

'Filling the Gap' in black history



RICARDO RAMÍREZ BUXEDA/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Tyrone Young's film shows blacks' contributions to U.S. history in the 19th century.

"Black people feel neglected in their history."

Mary Fears, re-enactor and film co-producer

FILM AIMS TO COVER WHAT LESSONS DON'T

By Daphne Sashin | ORLANDO SENTINEL

An independent filmmaker and a Civil War re-enactor are trying to change the way African-American children think about their history — and themselves — with a film that offers what the textbooks are missing.

A *Filling the Gap: Forgotten Chapter of American History* highlights the triumphs by blacks — some as young as 9 years old — during the late 1800s as engineers, spies, artisans and inventors who in their own way helped develop the U.S. economy or secure victory for the Union Army.



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Union Army re-enactors were filmed practicing maneuvers at Oustee Battlefield Historic State Park

"Kids think that with the exception of a few well-known blacks, everyone was in the field picking cotton, they were enslaved, they were beaten, they were treated wrongly. That is a fact, but we were still doing some wonderful things," director Tyrone Young said. "We were able to rise above chains and bondage because of the gift and talents that we have."

Young, 42, who grew up in East St. Louis, Ill., spent years in Hollywood producing music videos for Tupac Shakur, Luther Vandross and other celebrities, and his feature film, *True Adversity*, won Best Drama at the 2004 New York Independent Film and Video Festival.

He moved to Orlando in 2000 to work for *The Grand Ole Opry* television series producer Albert Gannaway. When Gannaway had a stroke, Young stayed on the East Coast to look after his mentor and began picking up