would show that work is not easy but a sense of self satisfaction can be derived. Professionals as well as "blue collar" jobs would be included. This particular feature would also help young people realize the vast kinds of jobs that exist as well as depict skill necessary for career preparation.
A retrospective look at a problem or issue would be treated under the heading of "Backtracking." This could include anything from traffic to crime. Such a feature holds institutions and/or individuals accountable to resolution of problems. Using file news footage as well as current film as an update would allow for a visual approach.

"Focus" would be an in-depth discussion. It's form could be that of interviews with black newsmakers, or non-blacks who are impacting upon the black community. It could also take the form of a mini-documentary. This segment is the one that tackles the most controversial issues of the time.

"Dealing with the System" would be a film feature designed to disseminate social service and government referral information, serving as an agent of where to go for needs. Again, this is the kind of topic that is flexible and could cover many issues from senior citizens to urban policy. Such a feature is vitally needed because "when asked to whom they go for information and help, low income respondents mention most frequently family, friends and neighbors . . . the professional outsider is rarely mentioned. . . . Several researchers suggest that much of the problem is lack of information . . . lack of familiarity and participation in
organizations means little understanding of bureaucracies. The poor often do not know that certain caretaking agencies exist and they have no means of getting the information that would lead them to these resources.  

"Your health" would be centered on health maintenance and disease prevention. The stress of daily life creates a need for a consciousness regarding the physical and mental self.

"What's Going On" would accommodate the announcements of activities that would primarily appeal to the black community. Such a segment would be a regular calendar of events, noting dates, times and places.

"Next Generation" would highlight youth in terms of recognizing personal achievements through talents. This component would also be a vehicle for young adults to discuss problems of concern to them.

A large black artistic community exists in Atlanta. Musicians are regularly featured but the visibility of those in the plastic arts such as sculptors and painters has been negligible. A regular feature "On the Arts" would give exposure to the talented artists who have created with little public recognition or acknowledgment.

110 Greenberg, p. 100.
As always there are items that cannot fit within the confines of a limited number of categories. A "By the Way" section would encompass those items.

A public affairs program of this type would be informative, and through its cultural aspect, "entertaining." Its primary purpose is to concretely and substantively address that which has persisted as constant problems and concerns of the Atlanta community, as well as combat the psychologically debilitating sense of frustration that generally characterize blacks, especially those of low income.

Psychiatrists William Grier and Price Cobbs have written in Black Rage that the black experience is unique from other ethnic groups that have undergone the process of Americanization. "Unlike those other groups it "began with slavery and the rupture of continuity and annihilation of the past. Even now each generation grows up alone. Many individual blacks feel a desperate aloneness not readily explained."\(^{111}\)

Through personalization of experiences, successes and failures, as well as insight for sources of assistance and critical appraisal of institutions, this public affairs program's intention is to build a sense of a social and cultural

\(^{111}\) Grier and Cobb, p. 22.
community erasing the feeling of alienation and frustration.

Historically black public affairs programs were born out of the turmoil of the civil rights struggle of the sixties. Bill Greaves, a pioneer in producing black programming of this genre, wrote that the anger of that period was not channeled into inter-communications.

The rage stems from the lack of a mass communication mechanism to adequately protest the outrages perpetrated against the black man in housing, employment, education, politics—in all those areas crucial to his existence. Most important, he doesn't gain from the one-eyed monster constructive information about himself and his people, information that will enable us to survive in a generally though often subtly, hostile white environment. We are prevented from communicating among ourselves over the airwaves, a privilege lavished on white America.112

Such a public affairs program as the one previously outlined would be a step in correcting some of the injustice that has been meted out to blacks, as well as other minorities in broadcasting. It would be a platform for the black "news-makers" who receive minimal visibility in news and it also confers status on the importance of the issues that the target community is perpetually facing. (See Appendix E for sample topics of features.)

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Television programming during the last few years has undergone a critical examination. The "Golden Years," as early broadcasting was labeled, have been found to be tarnished. Minority groups, from blacks to Mexican and Asian Americans, have protested racial stereotyping, slurs and the demeaning manner that is typical of ethnic portrayals. The next step after realization of the crucial problem of minorities being rendered invisible in terms of realistic portrayals, or their concerns not being acknowledged as viable issues, is the presentation of alternatives to existing programs.

This has been the purpose of this thesis. This writer has not found an empirical study that measures the affects of repeated viewing of blacks in programs that do not feature the reality of the black experience, from social concerns to achievement. But doubtless, the psychic affect of the current television viewers fare, which has been highly steeped in
stereotypes and buffoonery has to ultimately be devastating. With no other choice during prime viewing hours, an unequipped to refute the projected images, the vast majority of viewers are subtly brainwashed. As a consequence, polls such as the CBS survey easily find those who feel that black life has been meaningless in terms of adding to the cultural, social or moral fiber of this country and the world.

The broadcasting media has caught blacks in a quandary. It has neither highlighted achievements nor seriously probed the system that has made day to day life a series of insurmountable hurdles for many, during its prime viewing hours.

The programs outlined in this thesis have been intended as a multi-dimensional approach to the black experience, not the flat stereotype that deceives and distorts the meaning and reality of black life. Through programs targeting the cultural, historical and social concerns of the Atlanta black community and hence re-definition of the image conveyed, this thesis has been an attempt to couple both entertainment in addition to substantive information.

The film series attacks the underpinnings of racist stereotyping. By viewing films with black themes and discussion of the portrayal of images by the actors, writers
and directors themselves, the viewer can gain insight into separating truth from fantasy, stereotype from reality. This framework can then be applied to other forms of communication.

Through the historical game shows another aspect is added in the creation of a new video image for blacks. It is one of struggle, as well as accomplishment. William Katz admits that black history "provides a greater truth . . . of America. Part of our denial of justice to the Negro has been our consistent distortion of his positive role in our society."\(^{113}\) It has been said by many social scientists that without a sense of history there is no plan for the future. With programming designed to depict not only the "contributions" of blacks but also trends in social thought by historical periods this adds to a more wholistic view of blacks in this society.

The third in the triad is the public affairs program which focuses on the basic daily concerns confronting black Atlantans. Through a magazine format that personalizes experiences it will help generate a feeling of community. By showing where aid can be found it will be a step towards

\(^{113}\) Katz, p. 8.
solving social problems. In addition, highlighting the cultural aspect of the black experience in this city as well as nationally, provides a valid portrayal of life.

Paul Lazarfeld and Robert Merton note that the average consumer of mass media is narcotized by a flood of information.\(^\text{114}\) It is not the quantity, but the quality of the information that disturbs them.

To the extent that the media of mass communications have an influence upon their audiences, it has stemmed not only by what is said, but more significantly by what is not said. For these media not only continue to affirm the status quo but in the same measure, they fail to raise essential questions about the structure of society. Hence by leading towards conformism and by providing little basis for critical appraisal of society, the commercially sponsored mass media indirectly but effectively restrain the cogent development of a genuinely critical outlook.\(^\text{115}\)

When viewed from the black perspective this statement assumes near tragic implications. The status quo is not the same for minority groups, nor the poor. The prevalence of nonconsequential programming directed towards blacks has been virtually a diversionary tactic to minimize the magnitude of problems they face in society today.


\(^{115}\) Ibid., p. 567.
The stereotyping also re-inforces racist attitudes.

Ashley Montague explains that:

Man is a myth-making animal, and the myth-making faculty assists him to 'explain' whatever is in need of explanation. One of the functions of myth is to enable the individual to live comfortably with his beliefs in a fidelity so satisfyingly ritualistic that he eventually comes to identify his prejudices with the laws of nature or the canons of received religion. It is at this juncture that television can enter as the creative solvent and educate by re-educating.\textsuperscript{116}

The history of blacks in television has been largely one of neglect and distortion. The future, with the increasing importance of the electronic media cannot be a repetition of the past. The up-coming years must be ones of re-education and re-definition.

\textsuperscript{116}Montague, p. 130.
APPENDIX A

Graph showing comparison of black theme situation comedies versus locally produced public affairs programs based on data from the Nielsen Station Index, The Black American Market in Atlanta.
Syndicated Black Situation Comedy Ratings as Compared to Local Black Public Affairs Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanford and Son</th>
<th>Good Times</th>
<th>The Jefferson's</th>
<th>That's My Mama</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Ebony Beat Journal</th>
<th>Crossroads</th>
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</table>
APPENDIX B

Program treatment for film series and follow-up program for a 26 week season.
PROGRAM TREATMENT SHEET

SUBJECT: Blacks in film; a half hour follow-up of feature film

PREMISE: This would be a forum for the black actor/writer/director involved in major motion pictures. Through the process of discussion they would analyze this medium of expression up to very recent films.

FILM: Use of clips of the guests work

GRAPHICS: Opening animation for program

SLIDES: None

PERSONS INTERVIEWED: Black actors, directors, producers (See following 26 week proposal)

SPECIAL EFFECTS: None

GUESTS ON CAMERA: See proposal

RESOURCES: Schomburg Collection, Film Libraries, Company Archives, film critics (Donald Bogle, James Murray, Lindsay Patterson), periodicals (Ebony, New York Times, Variety)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Film Feature</th>
<th>Guest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Week 1 | Birth of a Nation         | Donald Bogle: author *  
Toms, Coons, Mulattoes,  
Mammies and Bucks  
James Murray, critic, *  
topic: stereotypes     |
| Week 2 | Oscar Micheaux films      | Lindsay Patterson, author   
Black Films and Filmmakers  
topic: early black films |
| Week 3 | Emperor Jones             | Paul Robeson Jr.  
Dorothy Gilliam, author *|
| Week 4 | Carmen Jones              | Lena Horne  
topic: acting career |
| Week 5 | The Edge of the City      | Donald Bogle,  
Gary Null, author Black Hollywood  
topic: changing trend of the 1950's |
| Week 6 | Raisin in the Sun         | Sidney Poitier *  
topic: acting career |
| Week 7 | Nothing but a Man         | Ivan Dixon * and Abby Lincoln  
topic: acting career |
| Week 8 | The Learning Tree         | Gordon Parks *  
topic: directing |
| Week 9 | The Great White Hope      | James Earle Jones *  
topic: acting career |
| Week 10| Cotton Comes to Harlem    | Ossie Davis *  
topic: directing |
| Week 11| Sweet Sweet Back's        | Melvin Van Peebles *  
topic: film career |
|        | Bad Assss Song             |                                                                      |
| Week 12| Superfly                  | Ron O'Neal  
topic: Superfly stereotype |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Film Feature</th>
<th>Guest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>The Spook who Sat by the Door</td>
<td>Ivan Dixon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: the craft of directing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Buck and the Preacher</td>
<td>Harry Belafonte/Bill Cosby *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Georgia, Georgia</td>
<td>Maya Angelou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: black women writers/directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
<td>Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman</td>
<td>Ernest Gaines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 17</td>
<td>Sounder</td>
<td>Cicely Tyson *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 18</td>
<td>Lady Sings the Blues</td>
<td>Diana Ross</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 19</td>
<td>Claudine</td>
<td>Diahnn Carroll *</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 20</td>
<td>Cooley High</td>
<td>Michael Shultz *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: directing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glen Thurman *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 21</td>
<td>Cornbread Earl and Me</td>
<td>Ronald Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kevin Hooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: young actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 22</td>
<td>Scott Joplin</td>
<td>Billy Dee Williams *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 23</td>
<td>Blue Collar</td>
<td>Richard Pryor *</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 24</td>
<td>The Harder they Come</td>
<td>Jimmy Cliff</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: Caribbean film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Film Feature</td>
<td>Guest</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 25</td>
<td>Bush Mama</td>
<td>Haile Gerima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>topic: African film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 26</td>
<td>Montage of clips</td>
<td>Discussion by critics;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentary style</td>
<td>future; critics alienation from mass tastes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>incorporating interviews with all of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>previous actors/writers/directors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates persons who have come to Atlanta in the past year for promotional reasons or for actual filming.*
APPENDIX C

Program treatment for history series. Sample script included.
SUBJECT: Black History

PREMISE: To bring history to the average person

FILM: Man on the Street interviews; approximately 400 feet per show (10 minutes)

GRAPHICS: Slides for each historical figure, et. Art work if no pictures are available

SLIDES: To be used to identify each answer specifically

PERSONS INTERVIEWED: Random people at various Atlanta locations; should include all age ranges

SPECIAL EFFECTS: Monitor on set

GUESTS ON CAMERA: No guests needed on set

SET DESIGN: Host sitting on high director's chair; monitor beside him/her

RESOURCES: Atlanta University Library, Special Collection
Atlanta City Library, Williams Collection
history texts
records
High Museum of Art and special private collections
Martin Luther King Archives
Just Us Actors
Spelman–Morehouse Players
Institute of the Black World
The following is a sample script of questions and responses for a history program, utilizing film and the explanations by the host on set.

**VIDEO**

Film question:
Who was Crispus Attucks?
response

Host on camera

Slide of Crispus Attucks on monitor

**AUDIO**

Boston, March of 1770 was full of British soldiers. The whole town felt it was in a state of siege. A group led by Crispus Attucks, a 47 year old seaman, who once had been a runaway slave, rushed into the streets to attack the main guard. They were fired upon. Attucks was the first to fall. It was five more years before the Revolutionary War was declared.

Film question:
Who was Nat Turner?
response

Host on camera

Slide on Nat Turner on monitor

There were many people who rebelled against the shackles of slavery. Some by attempting to escape and others by planning
Film Question:  
Who was Harriet Tubman? 
response

Host on camera
Slide of Harriet Tubman on monitor

88

full fledged revolts, such as

Denmark Vesey and Gabriel Prosser.

Nat Turner and his followers in

1831 killed many slave owners

and their families but they were

eventually caught by state and

federal troops. Despite the re-
talating restrictions placed on

slaves, uprisings continued

throughout Alabama, Louisiana

and Mississippi.

Harriet Tubman was known as a

Moses of her people because she

made around 20 trips to the South
during the mid-1800's bringing

over 300 slaves through the

Underground Railroad. If some

wanted to turn back she'd point

her gun at them and say "you'll

be free or die."

Film question:  
Who was Frederick Douglass? 
response
Frederick Douglass was a fugitive slave. In 1841 he attended an anti-slavery convention in Massachusetts. After speaking of his experiences there he became a well-known abolitionist. Douglass was President of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. He started the North Star newspaper, was active in the Underground Railroad and was an advisor to President Lincoln. After the Civil War he served as Minister to Haiti.

Booker T. Washington was a strong believer in industrial education. He saw it as a vital step to entering what he called the all powerful business and commercial world. Beginning in 1881, 31 students literally built their own college--from making the
Film question: Who was W. E. B. DuBois?
response

Host on camera
Slide of W. E. B. DuBois on monitor

W. E. B. DuBois was a brilliant historian. He even lived in our city, teaching at Atlanta University. In 1909 he was part of the group that formed the NAACP. He opposed Booker T. Washington's emphasis on vocational education. He called for a Pan African conference to establish ties on the continent. After 70 years of crusading for civil rights, DuBois renounced his citizenship and moved to Ghana.

Film question: Who was Marcus Garvey?
response

Host on camera
Slide of Marcus Garvey on monitor

A Jamaican, Marcus Garvey exalted our African past. In the United States he founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association.
His Back to Africa Movement had a following of at least half a million members. He bought a fleet of ships called the Black Star Line but even before the first ship could sail he was imprisoned in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary, accused of using the mails to defraud. He was pardoned by President Coolidge and deported to Jamaica. He died in 1940 never having stepped on African soil.

Wheel about and turn about and do just so and ebery time I wheel about I jump Jim Crow. Supposedly a slave boy danced and sang that tune on a street corner when a traveling actor-singer, Daddy Rice saw him. By adopting this tune, and blackening...
his face and dressing in rags, Rice became one of the first minstrel men. Around 1875 Jim Crow became the term used for the harsh segregation that ranged from racial separation at water fountains and rest rooms, schools, theaters, hotels and restaurants. Upheld by the Supreme Court the separate but equal doctrine lasted for nearly 100 years and was the basis for the civil rights movement of the sixties.

Film question:
Who was Langston Hughes?
response

Host on camera

Slide of Langston Hughes on monitor

Langston Hughes wrote his first story as a high school assignment in Cleveland. He worked as a seaman and travelled all over the world. He wrote stories about his travels, as well as poetry. He was part of the creative surge known as the
Harlem Renaissance during the 1920's. Without a doubt Langston Hughes is a giant in the American literary world.

Film question: Who is Rosa Parks?
Response

Host on camera
Slide of Rosa Parks on monitor

Martin Luther King described Rosa Parks as "the great fuse that led to the modern stride toward freedom." She was a seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama. One day in 1955 she refused to give up her seat to a white passenger. She was arrested but that sparked a year-long boycott of public transportation and the people of Montgomery eventually succeeded in desegregating its city buses. From that year-long struggle, a young minister by the name of Martin Luther King, emerged as a leader that would eventually be known throughout the world.
Film question: Who was Malcom X
response
Host on camera With slide of Malcom X

Malcom Little was in prison when he heard of the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. He joined and rapidly became a leading spokesman. He spoke out against the total reliance of non-violence of the movement at that time. Malcom X was ousted from the Nation in 1964 and was forming the Organization of Afro-American Unity. He was assassinated in 1965.
APPENDIX D

Program treatment for history quiz show.
Sample category questions included.
PROGRAM TREATMENT SHEET

SUBJECT: Black history

PREMISE: a more formal quiz program with a game show format to give historical information regarding blacks

FILM: None

GRAPHICS: Spinning wheel on set with subject divisions. Map of Africa with removable pieces

SLIDES: Used occasionally for identification purposes

PERSONS INTERVIEWED: None

SPECIAL EFFECTS: Buzzing device for each panelist. The first person who presses it must be able to cancel out the other two.

GUESTS ON CAMERA: 3 contestants on set

SET DESIGN: One host standing behind podium with spinning wheel by his/her side. Backdrop should have flashing light effect. Each contestant with their own desk and chair with their first name prominently visible. The name of the program can be on the backdrop behind them. Display area needed for prizes given to winner.

RESOURCES: Informational: Atlanta University Library, Special Collection
Atlanta City Library, Williams Collection
history texts
records
art collections
Martin Luther King Archives

Merchandise:
Black-owned clothing stores, furniture stores, car dealerships
beauty salons
travel agencies
The following is a sample script of questions and responses for the game show regarding black history. The set includes a wheel that contestants spin. It is divided into seven portions. The player must answer correctly when asked a question on each particular category. Categories include: Africa, Women, the Arts, 1800's, 1900's--Twentieth century, Quotes, and Mixed Bag. Each category should have at least ten prepared questions.

AFRICA QUESTIONS:

1. During the 1930's Leopold Senghor, Leon Damas and Aime Cesaire were the people associated with a movement formed in response to a feeling of alienation from French colonizers. It affirmed African culture and race pride. What was the name of this movement?
   NEGRITUDE

2. What were the names of the three powerful states in West Africa beginning before the fourth century known for political organization and extensive commerce?
   GHANA, MALI, SONGHAY

3. Who was recognized as an early African military genius?
   CHAKA ZULU

4. What was the name of the learning center in West Africa?
   TIMBUKTU
5. The struggle for independence in Kenya was waged by what group in the 1940's?
MAU MAU

6. Use map of Africa. What is the name of the country that is missing on this map?
USE REMOVABLE PIECES

7. What is the name freedom fighters use to refer to South Africa?
ZIMBABWE

8. What country became the home of black Americans who returned to Africa during the 1820's and '30's? through colonization societies?
LIBERIA

9. In the past few years after prolonged guerilla fighting what two former Portuguese colonies received self determination?
ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE

10. What country is a large producer of low sulphur oil?
NIGERIA
QUOTES:
1. Who said "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line"?
W.E.B. DuBOIS
2. What educator urged blacks to "cast down buckets where you are"?
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
3. What abolitionist said "if there is no struggle there is no progress"?
FREDERICK DOUGLASS
4. Who said that the choice of the '60's was between "the ballot and the bullet"?
MALCOLM X
5. What woman, speaking before a group of abolitionists concerned also with sex discrimination, bared her breast and asked "ain't I a woman"?
SOJOURNER TRUTH
6. Who wrote an appeal to his brothers in slavery to resist bondage, writing that "America is more our country than it is whites--we have enriched it with our blood and tears."?
DAVID WALKER
7. What major leader of the Back to Africa movement exhorted--"Wake Up Ethiopia! Wake up Africa! Let us work toward the
one glorious end of a free, redeemed and mighty nation. Let Africa be a bright star among the constellation of nations."?

MARCUS GARVEY

8. Who is the person who said during the Watergate hearings that their faith in the Constitution of the United States was "whole and complete."?

BARBARA JORDAN

9. "Life Every Voice and Sing till heaven and earth ring" are the opening lines to what has been called the Negro National Anthem. What early civil rights figure wrote the song?

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

10. What movement leader said that he had "been to the mountain top" as he described his vision of a new society?

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
WOMEN:

1. Who made her fortune in the beauty industry and became a patron of the arts?
   MME. C. J. WALKER

2. Who was an educator and confidant to President Roosevelt and his wife?
   MARY McLEOD BETHUNE

3. What's the name of the former Mississippi sharecropper who led a delegation from her state to the Democratic National Convention to gain voting rights for blacks?
   FANNIE LOU HAMER

4. Who is said to be the first black woman poet in America?
   PHYLISS WHEATLEY

5. What's the name of the Alabama seamstress who through her refusal to give up a seat on a bus started the Montgomery bus boycott?
   ROSA PARKS

6. What's the name of the female anthropologist who wrote about black folklore as well as fiction. One of her novels was Their Eyes were Watching God?
   ZORA NEAL HURSTON

7. Who was the philosophy teacher who due to her relationship with some California activists went underground for two years
later was caught and served a prison term?

ANGELA DAVIS

8. Who is a former ambassador and the first black woman to serve on a Presidential cabinet?

PATRICIA HARRIS

9. What black female poet won a Pulitzer prize?

GWENDOLYN BROOKS

10. What black Congresswoman ran for President of the United States in 1972?

SHIRLEY CHISOLM
MIXED BAG:

1. Name the Caribbean leader who fought Napoleon's forces for the freedom of his country?
TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE OF HAITI

2. Who is the doctor who discovered blood plasma?
DR. CHARLES DREW

3. Who was a black explorer who opened up New Mexico in the early 1500's?
ESTEVANICO

4. Who is the first black Supreme Court Justice?
THURGOOD MARSHALL

5. Who was the King of ragtime and wrote Treemonisha--the first black opera?
SCOTT JOPLIN

6. Who wrote an almanac and was an amateur astronomer, plus helped layout plans for Washington, D.C.?
BENJAMIN BANNEKER

7. Who has been given the title "Empress of the Blues"?
BESSIE SMITH

8. He was an actor, opera singer, all star athlete and intellectual who wrote the book On This I Stand. Who was he?
PAUL ROBESON
9. Who was the first black to have his own television program?
NAT KING COLE

10. Who was significant for union organizing by founding the predominantly black Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids in 1925?
A. PHILLIP RANDOLPH
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1800's:

1. The official closing of the African slave trade took place in what year—1808, 1810 or 1212?

1808, ALTHOUGH SMUGGLING TOOK PLACE

2. Many slave revolts occurred. What's the name of the free black carpenter who planned an uprising in 1822 in South Carolina that led to stricter laws?

DENMARK VESEY

3. Many slaves escaped forming fugitive slave communities in forests and mountains and swamps. What did they call themselves?

MAROONS

4. The first black newspaper was started in 1827 by Samuel Cornish and John Russworm. What was its name?

FREEDOM'S JOURNAL

5. During the 1800's slaves escaped by the Underground Railroad. One famous escape was a stowaway shipped in a carton for 26 hours—from Richmond to Philadelphia. Who was he?

HENRY "BOX" BROWN

6. Who was the subject of a court case that ruled that a slave was not a citizen and could therefore not bring suit in the courts?

DRED SCOTT
7. What's the significance of January 1, 1863?

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

8. Identify the person who served Louisiana as acting governor in 1873, was elected to the Senate but denied his seat?

P.B.S. PINCHBACK

9. In 1890, as part of the self-help movement, The Afro-American League was founded. Its purpose was to fight all forms of segregation and discrimination. Who was its leader?

THOMAS FORTUNE

10. Booker T. Washington after attending Hampton Institute went to Alabama and founded what vocational school?

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE
ARTS:

1. The Escape or A Leap to Freedom appeared in 1858, written by William Wells Brown. What was its significance?

FIRST KNOWN BLACK PLAY

2. Who was the early black poet dubbed "the poet laureate of the Negro race"?

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

3. As a response to the riots and violence of the early 1900's who was the poet who urged that "If we must die, let it not be like hogs" but "like men we'll face the murderous cowardly pack, pressed to the wall, dying but fighting back!"

CLAUDE McKay

4. Eubie Blake and Nobel Sissle wrote and produced what early musical review?

SHUFFLE ALONG

5. Who was the early artist who received recognition for his predominantly religious paintings in Europe?

HENRY OSSAWA TANNER

6. What musician was nicknamed Yard Bird?

CHARLIE PARKER

7. Who was recognized as a leading black pioneer in the film industry starting in the early 1900's?
8. Who wrote *The Autobiography of Malcom X* as well as a popular book tracing his ancestry back to Africa?
ALEX HALEY

9. What nationally recognized black artist was commissioned to design an Urban Wall (or mural) in Atlanta?
ROMARE BEARDEN

10. Who wrote this song: (MUSIC IDENTIFICATION CAN BE USED FOR SEVERAL QUESTIONS), e.g. Satin Doll
DUKE ELLINGTON
1900's--TWENTIETH CENTURY:

1. The Niagra Movement was the seed for what organization?
   THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

2. What was the name of the organization founded by Jamaican Marcus Garvey?
   UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

3. The early 1900's period of creativity in the arts was known as what?
   HARLEM RENAISSANCE

4. In 1961 the Congress of Racial Equality sent a group of people south to test segregation laws and practices in interstate transportation. What were they called?
   FREEDOM FIGHTERS

5. A leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee was denied his elected seat in the Georgia legislature due to his stand against the Viet Nam War. Who was he?
   JULIAN BOND

6. What's the name of the organization which sought to unseat the Mississippi delegation at the 1964 Democratic National Convention?
   MISSISSIPPI DEMOCRATIC FREEDOM PARTY

7. What year was the Supreme Court decision Brown vs. Board of Education which prohibited segregated schools?
1954

8. What was the first organization banding together ministers in the south to combat segregation in the early '60's"?

SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

9. What California based organization in the late '60's advocated self defense?

BLACK PANTHERS

10. Andrew Young is now the U. S. Ambassador to the United Nations but who served in the U. N. as Deputy Secretary General in the 1950's?

RALPH BUNCHE
APPENDIX E

Treatment for a public affairs program. Topic areas included.
SUBJECT: National and Local Concerns of the Black Community

PREMISE: Through short features many issues can be presented in a semi-news style

FILM: For many designated regular features

GRAPHICS: Dependent on feature treatment (e.g. graph showing rate of teenage unemployment in Atlanta).

SLIDES: Used occasionally

PERSONS INTERVIEWED: Newsmakers, community leaders, "ordinary" people

GUESTS ON CAMERA: For Focus feature

SET DESIGN: Comfortable conversational area for Focus section

RESOURCES: See each topic for suggested resources
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PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

SAMPLE TOPICS
and
RESOURCES

FOCUS
1. Welfare reform
2. Public Safety Dept. hiring dilemma
3. Analysis of black political power in Atlanta
4. Unions versus city government--A.F.S.M.E. national media campaign
5. Discipline problems in Atlanta public schools
6. Urban Crisis Center's approach to racism
7. Public housing dispersal
9. Affirmative action
10. Unemployment in Atlanta

BACKTRACKING
1. Alleged embezzler and former city alderman Joel Stokes; his current activities for juvenile crime prevention
2. Anti-MARTA community group IMPACT
3. Former singer with Gladys Knight - profile
4. Dr. Walker Moore; accused of medicaide fraud while running for elective office
5. Columbia high school and their racial disturbance; update from incident two years ago.
6. Affect of methadone treatment programs

7. Study by Metro Atlanta Crime Commission regarding judges sentencing practices

8. Teacher paralyzed after gunshot in a student disturbance

9. Equifax opening of films

10. Status of Grady Hospital finances

RESOURCES: file film; newspapers

ON THE JOB

1. Pilot

2. Teacher of the handicapped

3. Emergency health paraprofessional

4. Car plant worker

5. Telephone lineman

6. Independent business person

7. Researcher at Center for Disease Control

8. Writer

9. Midwife

10. Computer programmer

RESOURCES: Professional organizations, business personnel departments

GOOD HEALTH

1. High blood pressure clinic

2. Nutritionist regarding harmful affects of sugar
3. Chiropractor
4. Podiatrist regarding foot care
5. Diet fads
6. Dental care
7. Investigation of Georgia Baptist Hospital regarding high rate of hysterectomies
8. Free or low cost mental health facilities
9. Pre-natal care
10. Who and what is available with the Fulton County Health Department

RESOURCES: Atlanta Chapter National Medical Association
             Fulton County Health Department
             Grady Hospital
             Health organization (e.g. Cancer Association)

WHAT'S GOING ON

A CALENDAR OF EVENTS

RESOURCES: Community organizations sending information regarding upcoming events

THE ARTS

1. Music groups
2. Theater companies, "Just Us," "Proposition"
3. John Riddle - painter; sculptor
4. Bud Smith - commercial photographer
5. Kenneth Dunkley - holograms
6. Dan Danner - sculptor; gallery owner
7. Lev Mills - printmaker
8. Black art collectors
9. Clothes designer Patrick Kelley
10. Ashanti-Muralist

RESOURCES: Atlanta Art Workers Coalition
            Neighborhood Arts Center
            Bureau for Cultural and International Affairs

NEXT GENERATION

1. Hospital volunteer
2. Teenage pilots (Atlanta Negro Airman Flyers Club)
3. Vocational careers at Carver High School
4. Discussion by students at Project Propinquity (designed for drop-outs)
5. Teenage pregnancy
6. Drugs and youth
7. N.A.A.C.P. Youth Council
8. Thomasville Soul Patrol
9. Unemployed teens
10. Mod Squad - high school anti-crime group

RESOURCES: Youth organizations
            Metro Boards of Education
            Purple Cow - metro teen paper
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