

Madeline Anderson in Conversation: *Pioneering an African American Documentary Tradition*

MICHAEL T. MARTIN

I felt the history right under my feet.

—MADELINE ANDERSON (2001)

Introduction

Madeline Anderson's documentary oeuvre, though modest, is as seminal and compelling an account of the times as it is instructive. As such, she merits renewed consideration among a distinguished cohort of pioneering African American women filmmakers, including Eloyce Gist and ethnographers Zora Neale Hurston and Eslanda Goode Robeson. What follows is a conversation engaging with the evolution of her documentary practice, a practice honed by the vagaries of circumstance and the determinations of race and gender.¹ And perhaps more importantly, an undaunted ethos to make films "useful to improve our people" and conviction eloquently evinced by Anderson in these words: "I filmed history in the making, and it was an honor."²

What can be said about Anderson's chronicle of history in real time? In *Integration Report 1* (1960) and *The Walls Come Tumbling Down* (1975), she took cause with local struggles for civil rights and black empowerment which corresponded with other national and international struggles for social justice and human rights. In *Malcolm X: Nationalist or Humanist* (1967), she interrogated and found wanting the efficacy of integration. In *I Am Somebody* (1969)—the most deeply personal of her films—Anderson documented what two labor historians contend was "one of the South's most disruptive and bitter labor confrontations since the 1930s": the strike largely by black women workers at the Medical College Hospital of the University of South

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Figure 1. Madeline Anderson at the Black Film Center/Archive (BFC/A), Indiana University, January 18, 2013. Courtesy of Nzingha Kendall, BFC/A.

Carolina in Charleston.³ Poignantly, she later declared: “I identified with them as a black woman, as a black working woman, as a wife and mother of children.”⁴

Identifying with her subjects, their plight and struggles is what distinguishes Anderson from most other documentary filmmakers of her generation. And, as much ethical as it is political, that conviction frames three fundamental constituents of her documentary practice: First, that film must have utility and social purpose; second, it must endeavor to give voice to protagonists who otherwise are marginalized and silenced; and third, it must resist and debunk the received view that African Americans are unable to manage their own affairs. Such tenets cohere and correspond to programmatic statements of *Third Cinema*—the counterhistorical reading of hegemony manifest and most prevalent during the 1960s and 1970s. What matters most then about Madeline Anderson is not her documentary style or artistic sensibility, but rather her sustained advocacy on behalf of black people and their self-

empowerment. And it is here that her contribution to a profoundly humanistic African American documentary tradition is convincingly foundational.

Michael T. Martin (MTM): *I would like to begin with the statement you made at IU Cinema yesterday: “The purpose of my films is not to make money or to make me famous. I want my films to be useful.” What do you mean by “useful”?*

Madeline Anderson (MA): I think that media has to be utilitarian. I was criticized a lot for that view and I accept the criticism. I was not interested in making entertainment. I wanted my films to be used to improve our people. Many people dismissed my films as message films.

MTM: *Film has to have a social purpose?*

MA: Yes. At that time it was true and it's true now. And you can still express everything that you want as an artist through your technique and sensibility. At that time, the documentary and the techniques of making them were very narrow. It was usually a picture and somebody's voice-over. While I wanted to be a filmmaker and give information I also wanted to be an artist. So, I tried to express my artistic sense in my films even though they were documentaries.⁵

MTM: *Is giving voice to the protagonists in your films—enabling them to speak for themselves—a defining aspect, too, of your working practice?*

MA: This is true. Another aspect of how I made my films depended on the equipment. I was a student of equipment. When I started making films part of my education was to know exactly what each piece of equipment was capable of doing. What are its possibilities?

MTM: *How else can you know your craft?*

MA: Exactly. You can't sing unless you know what music is about. I was criticized for this too, but for a different reason. I went to equipment houses. In those days there weren't film schools. The way you became a filmmaker, film editor or technician in the field, was by becoming an apprentice. You had to find someone who would accept you as an apprentice. From that position you advanced. For example, if you wanted to be an editor you first became an apprentice editor, then an assistant editor, and then editor. I wanted to do the whole thing. I didn't want to tell someone how to edit. I wanted to edit. One of my fantasies was that someone would be standing at the door pushing film in and I would sit there and edit and just edit.

I went to museums and studied art. I learned every facet of the camera and how you developed long shots, close-ups, and what you could do with those long shots, close-ups and medium shots. I learned lighting and how the light fell on a subject and the differences between close-ups because light

has something to do with it. I learned all of that from people who were at the top of their professions. At that time that kind of information was available at little or no cost. I learned how to record sound. Why did I learn every facet of filmmaking? Making films is expensive and, if you have to hire someone to do everything that makes it even more expensive.

So, I decided that I wasn't going to be a cameraperson. I did not want to record sound, even though I knew how. I wanted to edit film. I wanted to take all of those parts of filmmaking and make them say what I was trying to say.

Now, how did I become an editor? My father was not in the industry and I was not someone's son—a requirement to enter what was a father/son union and a father/son craft. I had to depend on the goodwill of people that I knew who could influence others to help me. What I did—one of the best things that I ever did—while I was going to school because I had to work, was to answer a job ad for a babysitter boarder with Ricky Leacock and his wife.⁶ Ricky was a genius cameraman and had just finished working on Robert Flaherty's *Louisiana Story* (1948). I got the job as his babysitter boarder and that was wonderful. After working and living with them for a while I told them about my ambition to become a filmmaker. It was largely because of Ricky that I became a filmmaker and after I got married he gave me a job as a production manager in his company—Andover Productions—when he was making a series of films for MIT followed by one for NBC on Bernstein's tour in Europe.⁷

MTM: *Leonard Bernstein?*

MA: Yes. After we completed the production, Ricky asked a friend who was editing it if I could come into the editing room. That's when I got my apprenticeship. After the apprenticeship I applied to become a member of the union but was turned down because I didn't have enough experience.

After Ricky I worked with Shirley Clarke who was part of a group of filmmakers that used the same production facilities that Ricky did.⁸ There I was educated, not only by Ricky, but also by Shirley Clarke, the Basil brothers, D. A. Pennebaker, and Graham Ferguson from the Canadian Film Board. Imagine being around these people for two years and the education that I got.

MTM: *We will revisit Clarke later in the conversation. Let's return to the organizing principles of your film work. Is it fair to say that, along with the social utility of your films and giving voice to people, otherwise marginalized and silenced, a third aspect of your practice is that you identify as a black woman with the struggles of the people in your films?*

MA: Yes, as a black woman I do identify with their struggles and because some of their struggles were my struggles—my own personal struggles. I

tried to get into a union and the reason why was for a decent salary and respect. You probably can't imagine the disrespect I experienced as a black woman trying to get into a predominantly white male union and without the normal connections.⁹



Figure 2. *I Am Somebody* (1969).

MTM: *I hear that.*

MA: In Local 771, which

I was trying to become a member of, there were a thousand white men, nine white women, and one black woman. "Here's another one knocking at the door". Often in institutions in society there is the practice of tokenism. You let one person in and then you can feel good about yourself.

MTM: *We're integrated.*

MA: That's what happened to me in a number of cases. Even before *Black Journal* when I was working for PBS there were protests that not enough, or that any of the programming, was directed to the black community.

MTM: *I remember that too.*

MA: Emma Bowen, who was in charge of one of the organizations for equality in media, demonstrated at the office building of NET, which later became WNET.¹⁰ People picketed demanding black representation in programming. One of the producers that I was working with on a project at NET—where I had worked as an editor for about seven years—came to me because of the bad publicity and said, "Madeline, would you mind speaking to the demonstrators? Tell them that you work here and that we're not racist." I replied, "Well, that doesn't prove anything because it's just me. It's only one person and what they're saying is true." I refused to go and thought, well, good-bye job, but they didn't fire me.

MTM: *Continuing with your working practice, what are the things that you consider in the development of a project?*

MA: First, I always started out with an idea of what I wanted to express. Second, how do I get the funds to do it? And third, how do I do it—how am I going to make this film? Many times I didn't get the funding. Then how

do I make the film? How do I at least start it? You cut back on your ambitions. The technique I used was to make what was then called a “composite film”. In my mind, a composite film is using existing material and adding to it. When I first started out I thought to make a survey film. It should be like a table of contents: What’s going on now? How to cover it? Was it going on all over the country? Well, there was no way that I could do that. So, my first stop was always to go to the networks because they knew me there. I would write a proposal and present it to them.

MTM: *For the raw footage?*

MA: No, for funding the film. I started with the funding. If they said no, I said, “Well, what can I get?” and asked “Would you let me use your film library?” When I knew I wasn’t going to get the funding, I couldn’t fool around because I was in a hurry. I would go to another network. Get funding? No. “Can I use your film library?” Yes, no. When I got permission the next issue was how to shoot the live action? How do I shoot that? I remember once I was trying to make a tracking shot for *Integration Report 1*. It required animation, but I had no money for animation. So D. A. Pennebaker made a contraption for me. On a long piece of wood he put a camera and moved it down the length of the wood. That was my tracking shot.¹¹

MTM: *Talk about innovating.*

MA: Right! That was my tracking shot and that’s the reason why I called it earlier a composite film because it was made of bits and pieces of a lot of things. It’s like an artist with a palette using different colors. That’s how I put the film together.

MTM: *In an interview with African Voices in 2001, you said, “I am a documentary filmmaker.”¹² It’s my job to capture the truth.” Is the truth—the recognition of it—only possible in documentary? Is there “truth” in fiction?*

MA: I was referring to truth in documentary. A lot of people made films which they called documentary but weren’t. They made them in the documentary style. To me a documentary is what’s happening. Remember Wexler’s film?

MTM: *Haskell Wexler.*

MA: Yes.

MTM: *Which one?*

MA: I think it was *The Bus* [1963].

MTM: *Not to be confused with Bob Young's Sit-In [1960]?*

MA: Robert Young, that's another story. I know him too. We were contemporaries. But let me illustrate what I'm trying to say about truth. Wexler's film was an enactment of a historical incident. It was shot in documentary style. People said, "Wow, what a great documentary". But it wasn't a documentary. It was true that the incident happened. What was also true was that Wexler added footage that would add interest to the film. Do you understand what I'm trying to say?

MTM: *Yes.*

MA: Well, that's what I was talking about. I wasn't criticizing people that made other kinds of documentaries.

MTM: *I didn't think you were.*

MA: That's my personal point of view. I did not want to get entertainment into my footage because that was not my purpose. Alright!

MTM: *I would like for you to speak about several of your films, beginning with Integration Report 1.*

MA: I made *Integration Report 1* under the auspices of Andover Productions. I wanted to record the struggle of black people which was in high gear in the fifties, starting with Brown.¹³ After Brown the Montgomery Bus Boycott¹⁴ and after that Emmett Till was killed.¹⁵ There was a lot of ferment and struggle for equal rights. The first thing that I shot in *Integration Report 1* was a demonstration over school education in Ocean-Hill Brownsville, Brooklyn.¹⁶

MTM: *Yes.*

MA: There was also the continuing struggle over desegregation because, even though Brown had been passed in '54, it wasn't complied with and still isn't. So, with the money I had started recording in Brooklyn and then moved down South. I don't know if you recall Robert Williams?¹⁷

MTM: *Negroes with Guns [1962].*

MA: Next, I think I went to Greenville and am not sure where from there?¹⁸

MTM: *Let's turn to your piece on the striking black hospital workers in Charleston in I Am Somebody. In it you appear in conversation and solidarity with their cause.*

MA: Their struggle represented my struggle to join the union. I was kept out because of gender. I was disrespected and so were they. You see how identical our struggles were?



Figure 3. *Integration Report 1* (1960).



Figure 4. *Integration Report 1*.

The kinship I felt toward the women of *I Am Somebody* compelled me to translate the essence of their experience to film as genuinely as I could. I identified with them as a black woman as a black working woman, as a wife and mother of children. Their grit and determination to succeed were evocative of my own efforts to become a member of the film editors' union. Our obstacles were the same, those of gender, racial discrimination, and politics. In the criticisms and analyses of the film by some white feminists during the 70s, *I Am Somebody* was

not regarded as a feminist film. To me, the importance of the film was not its classification, however; it is a film made by a black woman for and about black women. At the time my concern was had I been successful in making a film that was true to their experience?¹⁹



Figure 5. *I Am Somebody*.

MTM: Yes.

MA: So, when I made *I Am Somebody* with these women my main objective was to make a film that was true to their experience and their experience was my experience.²⁰

MTM: In the piece *Malcolm X: Nationalist or Humanist* you problematize the prospect of integration in America. Did you share that view, as Malcolm did, during that period of the struggle for civil rights?

MA: I think every black person in America did then and even now questions it? We move forward by the law and then, in many instances, the law is not complied with. We go backwards. What happened in Florida during the last [presidential] election is a case in point, even though Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act in 1965.²¹ Do you see what I'm saying?

MTM: African Americans were denied the vote.

MA: They were denied. We make strides but if they're not enforced we continue to struggle. Sometimes I wonder will the struggle ever be over? I think it will but maybe not in my lifetime, but I think it will.

MTM: In 1975, for the Ford Foundation you made *The Walls Come Tumbling Down*. In it you foreground black peoples' capacity to manage their own affairs



Figure 6. *Integration Report 1.*

when given the opportunity in the projects of St. Louis. Taken together, are Integration Report 1, Malcolm X: Nationalist or Humanist, and The Walls Come Tumbling Down—despite their differences—your call for black empowerment. Am I reading too much here?

MA: No, absolutely not. We're denied power so there are doubts about whether we can manage power. I wanted to show in every film I made that we can manage ourselves, but we have to be given the opportunity to do so. What happened to the people in *The Walls Come Tumbling Down* is an example of what happens when we are given power, which is the same thing that happens to any other people that are given power. We have to know how to handle power because it is a very strong influence and you can abuse it. Power gives people the opportunity for personal agendas. They forget the source of the power. If you're not able to resist personal agendas you destroy the most wonderful thing about power. You have to remember the source of the power. I'm talking specifically about black people now. You didn't give yourself that power. Someone else did because we are a minority and controlled by the majority. So, the majority has given us this power expecting us to abuse it and we forget and do. But look what Martin Luther King [Jr.] did. He was blessed to be able to use that power to reach his goal for improving humanity.



Figure 7 and 8. *The Walls Come Tumbling Down* (1975).

MTM: In *I Am Somebody*, you foreground the solidarity of the labor movement with the women strikers. Does this alliance between the black working class and labor unions persist today?

MA: No, and I'll tell you why. The strike in *I Am Somebody* was the last coalition between the civil rights movement and labor. What has happened is that labor has lost its power because of opposition to unions and because the younger generation doesn't understand the source of power created when workers become union members. So, labor is losing ground because they don't know how to deal with this new generation and age of individualism. It's not that the new generation doesn't like unions but their emphasis is more on the individual.

MTM: Let's turn the corner and discuss your experience with the short lived *Black Journal*. Who were the principals associated with the *Journal*?

MA: It's a very short history. The initial principal was Al Perlmutter who was white. I had been working with Al for years as an editor of projects he was producing. So I knew him. He was the executive producer of *Black Journal* when we started. Then began the struggle for power at the *Journal*. It was not only a struggle for power but also for peace and truth.

MTM: A struggle for representation?

MA: No, for truth. *Black Journal* was being advertised as a series for, about, and by black people. That wasn't true. We had a white head and a black body.

MTM: That's a powerful metaphor.

MA: Thank you. So, the staff said, "No, we're living a lie here. We do, indeed, want the series to be and do this." Ironically, it was because of Al Perlmutter



Figure 9. *I Am Somebody.*

that *Black Journal* was started and now we were telling him that he should leave. After a while he agreed.

MTM: *Enter William Greaves?*

MA: At first they wanted Lou Potter, who was writing for the series. There were objections because Lou Potter did not have a background in film, although he's a wonderful writer. So, in the search for a new executive producer, Bill Greaves was chosen.

MTM: *Did the mission of Black Journal change under Greaves?*

MA: With Perlmutter it was the regular format for public television: talking heads but not struggles because they didn't want to promote that.

MTM: *Did the subject matter change with Greaves?*

MA: From peaceful demonstrations and nice Negroes talking about what we should have, which we wanted, but we also wanted people to know, "Hey, the struggle is going on".

MTM: *A dramatic shift?*

MA: We wanted the intellectual parts of the struggle to be known in the beginning. When Bill came he said, "Look, this is the golden age for us and we

have to do the best we can and to do what we want to do". He had a willing staff and whipped us into shape.

MTM: *The approach changed?*

MA: It wasn't so much that the format changed. What changed was the essence of what we wanted to say.

MTM: *You were among the first generation at Black Journal. Later, Stan Lathan, St. Clair Bourne, and I know Julie Dash did an apprenticeship there and others.*

MA: I was there before they were. Even when *Black Journal* started I had to ask to be transferred there. They wanted me to stay where I was. I said no. This transition was a continuation of my development. I wanted to be where the action was and where the struggles for my people were. So they transferred me to the *Journal*.

MTM: *What do you mean by that?*

MA: As I said earlier, before Bill were intellectual discussions about the possibilities for integration, those kinds of things.

MTM: *Safe discussions?*

MA: Yes. Then when Bill came he continued, to a lesser extent, those intellectual discussions, but told us—and rightfully so—we should be in where the action was.

MTM: *In the middle of it.*

MA: That's it. We should be "in the middle of it," if we wanted to be true. So, Bill did something that was unprecedented. Not in the beginning, but later he sent Kent Garrett to Vietnam and did a program about black soldiers.²² Are you familiar with that?

MTM: *I saw that. Under Greaves, did Black Journal develop a particular style and signature?*

MA: It was like no other show that had ever been done on television—black or white.

MTM: *In what way?*

MA: He encouraged us to do programs about what was really affecting our people.

MTM: *Immediate stuff?*

MA: Yes, immediate. It was done, too, because people wanted to do that, St. Clair [Bourne], Kent Garrett, and there was Horace Jenkins.

MTM: Was there a shared ideology among the producers and directors at Black Journal?

MA: Yes.

MTM: How would you characterize it?

MA: We encouraged each other. Everyone was rooting for one another. There was no competition about who was going to do what. I was an editor to begin with and it was only later when Bill gave me a chance to do *Malcolm X: Nationalist or Humanist* that I moved from editor to producer and director.

MTM: What was distinctive about Black Journal?

MA: Remember the other series that aired at that time—*Soul*, *Inside Bed-Stuy*?

Well, they were different because each one emphasized a facet of black life. But *Black Journal* was distinctive because it addressed the bread and butter issues that were affecting black people.



Figure 10. Malcolm X, November 24, 1966. UPI. Courtesy of Madeline Anderson.

MTM: *If it has one, what's Black Journal's legacy?*

MA: Even to this day, I don't know of any programming that does what *Black Journal* did.

MTM: *With such consistency?*

MA: Yes, with such consistency. We did three years of it, right? I was so sorry when Bill had to leave for personal reasons, which were very important.

MTM: *Can you talk about that?*

MA: No, I can't. When Bill left I left because *I Am Somebody* was there waiting for me and I knew it was urgent that I make it. St. Claire and Kent left, too, and we knew it was going to be different. We knew that.

MTM: *Let's revisit several subjects earlier in the conversation. How did you negotiate race and gender in a white male environment once you joined the union?*

MA: When I got into the union I felt free. Before then, as an editor, I had to depend on someone else to give me work. If I wasn't hired then I didn't work. But once I got into the union I knew enough about finances, the film industry, and where I was going that I could control what I was going to do. I had that kind of confidence in myself, maybe it was misplaced.

MTM: *You must have had people throwing stuff at you. A black woman in the driver's seat in an over determining white male environment, you must have been as tough as nails when you had to be?*

MA: Yes, I could and was. I would say though that the opportunities I had were narrow. I wasn't competing with anyone to make a film in Hollywood, which for others was their aspiration. That was the goal of blacks and whites in film. Even I was offered a film from Universal.

MTM: *All roads lead to Hollywood.*

MA: I wasn't interested but that's right, for money and universal exposure. I knew what I wanted to do. So, there wasn't much competition in the things that were thrown at me. That's not true though. I had other opportunities. I worked for the Children's Television Workshop. It wasn't about blacks there but, by using a film I made, I caused a lot controversy. Within their curriculum I would make films that no one else had thought to make or didn't want to make. I'll tell you this particular one about teaching the word "me". I was given the song and supposed to illustrate "me". I went to the Chinese community and chose a little girl who was Chinese. I followed all day and recorded her activities. I made a beautiful little film about "me". It



Figure 11. Julianna Wang and Madeline Anderson filming *The Electric Company* for The Children's Television Workshop, 1973. Photo: Emily Squires. Courtesy of Madeline Anderson.

caused so much controversy within CTW. Why? They said because children learning about “me” could not identify with this little girl—which was not true.

MTM: *Because she was Chinese.*

MA: But three- to five-year-olds don't know the difference.

MTM: *And don't associate a value to difference when they see it?*

MA: No.

MTM: *Or make a judgment about someone based on that difference?*

MA: So it wasn't the children that wouldn't accept it; it was the white staff. One more example: I made this other beautiful little film about a black man who had a shoe repair stand in a Harlem neighborhood. “Oh, my God,” white staff objected, as well as some of the black staff chimed in.

MTM: *It was a class thing?*

MA: Yes. The black people said if you want to make a film about a black person in the neighborhood . . .



Figure 12. Filming *Sesame Street* for The Children's Television Workshop, 1972.
Photo: Emily Squires. Courtesy of Madeline Anderson.

MTM: *Make it about a black doctor or lawyer.*

MA: Yes. I said that kids that look at this show, for the most part, don't see doctors in their neighborhood unless they're sick. On the other hand, they see this man every day because he's in the neighborhood.

MTM: *In your long and distinguished career is there a distinction to be made between men and women filmmakers and between African American and white women filmmakers?*

MA: Gender does play a part in the interests of men and women, especially with regard to subject matter but less so for entertainment. And, like any other culture, there are differences, too, between black men and black women because of the diversity of things that influence interests.

MTM: *And for black and white women filmmakers?*

MA: There's a difference. In the seventies, the white feminist movement began. The feminist mystique was different for white women than it was for black women. The women I made films for didn't identify with Betty Friedan's

feminist mystique, and not only because she was white, but also because she lived in the suburbs.

MTM: *Race, location.*

MA: She lived in the suburbs. Most of us live in cities. Their agenda was personal. Ours is still about our people. We're still talking about our people.

MTM: *Which brings us to Shirley Clarke. In your development as a filmmaker, what was most important about working with Clarke?*

MA: I really admired Shirley's work. She was able to formulate and communicate what she was trying to do. She was also a great person for giving someone else a chance. She knew my next step was to try to get into the union and that, too, was part of making the *Cool World* (1963). The book [play] from which the film was adapted was not specific about that and she wanted to include it because it added to the veracity of the film. So, she had black cameramen, although the main cameraman was [Baird] Bryant. Some segments were shot by black cameramen even though black cameramen were not in the union at that time. She took a chance.²³

MTM: *She was out there like you?*

MA: More so. Shirley was one tough lady whose values and humanity was what... I know a lot of people disapproved of her.



Figure 13. Madeline Anderson (left) and Shirley Clarke (center) at the Toronto Women and Film International Festival, 1973. Courtesy of Madeline Anderson.

MTM: *Why?*

MA: It was for her personal life. But as a human being there wasn't anyone better than Shirley Clarke, really. A lot of people will read this and disagree. But that's what I thought. That was my relationship with Shirley.

MTM: *In 1975 you formed Onyx Productions with what purpose in mind?*

MA: I had the experience and track record and was trying to become independent and felt it was the time I could be independent.

MTM: *How did having your own production company enable you to be independent?*

MA: I knew people. I made a film for the Ford Foundation. I made films for Sesame Street through my company. I had a budget. I had a proposal or they gave me an assignment. I had complete control and I had something else too. I had the reputation of being able to complete assignments on time, within budget, and that was important.

MTM: *It still is, even more so now given the cost of making movies.*

MA: Right.

MTM: *You delivered and that's a big deal.*

MA: Right, exactly. It was a big deal and I thought now I can have my own company.

MTM: *Is Hollywood and the studio system the game in town?*

MA: Hollywood isn't the only game in town and black people are more integrated in society. We're more integrated in the [movie] industry. This may be controversial, but I don't think we're as much thought of as black filmmakers as we are filmmakers.

MTM: *What makes you think so?*

MA: I want to think it has. In the beginning, we were looking for black stuff because that's what was available to us. It was a period of growth for us. A lot of people worked during the black exploitation era. People were upset and criticized it but I was looking at it from a different point of view. "Hey, we're getting a chance to make films."

MTM: *It was a gig.*

MA: That's right and some of us went to Hollywood and made "Cotton Comes to Hollywood." It wasn't always flattering but we were doing it. I didn't look

at the narrow: "Oh God, they're portraying us." Yes they were but this time we were doing it.

MTM: *That debate continues.*

MA: Yes, and for a long time.

MTM: *You've got the last word.*

MA: Turn the recorder off. . . .

Notes

1. Interview occurred on January 19, 2013, during Anderson's visit to Indiana University on the occasion of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

2. Walker Smith, "Madeline Anderson: Film Maker, Historian and Visionary," *African Voices*, Summer 2001.

3. Quoted from Shilyh Warren's essay, "Recognition on the Surface of Madeline Anderson's *I Am Somebody*," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38, no. 2 (2013), 353.

4. Artist Statement, "Madeline Anderson, *I Am Somebody*," <http://signsjournal.org/madeline-anderson-i-am-somebody-1969/>, accessed January 16, 2013.

5. This view and stance merits further consideration. In another context, Anderson elaborates understanding history in real-time and the role of the artist in society: "I wanted to go where the action was because that was the interesting thing about it. That is the interesting thing about contemporary history. You could be there when it was being made and you could learn about incidents and accomplishments. . . . Do you see how your mind can develop as well as your art? The two work together. If you're just an artist you don't evolve. This is my philosophy not everybody's. Just working as an artist was not as interesting to me as making the art useful. It had to be useful. I wasn't just making films to make money or to become famous but was working in film for humanitarian reasons. I wanted to be useful. With the exception of making films for children I never deviated from the idea of making films which told the history and which were useful in some way." Ibid.

6. Richard Leacock, British documentary filmmaker associated with *cinéma vérité*.

7. In 1968, Leacock joined the faculty of the Documentary Film Section, which in 1985 became part of the Media Lab at MIT.

8. With Jonas Mekas, Clarke cofounded the Film-Makers' Cooperative in 1963.

9. Reflecting on her experience with unions, Anderson recalls: "One thing that I learned was the power of a union. When I was working at the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) plant in Lancaster the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) came and organized the plant. It was a bitter struggle but they won and the workers unionized. That's when I learned that unions were good for the working man and woman. I always kept that in mind." Anderson, IU Cinema.

10. Anderson is referring to Emma L. Bowen, community activist and founder of New York City's Black Citizens for a Fair Media (BCFM) and cofounder of The Foundation for Minority Interests in Media.

11. Anderson describing innovations in filmmaking occurring during formative period: "When I started making films we had these big cameras and then a group that I was working with called the 'filmmakers' were making small equipment—the handheld camera. That was in the sixties and early seventies. That's the way we made documentaries easier rather than using the big cameras that the newsreel or feature film people used; these big 35mm cameras. We used small 16mm ones." Anderson, IU Cinema.

12. Smith, "Madeline Anderson."

13. *Brown v. Board of Education* was a landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision declaring that state laws which established and upheld separate public schools based on race were unconstitutional.

14. Precipitated by the arrest of Rosa Parks, the thirteen-month mass protest in Montgomery, Alabama, concluded with the 1956 US Supreme Court's ruling that segregation on public conveyances was unconstitutional.

15. 1955 murder by two white men of an African American teen in Mississippi for whistling at a white woman in a grocery store.

16. Strike and confrontation in 1968 by the United Federation of Teachers union (UFT) against the community-controlled school board in Ocean-Hill Brownsville, in a predominantly black neighborhood, pitting the union against the community and foregrounding the conflict for local control and self-determination.

17. Born 1925 in Monroe, North Carolina, Rob Williams, activist and leader advocated armed resistance to racial oppression, declaring, "I don't really think you can have a defense against violent racists and against terrorists unless you are prepared to meet violence with violence, and my policy was to meet violence with violence." Charged with kidnapping, with his family, Williams fled to Cuba where he was given political asylum and where he continued to press for human rights through "Radio Free Dixie" and the publication of *The Crusader*. In 1962 he wrote *Negroes With Guns* (1962; repr., Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998) and 1966 traveled in China. Three years later he returned to the United States when all charges against him were dropped.

18. Here Anderson elaborates the back story: "When I was trying to raise money to make *Integration Report 1*, I did it largely with grants, loans, and some of my own money. My idea was that, after I made it, the network would support making other segments. It didn't happen. I took the film first to NBC. They said, "Oh, it's a nice film but most people will not be interested in what's happening." Were they wrong! This was the beginning of the civil rights movement and I couldn't get any money to make part two. Anderson, IU Cinema.

19. Artist Statement, "Madeline Anderson, *I Am Somebody*."

20. In another context, Anderson elaborates: "I had met some of the women who came to New York before the strike was over and I got the opportunity to talk to them. When we started the film the strike was almost over. But there was national and international coverage of the strike because it was unique. It was the last large coalition of labor and civil rights. That was the importance of it. But the main importance was that four hundred women—388 black—went on strike and the tactics of non-violence they used, along with the support of the SCLC [Southern Christian Leadership Conference]." Regarding narration in the film, Anderson said in an interview, "In a film of this type you usually use a narrator but I felt that conventional narration would fail to project the emotional climate I was trying to create. I wanted someone involved in the strike to talk about it. When I went to Charleston, I met Claire Brown who had been very active in the strike. . . . I wanted to talk about the strike naturally. [In New York, where the

film was edited] I had her look at the screen and tell how she remembered things about the strike as the images appeared. Certain pictures would come up and she would speak out of her own feelings about them. That's how I got the narration on the film." See FLQ staff, "An interview with Madeline Anderson on the making of *I Am Somebody*," *Film Library Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (1970–71), 39.

21. Enacted in 1965, the Voting Rights Act was preceded by the Civil Rights Act in 1964 that outlawed discrimination against racial, ethnic, national, and religious minorities and women. Both were signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

22. *The Black G.I.*, dir. Kent Garrett; executive producer, William Greaves, 1970.

23. Anderson says, "I worked as her script clerk, her assistant editor, her assistant. I was her right hand." Anderson, IU Cinema.