

# "When We Were Colored," Sensitive, Impressive

Based on Clifton L. Taulbert's critically acclaimed book, "Once Upon a Time ... When We Were Colored" is a sensitive memory film of the author's coming-of-age in the segregated South.

Actor Tim Reid makes an impressive directorial debut with an emotionally quiet saga that chronicles a momentous era in black communal life, one mostly neglected by U.S. films.

This well-made production, released on the Martin Luther King Jr.

holiday weekend on a handful of screens, has some crossover appeal as family fare and should be seen in major urban centers before landing on TV, cable and in classrooms.

There are no drugs and not much violence in this evocative work in which black characters actually get to live long lives and die in bed of natural causes.

The film as a whole stands as a significant effort to "correct" black history by recording its rich traditions and celebrate unadorned heroes

who have inspired black youngsters and paved the way for the civil rights movement.

Set in the small town of Glen Allan, Miss., the film presents a warm tribute to the black heritage that prevailed in the Deep South of the post-war years.

Sprawling narrative sheds light on what it meant to grow up in this particular time and place, and at the same time captures a sweeping, panoramic view of black culture as it was experienced on a daily basis.

The three-part story begins in 1946 with a baby's birth in the cotton fields, then jumps to 1951 for the first and longest chapter. Born to a single mom, Cliff (Charles Earl "Spud" Taylor Jr.) is raised by his great-grandparents, Ma Pearl (Paula Kelly) and especially Poppa (Al Freeman Jr.), a proud, elegant man who initiates his offspring into a harsh life imposed by the whites.

Poppa teaches Cliff his first words ("Whites Only" and "Colored") and exposes him to a Ku Klux Klan parade, where the boy first experiences blatant racism.

But it's by no means a dreary, depressing childhood.

Loose-knit script is laced with fond anecdotes of rich adventures like fishing trips, communal picnics, a minstrel show, trips to the neighboring "big city" and, above all, life in a tightly knit community.

The film doesn't contain many white characters, but the few present are agreeably non-stereotypical. In the second, 1958, chapter, Cliff (Will-

ie Norwood Jr.) helps out Mrs. Maybry (wonderfully played by Polly Bergen), a liberal woman who introduces him to literature and checks out books from a library that bars blacks.

Most of Cliff's interactions, however, are with his great aunt (Phylcia Rashad) and her son Melvin (Leon), who visit from Michigan after a long absence.

The concluding segment is the most overtly political, revolving around Cleve (Richard Roundtree),

## TB Spreading For Homeless

Tuberculosis may be spreading in a dangerous way among the homeless, according to new research.

The finding was based on a study of homeless people in Los Angeles where researchers said they found an infection rate of 53 percent due to recent exposure to the bacterium — so-called primary tuberculosis — compared to a traditional estimate of 10 percent in the population at large.

"Our results suggest that the majority of tuberculosis cases in the homeless in a large city are attribut-

able to primary tuberculosis from recent infection," the study said.

"We found a remarkably high frequency of primary tuberculosis at a time when no specific tuberculosis outbreak was identified in central Los Angeles," it added.

The study, in the Journal of the American Medical Association, was conducted by the Division of Infectious Diseases at the University of Southern California School of Medicine.

Primary tuberculosis "greatly increases the number of infectious tu-

berculosis cases over a short period and facilitates epidemic spread of the disease," the report said.

Previous research has shown a higher prevalence of the disease in general among the homeless, and shelters have been identified as sources of outbreaks, the study said. It said the determination of the relative frequency of primary TB and that developed two or more years after exposure is important in controlling the disease in the homeless and other high-incidence populations.

## Wise Water Users Wanted

The City of Vancouver's new Water Resources Education Center is seeking volunteers to fill many niches in the Water Center's promotion of wise water use.

People of all ages are needed to be musicians, puppeteers, art demonstrators, lecturers, exhibit designers, lab assistants, teaching assistants, tour guides, audio-visual technicians, receptionists, aquarium managers and clerical assistants.

Volunteers are needed now and for the Water Center's grand opening weekend, Feb. 24 and 25. Grand Opening events include a pancake

breakfast, tours, food, music, exhibits and activities for all ages. Help out for a few hours or develop a regular schedule and become part of the Water Center's Aqua Guides program. Call 696-8478 for details.

The \$3.1 million Water Center is a 16,000-square-foot facility with a 1,000-gallon aquarium, exhibits, laboratory, atrium and community meeting room.

A short walk to an overlook offers visitors a panoramic view of the nearby wetlands.

The Water Center's purpose is to teach people of all ages to care for

and make wise decisions about our region's water resources.

The city broke ground for the public facility in September 1994. The Water Center is a public amenity built as part of the city's new state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant which went on-line in June.

The Water Center is at the east end of Marine Park on Vancouver's Renaissance Trail. From Highway 14, between I-5 and I-205, turn south at the Columbia Way exit. Follow Columbia Way east to the Water Center's parking lot.

## Self Image Problems Persist

American women's march into the work force in the past two decades may have improved their economic options but it has not improved their self-image, according to new research.

"Forty-eight percent of women ... have an overall dissatisfaction with their looks," said Thomas Cash, a professor of psychology at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., and an expert on the psychology of appearance.

Cash, who presented his research on Friday at the annual scientific meeting of the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery in Orlando, said he surveyed 803 women from across the United States in 1995 and found that nearly half were not happy with their appearance.

He said 48 percent was sharply higher than the 30 percent who expressed similar sentiments in a survey he conducted in 1985, and only about 23 percent voiced similar negative views in surveys conducted by other researchers in the early 1970s.

Cash said one reason for the shift could be the standards of female beauty presented in the mass media, which

today dictate that to be attractive women must not only be young and thin but also physically fit.

"One of the things that we've seen is now it's not enough to be thin.

You've got to be a certain kind of thin, a well-toned thin," he said.

He also theorized that a growing role in the workforce has pressured women to emphasize physical attractiveness and some feel pressure to compete on that basis with younger women.

"I think also women in greater numbers than 10 years ago, 20 years ago, are in the workforce and they're out there putting their feet and their faces forward," he said. "Historically women have been taught that the way to compete is with their looks," he added.

The author of a recent self-help book on body image, "What Do You See When You Look in the Mirror," Cash suggests that women — and men — could improve their body image by thinking less about their appearance, confronting those who belittle their looks and eliminating "mental mistakes" like thinking they cannot exercise because they would look too silly.

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