

ESCAPE TO THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP | 12PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel

In the 1800s, southern newspapers ran ads seeking runaway slaves suspected of taking refuge in a vast wetland called the Great Dismal Swamp. For decades, scholars have sought proof that the reports were true, and now they finally have it. See how a team of archaeologists is using new discoveries and modern dating methods to piece together this lost part of American history. Then discover what life was like for these brave men and women, who chose to suffer in the swamp and keep their freedom rather than live under the conditions of slavery.

CIVIL WAR 360: FIGHT FOR FREEDOM | 1PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel

A century and a half ago, North battled South in a conflict that would kill more Americans than any other war. The outcome would change our nation forever, and no one had more to gain, or to lose, than enslaved Americans. Join actor Dennis Haysbert as he looks at their struggles through the objects in the Smithsonian's collection. From a bloodstained map to the inkwell Lincoln used to write the Emancipation Proclamation, these artifacts transport us to a brutal and complicated time when our country tore itself apart.

LEGEND OF LEAD BELLY | 2PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel

Huddie Ledbetter was born into poverty, battled racism, and did time, but in spite of his early hardships, or perhaps because of them, he became one of the great musicians of the 20th century. We trace the life and career of Lead Belly, a man praised by critics and revered by artists, whose unique music crossed a host of genres and influenced countless industry legends, from The Beatles to Led Zeppelin to Nirvana and beyond. See how his talent, humanity, and determination defeated all that stood in his way to make his voice heard, then and now.

THE GREEN BOOK: GUIDE TO FREEDOM | 3PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel and YouTube Playlist

In the 1930s, a black postal carrier from Harlem named Victor Green published a book that was part travel guide and part survival guide. It was called The Negro Motorist Green Book, and it helped African-Americans navigate safe passage across America well into the 1960s. Explore some of the segregated nation's safe havens and notorious "sundown towns" and witness stories of struggle and indignity as well as opportunity and triumph.

BREATH OF FREEDOM | 4PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel and YouTube Playlist

They fought to liberate Germany from Nazi rule, as racism reached unfathomable levels. Their fight would continue back home on American soil. This is the story of the one-million-plus African Americans who fought in World War II. Discover their encounters with hatred, from the enemy and from within their own ranks. Explore this paradoxical chapter in American history through interviews with war heroes, including Colin Powell, Tuskegee ace pilot Roscoe Brown, and Charles Evers, brother of Civil Rights activist and WWII veteran Medgar Evers.

MAJOR LEAGUE LEGENDS: HANK AARON | 5PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel

Henry "Hank" Aaron didn't aim to become Major League Baseball's home run king, nor did he intend to grow into a Civil Rights icon. But because of his remarkable strength, both in power and in character, he became both. This is the story of Hammerin' Hank, a victim of discrimination and bigotry his whole life, from his Alabama upbringing through his days in the Negro League and notably during his quest to capture Babe Ruth's home run crown. Through it all, he stayed focused, stood up to every challenge, and 755 big swings later, became a legend.

SEIZING JUSTICE: THE GREENSBORO 4 | 6PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel and YouTube Playlist

In February of 1960, a simple coffee order at America's favorite five-and-dime store sparked a series of events that would help put an end to segregation in the United States. Join us as we detail the extraordinary story of otherwise ordinary young men, four African-American college students whose nonviolent sit-in at a Woolworth's lunch counter started a revolution.

THE LOST TAPES: MALCOLM X | 7PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel and YouTube Playlist

In 1959, a 33-year-old minister from the Nation of Islam gains notoriety with his fiery rhetoric and keen intellect. His name is Malcolm X and over the next five years, this influential yet highly controversial Civil Rights leader will become an ideological hero to some and a dangerous enemy to others. Presented entirely through his speeches, newscasts, and rarely seen archival footage, The Lost Tapes: Malcolm X tells the story of the man who, by any means necessary, willingly put his life at risk to bring change and equality to black America.

MLK: THE ASSASSINATION TAPES | 8PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel and YouTube Playlist

April 4, 1968. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is gunned down on the balcony of a hotel in Memphis, Tennessee. It was all caught on film, tape and audio. So why have we seen so little of it? The well-known photograph of Dr. King's aides pointing toward the direction of the gunfire is iconic, but tells only part of the story. For the first time, a remarkable collection of recently rediscovered footage has been chronologically reassembled. The resulting documentary allows us to revisit the tumultuous events surrounding one of the most shocking assassinations in America and relive history through the voices of the era.

BLACK WINGS | 9PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel

For early aviators, conquering the forces of gravity was a daunting challenge. But black aviators had an additional challenge - conquering the forces of racism. Meet the men and women who took to the skies throughout the 20th century, proving to a segregated nation that skin color doesn't determine skill level. From biplanes to commercial jets, and from barnstormers to war fighters, meet the path-breaking pilots who opened the skies for all - and contributed in countless ways to the development of aviation.

BLACK IN SPACE: BREAKING THE COLOR BARRIER | 10PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel

America's experiences during the Civil Rights Movement and the Space Race are well documented. However, few know about the moment these two worlds collided, when the White House and NASA scrambled to put the first black astronaut into orbit. This is the untold story of the decades-long battle between the U.S. and the Soviet Union to be the first superpower to bring diversity to the skies, told by the black astronauts and their families, who were part of this little-known chapter of the Cold War.

THE OBAMA YEARS: THE POWER OF WORDS | 11PM ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel

Barack Obama launched into our national consciousness at the 2004 Democratic National Convention and ever since, he's delivered messages of patriotism, unity, and hope through the power of words. But of all the speeches he's given, six in particular may define his legacy as, in historian Doris Kearns Goodwin's words, "one of the best writers and orators in the presidency." Interviews with eminent historians and key figures in his writing process give rare insights into these iconic speeches, as well as the Obama presidency and the man himself.