

The William Miles Collection

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Last updated: 2013

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The filmmaker passed away at age 82 in Queens, New York on May 12, 2013. The collection contains the materials used to create his film projects (production materials, oral history interviews, stock footage, photos, and manuscript materials). Mr. Miles' film topics explored African Americans' contributions in the military, sports, space exploration, Harlem, and the nineteenth century American West. This rich collection houses many untold stories and new voices waiting to be brought to life by researchers and students.

U.S. House Representative, the Hon. Charles B. Rangel of New York, closed his November 29, 2012 remarks honoring Mr. Miles with these words, "... a titan of a man who has documented the history and contributions of African-Americans and the black American experience with film, camera and a lens."

The Film and Media Archive annually awards "The William Miles Prize" to an undergraduate research paper or other serious research project (e.g., a student film or multimedia website) that makes significant use of rare and unique materials from the Film and Media Archive. See the [Film and Media Archive Libguide](#) for more information.

For additional information on the filmmaker, his films, or the collection see the Washington University Film and Media Archive [William Miles Collection page](#).

Films by William Miles

Men of Bronze (1977)

Call Number: Olin Checkout Desk (DVD) D570.33 369th .M53 1996

Summary: "This film tells the little-known story of the African American soldiers of the 369th combat regiment, New York, who fought with the French army in World War I. Despite facing violent racism from other American soldiers and being relegated to menial duties by the U. S. command, the 369th chose to fight alongside French, Moroccan and Senegalese soldiers in some of the fiercest battles of the last year of the war. At war's end, the entire regiment received high military honors from the French government."

I Remember Harlem (1981)

Call Number: Olin Checkout Desk (DVD) F128.68.H3 I3 2003

Summary: "Traces the rise, decline, and regeneration of America's largest Black community over three centuries." It includes an interview with author, playwright, and activist, James Baldwin.

The Different Drummer: Blacks in the Military (1983)

Summary: "...concentrate[s] on African-American soldiers in recent decades."

Black Champions (1986)

Summary: "A three-part program on the historic achievements by black athletes in America."

Black Stars in Orbit (1990)

Summary: "A documentary that profiles black astronauts and the contributions of African-Americans who worked behind the scenes in the NASA Space Program."

Liberators: Fighting on Two Fronts in World War II (1992) Olin Checkout Desk (DVD)

Call Number; D769.306 761st .L52 2006

Summary: "Tells the unknown story of African-American battalions, focusing on the heroic actions of the 761st, which spearheaded General Patton's Third Army and helped liberate the concentration camps at Buchenwald, Dachau and Lambach."

The Untold West: The Black West (1993)

Call number: Film Archive Videocassette F596.2 .U54 1994 cassettes 1-3 LIB USE ONLY

Summary: "An episode of the TBS series, The Untold West, African Americans in the U.S. west in the late nineteenth century."

Co-Producer

James Baldwin: The Price of a Ticket (1989)

Call Number: Olin Level B Videocassettes PS3503.A5525 Z733 1989

Summary: "Opening with the funeral of James Baldwin, this film traces the life history and accomplishments of this great black writer. Includes interviews with friends and colleagues, including Maya Angelou, Amiri Baraka, his brother David, and his mother Berdis." Originally broadcast as a 1989 as an episode of PBS's American Masters series.

Additional Information

Baker, Mark Frederick, and Houston A., Jr. Baker. "Uptown Where We Belong: Space, Captivity, And The Documentary Of Black Community." *Struggles for Representation: African American Documentary Film and Video*. 211-249. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1999. *MLA International Bibliography*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 24, 2013).

The Blackpast.org: An Online Reference Guide to African American History

<http://www.blackpast.org>

Calvert, Pamela. "Liberators: Documentary And The Construction Of Public History." *Film & History* (03603695) 25.1/2 (1995): 24-32. *America: History & Life*. EBSCOhost (accessed May 24, 2013).

Abstract: "Reviewed: Liberators: Fighting on Two Fronts in World War II. Miles, William and Rosenblum, Nina, prod."

Dewitt, K. "Memory of Harlem + Miles, William." *American Film*. Volume: 4 Issue: 2 (1978):18-27.

Documentary Filmmaker, William Miles, Dies at 82 by BFC/A The Black Film Center/Archive at Indiana University, May 21, 2013.

<http://blackfilmcenterarchive.wordpress.com/2013/05/21/doc-filmmaker-william-miles-dies-at-82>

Film Maker William Miles, 1931-2013. The Film & Media Archive at Washington University in St. Louis, [Out of the Archive]

<http://wufilmarchive.wordpress.com/2013/05/17/filmmaker-william-miles-1931-2013>

Honoring Harlem's Historian and Black Filmmaker William "Bill" Miles — (Extensions of Remarks – November 29, 2012), [page: e1837]

Speech of Hon. Charles B. Rangel of New York in the House of Representatives Thursday, November 29, 2012 <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?r112:E29NO2-0021:/>

An Interview with Bill Miles. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; interviewed by James Briggs Murray]; [videorecording]. Year: 1986

Note: Taped at Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York.

Description: 6 videocassettes of 6 (U-matic) (186 min.) sd., col. 3/4 in.

Abstract: Bill Miles talks about growing up in Harlem and his career as a filmmaker.

Keilbach, Judith. "Opfer, Weltkrieg, LIBERATORS: Holocaust Und 2. Weltkrieg Im Deutschen Und Amerikanischen Fernsehen." ["Victims, World War II, Liberators: Holocaust and the 2nd World War in the German and American television"] *Frauen Und Film* 61. (2000): 145-155. MLA International Bibliography. EBSCOhost (accessed May 24, 2013).

Klotman, Phyllis, and Janet Cutler. "Interviews With Filmmakers." *Struggles for Representation: African American Documentary Film and Video*. 329-393. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1999. MLA International Bibliography. EBSCOhost (accessed May 24, 2013).

Klotman, Phyllis R. "Military Rites And Wrongs." *Struggles for Representation: African American Documentary Film and Video*. 34-70. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1999. MLA International Bibliography. EBSCOhost (accessed May 24, 2013).

Mourning the Death of Harlem, New York, Native William Miles, Noted Historian and Legendary Filmmaker. J2031-2013. New York State Senate – Legislative Resolution

Sponsor: Perkins, Committee: Finance

May 21, 2013: Referred to Finance; May 23, 2013: Adopted, Reported To Calendar for Consideration <http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/J2031-2013>.

Myers, Walter Dean and Bill [William] Miles. *The Harlem Hellfighters: When Pride Met Courage*. New York: HarperCollins Pub., 2006.

"A history of Harlem's all-black regiment and its exploits in France during the Great War is marred by uneven storytelling and inadequate documentation. Myers and Miles take their time with setup, providing histories of both African-Americans in combat and the conditions in Europe that led to the outbreak of WWI. Even when they reach the formation of the 15th New York National Guard, they back and fill in a dedication to exposition that leaves the reader wondering what the story is. The mobilization of the 15th-now the 369th-Infantry in France is similarly plagued with narrative snags, only occasionally offering up stories of bravery in combat that illustrate the courage of these men who fought to "make the world safe for democracy," even as they lived in most undemocratic conditions. These anecdotes, and the quotations from soldiers and their families, are shockingly poorly sourced, with neither textual references nor chapter notes to complement the brief bibliography. The whole reads like a second draft, with clunky transitions and a diffusion of focus that drag down what could have been an enormously inspiring tale. (Nonfiction. 9-12)" (Kirkus Reviews)

Price, Clement Alexander. "Black Soldiers In Two World Wars: "Men Of Bronze" (1980) And "Liberators" (1992)." *Historical Journal Of Film, Radio & Television* 14. (1994): 467-474. *Film & Television Literature Index with Full Text*. Web. (accessed May 24, 2013).

Abstract: "Focuses on the motion pictures 'Men of Bronze,' directed by William Miles and 'Liberators:

Fighting on Two Fronts in World War II,' directed by Nina Rosenblum. Role of black American soldiers as depicted in the films; Factual errors in the films; Brief plots; Characters; Films' lack of historical information."

Rowntree, David. "Out of the Archive." *Black Camera: The New Series* 1.1 (2009): 171-185. *Film & Television Literature Index with Full Text*. Web. 24 May 2013. 15p, 3 Black and White Photographs, 2 Diagrams, 1 Chart

Film & Television Literature Index with Full Text, EBSCOhost (accessed May 24, 2013).

Abstract: The article explores the considerations involved in the decision to create a special media collections archive. It addresses the challenges and opportunities brought by the Henry Hampton Collection to the Film and Media Archive at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. The initial challenges were physical control or storage, intellectual control or cataloguing, and accessibility. With the addition of the William Miles Collection to the university, opportunities that opened include access to original interviews and research materials for films.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

<http://schomburgcenter.tumblr.com/tagged/William-Miles>

Weber, Bruce. "William Miles, Maker of Films About Black History, Dies at 82." *New York Times* Published: May 18, 2013

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/19/movies/william-miles-maker-of-documentaries-about-black-history-dies-at-82.html?pagewanted=all&r=0> (accessed May 23, 2013).