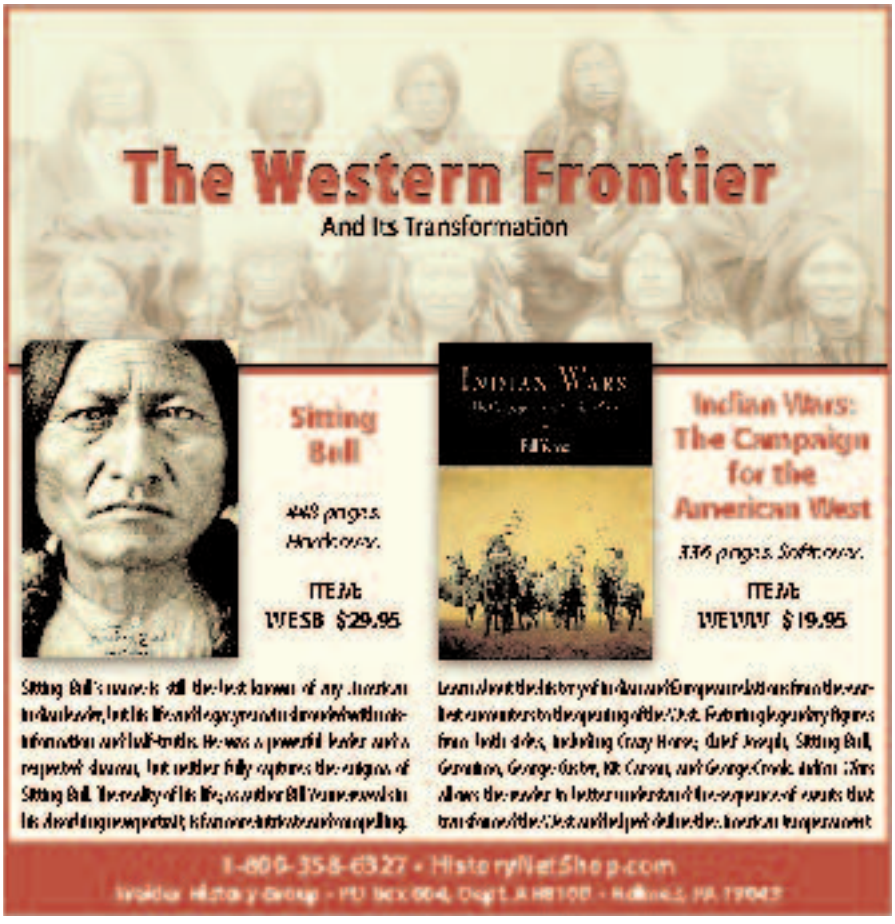
Moving Midway: A Southern Plantation in Transit
directed by Godfrey Cheshire
Color, 98 minutes
In theaters Fall 2008

TALK ABOUT A family affair. In 2004 Godfrey Cheshire's cousins, the Hintons, decide to literally uproot Midway, the family's ancestral North Carolina mansion built in 1848, because Raleigh's mall-riddled suburbs have noisily engulfed it. The notion naturally stirs up the whole clan. Will Aunt Mimi's ghost (it haunts the place) be upset? Will the house survive the move's physical stress? The plot thickens when the white Hintons discover, like Dick Cheney, Strom Thurmond and many others, that their genealogical tree has black branches. Cheshire meets historian Robert Hinton, an unrelated descendant of the family's slaves. A fuller story of the plantation emerges—and the Hinton descendants begin, in their individual ways, to face, explain, dodge or spin the racist history embedded in the old house. (Ironically, only the slave graveyard is spared the bulldozers when Plantation Mall moves in.) Evocative, whimsical, earnest, intelligent and homespun, *Moving Midway* entwines family memories and memorabilia with resonant context (talking heads include historians Hinton, John Hope Franklin and Bruce Chadwick), while examining pop-culture images of plantation life (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Gone With the Wind*, *Roots*). At the movie's core, though, is the house, from its founding through the grueling haul to its new rural home—a bittersweet feat wrapped in historical ironies that culminate in an integrated family celebration.

—*Gene Santoro*

Antebellum Midway—before the 'burbs.

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