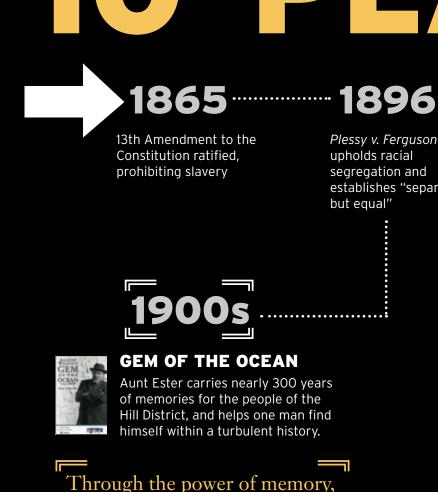
AUGUST WILSON'S 10-PLAY CENTURY CYCLE



13th Amendment to the Plessy v. Ferguson Constitution ratified, upholds racial segregation and establishes "separate

but equal"

GEM OF THE OCEAN

Aunt Ester carries nearly 300 years of memories for the people of the Hill District, and helps one man find himself within a turbulent history.

"Through the power of memory, a man takes a mystical journey toward freedom and redemption

JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE Herald Loomis arrives in the

Hill District after working on Joe Turner's chain gang, and his journey becomes a search for the meaning of his past and the possibilities for his future.

"Tenants of a boardinghouse contend with the personal and social aftermath of slavery and the Great Migration

Considered America's Shakespeare, Pulitzer Prizewinning playwright August Wilson (1945-2005), created an unprecedented 10-play Century Cycle-one play set in each decade of the 20th century-chronicling the joys, struggles, history, and culture of African Americans.

August Wilson was born Frederick August Kittel on April 27, 1945, in the Hill District community of Pittsburgh, the son of an African American cleaning woman, Daisy Wilson, and a German immigrant and baker, Frederick Kittel, who was mostly absent from Wilson's life. Wilson's mother raised him and his five siblings in a two-room, cold-water flat. Wilson left school in the 10th grade after experiencing racial bullying and false accusations of plagiarism. For the next several years, he educated himself at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh during school hours, unbeknownst to his mother.

Wilson began his artistic life as a poet, spending time in restaurants and barbershops and on the streets of The Hill, scribbling down the voices of residents as they reflected on their lives. Wilson would later draw on these voices and histories to create unforgettable characters in his plays, all but one of which are set in the Hill District.

The plays in Wilson's 10-play Century Cycle (also known as The Pittsburgh Cycle) present African American life in all its fullness, but they are also explorations of the universal themes of community, identity, diversity, activism, selfreliance, and resilience. August Wilson told extraordinary stories about ordinary people, and in doing so, he changed the face of the American theater.



-Ruben Santiago-Hudson Tony Award-winning actor, Seven Guitars

1910-1930 The Harlem Renaissance Americans from the rural South to large industrial cities in the North begins

1930s

THE PIANO LESSON

MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM Rich in cultural gifts, but poor in opportunities, four musicians share jokes, bitter barbs, mounting tension, and the blues as they wait for their lead singer in a Chicago recording studio.

armed forces

exploitation by white record labels, black musicians turn their rage inward

was acquired during slavery through the sale of two of their ancestors how to honor the legacy of their family's painful past **Executive Order 9981** desegregates the

> 1947 **SEVEN GUITARS** s six friends try to make sense Jackie Robinson breaks the color barrier in ntimely murder, they celebrate Major League Baseball heir lives together while riffing on their hopes, dreams, and frustrations.

Internal and external struggles shape African American men as they fight for their humanity and self-worth

KING HEDLEY II Jr. Day is declared a An ex-convict tries to rebuild his life, family, and sense of self in a community plagued with violence and prejudice.

> A man's quest for identity and dignity is thwarted by limited opportunity, secrets from the past, and personal demons

> > In an unofficial taxi station

Bonds between generations are tested by personal and community conflicts

1968 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated

Civil Rights Act outlaws housing discrimination (Fair Housing Act)

Movement

Shirley Chisholm becomes the first African American woman elected to Congress

1960s

TWO TRAINS RUNNING

much has really changed for them by the

African Americans grapple with the social and psychological impact of the Civil Rights and

1966-Rise of the Black Power 1965 Voting Rights Act outlawed discrimination in the voting process 1964 Freedom Summer Civil Rights Act outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin 1963 March on Washington

his body of work. Notable actors such as James Earl Jones, Laurence Fishburne, Phylicia Rashad, and Charles S. Dutton discuss Wilson's impact on their careers, his artistic process, and his unwavering belief in black life as rich and full of stories worth telling. Powerful performances of scenes from Wilson's plays round out this definitive story of the life, work, and impact of the most prolific playwright of

*For airtimes, please check your local PBS listings.

the last half of the 20th century.

AUGUST WILSON:

American Masters

Wilson two Pulitzer Prizes.

A documentary presented by

Premiering February 2015*...

THE GROUND ON WHICH I STAND

August Wilson: The Ground On Which I Stand details August Wilson's unexpected rise from humble beginnings

and adversity to create a 10-play cycle about African American life – a groundbreaking achievement in theater

history. From the 1980s into the first decade of the 21st

century, Wilson was the most produced playwright both

on Broadway and in regional theaters. His unprecedented

10-play Century Cycle (also known as the Pittsburgh Cycle)

helped launch the careers of countless actors and earned

A native of Pittsburgh's Hill District where all but one

of the plays in the Cycle are set, Wilson put the joys,

struggles, history, and culture of African Americans on

the national stage. August Wilson: The Ground On Which

I Stand features Wilson's family, friends, and collaborators

recalling his formative years and, later, the evolution of

WQED Multimedia and the PBS series,

1955-1956 Black Power Movements bus boycott 1954 1952

in 70 years, the

Tuskegee Institute

reports no lynchings

in the United States

FENCES Troy Maxson must reconcile his

A father's frustration with his own past threatens his

Education overturns

"separate but equal"

in America's schools

August Wilson helps us

remember who we are...all of us.

as an American people.

-Suzan-Lori Parks Playwright, 2002 Pulitzer Prize-winning drama Topdog/Underdog







son's future







