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## Winter Film Festival at Interpretive Center focuses on Native Americans

BY TRIBUNE STAFF • JANUARY 8, 2010

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The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center's annual Winter Film Festival begins on Jan. 14 and features a series of films focusing on Native Americans.

ADVERTISEMENT "Through Native Eyes" is the theme of this year's festival, which features films from the recent PBS series, "We Shall Remain," the earlier series, "500 Nations," and the recent Montana PBS special, "Playing for the World."

A different film is shown each Thursday at 4 p.m. and is repeated at 7.

Films are about 90 minutes long and are free to the public. A goodwill offering of a nonperishable food item for the Great Falls Food Bank is welcomed.

The series begins with "After the Mayflower" on Jan. 14. While most Americans know the Pilgrim story, few remember that the son of Masasoit, the same chief who helped keep the Plymouth colony alive, was involved in a bloody war with the settlers' descendants less than 50 years later.

On Jan. 21, the series offers two episodes from the "500 Nations" series, "Cauldron of War" and "Removal."

Native groups became drawn into larger European conflicts, and shifting alliances left Native peoples vulnerable. Leaders such as Pontiac and Tecumseh attempted to resist the tide of European and American expansion, but the tribes of the East soon faced removal to lands in the West.

Jan. 28 brings the film, "Tecumseh's Vision." The Shawnee leader preached Indian unity in the face of challenges to their sovereignty, seeking a united state to balance the power of Great Britain and the United States. In the process, he came closer than anyone ever would to creating an independent Indian state.

"Trail of Tears" will be shown on Feb. 4. The Cherokee people resisted removal from their homelands in Georgia and Tennessee with every legal means available, including adoption of European-style governments, conversion to Christianity and pursuit of a lawsuit to the U.S. Supreme Court.

On Feb. 11, the story continues with the episodes, "Roads Across the Plains" and "Attack on Culture" from the "500 Nations" series. The Plains nations resisted encroachment, with leaders pursuing paths of peace and war.

As the reservation system posed a threat to their existence, the Native peoples worked to retain and renew native cultures.

The final program, on Feb. 18, is "Playing for the World." In the early years of the 20th century, a multi-tribal group of girls from the Fort Shaw Indian School formed a basketball team that defied all expectations.

With a challenge to all comers at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, the Fort Shaw girls returned to Montana hailed as "champions of the world."

Some of those involved in the making of the film will give a short presentation afterwards.

The Winter Film Festival is made possible by support from the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Association, working through a Challenge Cost Share grant from the U.S. Forest Service.

For more information about the festival, contact the Interpretive Center at 727-8733.

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