

Documentaries

Classic documentaries, newsreels, government “educational” films, “Industrial” films, train films, telephone films and travelogs. See separate pages for **World War-II**, **Korea** and **Atomic Age**.

Black Military Experience

Three documentaries during World War II about the use of Negro soldiers in the armed forces.

The Negro Soldier

Navy Steward

The Negro Sailor

Bonus: “**Ghosts of Hollywood**” Documentary about the decaying and forgotten studios of the silent film era.

Classic Documentaries - Places & People

Night Mail

(Britain, 1936) 25m. Dir: Harry Watt, Basil Wright. Shows the special train on which mail is sorted, dropped and collected on the run, and delivered in Scotland overnight.

New Earth

(Holland, 1933) 36m. By Joris Ivens. A struggle as man tries to subdue nature. To prevent flooding and for purposes of land reclamation, the people of the Netherlands struggle and succeed in building a breaker.

Song of Ceylon

(Britain, 1937) 38m. By Basil Wright. Ambitious documentary chronicling the cultural life and religious customs of the Sinhalese and the effects of advanced industrialism on such customs.

Housing Problems

(Britain, 1934) 16m. Slum conditions, slum clearance, bright new public housing.

Classic Documentaries - The Land

3 films about the people and the land in rural America during the 1930s:

The Plow That Broke The Plains

(1936) 30 min. Directed by Pare Lorentz. The social and economic history of the Great Plains, from the settlement of the prairies through the World War-I boom to drought and depression in the 1930s, is dramatically presented.

The River

(1937) 29 min. Directed by Pare Lorentz. A panoramic view of the Mississippi River from the Civil War through the 1930s, showing the growth of industry and agriculture which led to the basin’s exploitation and ruin. One of the first films to call for social change to save the environment.

The Power and the Land

(1940) 41 min. Directed by Joris Ivens. A plea for the support of rural co-ops so that those areas could receive cheap electric power, told through the story of everyday life in rural America of the time.

Forgotten Village

(1941) 67m. Directed by Herbert Kline, Alexander Hammid. Documentary examining the conflicts between the coming of modernization and the traditional culture of a small Mexican village.

Louisiana Story

(1948) 78m. Directed by Robert Flaherty. The idyllic life of a young Cajun boy and his pet raccoon is disrupted when the tranquility of the bayou is broken by an oil well drilling near his home.

Paris 1900

(France, 1947) 74m. Directed by Nicole Védres. Documentary limning the life of Paris and its citizens during "La Belle Epoque," the years between 1900 and 1914. Beginning with the Paris Exposition of 1900 and the completion of the Eiffel Tower, the film progresses through cultural, technological, and social changes, from peaceful and sometimes naïve times to the rumbling foreshadowing of the war.

The Quiet One

(1948) 65m. Directed by Sidney Meyers. A documentary account of the rehabilitation at the Wiltwyck School of an emotionally disturbed Black boy who is unwanted, misunderstood, and inwardly tortured.

Salt of the Earth

(1954) 94 min. Directed by Herbert Biberman.

Based on an actual strike against the Empire Zinc Mine in New Mexico, the film deals with the prejudice

against the Mexican-American workers, who struck to attain wage parity with Anglo workers in other mines and to be treated with dignity by the bosses. The film is an early treatment of feminism, because the wives of the miners play a pivotal role in the strike, against their husbands wishes.

See the USA!

3 DVDs showing a panorama of America from the 1930s thru 1960s with visits to small towns, train and bus trips, cartoons, vintage car ads and travelogs.

Volume 1:

The Golden State
Chevy & Edsel Ads
Henry Ford's Mirror of America - Part 1
1950s Newsreel
This is My Railroad
Coral Gables, Florida
Our Home Town - Part 1
The Fifth Freedom
Flight of the Century
Freedom Highway - Part 1

Volume 2:

The Lone Star State
Chevy & Corvair Ads
Henry Ford's Mirror of America - Part 2
1950s Newsreel
Why We Fight - Part 1
Big Trains Rolling - Part 1
Santa Cruz Trail
Our Home Town - Part 2
3rd Ave. El
Freedom Highway - Part 2

Volume 3:

The Funshine State
1950s Newsreel
Chevy Ads
Why We Fight - Ppart 2
Big Trains Rolling - Part 2 - Train Trip
Our Home Town - Part 3
Mainline USA
Henry Ford's Mirror of America - Part 3
Freedom Highway - Part 3

Telephone Shorts

A two-disc set of vintage public service shorts about ... "The Telephone!"

How to Use the Dial Phone (1927)

Calls That Cure

Operator Toll Dialing (1949)

Learn About the Telephone (1965)

Nationa at Your Fingertips (1951)

You Can Tell by the Teller (1945)

Mr. Bell (1947)

Speeding Speech (1950)

Story Without End (1950)

The Town and the Telephone (1950)

Century 21 Calling (1964)

Plane Talk (1965) & Many More!



Universal International Newsreels

(1950-1959) 3 DVDs of the weekly Universal International Newsreels from the 1950s.

Witness events as they unfolded: Britain testing the H-Bomb on Christmas Island; Santa Claus arrives by space ship; American recovers its first missile from space; Ike signs a law; Hawaii becomes our 50th state; Alaska becomes the 49th state; peasants support Castro; Tour De France bike race; football game; car show in NY; Nazi criminals go on trial; Communists infiltrate Hollywood; plane crashes; Billy Graham; fashion shows and much more!

Educational Films

During the decades of the 1940's thru 1960's, many companies produced short films for school use on topics from Driver's Ed, Sex Ed, LSD, dating to brushing your teeth. Today these fascinating relics entertain for their "campy" laughs while providing rich stock footage of the 1950s. Enjoy the best from Coronet and Encyclopedia Britannica Films!

Vol. 1 -- School Woes

Manners in School
Soapy the Germ Fighter
Lunchroom Manners
Why Doesn't Cathy Eat Breakfast?
Appreciating Our Parents
The Outsider
Shy Guy
Personality and Emotions
Right or Wrong?
Why Vandalism

Vol. 2 -- Sex & Drugs

Human Growth
It's Wonderful Being a Girl
Social-Sex Attitudes in Adolescence
Marijuana
Case Study LSD
Case Study - Barbiturates
Case Study - Amphetamines
Case Study - Heroin
LSD - Insight or Insanity
Narcotics

Vol. 3 -- Driver's Education

Crossroads Crash
I like Bikes, But...
Safety Belt for Susie
The Last Prom
The Talking Car
The Bottle and the Throttle
Alco Beat
Joy Ride - An Auto Theft
Tomorrow's Drivers

Vol. 4 -- Jobs & Work

Americans At Work
How to Keep a Job
Purely Coincidental
Shake Hands with Danger
The Grapevine
When You Grow Up
Trouble with Women
You and Your Work
Promotion by Pass

Vol. 5 -- Adolescence

Each Child is Different
Your Junior High Days
It Must be the Neighbors

The Cautious Twins
Understanding Others
Good Health Practices
Social Acceptability
Self Image Film
What to Do On a Date
Skipper Learns Lesson

Vol. 6 -- America and You

Patriotism
The Pledge of Allegiance
Freedom Comes High
In Our Hands
Are You Ready for Service?
200
A Day of Thanksgiving
The Great Rights
Despotism

Vol. 7 -- Religion

Of Heaven and Home
The Scriptures
Getting Ready Morally
New Doorways to Learning
Teenage Challenge
Turn the Other Cheek
Carnivorous Plants

Vol. 8 -- Miscellany

Driver's Ed Film
Promotion By-Pass
The Hidden Grievance
Kitty Cleans Up
Atomic Energy Can Be a Blessing
Stalked

“Government” Films

The U.S. Army, Navy, Selective Service and U.S. Information Service continued to make short informational films for soldiers long after the Korean War. How else could young naval officers learn how to date blondes and brunettes?

Vol. 1 --

The Decision is Yours
Blondes Prefer Gentlemen
How to Succeed with Brunettes
Time to Go

Primordial Soup
Shadow of a Gunfight
On Post Safety

Vol. 2 --

Defense Against the Spy
The Smile and the Sword
The Enemy Agent
The Daily Enemy
The Code
Principles of Control
A Fool and His Money
ABC of Sex Education for Trainables
Know for Sure

Vintage Train Shorts

Featurettes chronicle the railroad industry from the first transcontinental line, freight and Pullman cars to modern diesel engines. See the people and machines that built the tracks across America.

Volume 1:

Wheels of Progress (1950)
A Great Railroad at Work (1942)
Desert Empire (1948)
The Big Train (1950)

Volume 2:

New Horizons (1948)
This is My Railroad (1940)
Troop Train (1943)
The Sundown Limited (Our Gang short, 1924)

Volume 3:

Flight of the Century
This is My Railroad
Passenger Train
Mainline USA
At This Moment
Big Trains Rolling

Volume 4:

Railroad Man
Operation Fast Freight
Modern Coal Burning Steam Locomotive
3rd Avenue El
Safe Roads
Railroads for Western Expansion
Steam Locomotive

Volume 5:

The Railroad Story
Son of the Pioneer
Nickel Plate Story
End of an Era
California zephyr
Rolling the Freight

Volume 6:

Return of the General
Pioneer Behind the Nation
Railroad at Work
The Freight Train
Snow on the Run
Clear Track Ahead

Volume 7:

Last of the Giants
Progress of the Rails
Wheels of Steel
Opening a New Frontier
Beef Rings the Bell

