

press release

THIRTEEN/WNET NEW YORK SEEKS TO RESTORE GROUNDBREAKING PUBLIC TELEVISION CLASSICS THAT HAVE LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK ON AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE

Such Series As *The Adams Chronicles*, *The Great American Dream Machine*, *An American Family*, *The 51st State*, And *Skyline* Will Be Made Available To The Public

Thirteen/WNET New York is in the process of a major effort to digitally restore and remaster select videotapes from its archive of some 30,000 public television titles. The series and programs slated for preservation are in imminent danger of being lost forever due to deterioration of the videotapes, some of which are more than 30 years old. Thirteen is currently seeking funds for the preservation initiative.

Initial productions selected for preservation originally aired in the 1970s and include *The Adams Chronicles: 1750-1900*, an Emmy-winning series that marked one of the first television forays into historical dramatization; *The Great American Dream Machine*, an experimental newsmagazine featuring Andy Rooney and Marshall Efron, among other commentators, that took an irreverent and satirical look at American life through short features, sketches and song; *An American Family*, the controversial, original “reality series” that gave the nation an unvarnished glimpse into the troubled life of the Loud family of Santa Barbara, California, and which anthropologist Margaret Meade called “as new and as significant as the invention of drama or the novel – a new way in which people can learn to look at life”; *The 51st State*, a provocative nightly news program that provided in-depth reporting on regional issues of national and urban relevance; and *Skyline*, a pioneering arts series that revealed the creative process by profiling the actual act of creating art.

“Television is still our most powerful medium, and no other has had a greater impact on society,” said Carmen DiRienzo, Thirteen’s vice president and director of Corporate Affairs. “Thirteen has been a leader in the production of groundbreaking national programming that has reached millions of viewers, and helped shape their perceptions and experiences of American culture and values. Preserving these productions means preserving an integral part of our shared



national heritage.”

Priority productions include those with content that is historically significant for the nation or New York City, those that reflect the cultural diversity of New York City as a window on urban America, and those that capture milestone moments in the arts. Because of the age and fragile condition of the videotapes, they are deteriorating rapidly and the programs are in danger of being lost forever. The goal of the preservation initiative, one of a very few in public television, is to save these important productions for future generations. By making new masters of the original programs, Thirteen will be able to make them accessible and available to the public for research and other purposes for the first time in more than 25 years.

Thirteen has already submitted proposals to a number of funding sources, including the National Endowment for the Humanities; the National Historical Publications and Records Commission; and the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program, established by the Library of Congress after Congress passed legislation in 2000 for the purpose of preserving America’s cultural heritage.

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Thirteen/WNET New York is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *Charlie Rose*, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*, *Wide Angle*, *Stage on Screen*, *Secrets of the Dead*, and *Cyberchase* – as well as the work of Bill Moyers – to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public broadcaster in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area, Thirteen reaches millions of viewers each week, airing the best of American public television along with its own local productions such as *The Ethnic Heritage Specials*, *The Thirteen Walking Tours*, *New York Voices*, and *Reel New York*. With educational and community outreach projects that extend the impact of its television productions, Thirteen takes television “out of the box.” And as broadcast and digital media converge, Thirteen is blazing trails in the creation of Web sites, enhanced television, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, educational software, and other cutting-edge media products. More information about Thirteen can be found at: www.thirteen.org.

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