“By Parties Unknown” Premiere

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A new documentary produced by WKU-PBS sheds light on the violent killing of four black men in Logan County in 1908.

Amy Bingham has more on the thought provoking film “By Parties Unknown” in this week’s View from the Hill.

It’s hard to watch and even harder to comprehend. The WKU-PBS produced documentary titled “By Parties Unknown” is a look back at a part of Logan County’s history that’s a difficult but necessary story to tell.

“I never thought I’d be able to tell the story. I figured I would write something about it and tell it but I never figured that I’d get it in a documentary where all the nation could see it.”

“By Parties Unknown” is a documentary produced by WKU-PBS that details the story behind the lynchings of four black men in Logan County in 1908.

“What if I tell the truth, can’t I do that? Ain’t the truth good?”

“Sometimes it hits me kind of emotional. It’s just, I’ve tied up thirty something years of my life telling this story and it hits me kind of the same way it hit me the first time I heard it.”

Russellville native Michael Morrow says his grandmother Maddie Bell was eight years old when the lynchings took place. She always wanted him to tell the story.

“She knew it was wrong and she wanted people to see it for what it was.”

“The history of Logan County is where I first went, the little blue book…”

Morrow has spent years running the SEEK Museum dedicated to telling buried stories about struggles for freedom, equality and justice. He crossed paths with producer Josh Niedwick four years ago.

“Lynching is something this nation has a history of, especially in a specific time period, that’s kind of been glossed over.”

“And we really don’t pay enough attention to it to understand just the impact it had on small communities, larger communities and our nation as a whole.”

The lynchings shocked the community into silence 115 years ago. The film peels back the details surrounding an incident involving Rufus Browder that touched off the brutal murders of four other men.

“There were members of the family who thought their ancestors were lynched because they did something unspeakably horrible and had no idea that no, these gentlemen were just trying to protect their friend and help him get a fair shake in the legal system.”

More than 100 people came out to two recent showings of the documentary at the Logan County Courthouse in the same courtroom where Rufus Browder stood trial.

Morrow said he couldn’t help but think his grandmother, Maddie Bell, would be glad the story is being told to current and future generations.

“I hope young people see it and learn from it. I hope other people see it and learn from it. I hope they learn what shouldn’t happened to anybody you know how we gotta start treating each other and how we have to start watching out for each other.”

This is WKYU-PBS’s largest distribution of content to date reaching close to 80 percent of the U.S. population. If you would like to see “By Parties Unknown” you can log onto [www.wkyupbs.org\bypartiesunknown](http://www.wkyupbs.org\bypartiesunknown).

With this week’s View from the Hill.

Classroom curriculum for the film has been created for grades nine through 12 and can also be found on the website.