

is very strong, from the street kids who wish they could go to school, to the rural children whose classes are conducted under acacia trees with a paper-sized slate serving as their blackboard). Moving and thought-provoking, this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (R. Reagan)

True Caribbean Pirates ★★

(2006) 94 min. DVD: \$19.95. The History Channel (dist. by A&E Home Video). PPR. ISBN: 0-7670-8990-1.

Public interest in pirates has been pricked by romantic visions of buried treasure maps (sadly, there don't seem to be any surviving examples), shipwrecks, and sea floors littered with gold coins and jewelry—not to mention a pair of highly successful Johnny Depp movies. This History Channel production takes a look at the real pirates of the Caribbean, arguing that these men (and women) were indeed as wild, reckless, and colorful as their legends suggest. Piracy flourished during the great age of exploration in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the Caribbean served as a vast shipping and trading ground for moving booty from the New World to Europe. Fueled by rum and greed, these buccaneers (literally, “jerky makers,” for their fondness for smoking meat on wooden frames) turned the Caribbean into a free-for-all zone. One scholar notes here that the pirates lived a crazy life in which treasure from a looted ship would be later squandered in drunken debauches, but in spite of their crudeness, they subscribed to a rough democracy aboard ship, where a captain could be voted out by his men. Ultimately, the swashbuckling era was simply too wild to last, and most pirates were killed by tropical diseases, combat, the hangman's noose, or simply disappeared into the mists of history. Combining dramatic reenactments and interviews, *True Caribbean Pirates* brings to life a handful of famous pirates who sported nicknames like Blackbeard

and Black Bart (as well as pirate queens such as Ann Bonny and Mary Read, who proved just as able as men at wielding a cutlass). In spite of a few slow spots and the inevitable Hollywood-style touches (dramatized pirate raids and ship-to-ship combat), this is solid popular history. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

Warrior Empire: The Mughals ★★

(2006) 91 min. DVD: \$24.95. The History Channel (dist. by A&E Home Video). PPR. ISBN: 0-7670-9101-9.

Who, you ask, were the Mughals? They were nomadic Indian tribesmen who made fierce warriors and created a loosely knit empire that stretched across South Asia, covering much of today's India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. For three centuries (1526-1828), the Mughals ran roughshod over their adversaries, relying not only on their natural ferocity but also on their development of technologically innovative weaponry, including their own types of firearms, cannons, chain mail, and even rockets. The Mughals used their expertise to create as well as destroy, building countless forts, palaces, and even the magnificent Taj Mahal, so that—somewhat ironically—their generally brutal reign produced a plethora of cultural advances. Combining scholarly interviews, dramatic reenactments, illustrations, and on-location footage shot at the Taj Mahal, among other places, *Warrior Empire: The Mughals*, which originally aired on the History Channel, offers an interesting portrait of a complex people. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (E. Hulse)

What We Want, What We Believe: The Black Panther Party Library ★★

(2006) 4 discs. 720 min. DVD: \$37.95. AK Press (avail. from most distributors).

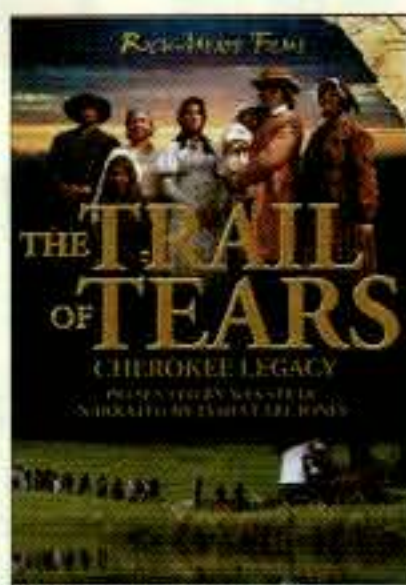
Anyone seeking a polished documentary on the Black Panthers and their role in the

Black Power movement and broader American radicalism will have to look elsewhere, since what this four-disc set offers is a compilation of source material. The first disc begins with several of the contemporary shorts produced by Newsreel Films, a cooperative of activist filmmakers who banded together in the late 1960s, establishing volunteer units in major cities to produce pieces critical of U.S. domestic and foreign policies that could be used as organizing tools for progressive groups. The three films included here all focus on the Panthers, with footage of demonstrations as well as snippets of interviews with key figures such as Huey Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, and Bobby Seale. Also contained on this disc is a rambling, nearly two-hour session with Donald Cox, a former Field Marshal in the party, as well as footage of a 2001 Panther reunion featuring discussions among the participants—some on film, others audio only—about various aspects of party history. The second disc opens with footage of a conference featuring Roz Payne, the founding Newsreel member responsible for most of the material included here, followed by interviews she conducted with two FBI agents involved in surveillance of the Panthers. Disc three compiles interviews with lawyers who defended Panthers accused of crimes, as well as the organizer of a defense fund for the Panthers, while the final disc consists of interviews with Newsreel members (including Payne), as well as DVD extras such as a photo gallery and a collection of print documents in DVD-ROM-accessible PDF format. *What We Want, What We Believe* serves up an interesting collection of source material, mostly in the form of oral history, that could be employed in constructing works of historical synthesis, but is also important in its own right (if sometimes longwinded). A must for Black Studies and modern American history collections, this is also recommended for larger general collections. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

The Trail of Tears: Cherokee Legacy ★★1/2

(2006) 115 min. DVD: \$34.95. Rich-Heape Films. PPR.

America's most shameful episode of ethnic cleansing is the subject of the excellent documentary *The Trail of Tears*. The “Five Civilized Tribes” (Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole) were expected to acculturate to “white” standards in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, but then were still forced out, especially after the discovery of gold in Georgia, which not only accelerated the pressure on native peoples but also led to the Indian Removal Act of 1830. In 1838, some 16,000 Cherokee Indians in the Southeastern United States embarked—in exchange for their homelands—on a mandatory march along what came to be known as the “trail of tears,” moving 800 miles west to Indian Territory (later Oklahoma) to join other relocated tribes, a horrific journey that resulted in the deaths of thousands (nearly a quarter of the people). Hosted by acclaimed actor Wes Studi (speaking in Cherokee with English subtitles), *The Trail of Tears* combines interviews with eminent historians, re-enactments filmed on-location in six different states, and narration by James Earl Jones, with additional voiceover work by James Garner and Crystal Gayle, among others. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (R. Reagan)



BIOGRAPHY

Billy Wilder Speaks ★★1/2

(2006) 71 min. In German w/English subtitles. DVD: \$24.95. Kino on Video (avail. from most distributors).

Billy Wilder, the Oscar-winning director of such classics as *Double Indemnity*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and *Some Like It Hot* was also one of Hollywood's most engaging raconteurs, and he takes center stage—figuratively speaking—in this very entertaining compilation of interviews conducted by German filmmaker Volker Schlöndorff (*The Tin Drum*). Weighing in at just over 70 minutes, *Billy Wilder Speaks* finds the legendary auteur recounting the stories behind his greatest achievements,