



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **East Cleveland Public Library PRESENTS:**

The Birth of a Nation: Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition  
a Panel Discussion with Prester Pickett, Cleveland State University

**October 22, 2016 EVENT IS PART OF NATIONAL LECTURE SERIES ‘THE BIRTH OF A NATION: SLAVERY, RESISTANCE & ABOLITION,’ TIED TO AWARD-WINNING FILM**

East Cleveland, Ohio, October 1, 2016 – East Cleveland Public Library today announced “Birth of a Nation: Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition,” a panel conversation with noted guests, Prester Pickett (moderator) of Cleveland State University, filmmaker Robert C. Banks, Amanda King (Creative Director, “Shooting Without Bullets”), and local historian, James Ewing.

This presentation is part of the national lecture series and community-building initiative “The Birth of a Nation: Slavery, Resistance & Abolition.” The series is presented in conjunction with the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services at the American Library Association (ALA), The United Nations’ Remember Slavery Programme, Fox Searchlight Pictures and BazanED.

Inspired by actor and director Nate Parker’s acclaimed film *The Birth of a Nation*, the series will run August 21 through October 30, 2016, commemorating the history-changing slave rebellion launched by the film’s subject, Nat Turner, on August 21, 1831, through his capture on October 30, 1831. The lecture series marks the 185th anniversary of Turner’s rebellion, as well as The United Nations’ International Day for the Remembrance of The Slave Trade and its Abolition, observed annually on August 23.

### **Event Details**

**When:** October 22, 2016, 2pm – 5pm

**Where:** East Cleveland Public Library, 14101 Euclid Avenue

**Public Contact** Sheba Marcus-Bey, Executive Director

“We are excited to present this engaging conversation as part of an ongoing national discussion about the history of slavery and resistance in America,” said Ms. Marcus-Bey, Executive Director. “Our participants’ extensive knowledge and connection to East Cleveland Public Library and our Cleveland community will make this a powerful, important, and informative event.”

Nate Parker, the film’s writer, director and star, shared his excitement: “Above all, I want *The Birth of a Nation* to inspire audience members to recognize and resist unjust systems domestically and abroad. That they will be activated toward using their occupational platforms to combat oppression wherever it lives. This speaker series is a great way to engage local communities in an honest discussion about slavery and its legacy in America. The hope is that this honest confrontation with our past will galvanize our society toward understanding, healing and systemic change.”

“We are honored that libraries will be the primary venues for these vitally important conversations across the country, and thankful that East Cleveland Public Library came on board to bring this series to its local community,” said Jody Gray, director of the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services at the American Library Association. “Libraries are not just about housing books; they have always been about learning, exchanging ideas, and transforming lives — characteristics that this series perfectly reflects.”

### **About the Participants**

Prester Pickett, Panel Moderator, Coordinator of the Howard A. Mims African American Cultural Center at Cleveland State University

Amanda King, Creative Director of photovoice exhibit, “Shooting Without Bullets,”

Robert C. Banks, award winning local filmmaker and teaching artist at New Bridge Academy

James Ewing, Historian and community activist

### **About “The Birth of a Nation: Slavery Resistance & Abolition” National Lecture Series**

“The Birth of a Nation: Slavery, Resistance & Abolition” lecture series is taking place in libraries, museums, institutions of higher education, and community centers around the nation during the period of August 21<sup>st</sup> and October 30<sup>th</sup> 2016. Each free public event features a local educator or historian addressing the topic of slavery, resistance and abolition, and will provide an opportunity for individual communities to engage in a timely and coordinated national discussion.

### **About *The Birth of a Nation* movie**

Set against the antebellum South, *The Birth of a Nation* follows Nat Turner (Nate Parker), a literate slave and preacher, whose financially strained owner, Samuel Turner (Armie Hammer), accepts an offer to use Nat’s preaching to subdue unruly slaves. As he witnesses countless atrocities — against himself and his fellow slaves — Nat orchestrates an uprising in the hopes of leading his people to freedom. The film won the Audience Award and Grand Jury Prize in the U.S. Dramatic Competition at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival. Fox Searchlight Pictures will release *The Birth of a Nation* on October 7, 2016. The company acquired the film at this year’s Sundance Film Festival, where it received rave reviews and won both the Audience Award and Grand Jury Prize in the U.S. Dramatic Competition.

### **About The American Library Association**

The ALA is the oldest and largest library association in the world. Founded on October 6, 1876, during the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, the mission of the ALA is “to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.”

### **About The United Nations Remember Slavery Programme**

The Remember Slavery Programme, managed by the Education Outreach Section of the United Nations Department of Public Information, was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/122 of 17 December 2007 to honour the memory of the victims of slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. It also aims at raising awareness of the dangers of racism and prejudice today with activities held and educational materials produced throughout the year. To learn more about the United Nations

'Remember Slavery' programme, please contact Kimberly Mann, Chief, Education Outreach Section, at [education-outreach@un.org](mailto:education-outreach@un.org) or visit [www.rememberslavery.un.org](http://www.rememberslavery.un.org)

### **About Fox Searchlight Pictures**

Fox Searchlight Pictures is a specialty film company that both finances and acquires motion pictures. It has its own marketing and distribution operations, and its films are distributed internationally by 20th Century Fox. Fox Searchlight Pictures is a unit of 21st Century Fox.

### **About BazanED**

BazanED is a free teacher resource offering free materials for narrative films and documentaries, as well as curriculum guides and so much more to K-12 and College educators throughout the U.S. BazanED partners with entertainment, cultural, scientific and financial organizations to provide teachers with engaging, grade-appropriate content to supplement and support classroom instruction and enhance student learning.

A full high-school and college-level educational curriculum about Nat Turner's rebellion that meets Common Core state standards will be available for teachers at [BazanED.com](http://BazanED.com), pegged to the major motion picture *The Birth of a Nation*. BazanED provides free curriculum materials to educators, and has previously launched successful educational initiatives on behalf of the 2014 Academy Award®-winning film *Selma*, the Jesse Owens biopic *Race* and Davis Guggenheim's feature-length documentary film *Teach*.

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