Viewing turn-of-the-century African American history through the lens of cinema, my book *Envisioning Freedom* examines the forgotten history of early black film exhibition during the era of mass migration and Jim Crow. As pioneers of cinema from the 1890s to the 1920s, itinerant black film exhibitors traveled across the same railways that structured turn-of-the-century migration. They presented films in churches, lodges, and schools, which raised money and created shared social experiences for black urban communities. By embracing the new medium of moving pictures, black Americans forged a collective—if fraught—culture of freedom.

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