

# THE AFRICAN AMERICANS

MANY RIVERS TO CROSS

with HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

6 x 60 **HD**



**PBS**

INTERNATIONAL

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*The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross* with Henry Louis Gates, Jr. chronicles the full sweep of African American history, from the origins of slavery on the African continent through five centuries of remarkable historic events right up to today—when America has a black president, yet remains a nation deeply divided by race. The series explores the origins of the people from Africa whose enslavement led to the creation of the African American people, as well as the multiplicity of cultural institutions, political strategies, and religious and social perspectives that African Americans have developed against unimaginable odds. All of these elements define black culture and society in its extraordinarily rich and compelling diversity from slavery to freedom, from the plantation to the White House.

Written and presented by Professor Gates, and drawing on some of America's top historians, the series guides viewers on an engaging journey across five hundred years and two continents to shed new light on the experience of being an African American. By highlighting the tragedies, triumphs, and contradictions of the black experience, viewers of *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross* learn that the African American community has never been a uniform entity, and that its members have been actively debating their differences from their first days in the U.S. Viewers also learn that the road to freedom for blacks in America was not linear, but instead, like the course of a river, full of loops and eddies, slowing, and occasionally reversing the current of progress.

**Episode One:** *The Black Atlantic* (1500–1800) explores the truly global experiences that created the African American people.

**Episode Two:** *The Age of Slavery* (1800–1860) illustrates how black lives changed dramatically in the aftermath of the American Revolution.

**Episode Three:** *Into the Fire* (1861–1896) examines the most tumultuous and consequential period in African American history: The Civil War, the end of slavery, and Reconstruction's thrilling but tragically brief "moment in the sun."

**Episode Four:** *Making a Way Out of No Way* (1897–1940) portrays the Jim Crow era, when African Americans struggled to build their own worlds within the harsh, narrow confines of segregation.

**Episode Five:** *Rise!* (1940–1968) examines the long road to civil rights, when the deep contradictions in American society finally became unsustainable.

**Episode Six:** *A More Perfect Union* (1968–2013) follows African Americans who set out to build a bright new future on the foundation of the civil rights movement's victories, even as a growing class disparity threatened to split the black community in two.

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CREDITS

*Executive Producers:* Julie Anderson, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Peter Kunhardt, Dyllan McGee

*Senior Producer:* Rachel Dretzin

*Senior Story Producer:* Leslie Asako Gladsjo

*Writer:* Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

*Directors:* Phil Bertelsen, Leslie Asako Gladsjo, Sabin Streeter, Jamilla Wignot

*Photo:* Peter Simon



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