The SS Columbia Project (SSCP)  
The Steamship Historical Society of America (SSHSA)  
and  
The National Maritime Historical Society (NMHS)  
Present  

Sarah Elizabeth Ray: The Rosa Parks of SS Columbia  
A Video Produced by Aaron Schillinger  

Zoom Video Conference*  
Tuesday, July 21, 2020--7:00 PM  

Introduction  

Ten years before Rosa Parks was removed from a bus, Sarah Elizabeth Ray was removed from a boat, Steamer Columbia. Sarah's experience (long unrecognized) is now known to have inspired Rosa's. In June 1945, Sarah was aboard Columbia, the sole African American on a celebratory graduation cruise with her classmates. Sarah was taken off the vessel before the vessel left the Detroit River dock. Michigan law prohibited segregation and discrimination on public conveyances. With the help of the NAACP (and Thurgood Marshall), Sarah filed a law suit which would ultimately end illegal segregation in Michigan. The suit was appealed at every level by the vessel operator, the Bob-lo Excursion Co. before making its way to SCOTUS. On Feb 2, 1948, the People of Michigan (and Sarah) prevailed thus putting an end to discrimination and segregation on the Bob-lo boats. Columbia, built in 1902 and today docked in Buffalo, remains a powerful symbol of how an individual battled injustice and won.

*Note: Zoom conference url and login instructions to follow.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Assignee</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 PM</td>
<td>Greet and welcome panelists and guests as they enter the Zoom conference call, remind them if they have questions during the course of the presentation to use the chat feature.</td>
<td>Ian Danic</td>
<td>Greet panelists and guests as they enter the Zoom conference call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:05PM</td>
<td>Official welcome</td>
<td>Ian Danic</td>
<td>Officially greet all members of the Zoom conference call, discuss structure of call and how things will run. Thank SSHSA and NHMS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce Filmmaker</td>
<td>Ian Danic</td>
<td>Introduce Aaron Schillinger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:10PM</td>
<td>Stream Video</td>
<td>Aaron Schillinger to introduce video</td>
<td>Seque into video and show video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:15PM</td>
<td>Introduce Panelists</td>
<td>Panel Moderator: Malika Pryor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:20PM</td>
<td>Panel Discussion</td>
<td>Panelists: Desiree Cooper Victoria Wolcott Aaron Schillinger</td>
<td>With questions from audience (and submitted in advance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:45PM</td>
<td>SSCP: Update on Vessel</td>
<td>Ann Loeding</td>
<td>Show Photoscan, talk about hull restoration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:55PM</td>
<td>Final Questions</td>
<td>Ian Danic</td>
<td>Ask for support and suggestions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thank Attendees</td>
<td>Ian Danic</td>
<td>Thank SSHSA and NMHS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants

**Aaron Schillinger**, Filmmaker, Director, Producer, Video Editor, Writer

Aaron Schillinger is a filmmaker whose directorial debut is the forthcoming *Boblo Boats: A Tale of Sisters*. The documentary follows the rag tag group of Detroiters who are fighting to save the infamous Boblo Island amusement park ferry boat from the scrapyard. It is narrated by Motown legend Martha Reeves and was chosen as a finalist for FilmShop’s 2019 Breakthrough Competition at Film Society of Lincoln Center. Aaron’s production company BabyVolcano Films specializes in telling stories that make a lasting impact. Their clients include non-profits such as the National Eating Disorders Association and the Horticultural Society of New York. Baby Volcano’s short film *Pepper (2018)* received premieres at the Seattle International Film Festival, Jeonju International Film Festival and Cleveland International Film Festival. Aaron graduated from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts with a BFA in Cinema Studies.

[Website: https://www.bobloboatsfilm.com/]

**Malika Pryor**, Senior Director, Education and Programs, Detroit Historical Society

With nearly 15 years of experience in the non-profit and legal sectors, Malika is a leader and servant who expands organizational capacity and has successfully navigated her teams through significant change. Growing wherever she’s planted, Malika has impacted institutions and communities stateside and abroad: in her hometown, Detroit; Atlanta; and Nassau, The Bahamas.

**Desiree Cooper**, Author, Speaker, Commentator, Writing Faculty

Desiree Cooper is a 2015 Kresge Artist Fellow and former attorney. For more than a decade, she penned an award-winning column for the *Detroit Free Press*, during which she received two Pulitzer Prize nominations. Her debut collection of flash fiction, *Know the Mother*, is a 2017 Michigan Notable Book that has won numerous awards, including the 2017 Next Generation Indie Book Award. Cooper’s flash fiction has appeared in *The Best Small Fictions 2018*, *Forward: 21st Century Flash Fiction*, *Electric Literature*, *COG Magazine*, and in the forthcoming *Choice Words: Writers on Abortion*. Her essay, “We Have Lost Too Many Wigs,” was listed as a notable essay in *The Best American Essays 2019*. In 2018, she wrote, produced and co-directed “The Choice,” a short film about reproductive rights based upon her flash fiction story, “First Response.” The film has won several awards, including a 2019 Outstanding Achievement Award from the Berlin Flash Film Festival, and Award of Merit, 2019 Best Shorts Competition, California. [Website: http://www.descooper.com/]

**Victoria Wolcott**, Professor, Author, Historian

Victoria W. Wolcott is Professor of History at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. She has published two books: *Remaking Respectability: African-American Women in Interwar Detroit* (2001) and *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle Over Segregated Recreation in America* (2012). In addition, she has published articles in *The Journal of American History*, *The Radical History Review*, and the *Journal of Women’s History* among others. She teaches African American and Urban History as well as the history of leisure and recreation in America.

**Ann Loeding**, Port Captain, Restoration Manager and Executive Director, The SS Columbia Project

Captain Loeding came up through the hawsepipe working on tugs in New York Harbor, eventually specializing in operating older single-screw boats on inland water routes – Hudson River, Erie Canal, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. She has served as a project manager and fundraiser for many historic vessel projects over the past 25 years, including fireboat John J. Harvey, canal motor vessel Day Peckinpaugh, and covered barge Pennsylvania Railroad No. 399. Captain Loeding has served as SSCP’s Restoration Coordinator since 2013. As a professional mariner accustomed to working towards a clear goal in the midst of changing conditions, she brings to the project a straight-forward, reality-oriented management process. In the past five years, Captain Loeding and her crew have gotten the boat from Detroit to the shipyard in Toledo, managed replacement of 60% of the
underwater hull and structural repairs to the upper decks, coordinated transit from Toledo to Buffalo, undertaken work to stabilize the deckhouse and engine room to retard further weather damage, and coordinated full laser and photo scans to create a permanent digital record of the vessel. Since recently taking over as Executive Director, her duties have expanded to include supporting fundraising and strategic planning efforts, communicating with partners and supporters, and general organization housekeeping – all of which she has come to regard as the winds and tides of a shore-based job. [Website: www.sscolumbia.org]

**Ian Danic, Co-Chairman, The SS Columbia Project**

Mr. Danic grew up near Detroit and fond memories of travelling on Columbia inspire his enthusiasm for restoring the boat. Mr. Danic is co-founder and Executive Director of Electra Information Systems. In addition to serving as Co-Chairman of The SS Columbia Project, he sits on the Board of Directors of The River Project (www.riverprojectnyc.org) and The Helicon Foundation (www.helicon.org). [Website: www.sscolumbia.org]

[Image: Martha Reeves & the Vandellas aboard Columbia, July 21, 1970]