

BUUF Racial Justice Ministry Video of the Month

February 2021

The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross, Episode 6: A More Perfect Union

Henry Louis Gates, 2013, 53:10

<https://www.pbs.org/video/african-americans-many-rivers-cross-more-perfect-union-1988-2013/>

Information about the Video

This is the last episode in the Emmy-winning *Many River to Cross* documentary series that aired on PBS during 2013. The series was written, produced, and narrated by Henry Louis Gates. It tells the story of 500 years of Black history in America. Episode 6 covers the last 50 years, from the last days of the Civil Rights Movement during the late 1960's through the election of Barack Obama. All six episodes are informative, about an hour long, and worth watching. This episode was selected because it covers events that might be more familiar to members of the BUUF community and is a useful way to consider the progress that has (and hasn't) been made during the last 50 years. It can also generate cross-generational discussion about that progress.

Information about the Presenter

Henry Louis Gates is the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University. Professor Gates has authored or co-authored 25 books and created 23 documentary films, including *Black America Since MLK: And Still I Rise*; *Reconstruction After the Civil War*; and *The Black Church*, all available via PBS.org. He is also known as the creator and host of *Finding Your Roots*, a genealogy series in its 7th season on PBS.

Questions to consider and discuss with others:

- The episode begins with the late 1960's. Where were you during that time? What were you doing? What do you remember about the events described in the episode? What did you think and feel about them at the time? How have your thoughts and feelings changed since then?
- The episode ends with the idea that the struggle is "far from over." Given the events of the last 4+ years, including the 2020 elections, how do you feel about the future – encouraged, discouraged, hopeful, angry, worried, all of the above?
- What do you think should be done now at the national level to promote racial equity and justice? At the state level? At the local level? What do you see going on that gives you hope for the future?