



# PRESS RELEASE

**The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum**  
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**FEBRUARY 28, 2007**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**FOR INFORMATION CALL: CLIFF LAUBE at (845) 486-7745**

THE PARE LORENTZ FILM CENTER OF THE  
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY  
PRESENTS

**THE FILMS OF PARE LORENTZ:**  
***THE PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS* and *THE RIVER***

**SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2 PM**  
**HENRY A. WALLACE CENTER**

HYDE PARK, NY—On Sunday, March 11 at 2 p.m., documentary film enthusiasts can attend a special program, **The Films of Pare Lorentz: *The Plow That Broke The Plains* and *The River***, at the Henry A. Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Home. The films are presented by the Pare Lorentz Film Center of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.

*The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River* were created in the 1930s by Pare Lorentz (1905-1992) for the US Resettlement Administration (RA), part of Roosevelt's New Deal. Amazingly, the first man to produce major documentary films for the US government had never before produced, directed or written any motion picture. However, he was a professional writer and film critic with strong feelings about how motion pictures could be used for purposes besides entertainment.

Hired by RA Administrator, Rexford Guy Tugwell, to become a consultant on motion pictures for information and education purposes, Pare Lorentz convinced Tugwell that the

films had to be interesting enough in their own right to be shown and distributed in commercial theaters across the country, greatly expanding the audiences for the film.

Unlike the usual dry, dull style of government propaganda films of the period, Pare Lorentz believed that the film had to be able to hold an audience by dramatic means, using powerful and emotionally compelling imagery, music and words to clarify the problem the film was highlighting and to explain why the government had devised programs to correct the problems.

*The Plow That Broke the Plains* covers the causes and effects of the Dust Bowl and *The River* conveys the danger and magnificence of the Mississippi River. Both were filmed on location with real people engaged in the production. Virgil Thomson, the renowned composer, created the powerful and emotional scores using as “source music” well known traditional songs such as “Git Along, Little Dogies” and “Laredo.” Pare Lorentz edited the film footage to make maximum use of the music and wrote the poetic narration himself.

The films will be introduced by John Hotrovich, Adjunct Professor of History of Mass Communications at Dutchess Community College. He graduated with a BA in Music Education from Montclair State College and has a Masters Degree in Music from Western Connecticut State College.

There is no charge for this event. Please contact Cliff Laube, Public Affairs Specialist, at (845) 486-7745 or email [clifford.laube@nara.gov](mailto:clifford.laube@nara.gov) with any questions about the film viewing. For additional information about all upcoming events, register for our Email Bulletin by sending your email address to [clifford.laube@nara.gov](mailto:clifford.laube@nara.gov) and type "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.

**The Pare Lorentz Film Center's** primary mission is to apply audio visual techniques to the teaching of the history of the Roosevelt era. The Center is funded by the Franklin and

Eleanor Roosevelt Institute through a generous grant from the New York Community Trust. Pare Lorentz was a groundbreaking film maker whose documentary films are a powerful synthesis of stunning imagery, evocative music and poetic narration.

**The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum** is dedicated to preserving historical material and providing innovative educational programs, community events, and public outreach. It is one of twelve presidential libraries administered by the National Archives and Records Administration. For information about the FDR Presidential Library call (800) 337-8474 or visit [www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu).

**Historic Hyde Park** is a group of government and private non-profit organizations based in Hyde Park, New York. Each has a unique mission, but all are united in their dedication to extending the legacy of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt to new generations. HHP includes the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, and Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. For more information about HHP visit [www.HistoricHydePark.org](http://www.HistoricHydePark.org).