



## WNET PRODUCTIONS: Cultural Tourism Implications

**WNET is a true cultural and community asset for its bi-national region.** The power of WNET to draw attention to attractions in the Buffalo-Niagara region, in New York State, and in Toronto/Southern Ontario is repeatedly demonstrated by the local and national broadcast of television productions such as *Niagara Falls*, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo*, *Buffalo's Houses of Worship*, *Toronto's Houses of Worship*, *A New Zoo for Buffalo*, *Fort Niagara: Struggle for a Continent*, *Wineries of Western New York, the Finger Lakes, and the Niagara Peninsula*, *The Adirondacks*, and others. Through the *Our Town* series, WNET has profiled 14 New York and Canadian communities, showcasing their charm and attractiveness for a wide audience.

WNET-TV is a leading producer of single-topic documentary programming for national PBS broadcast. Since 2004, PBS has nationally broadcast nine WNET documentaries—*Fort Niagara: Struggle for a Continent*, *America's Houses of Worship*, *Window to the Sea*, *Niagara Falls*, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo*, *The Marines*, *The Adirondacks*, *Your Life/Your Money*, and *Elbert Hubbard: An American Original*. These documentaries have been seen by millions of people across the continent, stimulating cultural tourism to our region's historic, artistic, and architectural treasures. The ratings information below further speaks to their reach and publicity value.

*Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo*: Broadcast premiere on September 4, 2006 was seen by 1,231,765 people in 559,893 television households in 38 metered markets with an average rating of 1.3. Throughout the month of September, the documentary was carried by 117 stations across the United States. The program aired in the second (Los Angeles), third (Chicago), fourth (Philadelphia), and fifth (Boston) largest markets in the country. PRtrak estimated the publicity value of the September broadcast on 71 stations across the country at \$3,018,575. Additionally, three newspaper articles printed prior to the broadcast premiere (in the *New York Times*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, and *Capital Times* in Madison, WI—combined circulation 1,485,432) had a publicity value of \$305,544 according to PRtrak.

The documentary impacted tourism at both the Darwin Martin House and Graycliff. In the four months

following the national PBS broadcast of *Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo*, visitation to the Darwin Martin House was 49% greater than visitation during that same time period one year earlier. In the year following the broadcast, visitation increased 56%. Additionally, 59% of all guests came from out-of-town (48% from U.S. locations outside of Western New York, 9.5% from Canada, and 1.5% from international locations). Related tour revenue increased 93% and merchandise sales in the Martin House's museum shops increased 82%.

*The Adirondacks*: Broadcast premiere on May 14, 2008 was seen by 1,942,180 people in 882,809 households with an average rating of 1.1 in 52 metered markets, including nine of the top 10 U.S. markets (Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Dallas, San Francisco, Boston, Atlanta, Washington, DC, and Houston). The program also aired on public television in New York City after the national

WNET's national PBS documentaries provide a window for the world into what makes our bi-national region a special and important place. Their value may be best articulated by Edward Healy, Director of Communications for the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), who said:

*"WNET's production of Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo is the **most powerful marketing tool ever deployed** by the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau on behalf of our community. Although it was created as a serious piece of broadcast journalism and has received ample praise as an exemplary documentary, Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo has also served as a powerful promotional tool that **has changed hearts and minds about our city**...The CVB has given away several thousand DVDs of Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo. We cannot make a more powerful case on behalf of Buffalo than our friends and colleagues at WNET have in this moving and profound production."*

The CVB distributed copies of *Frank Lloyd Wright's Buffalo* at the 2007 National Preservation Conference. According to Healy, the DVDs were a "spectacular success" and "created real buzz" among the conference attendees. This helped the CVB secure Buffalo's highly sought-after bid for the 2011 National Preservation Conference.

broadcast premiere. Articles promoting the documentary appeared nationally in the *New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. The Wild Center Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks has sold more than 200 DVDs of *The Adirondacks* in its museum gift shop since the broadcast premiere.

*Fort Niagara: Struggle for a Continent*: Broadcast premiere on October 18, 2004 was seen by 754,956 people in 343,162 households with an average rating of .9 in 25 metered markets. Admissions staff at Old Fort Niagara has reported many visitors saying the documentary prompted them to visit. They believe, with certainty, the national and regional airings of the program have drawn new visitors to the site.

*Niagara Falls*: Broadcast premiere on July 5, 2006 was seen by 3,631,062 people in 1,650,483 households with a 2.1 average rating and a 4 share in 50 metered markets. The premiere aired in eight of the top 10 U.S. markets. Additionally, international broadcast rights have been sold in Australia, Romania, Switzerland, Turkey, and to a London-based group that boasts worldwide distribution.

*The Marines*: Broadcast premiere on February 21, 2007 was seen by 2,967,119 people in 1,348,690 households with an average rating of 1.5 in 51 metered markets. It aired in each of the top 25 U.S. markets. The program was the subject of articles in the *New York Post* and on Bloomberg.com.

*Your Life/Your Money*: Broadcast premiere on September 9, 2009 was seen by 424,425 people in 192,921 households in 46 metered markets, including eight of the top 10 and 16 of the top 20 U.S. markets. The program aired in 45 of the top 50 markets nationwide during the months of September and October 2009. It was also the subject of numerous national newspaper, magazine, and web articles.

*Elbert Hubbard: An American Original*: Broadcast premiere on November 23, 2009 was seen by 449,091 people in 204,132 households in 26 metered markets, including four of the top 10 U.S. markets. The program was the subject of articles in *The New York Times* and *American Bungalow* magazine.

WNED is currently in production on two additional national PBS documentaries that highlight our region's rich history and attractions: *Chautauqua* is slated to premiere nationally in late 2010, and *The War of 1812* is expected to air nationally on PBS in 2011.

**Did You Know...One of two significant travel trends expected to dominate the tourism market in the next decade is the growing number of special interest travelers who rank the arts, heritage and/or cultural activities as one of their top five reasons for traveling.**

From 1996 to 2002, there was a 13% increase in the number of "cultural tourists" nationwide. Tourism is expected to become the world's largest industry by the year 2020.

In a 2002 study, the Travel Industry Association (TIA) categorized 55.1 million Americans—more than one-third of the total American travelers—as "sustainable tourists" or "Geotourists." These travelers are interested in unique and culturally authentic travel experiences and in trips that provide educational experiences. The study also showed that a high percentage of these travelers watch public television. Additionally, a 2001 TIA survey of 1,300 U.S. adults found that 34% of travelers visited a destination specifically because of an article in publication/Internet or on TV/radio.\*

\*Sources: Travel Industry Association of America TravelScope Survey, *The Historic/Cultural Traveler*, 2003 Edition, TIA and Smithsonian Magazine, [www.nasaa-arts.org/artworks/culture\\_profile.shtml](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/artworks/culture_profile.shtml); Travel Industry Association of America, *The Geotourism Study*, 2002, [www.tia.org/pubs/geotourismphasefinal.pdf](http://www.tia.org/pubs/geotourismphasefinal.pdf); Survey by Travel Industry Association of America, July 2001, [www.tia.org/pressmedia/travel\\_media.html](http://www.tia.org/pressmedia/travel_media.html).

## The Effect of Historical Documentaries on Cultural Tourism:

Broadcast of historical documentaries on PBS often has a positive effect on tourism:

- The 2002 broadcast of Ken Burns' *Mark Twain* sparked a doubling in the number of visitors to the Mark Twain House in Hartford, Connecticut in the months immediately following the broadcast.
- Taliesin Preservation in Wisconsin reported that the broadcast of Burns' *Frank Lloyd Wright* in 1999 had a positive effect on visitation, with 55% of their visitors that year having seen the documentary. Of that group, 65% said the documentary influenced their decision to visit.
- Following the February 1997 broadcast of *Thomas Jefferson*, Monticello experienced a 40% increase in visitation and a 19% increase in sales from its catalog and museum shops.
- Past war documentaries on PBS—such as *The War That Made America* (French & Indian War), *The Mexican-American War*, and *The Civil War*—have raised awareness and had a positive impact on tourism to historical sites featured in the programs. *The War That Made America*, broadcast in January 2006, was reviewed or mentioned by over 300 print media outlets across the United States with a total circulation of 104,000,000. Fort Necessity in Pennsylvania was one site featured in the program. The fort added an interpretive and education center to accommodate visitors and saw its attendance more than double in the year following the PBS broadcast.

## The PBS Viewer and Tourism

Public television has an unparalleled reach with more than 61 million people in 39 million American households watching during an average week. More than 124 million people access PBS content either on-air or online in a typical month, making PBS' audience significantly larger than many of the commercial channels available today. The PBS audience is a key target for cultural, historical, and architectural tourism. According to 2006 Doublebase Mediamark Research Inc., PBS viewers are:

- 83% more likely to travel in a motor home/RV than non-PBS viewers
- 62% more likely to visit a museum during their leisure time
- 41% more likely to visit a National Park
- 26% more likely to spend \$5,000+ on a domestic trip
- 26% more likely to go backpacking or hiking while on vacation
- 21% more likely to go sightseeing