

Scenes of Black History Docudrama filmed on The Indian River Queen

Monday, August 25, Penny Flaherty, owner and Capt. Jim Georges, of the riverboat cruise ship, Indian River Queen, were the excellent hosts for the filming location of two scenes for the docudrama, *Filling The Gap*. For approximately 5 hours the cast and film crew were on board the riverboat to film Cedric Lawson as the slave inventor, Benjamin Montgomery, and Aubrey Grier as Robert Smalls, a slave on the Planter, a Confederate steamer during the Civil War.



Mary Fears, Co-producer, professional storyteller, author and Civil War re-enactor, gives this description of the two scenes filmed on the River Queen. "Benjamin Montgomery, the slave of Confederate President Jefferson Davis' brother Joseph, was a skilled slave inventor. His invention, a propeller designed to aid river boats navigate through shallow waters, worked so well that it received extensive recognition and was used on Confederate gun boats during the Civil War."

"Robert Smalls worked as a wheeler or pilot on the Confederate steamer, the Planter, along with seven other slaves. They planned and executed the most daring and courageous feat of anyone during the Civil War. On a dark night in May 1862, when the captain and other white officers left the boat docked in Charleston harbor and went into Charleston to spend the night, Smalls and his comrades gathered their families who were secreted on an empty vessel. When their families were safely on board, Robert Smalls, dressed in the captain's coat and straw hat, stood at the helm, piloted the Planter safely and delivered it to the Onward, a Union blockade steamer. The boat was a grand prize for the Union because it was filled with guns and ammunition. Smalls and his crew were rewarded prize money by President Abraham Lincoln and Smalls later served as captain of the Planter for many of the remaining months of the Civil War."



Filling The Gap is a docudrama that will be a resource in Social Studies classes for the study of American History. The movie includes the contributions of "people of color" both slave and free, as inventors, artisans and craftsmen. The film includes the military service of African Americans in the Civil War, and much emphasis is given to both the military and non-combat service of fugitive slaves, who became known as "contrabands."



Tyrone Young is the award winning Executive Producer of the film. Young has established himself as one of the premiere independent filmmakers in the United States. His debut film, *True Adversity*, won a New York Critics Award. Young trained as an actor at Weist-Barron and Hill acting studios in Burbank, California, which landed him a few acting jobs in Hollywood.

Filling The Gap, is slated for a release date in February 2009. Persons may visit the web site for contact information and see film clips, news articles, and a trailer that shows a few minutes of the film, www.EssenceOfHistory.com

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