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“Created Equal” programming series to begin Aug. 28 at Cultural Heritage Center

PIERRE, S.D. – The Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society is one of 473 institutions across the country selected to offer a program series on the history of the Civil Rights movement. The first program will be held on Sunday, Aug. 28, at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

“Created Equal: America’s Civil Rights Struggle” is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities that uses the power of documentary films to encourage community discussion of America’s civil rights history. NEH has partnered with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in New York City to develop programmatic and support materials for the sites.

The powerful documentaries “The Abolitionists,” “Slavery by Another Name,” “Freedom Riders” and “The Loving Story” include dramatic scenes of incidents in the 150-year effort to achieve equal rights for all. “Freedom Riders” received an Emmy in 2012, and “The Loving Story” and “The Abolitionists” were nominated for Emmys in 2013. Each of the films will be part of a larger project that studies the Civil Rights movement. The films are intended for adults and students of at least high school age.

To introduce four documentaries with riveting new footage illustrating the history of civil rights in America, the Museum of the State Historical Society will offer a series of programming opportunities centered on the films.

“Beginning Aug. 28 we will be showing one of the films each week,” said Jay Smith, museum director. “We will also hold a discussion about the film topics, with discussion leaders from Presentation University and Northern State University beginning Sept. 11. We are very excited to bring this program to Pierre, and we encourage our citizens to attend.”

“These films chronicle the long and sometimes violent effort to achieve the rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—for all Americans,” said Smith. “We are pleased to receive a grant from NEH to provide programming around these films.”

The schedule for the events is:

- Sunday, Aug. 28, at 1 p.m. CDT - Film “The Abolitionists,” 180 minutes
- Wednesday, Sept. 7, at 6:30 p.m. – Film “Slavery by Another Name,” 90 minutes
- Sunday, Sept. 11, at 2 p.m. – Discussion of “Slavery by Another Name” with Dr. Brad Tennant, Presentation University
- Thursday, Sept. 15, at 6:30 p.m. – Film “The Loving Story,” 77 minutes

- Sunday, Sept. 18, at 2 p.m. – Discussion of “The Loving Story” with Dr. Jon Schaff, Northern State University
- Thursday, Sept. 22, at 6:30 p.m. – Film “Freedom Riders,” 120 minutes
- Sunday, Sept. 25, at 2 p.m. – Discussion of “Freedom Riders” with Dr. David Grettler, Northern State University

“Our hope is that people will come out and see the film on the weekday and come back for the discussion section, but you don’t have to do both to appreciate the importance of the Civil Rights movement or the events depicted in the films,” said Jay D. Vogt, director of the State Historical Society. “The scholars leading each of the discussion events are well versed on the topic and will provide insight into how those events continue to impact our lives today.”

Each of the events in the Created Equal programming series is free and open to the public. Regular admission fees will apply to visiting the museum galleries during the events.

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About the South Dakota State Historical Society

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Education. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society’s world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.