

FIREBURN THE DOCUMENTARY DISCUSSION GUIDE



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES



“

A POWERFUL SHORT FILM ON THE
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS...”

– THE VIRGIN ISLANDS CONSORTIUM




FIREBURN

FIREBURN FOUNDATION INC. PRESENTS FIREBURN - THE DOCUMENTARY
 PRODUCED BY JOEL FENDELMAN EDITOR KONSONANT MUSIC AND POST DIRECTOR OF FILMMAKERS WEBSITES EXECUTIVE PRODUCER NATHANIEL MACK, JR.
 PRODUCED BY ANGELA GOLDEN BRYAN PRODUCED BY ANGELA GOLDEN BRYAN, MARJORIE TINGLE AND STEVEN JAMES TINGLE DIRECTED BY JOEL FENDELMAN
 MADE POSSIBLE BY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION VIRGIN ISLANDS SPONSORED BY NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES - DEMOCRACY DEMANDS WISDOM.

FIREBURNDOCUMENTARY.COM





SYNOPSIS

FIREBURN THE DOCUMENTARY

Fireburn the Documentary

Angela Golden Bryan – Executive Producer, Producer

Joel Fendelman – Director, Cinematographer, Editor

Marjorie Tingle – Producer

Steven Tingus – Producer

21 minutes

Fireburn the Documentary takes a look at the Fireburn of 1878 that took place on the island of St. Croix, “the current day US Virgin Islands”. Historians, cultural ambassadors, educators, and artists of the Virgin Islands share their knowledge and insights relating to the Fireburn in this 21 minute film. This documentary takes us from the emancipation of the enslaved in the Danish West Indies, in 1848, to the Fireburn labor revolt of 1878. You will get a glimpse at how the Laborers’ living and working conditions created an environment ripe for a fiery revolution.

The Fireburn is Virgin Islands’ history, African Diaspora history, Danish history, US history, and Caribbean history...as such, it is world history.

Topics and Issues Relevant to *Fireburn the Documentary*

- Activism
- Civil Rights
- Ethnic Studies
- History – Virgin Islands, Caribbean, Danish, African American, US
- Human Rights
- Labor History
- Post Emancipation
- Race Relations
- Regional Studies
- Women’s Studies

CAST



La Vaughn Belle – Artist, Co-creator of the Monument “I Am Queen Mary”



David K. Christian and Campbell “Ras” Carter – *It's Your Perspective* talk show hosts



Julio “The Native Son” Encarnacion, III – Historian



Yulette C. George – Tour Guide, Crucian Heritage and Nature Tourism



Frandelle Gerard – Executive Director, Crucian Heritage and Nature Tourism Foundation



Senator Myron D. Jackson – Politician, Historian, and Artist



Dr. Patricia M. James – Educator, Historian, Politician, and Community Activist



Dr. Chenzira Davis Kahina – Director, Virgin Islands Caribbean Cultural Center



Eugenie Golden Kelley – Educator and Author, *Masego's Special Gift*



Eugene “Doc” Petersen – Cultural Ambassador

STATEMENT

ANGELA GOLDEN BRYAN

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

From the moment I learned that my ancestors were involved in the bloody labor revolt, known as the Fireburn, I've had a bit of an obsession with the event. The story is one that begs to be told in so many different formats. I've shared the story of the Fireburn orally, as well as in writing, and it resonates with so many people, regardless of their background. Having written two fictional books on the Fireburn, I wanted to give audiences an opportunity to hear more about the Fireburn from a historical perspective, in addition to the oral tradition. It has been a labor of love, and I'm thrilled to have embarked on this journey with so many amazing people.

Thank you for your interest in *Fireburn the Documentary*; may it inspire you to further explore not only the event known as the Fireburn, but the rich history and culture of the Virgin Islands.





FACILITATING A DISCUSSION OF *FIREBURN THE DOCUMENTARY*

We believe that this film is suitable for a wide variety of audiences, and for this reason, have included an assortment of questions. Depending on your time constraints, you can determine how many questions to select. Decide which questions best resonate with your viewers.

The following questions have been provided in order to prompt dialogue, reflection, critical thinking, and ethical action. These questions will stimulate discussion of the film's content, as well as the audience's reaction to the content. It is our hope that they will serve as a launchpad for dialogue designed to arrive at a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding the Fireburn.

1. The Queens and other Laborers were dissatisfied with the treatment they received. What strengths and weaknesses were displayed by their response?
2. What was most shocking or surprising to you?
3. If you were going to tweet a summary of *Fireburn the Documentary's* main point, what would you write?
4. If you were going to tell a friend about *Fireburn the Documentary*, what would you say?
5. What moment in this film was particularly inspiring or disturbing?
6. A month from now, what do you think you'll remember about this film?
7. In a word, how did the film make you feel?
8. What surprised you about this documentary?
9. What was familiar about the content?
10. Why do you believe "ordinary" people become activists?
11. What connections do you, or your community, have to the Fireburn?
12. What contemporary issues are similar to the Fireburn? How are they being addressed?
13. How was the role(s) of women, during the Fireburn, similar to the present time? In what ways do they differ?
14. There is power in numbers. How does this relate to oppressors vs oppressed?
15. In your opinion, what factors paved the way for the Fireburn to occur?
16. What steps must be taken for individuals to become fully accepted as valuable members of society?
17. Inclusion is the practice of including all people in activities. How did this concept relate to the Laborers?
18. What did you learn from *Fireburn the Documentary* that you wish everyone knew? What might change if everyone knew it?
19. What does "anger with a just cause" mean to you?
20. What similar contemporary issues are being addressed through non-violent group action? How is this different from the Fireburn?



ACTION STEPS

Depending on the goals of your group, incorporating activities into the screening event can be a helpful way to counter cynicism or any feelings of frustration that may arise. Activities are also useful for celebrating the rich heritage of the Virgin Islands, as well as a means towards diving deeper into the material. There are many ways to engage with the film's content depending on personal interests and levels of creativity. Here are a few ideas to explore.

1. Discuss the film with family and friends – sometimes dialogue in itself can be transformative.
2. Create a piece of artwork or jewelry that is symbolic of what the Fireburn means to you.
3. Write a poem, song or short story that tells your version of the Fireburn.
4. If you live in the Virgin Islands:
 - a. Contact local historians in your community and invite them to present a lecture or workshop regarding the Fireburn.
 - b. Identify people in your community who have family stories, memories, diaries, and artifacts from the Fireburn and ask them if they would be willing to share their stories.

RESOURCES FOR VIEWERS' FOLLOW-UP

The Fireburn Files is a platform for accessing historical sources relating to the Fireburn. Its purpose is to share information, dialogue, interpretations, and explore the implications of the Fireburn. In addition to Danish archives that have been translated into English, you will also find performances of the Fireburn. <https://fireburnfiles.dk>

Books by Angela Golden Bryan

Fireburn the Screenplay:
A Story of Passion Ignited Based
on the History of St. Croix
Available on Amazon

PURCHASE



James and the Fireburn:
An Anti-bullying and Human
Rights Story Inspired by
Caribbean History
Available on Amazon

PURCHASE





Queen Mary Folksong

Queen Mary, oh where you gon' go burn?
 Queen Mary oh where you gon' go burn?
 Don't ask me nothin' at all. Just give me the match and oil.
 Bassin Jailhouse, ah there the money there.
 Don't ask me nothin' at all. Just give me the match and oil.
 Bassin Jailhouse, ah there the money there.
 Queen Mary, oh where you gon' go burn?
 Queen Mary, oh where you gon' go burn?
 Don't ask me nothin' at all. Just give me the match and
 trash. Bassin Jailhouse, ah there the money there.
 Don't ask me nothin' at all. Just give me the match and
 trash. Bassin Jailhouse, ah there the money there.
 We gon' burn Bassin come down,
 And when we reach the factory, we'll burn am level down.

While the author of the "Queen Mary" folk song is unknown, most islanders (at least the old-timers) know the words. They sing it in celebration of the four Queens of the 1878 Fireburn and the Queens' contributions to labor reform. The song has several variations, as it has changed over the years while being passed down through the generations.

Acknowledgements and Credits

Writer: Angela Golden Bryan
 Contributor: Dr. Gloria Ayot-Cross
 Designer: Audrey Denson

Copyright ©Angela Golden Bryan
 Produced by Fireburn Foundation, Inc

With funding from



Sponsors



Contact Information



Fireburn Foundation, Inc, PO Box 268212, Weston FL 33327
fireburnfoundation@gmail.com
Fireburndocumentary.com
 IG - @Fireburndocumentary