

September 24, 2009, 7:30 p.m.: **1877: Grand Army of Starvation** (1987). Black & White; Color Sequences. 30 Minutes.

James Earl Jones narrates the first film made by the American Social History Project's series on American working people and U.S. history. Using rare documents and pictures, it explores the massive national railroad strikes of 1877, a watershed event in Pittsburgh and U.S. history.

Out of This Furnace: A Walking Tour of Thomas Bell's Novel (1990). Color. 20 minutes.

Beautifully realized film by Steffi Domike and narrated by Dave Demarest provides a synopsis of Thomas Bell's great novel as well as a walking tour of a Braddock that is disappearing before our eyes.

This free monthly Thursday night film series is sponsored by the Battle of Homestead Foundation (BHF), a charitable and educational organization whose purpose is "to interpret, preserve and promote labor and people's history and provide a forum for speakers and events at the historic Pump House, site of the Battle of Homestead on July 6, 1892." (Source: the By-Laws of the BHF)

The Battle of Homestead Foundation

P. O. Box 11421, Pittsburgh, PA 15241

Movie information: 412-831-3871

Charles McCollester, President, 412-381-0882

**The Battle of Homestead
Foundation presents**



Its 2009

Spring and Summer

Movie Schedule

at the Pump House

Just east of the Demicky rail bridge,

On Waterfront Drive

HOMESTEAD SHOPPING DISTRICT

April 30, 2009, 7:30 p.m.: . **The River Ran Red.** Producer-Directors: Steffi Domike and Nicole Fauteux.

Blair Brown narrates this gripping account of a community's struggle to preserve its way of life. In the summer of 1892, a bitter conflict erupted at the Carnegie Works in Homestead, Pennsylvania. The nation's largest steelmaker took on its most militant labor union, with devastating consequences for American workers. Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick head a fascinating cast of characters which includes 300 armed Pinkerton guards, and the would-be assassin, anarchist Alexander Berkman. To evoke the strike and its century old legacy, the film employs documentary techniques, primary sources, dramatically staged scenes shot on location in the Pittsburgh area, and lyrical commentary found in poetry, song and fiction.

May 28, 2009, 7:30 p.m.: **Valley Town** (1940).
Black & White. 27 minutes. Director: Willard Van Dyke

This social documentary that premiered at the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee's convention in Chicago in May 1940 portrays life in New Castle, Pa., during the Great Depression. Unemployment and poverty transformed the town and its people as automation made its impact in the steel industry. Because of what was considered an anti-corporate view, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, which funded the film, withdrew it from release and redid the film. Two very different versions, the original director's cut and the remake, exist.

Aliquippa: The Union Comes to "Little Siberia." 30 minutes.

This half-hour documentary, part of the PBS "Great Depression" program series, tells the dramatic story of the struggle at J&L Steel that led to the famous Supreme Court decision to uphold the constitutionality of the Wagner Act. After the win at Aliquippa extended the union beyond U.S. Steel surrendering without a shot in secret negotiations between John L. Lewis and Myron Taylor, the steelworkers' union hit up against Tom Girdler's extreme resistance. The Memorial Day massacre of 1937, just weeks after the victory at Aliquippa, kept the unions inside "Little Steel" without a contract until 1941.

June 25, 2009, 7:30 p.m **Salt of the Earth** (1953).
Black & White. 94 minutes. Director: Herbert Biberman.

Blacklisted Hollywood filmmakers made this important movie, subsequently suppressed in the United States for 30 years, during the McCarthy era. The film's story, based on a real event, portrays the dynamic struggles of Hispanic and Anglo zinc miners and their families for better living and working conditions in New Mexico. In what was uncommon at the time, the film also captures the critical role women played during the strike. *Salt of the Earth* stands out not only for its unique history but also for its raising of fundamental issues such as racial, economic, and gender equality; civil liberties; and the rights of labor, issues that are as important today as they were in the 1950s

July 30, 2009, 7:30 p.m. : **Bread and Roses** (2000).
Color. 106 minutes.). Director: Ken Loach.

Maya, an illegal Mexican immigrant in Los Angeles, joins a union organizing drive for office cleaners, a drive based upon the Service Employees International Union's Justice for Janitors campaign there. As she seeks better living and working conditions, health care and other benefits, Maya confronts obstacles that include deportation, her sister Rosa's opposition, and the realities of sexual and economic exploitation. This nuanced film presents the complex difficulties of immigrant strikers' achieving Bread and Roses, the title of a poem (and later a song) written by James Oppenheimer and popularized during the Lawrence Strike of 1912.

August 27, 2009, 7:30 p.m.: **China Blue** (2005).
Color. 88 minutes. Director: Micha X. Peled.

This affecting and prize-winning movie documents the life of one sixteen year old girl who travels from her peasant home to work 80 to 100 hours a week in a sweatshop making blue jeans with hundreds of other young women. Amazing access to the factory was bestowed by the factory owner who was very proud of his business. Pushing the girls to a twenty four hour production schedule to meet a contract deadline provokes a work stoppage by the girls who demand their money (in some cases withheld for months). Few films better document the realities of the global marketplace.