

You may not know their names, you may not know their stories – but they made America.

The extraordinary innovators whose ideas and entrepreneurial spirit gave birth to landmark advances like the steamboat and the 707 jetliner, and cultural touchstones like the Barbie doll and CNN, are profiled in *They Made America*, a new four-part series from the producers of *AMERICAN EXPERIENCE*. *They Made America* examines America's evolution over two centuries, from the infancy of the country, to its growth as an industrial power, through its global reach today.

The inaugural production of WGBH's History Unit, *They Made America* is based on a new book by renowned editor and journalist Harold Evans, whose commentary is featured in the television series. Little, Brown will publish *They Made America* in mid-October, in advance of the series November 8 premiere. A companion web site at **pbs.org/theymadeamerica** offers a chance to rank and compare innovators, an online teacher's guide, and more.

Evans, author of the best-selling *The American Century*, notes that the series is topical as well as historical: "The universality of *They Made America* is pertinent to the role of innovation for the next generation as well as for the past."

They Made America debuts Monday, November 8 at 9pm with **REBELS**, profiling two present-day magnates who have built bridges to different communities and countries through today's dominant American exports: information and entertainment. Russell Simmons has created a multimillion-dollar empire and an international following through rap music and hip-hop culture, once the sole province of inner city America. And Ted Turner turned a lens on the world with CNN, a 24-hour network launched in 1980 – and destined for failure, predicted most news executives. But like all innovators, he didn't listen to the naysayers. "If you've got an innovative idea," Turner says in *They Made America*, "and the majority does not pooh-pooh your idea, then you must not have a very good idea."

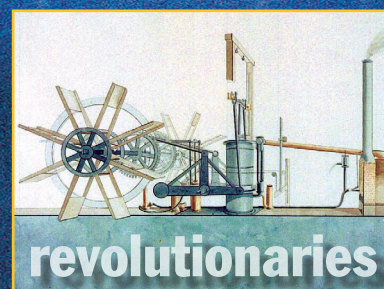
"The most important thing for an innovator isn't necessarily being first," notes Evans. "It's being able to put together a combination that works." Then, at 10pm, **REVOLUTIONARIES** highlights pioneering thinkers like John Fitch, who committed suicide before his eccentric invention, a steam-powered boat, transformed the commerce of a young nation, thanks to Robert Fulton's salesmanship and zeal. Lewis Tappan used the profits of a successful store that he and his brother ran in New York City to further the anti-slavery cause. Then, after the business went bankrupt, he used his network of abolitionists and lawyers to systematically report on the credit worthiness of out-of-town retailers who wanted to buy in New York – an enterprise that later became Dun & Bradstreet.

They Made America

Premieres
Monday, November 8
at 9pm on PBS



pbs.org/theymadeamerica



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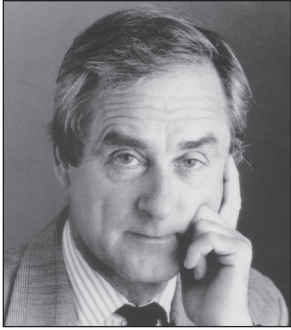


On Monday, November 15, **NEWCOMERS** focuses on immigrants to America, their diligence and desires and the often harsh reality of their lives. The success stories among them imbued whole communities with pride in the face of rampant prejudice. When Amadeo Giannini's idea – a bank that gave working people a chance to secure and earn from their savings – blossomed into Bank of America, the largest private bank in the world, many shared the wealth. "Giannini's great thing is to start saying we're going to open our doors to everybody; we're going to judge loans, not on what they've got in the bank, but what they've got in their soul," says Evans. Also uplifting is the story of a Russian seamstress who became a lingerie tycoon. With the creation of Maidenform, Ida Rosenthal mass produced a bra that was the perfect fit for the new American working woman at the beginning of the 20th century.

GAMBLERS, airing Monday, November 22, follows the risk-takers whose innovations became global icons in the second half of the 20th century. Every passenger whisking across continents today can thank Juan Trippe, the founder of Pan Am, who single-handedly brought the world into the jet age in the late 1950s by pushing Boeing and Pratt & Whitney to come up with a plane that would carry 200 people across the Atlantic Ocean in less than 7 hours. The 707 made the world smaller, but it was an 11-inch plastic doll, Barbie, that would become one of America's most powerful symbols abroad. Created by Ruth Handler in 1959, Barbie is now sold in 150 countries at a rate of two dolls per second. "The success of the Barbie doll is in the fact that it's not a static toy," says Evans. "It has infinite possibilities – and this versatility, this endless appeal, is very similar to many engineering innovations."

"There's a culture of reinvention in America that you see embodied in the innovators we profile," says Mark Samels, executive producer of the series and head of WGBH's history unit. "*They Made America's* individual stories have the cumulative effect of telling the story of the nation."

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES



HAROLD EVANS • Executive editor, *They Made America*

Harold Evans, author of the critically acclaimed bestseller *The American Century*, was the highly successful president and publisher of Random House Trade Group from 1990 to 1997. During his tenure, Random House relaunched The Modern Library of Classics, and he edited and published a record number of bestsellers, including *My American Journey* by Colin Powell and *Primary Colors* by Anonymous. From 1997 to 1999, Evans was editorial director and vice chairman of *U.S. News & World Report*, *New York Daily News*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Fast Company*. Evans remains a contributing editor of *U.S. News & World Report* and has been an adviser to *The Week* magazine since its launch in the United States. He moderates *The Week's* topical panels at Grand Central Station. Evans was named to the Queen's New Year's Honors List and knighted for services to journalism.



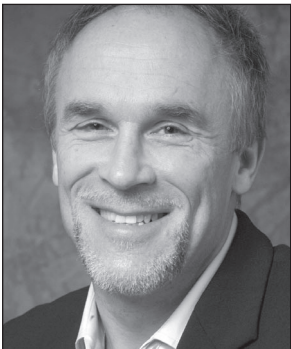
CARL CHARLSON • Series producer, *They Made America*

Carl Charlson is a producer, director, and writer of non-fiction television whose work has been seen worldwide on both commercial and public networks, and has been recognized with the Emmy, the American Film Festival Blue Ribbon, the Edward R. Murrow Award and other honors. A number of his projects for WGBH have been historically based and include: NOVA's *A Man, A Plan, A Canal, Panama*, the story of the building of the Panama Canal; *The Hidden City*, a history of New York City's infrastructure; *Science Odyssey*, a chronicle of 20th century technological innovation; and AMERICAN EXPERIENCE's *Murder of the Century*, the tale of the 1906 killing of Stanford White, New York City's leading architect and man about town.



SHARON GRIMBERG • Supervising producer, *They Made America*

Sharon Grimberg plays a key role in the origination, development, and acquisition of films for WGBH's History Unit. She co-produced *Secrets of a Master Builder* for AMERICAN EXPERIENCE which aired in October 2000 and produced *Miss India Georgia* which aired on PBS in 1997. From 1992 to 1995 Grimberg worked as a writer and associate producer for CNN Headline News. Her work has also been broadcast on the Discovery Channel and NPR.



MARK SAMELS • Executive producer, *They Made America*

Named executive producer of AMERICAN EXPERIENCE in 2003, Mark Samels served as the series' senior producer since 1997. He has been instrumental in bringing the series recognition within the independent film community as a leading presenter of documentaries to a wide audience through broadcast on PBS, and in the development of WGBH's History Unit. He directed and co-wrote AMERICAN EXPERIENCE's *A Brilliant Madness*, a biography of the Nobel Prize-winning mathematician and schizophrenic John Nash.

Samels has worked as an independent documentary filmmaker and television producer since 1979. Prior to joining WGBH, he was vice president for production at WITF, the public television station in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; executive producer for WNPB in Morgantown, West Virginia; and a senior producer in Tokyo for the first Japanese-American television co-production, *Japan Today*. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin.

They Made America

A production of WGBH Boston
in association with
Innovators Ventures, LLC
Based on the book
They Made America by Harold Evans

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Ventures, LLC

Sarah Frank

Executive in charge for Innovators
Ventures, LLC

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Research consultant

David Lefer

Photographic historian

Gail Buckland

Executive editor

Harold Evans

Series producer

Carl Charlson

Supervising producer

Sharon Grimberg

Executive producer

Mark Samels

REBELS

Produced, directed and written by
Linda Garmon

Associate producer: Caroline Toth

Editor: Dick Bartlett

Director of photography: John
Baynard

Music: Brian Keane

Narrator: David Ogden Stiers

REVOLUTIONARIES

Produced and directed by

Carl Charlson

Co-producer: Cathleen O'Connell

Story by Harold Evans

Telescript by Carl Charlson

Editor: Jonathan Sahula

Director of photography:

Stephen McCarthy

Music: Brian Keane

Narrator: David Ogden Stiers

NEWCOMERS

Produced and directed by
Megan Gelstein and Daniel McCabe

Story by Harold Evans

Telescript by Daniel McCabe

Editor: Daniel McCabe

Director of photography:

Stephen McCarthy

Music: Brian Keane

Narrator: David Ogden Stiers

GAMBLERS

Produced and directed by

Patricia Garcia Rios

Story by Harold Evans

Telescript by Patricia Garcia Rios

Associate producer: Morgan Faust

Editors: Bill Anderson,

Jonathan Sahula

Director of photography:

Stephen McCarthy

Music: Brian Keane

Narrator: David Ogden Stiers

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Download press materials and images for *They Made America* at
pbs.org/pressroom and pressroom.wgbh.org.



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Major funding for *They Made America* is provided by
the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to enhance public understanding of the role of technology in society.

Exclusive corporate funding is provided by Olympus,

a precision technology leader in healthcare and consumer electronics worldwide.

Additional funding is provided by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations.

