United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items

X New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

African American Resources in Portland, Oregon, from 1865 to 1973

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

I. Settlement Patterns
II. Business and Employment
III. Journalism
IV. Entertainment and Recreation
V. Benevolent and Fraternal Societies
VI. Religion and Worship
VII. Civil Rights

C. Form Prepared by

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date December 11, 2019
organization Bosco-Milligan Foundation/Architectural Heritage Center and City of Portland

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

(_______ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government
I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
**Table of Contents for Written Narrative**

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in National Register Bulletin How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (formerly 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

### E. Statement of Historic Contexts
(if more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503
E. Statement of Historic Contexts
(if more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

INTRODUCTION
This Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD), African American Resources in Portland, Oregon, is organized around properties associated with the African American experience in Portland from 1865, which marks the conclusion of the initial settlement period of the Willamette Valley as well as the end of the Civil War, through 1973, the termination of urban renewal programs in Inner North and Northeast Portland.

In 1865, the end of the Civil War (1861-1865) and the passage of the 13th Amendment permanently abolished slavery in the United States, securing the freedom of approximately 3.9 million African Americans who had been enslaved before the war. At the same time, the Willamette Valley’s initial settlement period (1841-1865) came to a close as new transportation options facilitated westward travel. America’s first transcontinental railroad, completed in 1869, greatly expedited travel to and from the frontier and led to subsequent decline in the use of overland trail routes. Whereas the journey from the eastern United States to Oregon had once necessitated months of arduous travel by wagon and on foot, westward travelers in the 1870s were able to proceed by rail as far as San Francisco and from there ride a steamship up the coast to Oregon; the journey could now be completed in a matter of weeks, and in relative comfort. The railroads also represented an important economic advancement for the young state, as they were able to convey goods quickly and securely from one side of the country to another. Oregon’s rapid infrastructure development and increasingly large and diverse population reflected this new connectivity.

The first African Americans to settle in Portland had arrived during the initial settlement phase of the Willamette Valley, during the early- and mid-nineteenth century. Exclusionary policies enacted in the years leading up to and immediately following Oregon’s 1859 admission to the Union discouraged African American in-migration for decades, and those who did make their way to the growing city found limited opportunity for social or economic advancement. Consequently, Portland’s African American population grew only slowly through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, spiking briefly after the development of the railroad and capping at approximately 2,000 people by the time of the 1940 census. The small community, concentrated in Northwest Portland until the early twentieth century and in Inner North and Northeast Portland thereafter, quickly developed a variety of social structures, industries, and institutions that paralleled those established and controlled by the city’s majority-White population.

World War II marked a significant inflection point in the history of Portland and its African American community in particular. The Emergency Shipbuilding Program attracted thousands of people to the wartime shipyards in Portland and surrounding communities, and the city’s African American population

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1 Liz Carter, Pioneer Houses and Homesteads of the Willamette Valley, Oregon, 1841-1865 (Portland, OR: Historic Preservation League of Oregon, 2013), 2; National Register of Historic Places, Settlement-era Dwelling, Barns and Farm Groups of the Willamette Valley, Oregon, National Register #64501236. The Willamette Valley is located in the northwestern quadrant of Oregon, and it is bounded to the north by the Columbia River, to the east by the Cascades, to the south by the Calapooya Mountains, and to the west by the Pacific Coast Range.
2 See the Historical Background for more information on these exclusionary policies and their impacts on the African American experience in early Oregon.
increased tenfold in fewer than five years, topping 20,000 by 1944. Despite active effort by the city’s dominant White power structure to limit African American employment and homeownership, about half this number remained in Portland following the termination of defense industry positions at the end of the war. Portland’s racist land use and real estate practices largely constrained this increased African American population to remnant wartime housing projects and less-desirable neighborhoods in Inner North and Northeast Portland. The parallel industries and institutions that the community had developed were also concentrated in this limited geographical area.3

As a result of the African American community’s rapid expansion during World War II, legal precedents and entrenched, racist social norms were meaningfully challenged in Portland during the postwar years. The 1950s and 1960s saw landmark civil rights victories that permanently impacted race relations at the local, state, and national level, including the Public Accommodations Act (1953) and Fair Housing Act (1957) in Oregon and the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965) nationally. At the same time, midcentury urban renewal programs had their own impact on Portland’s demographic landscape. These development programs, many of which concentrated their efforts in Inner North and Northeast Portland, disproportionately impacted the city’s African American community and displaced hundreds from their homes.4 The Emanuel Hospital Urban Renewal Project, the last of the major urban renewal programs in Inner North and Northeast Portland, had a particularly devastating impact on the African American community in the years before its termination in 1973. With the changing social and physical landscape that followed the urban renewal period, 1973 is therefore an appropriate end date for the historical context provided in this document.

Overview of the Document
In the following sections, this MPD describes resources and resource types associated with the African American experience between 1865 and 1973 and located within the 2019 city limits of Portland.5 The MPD is largely based on major efforts by the Bosco-Milligan Foundation, a non-profit organization in Portland, Oregon, to identify and document African American building resources during the late 1990s. The foundation’s efforts resulted in two subsequent editions of Cornerstones of Community: Buildings of Portland’s African American History, which provide an in-depth history of African American life in Portland through properties associated with residency, employment, professional achievements, social life, entertainment, religious practice, and civil rights. Additional information concerning the Bosco-Milligan Foundation and the methodology employed by Cornerstones of Community may be found in Section H of this document.

This introduction is followed by a brief historical background which describes the African American experience in Oregon through 1865, the beginning of the period of significance for this MPD. The historic contexts following the historical background cover seven major themes of the African American experience in Portland during the period of significance. These contexts address both the public and the

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private spheres of African American life from 1865 through 1973, and each theme reflects the pervasive reality of segregation and racial prejudice that impacted African American settlement and the development of African American institutions in Portland throughout the city’s history.

The narrative’s first context, Settlement Patterns, describes trends in African American settlement in Portland between the end of the Civil War and 1973, which marks the end of major Urban Renewal programs that displaced many African American Portlanders from their homes in Inner North and Northeast Portland. The legal and social restrictions that have historically constrained African American settlement in Portland are also examined in this first context. The second context, Business and Employment, details African American employment and entrepreneurialism. The third context, Journalism, describes the Black press beginning with the 1896 publication of The New Age and continuing through the Civil Rights Era and beyond. The fourth, fifth, and sixth contexts are concerned with African American social life and community gathering spaces, detailing resources associated with Entertainment and Recreation, Benevolent and Fraternal Societies, and Religion and Worship. The seventh and final context, Civil Rights, covers a broad range of issues surrounding racial discrimination in Portland, legal reforms, the activities of notable civil rights activists, and advocacy organizations established to challenge de jure and de facto limitations upon African American rights in Portland and across the country. All seven contexts include extensive references to properties known to be associated with Portland’s African American community. Where relevant, many extant and non-extant properties are referenced in the text or footnotes; addresses denoted in **bold** were extant as of 2019.

For the purposes of this document, the terms “African American,” “Black,” and “of African descent,” are used largely interchangeably, except when the individual(s) referenced are from a country other than the United States, in which case the term “African American” is not used. The terms “person of color” and “people of color” are used broadly to describe non-White individuals and populations. Dated and derogatory terminology appears sparingly in the names of historic-period businesses and organizations as well as in quotations from period newspapers, court cases, or other relevant primary source material.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: AFRICAN AMERICANS IN OREGON THROUGH 1865**
Racial segregation has impacted nearly every aspect of the African American experience in Portland from the earliest days of European exploration in the Pacific Northwest. The following historical background provides a context for understanding the conditions that resulted from deliberate political actions taken during the initial settlement phase of present-day Oregon which sought to limit the settlement of African Americans in Oregon before, during, and after this document’s 1865-1973 period of significance.

**African Americans in the Exploration Era: Through 1812**
The origins of the African American experience in Oregon are complex and may date back to the sixteenth century, the age of early European exploration in western North America. The European explorers and trading parties that first encountered indigenous Oregonians were often multiracial and multicultural in composition, and individuals of African descent from various national backgrounds are known to have been included in these diverse traveling groups. The earliest Black travelers in the Pacific Northwest came sometimes as sailors and sometimes as slaves; none are known to have established

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permanent residences in the region. However, the European expeditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries eventually gave rise to trading posts and other settlements that attracted a small number of permanent Black settlers, some of whom were enslaved by White pioneers and some of whom came of their own volition.

The first people of African descent may have arrived in present-day Oregon as early as 1579. In that year, English privateer Sir Francis Drake sailed along the Oregon Coast, likely sojourning there during his three-year-long circumnavigation of the globe. At the time of his Pacific coastal voyage, Drake’s crew included at least two men and one woman of African origin brought aboard as a result of his raiding activities within the Spanish colonies. Historians continue to debate the extent of the crew’s activities in present-day Oregon, but should it be conclusively shown that Drake did visit Oregon, this visit would mark the arrival of the first people of African descent in the region.7

In the years following Drake’s voyage, other Black sailors likely visited the region as well. People of African descent often worked as members of multi-racial crews and trading parties which frequented the Pacific Northwest prior to permanent non-indigenous settlement. The leaders of these groups were predominantly Caucasian, but the unnamed crewmen who made such expeditions possible were often racially heterogeneous. Local myths and legends of native populations sometimes indicate interactions with people of color. Other evidence appears from written sources, such as a documented 1783 conversation between Spanish explorer Esteban José Martinez and a Russian explorer in Alaska in which Martinez described the racial diversity of his crew.8

Because of its remoteness, the Pacific Northwest was the last part of North America to become connected to the geopolitical world. English and Spanish land claims date to the sixteenth century, but it wasn’t until the late eighteenth century that the Pacific Northwest excited the attention of European and American traders as a source of sea otter and beaver pelts for world markets. Early traders included Robert Gray, an American sea captain charged by his sponsors in Boston with gathering furs on the Pacific Coast for shipment to China. Before heading toward Cape Horn, the traders stocked up on provisions in Cape Verde off the east coast of the African continent. There they were joined by Marcus Lopius, also known by his anglicized name Markus Lopez, who was brought on as the ship’s cabin boy. The party reached a bay near present-day Tillamook on August 14, 1787, making Lopius the first unambiguously documented Black person to reach present-day Oregon.9

7 Kris Lane, Pillaging the Empire: Global Piracy on the High Seas, 1500-1750 (New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 38.
9 Eric Jay Dolin, Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), 148-49. Upon arrival, Gray’s trading expedition was initially welcomed by the Tillamook people, who exchanged otter skins, crabs, and berries for small weapons and tools with sailors on their ship. After a second cordial exchange with the indigenous people, a small landing party came ashore to visit the Tillamook village to collect more supplies. While Lopius gathered grass for feeding livestock on Gray’s vessel, a young man from the tribe absconded with his cutlass, which had been planted in the ground while he was working. Lopius chased the indigenous man into the woods and soon found himself surrounded by several armed Tillamook men. When two of his fellow crew members approached the group in an attempt to rescue him, Lopius was stabbed several times. The ship’s journal reported that the Tillamook people then shot Marcus Lopius with several arrows until he collapsed and then began firing at his would-be rescuers, sending them fleeing back to their ship. Lopius’s body was never recovered and Gray’s crew left days later after being harassed by Tillamook villagers following the confrontation.
One of the most widely-known stories about African Americans in early Oregon is associated with the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-06). The American exploration party brought with them a man named York, a Black man enslaved by William Clark. Clark enlisted York to serve on the expedition, and he was instrumental to the success of the enterprise. In addition to hunting for food, transporting supplies, and participating in scouting missions, York played a significant role in establishing a positive relationship with the Native American tribes that the expedition encountered. When the expedition was facing starvation in 1806, it was York who was entrusted with trading their few remaining valuables for necessary provisions. In return for his contributions, York was granted considerable parity with other members during the expedition. However, he was the lone member who did not receive 320 acres of land and double pay at the journey’s conclusion in 1806.10

African Americans Fur Trading Era: 1812-1841

Following the success of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the fur trading potential of the Pacific Northwest attracted an increasing number of explorers, trappers, and traders to present-day Oregon. The pursuit of furs in the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Northwest between 1820 and 1840 opened the way for future wagon train journeys, with Black men playing significant roles in the trapping and trading culture. Some of those African American “mountain men” also explored and later settled in Oregon. One early entrepreneur, John Jacob Astor, attempting to establish his own fur trading enterprise, sent at least two African Americans to Oregon on an overland party between 1810 and 1812.11 Several years later, a free African American man named Peter Ranne accompanied Jedediah Smith on a scouting expedition through the Southwest, California, and Oregon. Ranne was later killed at what came to be known as the Umpqua Massacre on the South Oregon Coast in 1828.12 Another African American fur trapper, Winslow Anderson, accompanied Tennessee trapper Ewing Young into Oregon in the 1830s. Anderson ultimately settled near Oregon City, where he farmed and practiced medicine.13

Consistent with the multi-national character of the frontier, people of African descent in the fur trading business also came to Oregon territory from other countries. The most prominent example is James “Black”

10 Darrell Millner, “York (ca. 1770-?),” *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, last modified March 17, 2018, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/york/#.WrQN9YjwaUk. York remained Clark’s slave until at least 1811, although the exact date when Clark freed York is not recorded. During this post-expedition period, the relationship between Clark and York grew tense and hostile. York felt he should have been given his freedom and compensation similar to the other members of the expedition upon its conclusion. However, Clark refused to grant York his freedom. When Clark assumed the post of Indian Agent for the Western Territories and relocated from Louisville to St. Louis, he brought York with him. York had a wife in Louisville and sought to stay in the area, but Clark refused this request, which further alienated the two. Seeking to break the will of his now-hostile slave, Clark resorted to applying the full arsenal of coercions available to a slave master, including beating York, jailing him, and leasing him out to a harsh “slave breaker.” In the 1810s, Clark finally gave York his freedom along with horses and a wagon to start a business. York’s business was unsuccessful, in large part due to the racial restrictions and discriminations imposed on free African Americans. Subsequently, York essentially dropped out of the historical record and his ultimate fate is uncertain.


Douglas, who rose to the position of Chief Factor at the British Hudson's Bay post at Fort Vancouver in the 1840s. Douglas's father was a Scottish cotton and sugar merchant in Demerara, a Dutch colony in present-day Guyana, and his mother was a free Black woman who had been born in Barbados. In Hudson's Bay Company records, he is referred to as “a Scotch West Indian.” Despite the racial prejudices of his time, Douglas rose to the office of Chief Factor at Fort Vancouver, effectively making him the most important British official in the Pacific Northwest during the 1840s. He later became the first governor of Vancouver Island and then the first governor of British Columbia.14

**African Americans in Oregon’s Settlement Era: 1841-1865**

Western Oregon was heavily colonized by White American in-migrants during the 1840s, 1850s, and early 1860s.15 While many of the first Euro-American settlers came to Oregon from midwestern states where slavery had been outlawed, others came from states like Missouri and Kentucky where slavery was a deeply-ingrained institution. The issues and conflicts that wracked the United States in the years leading up to the Civil War inevitably found their way across the trail into the Oregon Territory, where the country’s conflicting views on race shaped early attitudes and legislation.

As waves of largely Euro-American settlers arrived in the Pacific Northwest, the Oregon Territory’s law and politics were often in flux. The United States’ and Great Britain’s agreement to “joint occupancy” dissolved as American residents sought to establish a provisional government in 1841 until jurisdiction could be formally expanded. In 1846, the United States and Great Britain agreed to divide the territory along the 49th parallel, with the United States receiving present-day Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming. The size and temperament of each newly-arrived wagon train had a dramatic effect on indigenous and non-indigenous residents, culminating in a demand for formalized government in 1847. Oregon officially became a U.S. Territory in 1848 and was admitted to the Union in February of 1859 with its current boundaries. Until statehood, most of Oregon’s laws and their enforcement were decided locally.16

While the overwhelming majority of participants in the overland migration to the Oregon Territory in the 1840s and 1850s were White, African Americans were involved in the Oregon Trail experience in significant numbers and with significant impact. In the early years of the Oregon Trail period, most African Americans were still enslaved and therefore unable to embark on the journey west. The other major obstacle to large-scale African American participation was the socio-political climate of anti-African American legislation and economic discrimination imposed by the pioneer generation in the Oregon Territory to discourage Black immigration and residence. While early White settlers may have held different positions on the ethics of slavery, most did not want Black residents, free or enslaved, in their state; they preferred to make Oregon a place for White settlement exclusively.17

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15 The first substantial wagon train reached Oregon in 1843.


On three separate occasions during the 1840s and 1850s, White settlers adopted “exclusion laws” that made it illegal for an African American person to live in the Oregon Territory. The first of these was in reaction to a violent episode in Oregon City involving James Saules, a free African American man, and Cockstock, a Native American of the Wasco tribe, over disputed ownership of a horse. In the wake of the incident, a White settler alleged that Saules had threatened to provoke local Native American tribes to attack him and destroy his property. The event escalated to a point that White settlers in Oregon widely regarded free Black settlers as “dangerous subjects” likely to incite a Native American uprising. In June 1844, the Oregon Provisional Government hurriedly passed a bill that prohibited slavery and allowed free African Americans a limited period in which they were to vacate Oregon or be punished with up to thirty-nine lashes on the back. By December 1844, the law had been amended and instead called for the sale of African Americans at public auction for a mandated period of labor, followed by forcible removal from Oregon. The law was repealed entirely the following year, but it had established a precedent that was not quickly erased.  

These exclusion laws created a reputation for the territory that likely discouraged African American immigration. A free African American in the American East would not likely choose to endure the harsh demands of the Oregon Trail with knowledge of the hostile racial environment waiting at the journey’s conclusion. In addition to the 1844 exclusion law, the Provisional Government denied African Americans already present in Oregon the right to vote or hold public office. The pattern of hostility continued when Oregon became an official U.S. Territory in 1848, with the Territorial Government adopting a renewed Black exclusion law in 1849. The language of this law specifically cited concerns about Black residents colluding with Native American tribes to take revenge on White settlers. The penalty was less severe than that of the 1844 laws, but it still mandated that any African Americans arriving in Oregon after the law’s passage be arrested and ordered to leave. Those who remained and were arrested a second time would face incarceration, fines, and forced removal.

African Americans were also discouraged from settling in Oregon by the provisions of the federal Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, which declared that only White settlers and “half-breed Indians” (the children of White Euro-American men and Native American women) were eligible to receive free land from the government. A primary motivation for most in-migrants to Oregon during the early settlement period was the chance for economic security and advancement that homesteading represented. Denied the opportunity for agricultural enterprise and the promise of self-sufficiency, non-White persons had little incentive to move to Oregon. As a result, Oregon’s African American population remained small during the early settlement period.

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20 Williams G. Robbins, “Oregon Donation Land Act,” The Oregon Encyclopedia, last modified February 21, 2019, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon_donation_land_act/#.XT5i4i2ZPR0. In an effort to promote homestead settlements in the Oregon Territory, the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 granted 320 acres of land to unmarried White men or 640 acres to married White couples who came to Oregon country. The federal Homestead Act of 1862 was much more inclusive and permitted African Americans, immigrants, and women, along with men, to receive 160 acres after five years of “improving” the land. However, Oregon’s Black exclusion laws still prohibited Black settlement, limiting the inclusivity of the Homestead Act.
Effectively precluded from homesteading, African Americans arriving in Oregon gravitated to budding urban centers like Portland.¹¹ Unlike the countryside granted to White settlers under the Donation Land Claim Act, urban areas offered a range of employment opportunities accessible to African Americans; however, racist White attitudes and the Black exclusion laws of the 1840s continued to hinder African American settlement.²² The 1850s experience of a Black pioneer merchant, Abner H. Francis, demonstrates the challenges that faced even wealthy and successful African Americans in early Portland. Abner Francis moved to Portland in 1851, the same year that the city was incorporated, and started a successful mercantile business at the corner of Front and Stark streets.²³ In September 1851, Abner Francis’s brother Oliver was arrested under the provisions of Oregon’s 1849 Black exclusion law. When Abner came to his brother’s defense, the entire family was targeted, including Abner Francis’s wife and daughter, and all were ordered to leave Oregon within four months. Some of Portland’s White citizens campaigned on the Francis family’s behalf by attesting to Abner Francis’s character and disputing his removal; a petition signed by over 200 individuals finally forced the legislature to table the removal order, and the Francis family were able to remain in Portland. However, the Black exclusion law remained in effect, and racial animosity would continue to build.²⁴

A similar experience was had by Morris Thomas and his wife, Jane Snowden, a few years later. The African American couple were residents of Portland, and Snowden was employed as a servant in the home of Andrew Skidmore when they were arrested and ordered to remove themselves from Oregon in 1854. Perhaps because Snowden’s connection to the Skidmores, a prominent White family, a petition was signed by over 100 Portlanders requesting that the couple be exempted from the exclusion law and allowed to remain in Oregon. The experiences of the Francis family and of Thomas and Snowden seem to suggest that White intercessions were the primary force preventing the removal of individual Black Oregonians. However, because only one person is known to have been removed from Oregon under the Black exclusion laws—Jacob Vanderpool, a sailor from the West Indies who arrived in Oregon in 1850 and was expelled by 1851—this is impossible to confirm.²⁵

In 1854, the Black exclusion law of 1849 was rescinded when Oregon’s legislature omitted it from the new territorial code.²⁶ However, this was not the end of exclusionist policies in Oregon. Arguably the strongest expression of the anti-African American mentality in pioneer Oregon occurred in 1857, with the adoption of the State Constitution. The constitution included an exclusion clause which denied African Americans the right of residence, the ability to use the judicial system, and the means to make legally-binding contracts. Articles also excluded African Americans from certain employment and denied them the right to vote. These

²² See Context II, Business and Employment, for information on African American employment in early Portland.
²³ “Portland Historical Timeline: Part One 1843-1901”; Marta Cieslak, “Abner Hunt Francis (1812?-1872),” Black Past, January 28, 2007, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/francis-abner-hunt-1872/. By the time of Francis’s departure in 1862, he had amassed a fortune of $36,000, equivalent to $1 million today. The A.H. Francis Building, as documented in an 1858 McCormick lithograph panorama, was a substantial structure in downtown Portland. Francis’s financial success and social standing were anomalous for a member of the African American community in early Portland.
²⁴ McLagan, Peculiar Paradise, 27, 88. The Francis family moved to Victoria, British Columbia, of their own accord in 1862. They remained there at least until Abner Francis’s death in 1872.
provisions were still in place when Oregon was admitted to the Union two years later, and so Oregon became the first and only free state with an exclusion clause in its constitution.27

Oregon During the Civil War
Oregon played a comparatively minor role in the Civil War, as the state was geographically removed from the main area of conflict. However, Oregonians were hardly indifferent to the causes or outcome of the war. Although Oregon was a Union State, its White residents were not wholly united against the South’s “peculiar institution”: in 1857, just four years before the outbreak of the Civil War, roughly one-third of voters at Oregon’s state constitutional convention had voted in favor of a provision permitting slavery in the newly-established state.28 President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which freed all enslaved people in the Confederate states and allowed their enlistment into the Union Army, triggered an outpouring of dissent from Confederate sympathizers in Oregon. Rumors circulated that secret secessionist societies—including the Knights of the Golden Circle, a semi-military secret society active in the Midwestern states—were meeting across the Willamette Valley and planning to foment Native American uprisings in protest.29 This resistance to emancipation and the Lincoln administration led to the creation of new political organizations in support of the Union. Members of this new Union Party took dozens of state offices during the 1860s, attempting to crush the nascent successionist movements and equating support of the emancipation policy with support of the Union and the U.S. Constitution. In this way, dissenters and proslavery Oregonians were marked as traitors and enemies of the American Republic.30

In Oregon, the question of African American emancipation and potential enfranchisement was seen in a broad context of race-based restrictions on civil and political rights. Although few African Americans lived in the state at the time, the population of early Oregon included an otherwise relatively diverse mix of Native Americans, Asians, and Pacific Islands, and so the issue of African American emancipation and enfranchisement raised relevant questions about the relationship between race, political rights, and social and economic opportunity in Oregon.31 Many White Oregonians also balked at the idea of freed Black migrants entering their state in greater numbers after the war, alleging that they would diminish job opportunities for Whites and overwhelm the state’s poorhouses and prisons.32 The issue of enfranchisement was of particular concern as the war neared its conclusion: in March 1865, Unionist Henry L. Pittock, the editor of Portland’s Oregonian newspaper, opined that African Americans lacked the “capacity for self-government” that was required of fully enfranchised American citizens and cautioned that “this nation of the white race should well ponder the question before it admits the African, the Mongolian,

27 McLagan, Peculiar Paradise, 52-60.
29 Smith, “Oregon’s Civil War,” 162; David C. Keehn, Knights of the Golden Circle: Secret Empire, Southern Secession, Civil War (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana University Press, 2013). The Knights of the Golden Circle were a secret fraternal order that proposed the establishment of military colonies of Americans in Mexico, with the ultimate aim of annexing the “golden circle” of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean to the United States as new slave-holding states. With the election of Abraham Lincoln, however, the society began encouraging secession from the Union. The secrecy surrounding the Knights of the Golden Circle served to heighten fear and confusion surrounding their objectives and methods. John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Abraham Lincoln in 1865, was an alleged member.
30 Smith, “Oregon’s Civil War,” 162-64
31 Smith, “Oregon’s Civil War,” 156.
and the Indian to all its privileges."33 These exclusionary, patronizing, and racist sentiments would persist in Oregon into the postbellum period.

**African Americans in Oregon During Reconstruction: 1865 and into the Period of Significance**

On a national level, the African American experience during the period of Reconstruction (1865 through 1877) was characterized by a struggle for social mobility, economic opportunity, and political voice in the grudgingly reunited country. At this time, the majority of African Americans were newly-freed slaves thrown upon their own meager resources in areas devastated by the recent conflict; they were systematically denied opportunities for economic advancement and enfranchisement despite federal legislation to the contrary.34 Southern legislatures also passed Jim Crow laws that segregated transportation and public facilities, and racial violence including Lynchings and race riots increased in frequency.

In the decades following the Civil War, the African American experience in Oregon paralleled national trends in many ways. Namely, African Americans' opportunities for homeownership, employment, and participation in local social and political groups were consistently defined by the state's dominant White power structure. The parameters of these limited opportunities were consistent with several key elements of contemporary White attitudes regarding racial superiority: namely, that non-Whites should not compete with Whites for jobs, housing, or social influences, and that non-Whites should only hold jobs that Whites were unable or unwilling to perform themselves. In Oregon and across the country, African Americans were frequently limited to menial service positions such as shoemakers, domestic servants, bootblacks, cooks, waiters, stable hands, and coachmen in the decades immediately following the Civil War.35

In 1868, Congress ratified the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution; this granted citizenship rights and equal protection under the law to all persons born or naturalized in the United States, including recently emancipated African Americans. The Democratic Party in Oregon was strongly opposed to the amendment and challenged or ignored the national movement toward equal citizenship. In general, Oregon's White population was willing to acknowledge legal freedom for African Americans but remained resistant to the inclusion of African Americans on an equal footing in social, economic, and political affairs. The Oregon Legislature ratified the 14th Amendment by a very close margin in 1866, but rescinded its ratification two years later. The 14th Amendment was not re-ratified by the Oregon Legislature until 1973. The 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guaranteed voting rights for all male citizens, was also wildly unpopular in Oregon. Governor Lafayette F. Grover officially voiced his displeasure with the amendment, and it was not ratified by the state legislature until 1959.36

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33 “Radicalism,” *The Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), March 3, 1865.
34 U.S. House of Representatives, *Black Americans in Congress, 1870-2007* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008), 206. While a few political gains were made by African Americans during the first decades of Reconstruction, with several Black politicians elected to local, state, and national offices in the 1870s and 1880s, these were quickly reversed by new requirements for poll taxes, subjective literacy tests, and voter registration rules passed by White legislators in the late nineteenth century. John Mercer Langston, who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1888, was the first African American from Virginia elected to this office; because of the disenfranchising constitution adopted by Virginia at the turn of the century, he would be the last for nearly a century.
35 Millner, "Blacks in Oregon."
In addition to the state’s active resistance toward federal legislation granting African Americans equal rights, Oregon subjected its African American citizens to a poll tax in 1862 and excluded them from jury duty service. In 1866, the state legislature adopted a law that prohibited the intermarriage of Whites with other races, punishing offending couples and wedding officiators with stiff fines and prison sentences. A year later, African Americans in Portland won a major victory when they secured a promise for public education for their children, but the Portland school district was unwilling to immediately integrate and so created a separate “Colored School” at SW 4th Avenue and Columbia street. However, the extra financial demands to maintain a segregated school eventually proved so onerous that African American children were allowed to attend Portland public schools on an integrated basis beginning in 1872. This was one of a few early victories for the African American community in Portland, which continued to visualize a better social and economic future in Oregon despite the restrictive dictates of White society.

When viewed broadly, the anti-African American actions of Whites in early Oregon were extremely effective in achieving their racist objectives. They discouraged African American in-migration through dubious laws and sometimes open hostility. They generally contained African Americans in urban areas and denied them homesteading rights, thereby removing them from competition for the economic opportunities offered by a largely agrarian society. Finally, they placed African Americans outside of the normal protections and guarantees of American civil and legal institutions, making their place in Oregon life uncertain and vulnerable to the dictates of the dominant White culture. These conditions created an atmosphere of individual and institutional racism that affected the African American experience in Portland during the 1865-1973 period of significance.

CONTEXT STATEMENT I: SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Summary
Throughout the period of significance, African American settlement patterns in Portland and Oregon were profoundly impacted by the racist policies and social practices of a dominant White power structure. Beginning with the Black exclusion laws of the 1840s, Oregon had established itself as an unwelcoming environment for African American in-migrants. Discriminatory stipulations in the federal Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 prevented early African American settlers from securing a homestead and pursuing agricultural opportunities in the Oregon Territory. Those who did defy the exclusion laws tended to seek employment opportunities in urban centers, of which Portland was the largest and most developed. Following the completion of a transcontinental railroad to California in 1869, the Oregon Trail Era began to draw to a close. Portland became increasingly well-connected with the lucrative markets of the midwestern and eastern United States, and the city’s economy, geographic extent, and population grew rapidly through the end of the nineteenth century. Portland’s small settlement-era African American community was augmented by new Black in-migrants, first from the upper South and Midwest and later from the deep South and Texas. As a result of the limited employment options afforded to them during

37 Millner, “Blacks in Oregon.”
the nineteenth century, African American Portlanders generally settled in Northwest Portland near Portland’s rail terminal, Union Station, and associated hotels.\textsuperscript{40}

In the early twentieth century, the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition of 1905 spurred downtown development and shunted the African American population near Union Station to Lower Albina in Inner North and Northeast Portland. Lower Albina, including portions of the Eliot neighborhood and what is today the Veterans Memorial Coliseum, had been an area of predominantly White residency until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, at which time many of Portland’s White residents relocated to newly-developed suburbs in eastern Portland and to homes in the West Hills.\textsuperscript{41} Restrictive covenants, discriminatory real estate sales, and racist zoning practices generally prevented African American Portlanders from following suit, and instead the community was concentrated into Albina neighborhoods for much of the twentieth century.

World War II marked a significant inflection point in the history of Portland, and in the history of its African American community in particular. The Pacific Northwest’s shipbuilding programs attracted tens of thousands of new residents to the region, including approximately 20,000 African Americans who crowded into Lower Albina neighborhoods and temporary wartime housing projects. Nearly 10,000 African Americans remained in Portland at the time of the 1950 census, a significant decrease from the wartime peak of 22,000 but more than five times what the population had been before the war. In the postwar period, Black Portlanders successfully fought for legislative advances in equitable housing practice and organized community groups that campaigned for neighborhood improvements. However, they continued to face overt racism with regard to their housing options, and their existing neighborhoods in Lower Albina were targeted and devastated by City-led urban renewal programs during the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s. The Emanuel Hospital expansion project, the last urban renewal program to significantly impact Lower Albina and its predominantly African American population, concluded in 1973.

Over the course of the century-long period of significance described by this document, African American settlement patterns were largely dictated by the desires of Portland’s White majority. African American Portlanders were limited in their housing choices because of institutionalized racism, inadequate economic resources, and—in several instances—open hostility from their White neighbors. Collectively, these factors shaped the physical landscape of the African American community in Portland between 1865 and 1973.

\textsuperscript{40} See Context II, \textit{Business and Employment}, for a detailed discussion of African American employment history in Portland.

The Emergence of an African American Community in Early Portland: 1865-1900

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<td>1870</td>
<td>90,923</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>0.381%</td>
<td>8,293</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1.797%</td>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>174,768</td>
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<td>0.279%</td>
<td>17,577</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>1.092%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>317,704</td>
<td>1,186</td>
<td>0.373%</td>
<td>46,385</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>1.035%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>413,536</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>0.267%</td>
<td>90,426</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>0.857%</td>
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America’s first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, linking the existing rail hub in Omaha, Nebraska, with Sacramento, California, and eventually with the Pacific Ocean at San Francisco Bay. In the 1870s and early 1880s, Oregon-bound travelers from the eastern and midwestern United States could ride a train to San Francisco and travel up the coast on a steamship, a significantly shorter and less onerous journey than earlier migrants had taken across the Oregon Trail. In 1883, Portland was linked to the national rail network by way of the Northern Pacific Railroad, and in 1887, it became the northern terminus of the Southern Pacific Railroad; passengers could now travel directly from San Francisco to Portland by train, in the span of only a day and a half. The economy and population of the young city surged in the late nineteenth century as a result of its increased connectivity to eastern and midwestern markets and the facilitated migration path offered by these newly-completed railways.

In the thirty-year period between 1870 and 1900, Portland’s total population grew tenfold, from 8,293 to 90,426.42 The explosion was largely due to in-migration via railroad and steamship, but also to the 1891 annexation of towns surrounding Portland. In reaction to Seattle’s strong showing of growth in the 1890 census, Portland leaders persuaded the independent cities of East Portland (covering much of what is now Southeast Portland) and Albina (parts of present-day North and Northeast Portland) to consolidate into one much larger city. Voters in all three towns strongly approved the annexation in 1891, and Portland grew by approximately 18,500 residents and eighteen square miles overnight.43

By the close of the nineteenth century, Portland’s population mix included a large number of recent immigrants, most of them from Europe. In the early to mid-nineteenth century, most American immigrants came from Germany, Ireland, and Scandinavia, while the 1880s ushered in a thirty-year surge of emigrants from Southern and Eastern European countries. In 1890, 59 percent of Portland’s residents were foreign-

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born or had at least one foreign-born parent. Recent immigrants and their families tended to settle near others of the same ethnic and national background, and so ethnic neighborhoods developed in Goose Hollow (Germans), Slabtown (Irish and later Slavic immigrants), North Portland (Scandinavians, Finns, and Poles), Sabin (German-Russians), and Brooklyn near the Southern Pacific rail yards (Italians). Outside of these European enclaves, Chinese-Americans formed the most distinctive ethnic neighborhood in early Portland. The center of Portland’s pre-1900 Chinese neighborhood was at SW 2nd Avenue and Alder Street, and the district stretched from Ash Street to Salmon Street between the Willamette River and 3rd Avenue.

As Portland continued to grow into Oregon’s dominant urban locale, it also became the location of the only sizable African American population within the state: at the turn of the century, more than 70 percent of Black Oregonians lived in Portland. The railroad industry and associated hotels were the city’s primary employer of Black men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and so Portland’s African American community developed in close proximity to Union Station (800 NW 6th Ave.) and nearby lodging establishments. Beginning in the 1870s and continuing through the early twentieth century, a small yet distinct African American community developed in Old Town, in the area between NW Hoyt and SW Morrison streets.

A few Black Portlanders did find it possible to locate outside of this area, but these cases are exceptions to the prevailing settlement pattern of the late nineteenth century. These individuals and their families moved further “uptown” on the west side of the Willamette River, to present-day Nob Hill or Goose Hollow, or into the budding middle-class suburbs on the east side of the river. Although their means for locating

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46 Paul G. Merriam, “The ‘Other Portland’: A Statistical Note on the Foreign-Born,” Oregon Historical Quarterly 80, no. 3 (Fall 1979): 266; Douglas Lee, “Chinese Americans in Oregon,” The Oregon Encyclopedia, last modified July 10, 2019, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/chinese_americans_in_oregon/#.XZujsW5FxaQ. Many Chinese men came to Oregon to mine gold in the 1860s and to work on the Northern Pacific and Central Pacific Railroad lines in the 1870s and 1880s. As railroad construction jobs dried up, many settled permanently in Portland with their families, increasing the Chinese population in the city to nearly 7,000 by 1900. In late nineteenth-century America, Portland’s Chinatown was second in size only to San Francisco’s.
47 The urban concentration of African American Oregonians in the early twentieth century is almost certainly related to the limited economic opportunities available to non-Whites in the state’s early history. Discriminatory stipulations in the federal Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 prevented African Americans from securing homesteads and establishing profitable agricultural enterprise in the Oregon Territory, and so African Americans who did settle in early Oregon gravitated toward urban centers with a broader range of employment opportunities, particularly opportunities in the service industry and related to the railroads. See Context II, Business and Employment, for additional information on the history of African American employment in Portland.
48 Stuart McElderry, “Building a West Coast Ghetto: African American Housing in Portland, 1910-1960,” The Pacific Northwest Quarterly 92, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 137. The homes of prominent African Americans listed in the 1898-1903 Polk City Directories in Old Town and near Downtown Portland included those of Mrs. St. Clair Smith, who co-managed the Arcadia Club with live-in manager Burr Williams; John Logan, who served as the head waiter of the Portland Hotel for fourteen years; Howard Sproules, a newspaper founder who worked as a porter at Chandler & Ballard; and Lewis Goodwin, a founder of the Enterprise Investment Company who worked as a Portland Hotel waiter. None of these residences are extant.
49 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 18; Polk’s Portland City Directories. African Americans living in southwest Portland in the early twentieth century include W.H. Bolds, Portland Hotel waiter and Advocate newspaper
outside of Old Town and Inner North and Northeast Portland are unconfirmed, it may be assumed that these African Americans were sufficiently affluent to secure property elsewhere in the city; it may also be the case that these individuals—whether for their occupation, fortune, or social status—were well-regarded by the city’s dominant White power structure and therefore considered “acceptable” by their White neighbors. One notable example is Anita Leona Gilbert-Taylor, a wealthy African American nurse and divorcée who was able to purchase her own home at 133 NE San Rafael St. by 1895.50 Gilbert Taylor was one of the wealthiest members of Portland’s African American community at the time of her death in 1925, and she was a dedicated member of the predominantly White congregation of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church.51 Her position, affluence, and accepted membership within a White religious community may have contributed to her geographical mobility within the strictly-segregated context of nineteenth century Portland. Gilbert-Taylor was one of a relatively small minority of Black Portlanders who were able to achieve this level of freedom in residential location.52

**African American Settlement Patterns in Early Twentieth Century Portland: 1900-1929**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>413,536</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>0.267%</td>
<td>90,426</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>0.857%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>672,765</td>
<td>1,492</td>
<td>0.222%</td>
<td>207,214</td>
<td>1,045</td>
<td>0.504%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>783,389</td>
<td>2,144</td>
<td>0.274%</td>
<td>258,288</td>
<td>1,556</td>
<td>0.602%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>953,786</td>
<td>2,234</td>
<td>0.234%</td>
<td>301,815</td>
<td>1,559</td>
<td>0.517%</td>
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co-founder and vice president, at 1922 SW 10th St.; Charles Ritter, custodian, waiter, and City Agent for *The New Age* newspaper, at 124 SW Hall St.; James Edward Watson, Portland Hotel waiter, at 1420 SW 3rd St. (the Watson family would relocate to Northeast Portland in 1911); and Arthur and Charles Sykes, porters who obtained city contracts to clean the streets, at 1610 SW 1st Ave. and 1824 SW 6th Ave. None of these residences remain extant.


52 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 9. 13-14. Others Black Portlanders who were able to located outside of Old Town in the late nineteenth century were Reuben Crawford, an emancipated slave and talented local ship caulker who lived in the Goose Hollow Neighborhood from 1905 until his death in 1918; Allen Ervin Flowers and Louisa (Thatcher) Flowers, who owned a small farm near Mount Scott in southeast Portland; Charles Besseleu, who arrived in Portland in 1870 following a whaling expedition and settled in present-day downtown before relocating to a farm in the Sunnyside neighborhood of southeast Portland; English pioneers William and Emily Hooker, who arrived in Portland from Chicago in 1882 and made their family home in the Woodlawn Neighborhood, near the northern boundary of the city; Robert King Morgan, who had come to Oregon as a slave from Kentucky in 1855 and who lived in northeast Portland’s Piedmont Neighborhood with his wife Annie Caesar and their children; and George Weeks, the first and only African American in this era of Oregon’s history to become a probation officer, and his wife Lizzie Koonce Weeks, who settled in North Portland.
Portland’s small African American community grew slowly in the early twentieth century, increasing in number but expanding at a slower rate than the overall population of the city.53 The aura of White hostility evinced in Oregon’s Black exclusion laws and the state’s reluctance to ratify the 14th and 15th Amendments were likely discouraging to prospective African American residents, as was the resurgence of Oregon’s Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s.54 In this era, African Americans who did move to Portland tended to establish their residences within the small existing Black community near Union Station and in the growing downtown edge on SW 10th, 11th, and 12th Avenues. Many, if not most, African American men who arrived in Portland at this time lived in downtown rooming and boarding houses. A small number settled in South Portland near the banks of the Willamette River, which was also home to a variety of immigrant groups. The emergence of a small African American business community and several African American churches in Inner Northwest Portland provides a strong indicator of community development through the first part of the twentieth century.55

The number of African Americans who made their homes on the east side of the Willamette River also increased steadily during the early twentieth century. This was facilitated by Portland’s annexation of Albina and East Portland in 1891, and it may be seen as a consequence of development that occurred in relation to the Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair of 1905. In hosting the Lewis and Clark Fair, Portland hoped to establish itself as a major West Coast economic center by demonstrating the city’s prosperity and modernity. In the years immediately before and after the Fair, Portlanders rebuilt the city’s downtown core with modern buildings to accommodate and impress nearly 1.6 million Fair attendees.56

The concentrated development that occurred because of the Lewis and Clark Fair drastically altered Portland’s public and private infrastructure, which in turn impacted Portland residents. Minority communities who had traditionally made their homes in the downtown area were disproportionately affected: the construction of new hotels and warehouses in the downtown area pushed Portland’s Chinese enclave out of the existing Chinatown south of Burnside Street and into a “New Chinatown” in Inner Northwest Portland, subsequently crowding the African American community that had centered itself around Union Station in Northwest Portland.

The east side of the city was also drastically altered around the time of the Lewis and Clark Fair. Newly constructed bridges and expanded electric streetcar lines spanned the Willamette River and better integrated

53 Gibson and Jung, Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States, Table 51; Gibson and Jung, Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States, Table 38. Oregon’s other minority populations also decreased as a percentage of the state’s overall population during the early twentieth century. The state’s American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut population went from 4,951 individuals (1.2 percent of the state’s population) in 1900 to 4,594 (0.4 percent of the state’s population) in 1940; its Asian and Pacific Islander population fell from 12,898 (3.1 percent of the state’s population) in 1900 to just 6,794 (0.6 percent of the state’s population) in 1940.
54 Ben Bruce, “The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan in Oregon during the 1920s,” Voces Novae 11, art. 2 (2019): 1-3. See Context VII, Civil Rights, for more information on the Ku Klux Klan’s activities in Oregon.
55 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 19.
the two halves of Portland. The facilitated commute enabled Portlanders—White, middle-class Portlanders in particular—to live further from their places of employment, in newer houses on larger lots, away from the perceived vice of downtown and the cramped inner ring of late nineteenth century residential neighborhoods. Real estate developers quickly filled in eastside neighborhoods such as Irvington, Alameda, Laurelhurst, and Eastmoreland with tracts of detached residential structures. Portland’s first zoning code, implemented in 1924, designated several of these new neighborhoods as exclusively single-family zones.57

The rise of these new middle-class neighborhoods underscored the tension in the city’s character: in contrast to the bustling, multi-ethnic city center, the streetcar suburbs were racially homogenous and predominantly residential in character. They were generally unwelcoming to people of color, sometimes denying them the legal right to purchase property in a neighborhood through restrictive covenants, discriminatory real estate and lending practices, and other mechanisms. African American settlement was also restricted by societal constraints on employment opportunity, which limited many to jobs in the railyards of Northwest Portland and other downtown workplaces. Prevented from settling in many of the new developments and crowded out of Northwest Portland by downtown development and the relocation of Chinatown, multiple nodes of African American residency emerged in the few close-in North, Northeast, South, and Southeast neighborhoods that were accessible to them. During the early 1900s, small groups of African American Portlanders moved into single-family homes located in the Lair Hill neighborhood of South Portland; in northern Montavilla between NE Halsey Street and E Burnside Street; on and near SE Tibbetts Street; and into a small enclave roughly bounded by SE Lincoln Street, SE Powell Boulevard, SE 26th Avenue, and SE 30th Avenue that came to be known as “Sugar Hill.”

By far the largest node of twentieth century African American settlement emerged in Inner North and Northeast Portland, in what had been the city of Albina before its 1891 annexation by the city of Portland. Lower Albina, as the collection of northeastern neighborhoods near the Willamette River were known, had been predominantly occupied by White Portlanders before the turn of the twentieth century; as these residents were increasingly drawn to the newer streetcar suburbs to the south and east, African American individuals and families purchased and rented the homes they left behind. Housing in Lower Albina was older and comparatively less expensive, allowing widespread homeownership among working-class African American families. The Broadway Bridge (opened 1913) and the same streetcar lines that had drawn White residents into the new streetcar suburbs also facilitated a quick commute between Lower Albina homes and the predominant African American employment centers on the west side of the river. Within Lower Albina, NE Rodney Avenue was an important center of the nascent community, and many dwellings that were home to African American families in the 1910s and 1920s remain extant in this location as of 2019. Other important nodes of African American residency in Albina include NE Sumner Street, NE 14th Avenue between Mason and Killingsworth Streets, and NE 8th Avenue between Failing

57 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 11.
59 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, Appendix A.
60 McElderry, “Building a West Coast Ghetto,” 137.
61 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 38, 192; Polk’s Portland City Directories.
and Mason Streets, where numerous families settled in the years following the Lewis and Clark Fair.\footnote{Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 58.} Over the next several decades, the city’s African American population would become increasingly concentrated in Lower Albina, building a stable (if small) community in Inner North and Northeast Portland opposite Union Station, the previous center of Portland’s African American community.

**Restrictive Covenants and Discriminatory Real Estate Practices**

The concentration of African American settlement in the Lower Albina district was far from coincidental. Two major forces, both controlled by the White power structure, ensured that Albina became the center of African American residence in early twentieth-century Portland. The first was the racially restrictive real estate covenant, which became a common practice nationwide beginning in the early 1900s. Such covenants were legal clauses written into deeds of home ownership that specifically forbade sale to or occupancy by African Americans and other people of color. These covenants were widely utilized in Portland neighborhoods, particularly in the newly developed suburbs of the early twentieth century.\footnote{National Register of Historic Places, Laurelhurst Historic District, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #100003462, 30-31. Racially restrictive covenants were written for many suburban developments and have been documented in the following neighborhoods: Mock’s Crest, Ladd’s Addition, Palatine Hill, Ferncrest, Cedar Hills, Irvington, Piedmont, Lake Oswego, Grant Park, Hillsdale, Raleigh Hills, Alameda Park, Eastmoreland, Westmoreland, and Rose City Park.}

A Laurelhurst warranty deed, created by the neighborhood’s developers in 1913, reads: “. . . nor shall said premises or any building thereon . . . be in any manner used or occupied by Chinese, Japanese or negroes, except that persons of said races may be employed as servants by residents.”\footnote{Hughes et al., \textit{Historical Context of Racist Planning}, 6, 8.}

Restrictive covenants were made legally unenforceable in 1948 through action of the U.S. Supreme Court, but subtler actions could still be taken to prevent African Americans from moving into predominantly White neighborhoods. The second method of White control over the location of African American residence was the local real estate industry’s practice of preventing licensed real estate agents from selling homes in areas that were uniformly White. In 1919, the Portland Realty Board formally included an article in its Code of Ethics that called for punitive measures against any agent who sold a home to an individual for whom “such sales tended to cause a drop in property values”; this coded language was understood to prohibit the sale of homes in majority-White neighborhoods to African Americans and other minority populations.\footnote{McLagan, \textit{Peculiar Paradise}, 142; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 59.}

As racially restrictive covenants ensured that new suburban developments would be inhabited primarily—even exclusively—by White Portlanders, discriminatory real estate practices served to maintain the predominantly White character of existing neighborhoods in other areas of Portland.\footnote{Karen Gibson, “Bleeding Albina: A History of Community Disinvestment, 1940-2000,” \textit{Transforming Anthropology} 15, no. 1 (2007): 6.}

A small number of African American Portlanders were, however, able to circumvent these restrictions and purchase homes outside of Albina in the early 1900s. Black homebuyers might work with a White friend who would act as a middleman, purchasing a property in a predominantly White neighborhood and then

reselling it without the use of a real estate agent. Or, if individual White homeowners chose not to use a licensed real estate agent, they were free to sell to whomever they wished. In other cases, a member of the African American community whose outward appearance was regarded as “White” could make a home purchase for themselves or for another member of the community; one example, Walter Greene, described as a “White-passing” African American real estate broker, quietly bought homes for other African Americans from the 1910s onward.68

In addition to the legal and institutional measures limiting their housing options, African American homeowners often had to endure overt forms of discouragement to reside in White neighborhoods. Windows would be broken at night, cars vandalized, and confrontations occurred with belligerent White neighbors. The latter was experienced by Dr. DeNorval Unthank, a prominent African American medical doctor, and his wife, Thelma, who moved into a house at 2106 SE Knapp St. in 1931. In a highly publicized incident, the house was vandalized after neighbors demanded the Unthanks to leave. Thelma Unthank was later tried in municipal court on a charge of threatening to kill a neighbor who, according to others, had committed the vandalism.69 Similarly, in 1932, African American widow Ida Tindall, who lived at 2124 SE Ivon St., was sued by her neighbors to have her “removed” from the White neighborhood, claiming that the property’s previous owner had not consented to the contract of sale.70 It could be dangerous for African Americans to challenge the geographic boundaries that Portland’s White power structure had drawn for them.71

Portland’s African American Community During the Great Depression: 1929-1941

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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>953,786</td>
<td>2,234</td>
<td>0.234%</td>
<td>301,815</td>
<td>1,559</td>
<td>0.517%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1,089,684</td>
<td>2,565</td>
<td>0.235%</td>
<td>305,394</td>
<td>1,931</td>
<td>0.632%</td>
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In cities across America, including Portland, thousands of workers found themselves suddenly homeless and unemployed during the Great Depression. Many Portlanders ended up in one of the “Hoovervilles” of homemade shanties and tents that packed unused land, such as Sullivan’s Gulch along the route of the Union Pacific Railroad. The impacts of the Great Depression on Portland’s African American community were

68 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 59; Melissa Cornelius Lang, “‘A place under the sun’: African American Resistance to Housing Exclusion,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 119, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 369. Greene lived in Portland from 1899 until his death in 1954, and his last residence, an apartment at 3820 NE Mallory St., still stands.


70 “Sue to Oust Negro Owner: White Do Not Want Colored in District; Go to Court to Disposses [sic] Mrs. Tindall,” *The Advocate* (Portland, OR), January 16, 1932; McLagan, *Peculiar Paradise*, 143. Ida Tindall was the widow of James Tindall, who had owned a shoe shine business in the Pittock Building.

particularly acute, as many service industry positions that had historically been held by African Americans were given instead to unemployed Whites. The African American community continued to concentrate itself in Inner North and Northeast Portland, and by the time the country began to recover from the Depression in the late 1930s, more than half of the city’s nearly 2,000 African American residents lived in Lower Albina. The remaining half were largely scattered across North Portland and Southeast Portland.

Home ownership remained a constant pursuit of the African American community in Portland throughout the Depression, although this dream continued to be stymied by restrictive covenants, discriminatory real estate practices, and employment opportunities that offered only limited remuneration. Also during the 1930s, a new form of institutionalized opposition to African American homeownership was introduced by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC), a New Deal program created by Congress in 1933. The HOLC’s practice of redlining, or demarcating neighborhoods considered high-risk for loan default, doubling down on the racial segregation that had already grown to characterize Portland’s neighborhoods in the early twentieth century.

Redlining and Discriminatory Lending Practices
The HOLC was established as an emergency agency by the Home Owners’ Loan Act of 1933, which was intended to "provide emergency relief with respect to home mortgage indebtedness, to refinance home mortgages, to extend relief to the owners occupied by them and who are unable to amortize their debt elsewhere…” In effort to standardize methods of property appraisal for the purpose of refinancing home mortgages, the HOLC created a series of “Residential Security Maps” of major American cities. Categorization of individual neighborhoods was determined in part by the average income and racial or ethnic makeup of each; the HOLC held that areas of mixed or predominantly minority settlement were more likely default on home loans than areas that were exclusively White. As a result, neighborhoods that had historically been accessible to African Americans and other people of color were categorized as “hazardous” areas. They were denoted on the HOLC’s Residential Security Maps in red ink, while more racially-homogenous (i.e., White), higher-income areas were denoted in green. Blue and yellow were used to mark “good” and “definitely declining” areas, respectively.

“Redlined” neighborhoods accounted for 12 percent of Portland’s HOLC-appraised area. These neighborhoods included Lower Albina, of which one 1937 appraiser opined: “This area constitutes Portland’s ‘Melting Pot, and is the nearest approach to a “slum district” in the city. Three-quarters of the negro population of the city reside here and in addition there are some 300 Orientals, 1000 Southern Europeans and Russians.” Some scholars have argued that the HOLC’s maps promoted discriminatory

72 See Context II, Business and Employment, for additional information on African American employment in Portland during the Great Depression.
73 For example, in 1925 The Advocate published an article celebrating the move of Miss Margaret Mosley to her own new bungalow at 845 NE Portland Blvd. at a cost of $5,000. “Builds Attractive Home,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), August 29, 1925.
76 Hughes et al., Historical Context of Racist Planning, 9.
77 Hughes et al., Historical Context of Racist Planning, 9.
practices in government mortgage lending, while others have contended that an analysis of HOLC loans (most of which were made two years before the maps were completed) indicates that the agency provided mortgages to both White and minority homebuyers. This research suggests that the Residential Security Maps were not used by the HOLC to qualify mortgage refinancing; however, conventional home loans in redlined “hazardous” areas tended to have higher interest rates, and Federal Housing Authority (FHA) appraisers may have taken this information into account when financing loans in later years. What is certain is that the Residential Security Maps capture governmental perceptions of lending risk in the period prior to World War II, with mixed and majority-minority neighborhoods considered the most at-risk for loan default. Residents of redlined areas struggled to gain access to capital investment that could improve their housing and economic opportunity; in this way, both in Portland and across the country, redlining advanced economic inequality and racial segregation in those neighborhoods that contained minority populations.

World War II and the Growth of Portland’s African American Population: 1941-1945
In the years leading up to World War II, more than half of Portland’s African American population was concentrated into Lower Albina by the actions of the local real estate industry, the local and federal government, lending institutions, and private landlords. This situation became untenable in the war years, however, as the establishment of Henry Kaiser’s Pacific Northwest shipyards attracted tens of thousands of job seekers to the region, including approximately 20,000 African Americans. These new residents challenged understood conventions in Portland’s racial status quo and increased the visibility of the city’s previously small African American community. A renewed wave of discrimination in housing and business would be directed at long-time African American residents as well as these newcomers. With the substantial increase in the African American population, however, social mores shifted and achievements slowly compounded. Difficulties and challenges lay ahead, perhaps best summarized in the labeling of Portland as “the most segregated city outside the deep south,” a characterization that endured well into the postwar years. As the 1940s unfolded, many changes lay ahead for the established African American community, the city of Portland, and the entire nation.

The Emergency Shipbuilding Program and the Kaiser Shipyards
After two years of increasingly tenuous neutrality, the United States entered the war against Germany, Italy, and Japan in December 1941. For the next three and a half years, the domestic economy struggled to maintain production while enlistment in the armed forces reached more than 10 million. Women, minorities, and the disabled joined the labor force by the millions as workers poured into war production centers such as San Francisco, Seattle, and Portland.

83 *Local Color*, written and reported by John Tuttle (Portland, OR: Oregon Public Broadcasting, 1986), made-for-television documentary.
Even before the United States officially entered World War II, the conflict had begun to spur Portland to new heights of manufacturing. In the language of city officials, Portland became a “congested war production center” primarily engaged in shipbuilding.84 The first federal orders for new ships went to local companies in 1940, and the next year, construction magnate Henry J. Kaiser opened the first of three large shipyards. At the peak of wartime production, the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area counted 140,000 defense workers, most of them employed by the Kaiser Shipbuilding Company in shipyards in North Portland; Swan Island; and Vancouver, Washington.85 Kaiser’s active recruitment and the promise of steady employment drew men and women from across the country: shipbuilding put 28,000 women to work in the Portland area, and war-related industries employed approximately 6,700 African Americans by March 1945.86 The wartime peak of African American in-migrants (including family members and individuals who were not directly employed by wartime industries) was approximately 20,000, with most coming to Portland from the south-central states of Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Missouri, Illinois, Oklahoma, and Arkansas.87 While these people were attracted to the higher wages being offered in Portland-area shipyards, many were also fleeing oppressive Jim Crow segregation and racially-motivated violence prevalent in the South since the end of Reconstruction.

The African Americans who arrived in early 1940s Portland were met with racial tension (amplified in 1942 by Executive Order 9066, which resulted in the internment of approximately 112,000 people of Japanese descent, including more than 4,000 living in Oregon), a tight housing market, inadequate transportation, and overcrowding in schools, stores, and theaters.88 Although the city did not experience the race riots that exploded in 1943 in Harlem and Detroit, African American Portlanders still endured racial incidents on city buses, harassment by the police, conflict with segregated labor unions, and ongoing discrimination in the housing and rental markets.89

Temporary Wartime Housing: Guild’s Lake Courts and Vanport
The tight housing market was the foremost problem facing those employed by Portland’s wartime industries; soon after workers began arriving, housing vacancy rates plummeted from 6 percent to just 2

84 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 51.
88 Craig Collisson, “Japanese American Wartime Incarceration in Oregon,” The Oregon Encyclopedia, last modified March 17, 2018, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/japanese_internment/#.WrAZ_ujwaUk. Japanese Americans in Western Oregon were forced from their homes and relocated first to assembly centers and then to internment camps. Starting in May 1942, Portland’s Japanese Americans were housed at the Pacific Livestock Exposition center in North Portland (now the Portland Exposition Center), where the maximum population reached 3,676. Most of these Portlanders were then incarcerated at the Minidoka War Relocation Center in Idaho beginning in August 1942. Internees from Hood River and southern Oregon were sent to Tule Lake in Northern California.
percent, and it became apparent that the region's housing shortage amounted to a crisis. This problem was particularly acute for African Americans, who faced not only a limited housing supply but also legal and social restrictions on where they could live. At first, newly-arrived African Americans squeezed into Lower Albina and surrounding neighborhoods, sometimes into homes that had undergone internal conversions to accommodate more residents, and sometimes into trailers that were placed on residential lots. Both of these practices were authorized by Portland’s War Code Housing Program, which temporarily altered housing codes in order in quickly increase housing supply. There is evidence that African American Portlanders participated in the program, such as Edwin and Eliza Kelley who placed a trailer on their residential lot in 1946.90 As the war dragged on, Albina reached capacity and was unable to absorb the rapidly increasing population. Instead, many African American in-migrants made their homes in temporary wartime housing projects. These developments included Guild’s Lake Courts and the City of Vanport, which was the largest federal housing project in the country at its completion in late 1942.91

**Guild’s Lake Courts**

Portland was one of the last major American cities to establish a housing authority, despite the rise of homelessness and shantytowns that had occurred during the Great Depression. With the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, however, housing the massive influx of wartime in-migrants became an issue of patriotism, as well as a method control over the settlement patterns of “Oakies,” African Americans, and others arriving in Portland to secure jobs in the shipyards and steel industries. HAP was established within a week of the attack, and within two years, public housing for 40,000 defense workers and their families had been constructed on twenty-five sites, including Guild’s Lake Courts.92

Between 1942 and 1943, the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) authorized and oversaw the construction of 2,606 temporary housing units at Guild's Lake Courts, a development located along the southwestern bank of the Willamette River in the area that is today Northwest Industrial and Slabtown. The low-lying site was an infilled riparian marsh, formerly known as Guild’s Lake that was also the site of the 1905 Lewis and Clark Fair. When completed, the development included eight distinct housing developments (called “divisions” in plans) as well as five community buildings, five childcare centers, a grade school, and two fire stations.93 Its peak population was approximately 10,000 residents in 1945.94

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90 Kerrie Franey, “Early Densification in an Urban Center: Portland, Oregon and the War Code Housing Program,” (terminal project, University of Oregon, 2019), 147; Cornerstones of Community, 113. Although Cornerstones lists the Kelley Family as occupying 3936 N Kerby Ave. from 1952-55, War Code Housing Permit Applications list the owner as E.J. Kelley in 1946. Eliza Kelley was born in Mobile, Alabama in 1852 and enslaved as a child; supposedly, she once served Abraham Lincoln. She came to Portland in 1944. The home at 3936 N Kerby Ave. was demolished for the creation of DeNorval Unthank City Park in 1969.
93 March, “Guild’s Lake Courts,” 261. One of these fire stations is extant at 4465 NW Yeon Ave.; the other, which was a temporary station inside one of the community buildings, has been demolished.
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

State: Oregon

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Guild’s Lake Courts was the only defense housing community in Portland city limits that accepted African American residents, and it was also first officially segregated community in the city. The entire African American population of Guild’s Lake Courts—about 2,000 residents—was concentrated into the two northernmost divisions, which contained only hastily-constructed, unelectrified multi-family housing. Commonly known as the “Negro Section,” these two divisions were set apart from the other sections of Guild’s Lake Courts and served by their own dedicated community center. The only major facility that was integrated was the Guild’s Lake School, completed in 1944 and serving a student body of approximately 600.

Vanport

The City of Vanport, the largest wartime housing project in America, was established with the express purpose of housing workers in the Kaiser shipyards. Located in Oregon midway between Portland and Vancouver, Washington, Vanport was bordered by the Columbia River to the north, Denver Avenue to the east, the Northern Pacific Railroad on the west, and the Kenton stockyards to the south; Henry Kaiser intentionally located the project outside of Portland city limits in order to avoid interacting with HAP, who were reticent to approve and fund a project that would encourage a significant increase in the city’s African American population. Working instead with the U.S. Maritime Commission, the Kaiser Corporation constructed 9,942 housing units in the summer and fall of 1942. Tenants began occupying the prefabricated housing in December 1942, and nearly overnight Vanport became the second-largest city in Oregon. By spring 1945, the development was home to 30,842 residents, 6,317 of whom were African American.

Although the Vanport’s hastily-constructed buildings were relatively small and insubstantial plywood constructions, the city was a fully-functioning community complete with a post office, grocery stores, a movie theater, several schools, and sports and healthcare facilities. On paper, Vanport was an integrated community: African American residents could shop where they pleased and choose any seat in Vanport’s movie theaters, and children attended fully-integrated schools and daycare programs. Vanport also employed African American teachers and law enforcement officers, practices that were rare in Portland at the time. In reality, however, families did not have a free choice of housing units in Vanport. HAP assumed management of the project soon after it was constructed by the Kaiser Corporation, and African Americans were assigned housing on segregated streets. While public spaces remained officially

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96 March, “Guild’s Lake Courts,” 144, 418.
97 March, “Guild’s Lake Courts,” 209-210. Some students from the northern portion of the “Negro Section” were also bussed to Lintnton School to avoid having to cross the railroad tracks that separated them from the school.
“desegregated,” African Americans encountered separate medical facilities, segregated recreational facilities, and a hostile police force.102

Despite the de facto segregation of Vanport and Guild’s Lake Courts, these developments were unique in their diversity relative to the greater Portland-Vancouver area. The rapid influx of African American residents under dramatically-altered economic and social circumstances transformed Portland’s demographic makeup and intensified existing racial tensions.103 Widespread anxiety among Whites regarding the swelling African American population even prompted Portland Mayor Earl Riley to declare in a newspaper article that "Portland can absorb only a minimum number of Negros without upsetting the city's regular life."104 Commissioner J. E. Bennett publicly stated that it was better not to welcome African American workers, and Mayor Earl Riley agreed in private that the racial migration threatened Portland’s “regular way of life.”105

In general, White Portlanders looked forward to the end of the war and the return to pre-war racial norms, with most assuming that this would be precipitated by the exodus of the wartime African American migrants. Met with this unfriendliness, Portland’s African American population fell from a peak of roughly 22,000 in 1944 to a census count of 9,529 in 1950, about five times the size of the pre-war total.106 For the African American population that had resided in Portland prior to the war, these newcomers represented a competing force for the limited resources and positions traditionally available to African Americans in Portland. Conversely and more importantly, they provided a new momentum, critical mass, and energy that eventually broke the racial boundaries that had constrained Portland’s African American population for decades.

### Portland’s Expanded Postwar African American Community: 1945-1973

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Portland Population</th>
<th>Portland African American Population</th>
<th>African Americans as a Percentage of Total Portland Population</th>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>305,394</td>
<td>1,931</td>
<td>0.629%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>373,628</td>
<td>9,529</td>
<td>2.550%</td>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>372,676</td>
<td>15,637</td>
<td>4.196%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>382,619</td>
<td>21,572</td>
<td>5.638%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The end of World War II brought abrupt changes to nearly every aspect of American life. As veterans returned home, they married in unprecedented numbers and used educational benefits from the G.I. Bill to earn college degrees. Women left factory floors to return to a life of domesticity and to raise the first

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103 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 66.


105 Robbins, "African Americans and Women Workers in World War II."

106 Millner, “Blacks in Oregon”; Gibson and Jung, Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States, Table 38.
members of the postwar baby-boom generation. As war emergency housing was dismantled, White workers and their families settled in new suburban tract houses. Still restricted by discriminatory real estate practices, the impacts of redlining, and active resistance from Portland’s majority White populace, African Americans crowded into the established Black neighborhoods in Albina. The city council passed a nondiscrimination ordinance for public accommodations in 1950, but voters repealed it, revealing that racial prejudice was widespread among the greater Portland populace. In 1955, the Realty Board acknowledged that its code of ethics still prohibited members from selling houses to “individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood.” An this careful phrasing was a coded proscription against the sale of a dwelling in a predominately White neighborhood to a person of color.

Despite these ongoing challenges for Portland’s rapidly-growing African American community, World War II marked a turning point in community composition and race relations in the city. In numerous ways, the expanded population failed to fit within the place previously allocated to African Americans in Portland life. Physically, the population had grown too large for all to live in Inner North and Northeast Portland. Moreover, those who had recently moved to Portland brought with them different cultural patterns, life experiences, coping techniques, and aspirations, thus challenging the previously-defined relationship between the races in Portland. These differences certainly disturbed the pre-war White population of Portland, forcing it to confront and adjust to uncomfortable new elements in racial dynamics. But the impact of these new realities also presented Portland’s pre-war African American population with new challenges, sometimes welcomed and sometimes resisted. In general, however, African American Portlanders fought to retain and expand the social gains that had been made during the war.

The Destruction of Vanport and the Growth of Albina
As the war ended, the population of Guild’s Lake Courts and the City of Vanport rapidly contracted. Most of the projects’ White residents moved to permanent housing in Portland or returned to homes elsewhere in the United States; the population of Vanport fell from a wartime peak of 40,000 to approximately 18,500 by 1948, and the population of Guild’s Lake Courts was similarly reduced. HAP accelerated latter project’s decline by relocating some families to other wartime housing developments (including Vanport), eager to redevelop the land for industrial use and return Portland to some semblance of its prewar status quo. The African American section of the project was apparently sold off in October 1945, a reaction to heightened racial tensions in Portland at the time. The immediate cause for the hasty sale appears to have been the fatal shooting of Ervin Jones, an African American man and a resident of Guild’s Lake Courts, at the hands of a White Portland police officer in August 1945. In search of a murder suspect, a group of policemen stormed Jones’s home in the middle of the night; the officers failed to identify themselves and had no warrant. Jones fired a warning shot at the ceiling upon finding the group of unknown assailants in his apartment, and he was shot by an officer. His death was ruled a justifiable homicide.

109 March, “Guilds Lake Courts,” 167; McElderry, “Vanport Conspiracy Rumors,” 157-58. The immediate cause for the hasty sale appears to have been the fatal shooting of Ervin Jones, an African American man and a resident of Guild’s Lake Courts, at the hands of a White Portland police officer in August 1945. In search of a murder suspect, a group of policemen stormed Jones’s home in the middle of the night; the officers failed to identify themselves and had no warrant. Jones fired a warning shot at the ceiling upon finding the group of unknown assailants in his apartment, and he was shot by an officer. His death was ruled a justifiable homicide.
Portland’s Black residents; as a result, the majority of the Vanport’s African American residents were forced to remain in the project. Their cramped conditions in the hastily-built shelters, coupled with turbulent race relations and an increasingly assertive population, led Vanport residents to demand proper housing within Portland’s city limits for those residing in the project after 1945. However, the city’s White majority made it very clear that they had no interest in accommodating these requests and wanted African Americans who moved to the region during the war to leave. When it became obvious that Portland would have to allow many of the African American residents to remain, their settlement was still restricted to the Albina neighborhood in Northeast Portland. Many chose to remain in Vanport rather than crowd into Albina, although the project’s plywood apartments had never been intended to serve as permanent housing.\textsuperscript{110}

Then, quite suddenly, Vanport all but disappeared. After unusually heavy spring rains, the banks of the Columbia River began to swell in May 1948; on Memorial Day weekend, the railroad embankment on the west end of the city collapsed, and all Vanport residents had to be evacuated. Most received a warning of only 10 to 40 minutes. In a single afternoon, the flooding river swept away the homes of an estimated 6,000 African Americans and destroyed the entire city. Fifteen residents were reported dead and seven missing, although by many estimates, the actual figure is much higher.\textsuperscript{111} Survivors sought refuge in temporary facilities with the help of non-profit organizations and generous Portlanders, but long-term solutions for housing the more than 18,000 displaced residents did not quickly materialize. Rehousing Vanport’s residents of color, including African Americans and Japanese Americans, proved especially problematic within Portland’s highly segregated neighborhood system. Many were put up at what was left of Guild’s Lake Courts, either in vacant housing that had previously been reserved for White residents or in temporary trailer housing, while others were crammed into vacant defense housing on Swan Island.\textsuperscript{112} Still others squeezed into Albina, where the African American population had already swelled from a pre-war population of approximately 1,600 to a postwar population of 4,500.\textsuperscript{113} Albina managed to accommodate even more new residents following the flood, and it continued to grow as the primary location of Portland’s African American community in the postwar years.

The Battle for Equal Housing: The Oregon Fair Housing Act of 1957

Beginning with the original Black exclusion laws and restrictions in the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, attempts to control where and under what conditions African Americans could live in Oregon represented the most impactful institutional discriminatory act against African American residents. In the tumultuous years following World War II, African Americans looked towards establishing equal housing opportunities for themselves and other minorities. As school desegregation and bus boycott confrontations lit up the national scene, Oregon’s African American population chafed under the restraints imposed by private prejudice and public real estate practices which prevented their economic resources and personal preferences from determining where they could live.

In the decade after the war, African Americans continued to find their housing choices limited to Inner North and Northeast Portland. Colloquially known as the “Freedom Area,” African American residences were clustered in an area roughly bounded by NE Oregon Street to the south, NE Fremont Street to the north, the

\textsuperscript{111} Rubenstein, "May 30, 1948 Flood of Change."
\textsuperscript{112} Podany, \textit{Vanport}, 122; March, “Guild’s Lake Courts,” 341-42.
\textsuperscript{113} Harper et al., “History of the Albina Plan Area,” 44.
Willamette River to the west, and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to the east. Earlier African American residency was concentrated on NE Mallory and NE Rodney Avenues N Monroe, N Ivy, NE Ivy, NE Sacramento, NE San Rafael, and NE Tillamook Streets. After World War II, as Albina’s remaining White residents moved to other suburbs in and around Portland, the unspoken boundaries of the “Freedom Area” gradually expanded to accommodate the expanded postwar African American population, including those displaced by the Vanport Flood. In the 1940s and 1950s, the area within which African Americans could more easily purchase property included sections of N Commercial, N Gantenbein, N Haight, N Kerby, N Vancouver, N Williams, NE Garfield, and N Flint Avenues, and N Page, N Cook, NE Cook, and NE Hancock Streets. By the early 1960s, 80 percent of Portland’s African American population resided in Albina neighborhoods including Eliot, Irvington, Boise, King, Sabin, Humboldt, Walnut Park, Vernon, and Woodlawn.

A small but increasing number of African American individuals and families were able to move out of Albina in the postwar years, breaking the “traditional” boundaries allocated to them and drawing increasingly negative attention as the debate over race and housing intensified. In 1953, the Oregonian published a series of articles that refuted the perceived negative impact of African American residency upon property values, crime rates, and neighborhood character. The articles featured African American families already living in majority-White neighborhoods, with the reassurance that these residents hadn’t precipitated an African American “invasion” or generated any negative consequences to White residents. In the same year, this encouraging feature contrasted with another article headlined “Cross Marks Negro Lawn,” which discussed the police investigation of a cross-burning at the Parkrose home of Charles Gragg at 11261 NE Knott St. In 1954, both The Oregonian and African American newspaper the Portland Challenger reported the ordeal of Izella Kimmons, who received numerous telephone threats after she and her four young children moved into a rental house at 425 NE San Rafael St. Kimmons and her family quickly moved back to their former residence at 217 NE Weidler St. in Albina, where they remained until moving to North Portland in 1963.

The Oregonian also openly discussed the long-denied real estate practice of restricting African American homebuyers to a particular geographic area. In 1949, a front-page article exposed the Portland Realty Board’s expulsion of Clarence E. Enders, a White real estate agent who sold a home at 1524 SE 32 Pl. to William “Tony” Anthony, an African American railroad steward, and his wife Marie Anthony, who was of Cherokee descent. The Oregonian article quoted the Realty Board’s letter of expulsion, which claimed that Enders had violated “both national and local realty board codes of ethics in the sale of southeast district

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116 “African American Family in White Neighborhoods,” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), November 14, 1953. See Context III, Journalism, for additional information about The Oregonian and its evolving coverage of the African American community during the period of significance of this MPD.
117 “Cross Marks Negro Lawn,” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), May 11, 1953.
118 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 84. Charles Gragg was the son of Roy and Estella Gragg.
119 “Threats Drove Them from Their Home,” Portland Challenger (Portland, OR), April 23, 1954; “Telephone Call Frightens Negro Owner, Tenant,” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), April 10, 1954; J.V. Kimmons, interview by Catherine Galbraith. This house was moved in 1996 to 425 NE Tillamook St. to make way for the Albina Corner project, a mixed-use, low-income housing development at the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and NE San Rafael Street.
120 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 84.
property to other than Caucasian persons.”¹²¹ The Urban League protested the expulsion to no avail. The Anthony family remained on 32nd Place until at least 1965, then moved to 2011 NE Knott St.¹²²

At last, after years of agitation, the Oregon legislature adopted its first fair housing legislation in 1957. The Oregon Fair Housing Act made it illegal for property owners receiving any government funding to discriminate “solely because of race, color, religion, or national origin” in the sale, lease, or rental of any “dwelling place for a person or family…in a building containing five or more such apartments or units.” In 1959, the law was amended to apply to any “person who, as a business enterprise, sells, leases or rents real property.”¹²³ As in the case of the 1953 Public Accommodations Act (see Context VII, Civil Rights, for additional background), approval of a new law did not mean instant access to choice housing for African Americans. In 1960, the Oregon Journal newspaper featured a set of articles that quoted Portland Mayor Terry Schrunk as “shocked and embarrassed” over the burning of the partially-completed Parkrose home of Rowan Wiley, an African American waiter and Purple Heart veteran, under construction at 1630 NE 140th Ave.¹²⁴ In 1961, LaVerne Bagley Brown filed a complaint with the Civil Rights Division after she was evicted from her apartment at 1906 NE Multnomah because of her race.¹²⁵ After moving from 8844 N Hamlin Ave to 2933 NE 16th Ave. in 1965, John Whitesides, an African American department manager at Tektronix, and his wife Janet, a bookkeeper for Dr. DeNorval Unthank, received a torrent of hate letters leading to a police investigation.¹²⁶

Despite the intimidation and racism these families continued to suffer, the Oregon Fair Housing Act did remove the mantle of legality from those in Oregon who continued to racially discriminate in housing matters. Although many African Americans remained in Albina, the Fair Housing Act accelerated the rate at which people of color could emulate their White predecessors in the flight to newer, more desirable suburban neighborhoods. Fueled by the era’s predominant philosophical strategy to pursue integration into White society, African American suburban flight contributed to the steadily-growing problems of the African American community in Lower Albina. Those with the means to move away carried their professional and economic successes with them, thereby draining away resources, both individual and economic, from the African American community in Lower Albina.

**Clearance and Urban Renewal Programs**

In addition to the social issues surrounding race that emerged across America in the 1950s and 1960s, economic issues and infrastructure programs significantly impacted housing patterns of the country’s established African American communities. Following White residents’ surge to the suburbs in the early postwar years, American cities focused on rebuilding their urban centers in the late 1950s. “Urban renewal” programs combined federal grants and local investments to redevelop “blighted” urban centers with modern transportation infrastructure, commercial buildings, and public service facilities. Because communities of color

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¹²¹ “Realty Board Expels Agent in Sale to Non-Caucasians,” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), January 13, 1949.
¹²² Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 84.
¹²⁴ “Partially Completed Home Burned,” The Oregon Journal (Portland, OR), July 16, 1960. Despite the intimidations aimed at the Wileys, the family completed their home and settled at their new address.
¹²⁵ LaVerne Bagley Brown, interview by Catherine Galbraith, 1997. An Oregon Public Welfare Commission child supervisor, Bagley Brown had been the first African American to attend Marylhurst College. She was the daughter of Donald and Bessie Bagley.
¹²⁶ Janet Whitesides, interview by Catherine Galbraith, 1997.
inherited most urban centers as they aged and decayed, redevelopment strategies disproportionately impacted these populations. Older, close-in neighborhoods were torn down and replaced by the components of the public sector’s envisioned future of urban life—high rises, freeways, auditoriums, and recreation complexes—and displaced former residents were left to find housing and community elsewhere. In 1962, it was estimated that about 80 percent of Americans displaced by urban renewal were African Americans, and only 0.5 percent of total federal expenditures for urban renewal were spent on relocation.127

In Portland, as in other major American cities, urban renewal programs decimated the housing stock and commercial ventures that formed the heart of the city’s African American community. One after another, African American homes and businesses were destroyed to clear space for new development in Lower Albina. The Eliot Neighborhood, in particular, lost nearly half of its residents—most of whom were African American—to the Memorial Coliseum and Emanuel Hospital Expansion projects in the 1960s and 1970s.128 For African Americans and other minorities in mid-twentieth-century Portland, urban renewal and redevelopment projects consistently resulted in the displacement of families, the destruction of homes, and the eviction of businesses they owned and patronized. Demolished dwellings and commercial buildings were replaced, if at all, by facilities designed to serve more affluent and powerful Portland residents.129

Displacement for Memorial Coliseum Construction

Public debate over the best location for the Memorial Coliseum, a massive indoor sporting arena or “entertainment-recreation” (E-R) facility, began in the early 1950s. The Broadway-Steel Bridge site that was eventually selected never rose to prominence in any of the site studies completed by public agencies; the heavily-trafficked arterials along NE Broadway, N Williams Avenue, N Interstate Avenue, and NE Weidler Street were all recognized as barriers to easy access for the new facility. Some interest groups preferred a location in Southwest Portland, while others preferred a location in North Portland. Amid accusations of backroom deals and political corruption, the Broadway-Steel Bridge site was chosen not for its unique suitability but as a political compromise.130

Because the Broadway-Steel Bridge site was located in Lower Albina, the Memorial Coliseum project disproportionately impacted Portland’s African American community. 476 dwelling units lay in the path of construction, and 224 of these units were occupied by African Americans. This was at a time when the city’s entire African American population numbered between 9,500 and 15,500, amounting to 2.5 to 4.2 percent of the total Portland population.131 The clearance of the Broadway-Steel Bridge site resulted in the destruction of homes, businesses, and institutions and the displacement of hundreds of African American families.132 In April 1957, the Oregonian published a story profiling several of the approximately 400 displaced residents, including African American crane operator Clarence McFarland and his family. McFarland and his wife, who had five children at the time, had paid $55 per month for a two-bedroom apartment at 1213 N. Benton Ave.

129 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 104.
130 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 99.
131 Gibson and Jung, Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States, Table 38.
132 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 99.
but were now without a home. The family could not find comparable lodging at an affordable price, and, as Mrs. McFarland expressed, “there were so many places Negroes can’t live” in Portland.133

In perhaps the ultimate disregard of community and neighborhood impact, the project’s demolition contractor announced that he would clear the Coliseum site in thirty working days and demanded that all tenants vacate the area within the specified time frame. No financial assistance was provided to renters who were forced to move, and loan assistance programs from the Housing Authority of Portland and the Federal Housing Authority were not offered until after the mandatory relocation date. The Portland Development Commission (PDC, now Prosper Portland) maintained that public funds could only be used for property acquisition, not relocation. Some displaced families left Portland entirely, while others scattered throughout the city into the already-crowded neighborhoods north of Broadway. Many were forced into debt to find new homes and business locations. When the loan program was finally established, reimbursement offered to homeowners was generally insufficient, and five condemnation suits were filed objecting to purchase price offers. First to file was Mack Johnson, a Pullman porter living at 53 N McMillen St., who also owned property at 1461 and 1467 N Wheeler Ave. These lawsuits were not settled for more than a year.134

**Displacement for Emanuel Hospital Expansion**

In 1962, Portland’s Emanuel Hospital notified the City that it was interested in expanding its campus in Inner North and Northeast Portland using federal Urban Renewal funding. Developed in conjunction with PDC, the proposed development program called for expanded hospital facilities, parking, offices, employee housing, and housing for low-income elderly persons on 55.3 acres of land in Albina’s Eliot Neighborhood, bounded by N Williams Avenue to the east, N Russell Street to the south, and the Fremont Bridge interchange with Interstate 5 and N Kerby Avenue to the north and west.135 The plan was approved in July 1970 following a single community meeting. A group of residents led by African American Ina Warren formed the Emanuel Displaced Persons Association (EDPA) and called for the City to “see that those displaced can move with dignity and without suffering financial loss”; their protests received no official feedback from the City or PDC, however, in November 1970, the EDPA submitted a legal brief challenging PDC’s relocation plan. The EDPA’s activism ultimately resulted in the Replacement Housing Agreement, which stated that federally assisted low- to moderate-income housing should be constructed to offset demolitions.136

Like the Memorial Coliseum Project, the Emanuel Hospital urban renewal program disproportionately impacted African American Portlanders. The hospital itself purchased and demolished 101 properties in the redevelopment zone between January 1963 and October 1969; although no demographic information exists regarding these privately-purchased properties, a majority were likely owned or inhabited by African American families, individuals, and businesses. PDC subsequently purchased and cleared another 188 properties between 1971 and 1973, including 158 that were residential in nature and 30 that were commercial properties. 74 percent of the households displaced were African American.137 The home of Ina

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133 “Long Time Residents of E-R Site Reluctant to Leave; Others See Merit in Clearance,” *The Oregonian* (Portland, OR), April 9, 1957. The McFarlands eventually moved to 36 NE Skidmore St. and then 2521 N Williams Ave.


136 Casey Parks, “Fifty years later, Legacy Emanuel Medical Center attempts to make amends for razing neighborhood,” *The Oregonian* (Portland, OR), September 22, 2012; Woolley, “Reconciliation Project,” 2.

137 Woolley, “Reconciliation Project,” 1-3.
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

Warren, founder of the EDPA, was one of many to be demolished. Warren and her husband Leo had come to Portland in 1948; the Emanuel Hospital expansion forced the couple from 312 N Cook St. to 6133 NE 8th Ave. The home of Nellie Owens, 1958 NAACP “Grandmother of the Year,” at 111 N Fargo St. was also demolished. 138

To the frustration of the community that it had displaced, the Emanuel Hospital urban renewal program was halted in 1973 following federal budget cuts. Entire blocks that had been cleared of dwellings and businesses sat vacant and undeveloped and remained so for decades. Worse, the low-income housing promised under the EDP’s hard-won Replacement Housing Agreement was never provided. 139 The Emanuel Hospital project was regarded by Albina residents and by many City officials as one of the worst applications of urban renewal in midcentury Portland. As the last of the mid-twentieth century urban renewal programs to substantially impact the African American community in Lower Albina, the 1973 end date of the Emanuel Hospital project also marks the end of the period of significance for this MPD.

The Federal War on Poverty and Evolving Neighborhood Activism

In the 1960s, the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson introduced an expansive program of social-welfare legislation intended to help end poverty in the United States. 140 The War on Poverty, as it came to be known, provided both funding and a patriotic impetus for community organizing, and in Portland, it laid the groundwork for strong neighborhood activism for years to come. One of its program elements, the Model Cities Program, was specifically focused on developing innovative antipoverty programs, and it included a federal urban aid program that had positive impacts across a large section of North and Northeast Portland. Community organization under the War on Poverty and Model Cities Programs challenged class and racial biases in Portland programs while building community leadership capacity in the Albina neighborhoods. 141

The Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project and Albina Citizens War on Poverty Committee

By 1960, community resistance to urban renewal programs was gaining strength in Inner North and Northeast Portland. The Central Albina Study, an urban renewal clearance program proposed for the area between Broadway, Fremont Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, and Interstate Avenue, was under development by PDC in the late 1950s and looked to be disastrous for Albina residents. PDC’s report, finally published in late 1962, described the area as “in the advanced stages of urban blight” and suggested that its freeway and arterial access made the area “unusually well suited to transportation, distribution, and service industries.” 142 The plan area housed a population of 31,500 people, including

138 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 103.
139 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 103; Craig Wollner, John Provo, and Julie Schablitsky, Brief History of Urban Renewal in Portland, Oregon (Portland, OR: Prosper Portland, 2004), 12.
140 The War on Poverty was centered on several major pieces of legislation: the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which established the Office of Economic Opportunity, Job Corps, the VISTA program, the federal work-study program and a number of other initiatives; the Food Stamp Act of 1964, which made the food stamps program a permanent fixture of the American welfare system; the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which established the Title I program subsidizing school districts with a large share of students living below the poverty line; the Social Security Amendments of 1965, which created Medicare and Medicaid and expanded Social Security benefits; and the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, which authorized the Model Cities Program.
141 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 65.
12,544 African Americans—80 percent of Portland’s total African American population at the time.\(^{143}\) Had it been implemented, approximately 1,400 African American families would have been displaced from their homes.\(^{144}\)

In reaction to the proposed redevelopment program, Albina residents began to organize. In 1958, the Albina Neighborhood Council, a multiracial advocacy organization including clergymen, business professionals, and other interested Albina residents, began meeting to discuss the area’s needs and to explore possible solutions to ongoing problems.\(^{145}\) In August 1960, members of the Council met with the PDC to request assistance in securing federal funding for an “urban renewal conservation and rehabilitation program,” and the PDC agreed. The Albina Neighborhood Improvement Committee (ANIC) was formed two months later, and together with PDC, the committee submitted the “Survey and Planning Application for the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project” to Portland City Council and then the federal Housing and Home Finance Agency (now the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). Approval was granted on October 12, 1961, and the project officially commenced.\(^{146}\) An ANIC field office was opened in a house at 3726 N Kerby Ave. to help facilitate project implementation.

The Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project was the first urban renewal project in Northeast Portland to focus on neighborhood rehabilitation rather than redevelopment. The project area included thirty-five city blocks bounded by N Fremont Street, N Skidmore Street, N Vancouver Avenue, and the alley between Albina and Mississippi avenues, and it contained 755 dwelling units and a population that was 54 percent African American. Citizens rehabilitated more than 300 dwellings and performed neighborhood improvements including tree planting and the establishment of Unthank Park.\(^{147}\) Many Albina residents considered the project a success, and in 1967, more than 1,000 people petitioned Portland City Council to extend the project south of N Fremont Avenue. Because the City did not foresee residential potential in this part of Portland, the request was denied. However, in 1968, the project’s area was slightly expanded to include 13.5 blocks north of N Skidmore Street.\(^{148}\)

In addition to their work with the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project, the Albina Neighborhood Council also helped establish a local “War on Poverty” committee to secure neighborhood improvement funds from the federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). The OEO had been created by Congress in 1964 to lead the charge in the federal War on Poverty. The Albina Neighborhood Council developed a

\(^{143}\) Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American Community, 110.

\(^{144}\) Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American Community, 113.


proposal to secure OEO funding, and in October 1964, an Albina Community Action Plan was created. In February 1965, the Albina Citizens War on Poverty Committee (ACWPC) was formally named and recognized as the official representative for OEO programs in Albina. A new Neighborhood Service Center was opened at 59 NE Stanton St. with African American attorney Mayfield Webb as its first Executive Director. Some of the programs which operated out of the center were a free legal services program, a family counseling service and parenthood program, the Urban League Job Development and Training Program, and various Housing Department programs.149

The Model Cities Program
A complex parallel to local urban renewal decisions and other War on Poverty programing in Portland was the federally-funded attempt to create a “Model City” in Inner North and Northeast Portland in 1967. The national Model Cities Program, initiated in 1966, sought to remedy urban decay and poverty with innovative services and public improvements. The boundaries of Portland’s Model City area included the Albina neighborhoods of Eliot, Irvington, Boise, King, Sabin, Humboldt, Vernon, and Woodlawn, all of which had significant African American populations at the time. The program emphasized the grassroots involvement of community residents in decision-making and project design activities.

Although well-intentioned, this approach to community development would not produce lasting solutions to fundamental problems in the community. One major deterrent to genuine grassroots cooperation was the temptation to compete for control over the sizable pots of federal money that were made available to project participants. Other barriers to long-term success were the techniques of control that the traditional political power structure continued to exercise over decisions regarding objectives and expenditures.150 While the Model Cities approach itself did not solve the complex problems of a besieged community, however, it did involve numerous African American Portlanders and spurred many to greater civic involvement. For example, Charles Jordan, who was the fourth Director for Portland’s Model Cities Program and the first African American to hold the position, became the first African American on the Portland City Council when he was elected in 1974.151 African American Portlanders such as Jordan demonstrate a momentum shift within Portland’s African American community in the late 1960s and 1970s, as the community as a whole gained representation within local politics and achieved new inroads in the fight against discriminatory policies and programs.152

150 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 105. 51.
151 Anna Griffin, “Charles Jordan remembered: Portland's first African-American commissioner and longtime parks director was ‘a giant in this city,’” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), January 10, 2019. Jordan’s home of the era is extant at 1830 NE Klickitat St.
152 See Context VII, Civil Rights, for additional information on the Model Cities Program and the ways in which it galvanized Portland’s African American community.
Changing of the Guard in Portland’s African American Community: The 1970s and Beyond

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<th>Portland African American Population</th>
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<td>366,383</td>
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<td>437,319</td>
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<td>583,775</td>
<td>35,667</td>
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The period of significance for this document ends in 1973 with the conclusion of the Emanuel Hospital expansion project, the last major urban renewal program to significantly impact the African American community in Albina. Later in this decade, as Portland’s population and business shifted toward the suburbs, the city experienced a generational shift of leadership and a revolution in political values. Years of community activism fostered by neighborhood groups and the Model Cities Program led to the creation of the Office of Neighborhood Associations in 1974 and substantial public investment in the viability of older neighborhoods. Also in 1974, the decision to cancel the so-called Mount Hood Freeway through Southeast Portland saved half a dozen neighborhoods from destruction and reflected a significant shift in Portland’s application of urban renewal programming.\(^{153}\) The widespread clearance that devastated the African American community in Albina during the 1960s and early 1970s would not be repeated in Portland’s later urban renewal programs.

In many aspects, recent decades have been somewhat positive for the Portland area. After severe economic recession in the 1980s, the metropolitan economy has boomed, first with electronics and high-tech manufacturing and then with related fields like software and health research. Portland State University and Oregon Health and Science University grew substantially in the late twentieth century, and since the 1990s, the area has attracted more than its proportionate share of young college graduates, seeding the economy and earning Portland a national reputation as a progressive city. Portland has also

\(^{153}\) Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 65; Val Ballestrem, “Mount Hood Freeway,” *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, last modified March 1, 2019, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/mt__hood_freeway/#XaLL3i-ŻPow. It should be noted that the neighborhoods that would have been directly impacted by the proposed Mt. Hood Freeway were predominantly inhabited by White residents. Existing research has not revealed a definitive link between the neighborhoods’ racial makeup and the decision to cancel the freeway, but it may be postulated that White Portlanders in these areas were socially and financially better-positioned to protest urban renewal programs than Black Portlanders and other residents of the less-affluent Albina neighborhoods bulldozed for the Memorial Coliseum, Interstate 5, and the Emanuel Hospital expansion. Factors leading to the decision to cancel the freeway included new federal environmental legislation, which led to the creation of an environmental impact study critiquing the suitability of the proposed construction; a new generation of public officials with an interest in mass transit; and grassroots activists who raised legal oppositions.
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

become increasingly diverse with regard to race and ethnicity, as it has welcomed a new wave of Eastern European immigrants from the former Soviet Union, Asian immigration from Vietnam, Korea, India, and China, and an increasingly large Latinx population.\(^{154}\) The African American population of the city has remained relatively small, numbering 36,695 persons or 6.3 percent of Portland’s total population as of the 2010 census.\(^{155}\)

The reality of Portland’s growing population and tight housing market has heavily impacted the city's African American community. The historically Black neighborhoods of Albina had already experienced the impacts of massive land clearance from the late 1950s into the 1970s, followed by disinvestment in the poor economic years of the 1980s.\(^{156}\) In the first part of the twenty-first century, this area of the city has experienced a large influx of relatively young, affluent White residents, leading to gentrification and displacement that has again pushed the city’s African American population northward and eastward. Where there were three majority-African American census tracts in Inner North and Northeast Portland in 2000, there are now none within Portland city limits.\(^{157}\) The realities of displacement, observed at so many points in the community’s history, continue to shape African American settlement patterns in Portland even today.

**Context-Associated Property Types**

Section F of this MPD lists the predominant property types associated with African American resources in Portland, Oregon, during the period of significance (1865-1973). Resources significant for their association with Context I, **Settlement Patterns**, are mostly likely to belong to Property Type I, **Residences**, and Property Type IX, **Historic Districts**. However, nearly all of the property types described in Section F are likely to reflect this context to some degree. Additional research and evaluation of significance and integrity are necessary for any property or group of properties to be determined eligible for listing in the National Register under this MPD. Refer to Section F, **Property Types**, for additional information regarding properties’ potential eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

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\(^{154}\) In the 2010 U.S. Census, 72.2 percent of people living in Portland were identified as “White alone, not Hispanic or Latino.” 9.4 percent were listed as Hispanic or Latino, 7.1 percent as Asian, 1 percent as American Indian or Alaskan Native, 0.5 percent as Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 4.2 percent as another race not listed, and 4.7 as two or more races.


\(^{156}\) During the 1980s, the City of Portland targeted neglected buildings in “blighted” areas for demolition. One example was a multifamily building at 234-236 NE Sacramento St., which was declared a public nuisance by the Portland City Council in 1982 and demolished in 1984. The forced demolition and assessment of demolition fees was objected to by the property’s African American owner, Julia Davis, in a series of correspondence from the period (City Ordinance 153854 [September 29, 1982], Record AD/6918, City of Portland eFiles, Portland, OR).

\(^{157}\) Portland State University Center for Population Research, 2000 and 2010 Comparison Profile: Census 2000 Geography, Multnomah County Census Tracts (Portland, OR: Portland State University Center for Population Research, 2010), https://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.prc/files/Multnomah_CT2000.pdf. The three majority African American census tracts in 2000 were Multnomah County tracts 22.01, 34.01, and 34.02 (the area roughly bounded by Interstate 5 to the west, NE Killingsworth Street to the north, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to the east, and NE Russell Street to the south.)
CONTEXT STATEMENT II: BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

Summary

Although Oregon was admitted to the Union as a free state in 1859, most early White settlers viewed Black men and women with a sense of racial superiority. The exclusion laws of the 1840s suggest that Black settlers, both free and enslaved, were widely regarded as a threat to social and economic security in the predominantly White state. Black Americans who did make their homes in early Oregon struggled to acquire land and an independent income; they were invariably relegated to menial, low-paying service positions as janitors, bootblacks, cooks, or domestic servants. These were positions that a majority of White Oregonians regarded as appropriate for a demographic that was, until 1865, legally enslaved in much of the United States.

With the arrival of the railroad system, many African American men in Portland and the broader United States were able to secure more stable, higher-paying service positions with railroad companies and associated hospitality industry. Portland’s African American workforce slowly built up capital, and with it the ability to own, operate, and patronize Black-owned businesses. Because racial discrimination limited African Americans’ ability to frequent many types of White-owned establishments in early Portland, the city’s Black entrepreneurs created thriving parallel industries in hospitality, dining, retail, and professional services. These businesses were necessarily located at the geographical heart of Portland’s Black community, which was centered first on Union Station, the city’s major employer of African American men, and later in the Albina area of Inner North and Northeast Portland. A small but vital professional class also emerged in the first three decades of the twentieth century, introducing Portland’s first African American doctors, dentists, and lawyers.

The Great Depression forced many of the early Black-owned small businesses to shutter, and many African Americans employed by the city’s dominant White-owned industries were replaced with unemployed White workers. The outbreak of World War II and Portland’s growth as a wartime production center not only put Black Portlanders back to work, but attracted up to 20,000 new African American in-migrants. Of those who entered the wartime labor force in Portland, the vast majority worked in Kaiser Corporation shipyards, where they faced systematized discrimination at the hands of Whites-only unions. Wartime labor shortages and production industry demands guaranteed jobs for African Americans, but even federal action to dispel discriminatory employment practices did not ensure equal opportunity for African American men and women seeking skilled positions.

The end of the war and the curtailing of shipyard production led to widespread unemployment in Portland’s newly-expanded African American community, which stabilized at around five times its prewar population. Many returned to service positions with White-owned businesses, but these were initially unwilling to absorb the significant number of Black Portlanders seeking work. Aided by job placement services provided by the Urban League of Portland and encouraged by the passage of Oregon’s Fair Employment Practices Act in 1949, African Americans gradually broke barriers to employment in various previously White-dominated industries and organizations. In the early postwar period, the range of careers available to Black Portlanders expanded to include civil service appointments and skilled labor positions that had once been reserved for White applicants alone.

Black-owned small business was also revived by the influx of African American in-migrants during World War II. As the majority of Portland’s African American community shifted to the Albina neighborhoods of Inner North and Northeast Portland, Black-owned and -operated businesses proliferated along N
Interstate Avenue, NE Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, and N Williams Avenue in particular. The location of these business ventures reflects the ongoing prejudice that African American Portlanders faced with regard to public accommodations, even as their successes demonstrate the ambitions and acumen of local Black entrepreneurs.

The business aspirations and compounded economic gains of Portland’s postwar African American community eventually led to the creation of the city’s first Black-owned commercial bank, the Freedom Bank of Finance. The bank was an explicitly commercial venture with the express intention of providing equal access to financial services for African American Portlanders, including those attempting to launch business ventures within the local community. The Freedom Bank of Finance, later the American State Bank, was a visible symbol of the economic agency of Portland’s African American community and a capstone on decades of advancement in the areas of employment and entrepreneurialism.

African American Employment Opportunities in Early Portland: 1865-1905

Although farming and ranching were the basis of the economy in early Oregon, the Black exclusion laws of the 1840s and discriminatory stipulations in the federal Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 prevented Black Americans from establishing profitable agricultural enterprises in the Oregon Territory. Black migrants who defied the exclusion laws and settled in early Oregon therefore gravitated toward urban centers like Portland, where they typically found jobs in service to White settlers. In nineteenth-century Portland, African American women were almost exclusively employed as domestics, laundresses, and cooks in wealthy White households, while men found work as janitors, bootblacks, stable hands, coachmen, cooks, and personal servants. Although other West Coast port cities commonly employed Black men at the waterfront, few if any African Americans worked as longshoremen, stevedores, or dockers in early Portland because the city’s waterfront industries employed a nepotistic, “brother-in-law” system of recruitment that restricted employment to White persons, mostly of Canadian, Scandinavian, English, or German descent.

Many of the service positions available to African American men in late nineteenth-century Portland were associated with railroad and related hospitality industries. This was a nationwide pattern that began soon after the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869, when Chicago industrialist George Pullman and his Pullman Car Company instituted a policy of utilizing African American men almost exclusively as porters on their sleeping cars. Pullman preferred hiring recently-emancipated African American men because, in his estimation, they were likely to be skilled in service and willing to accept low wages; his hiring preference became an unofficial rule, and generations of African American men worked for the Pullman Company and its competitors through the mid-twentieth century. Although their pay was low by the standard of the day, employment as a Pullman porter was one of the most lucrative and highly-respected careers available to Black men at the time. These positions were generally coveted among members of the African American community, as they offered a reliable income, opportunity for travel, and a career free from heavy manual labor.

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When Portland was linked to the national railroad network in 1883, a number of new Black in-migrants were attracted to the city because of the vocational opportunities that the railroad offered: between 1880 and 1890, the total African American population of the city increased from 487 to 1,186. Black men in Portland found work with the railroads as porters and also as dining car waiters, mail clerks, and “red caps” (baggage handlers). Others were employed by the hotel industry, which had grown in the late nineteenth century to accommodate Portland’s increasing rail traffic. One of the city’s largest and most significant employers of African American hotel workers was the Portland Hotel, a full-block building in downtown Portland constructed by railroad magnate Henry Villard in the 1880s. Like George Pullman, Villard sought to staff his establishment with recently emancipated Black Americans from the South. Villard hired John C. Logan from Columbia, South Carolina, to serve as the hotel’s head waiter, and Logan in turn recruited other African American employees from his state, including brothers Edward and William Rutherford. When the Portland Hotel opened in 1890, seventy-five African American men recruited from North and South Carolina were employed by Villard as waiters, private barbers, and bellmen.

While a few other Portland hotels and gentlemen’s clubs followed Villard’s lead in hiring African American waitstaff (the Seward Hotel, the Hotel Cornelius), the Portland Hotel remained the only major hotel employing African American porters and waiters. Despite the limited range of positions and advancement opportunities that the arrangement offered, it was accepted by Black hotel employees even as it reinforced their White clients’ notions of superiority and non-White subservience. For African American men who were excluded by law and custom from other avenues to economic success and security, the financial rewards and superior working conditions of the hospitality industry made such positions invaluable.

Hospitality careers afforded African American men both financial security and relative prestige within the Black community of Portland. In some cases, they used their new economic and social status to advance greater employment opportunity for other African American Portlanders. In 1892, a group of Portland Hotel employees formed the New Port Republican Club primarily to support the reelection of President Benjamin Harrison, but they also endorsed an entire slate of African American candidates for employment

\[\text{Making of the Black Middle Class (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 1-3; Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American Community, 12.} \]

\[\text{161 Gibson and Jung, Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States, Table 38. Portland was connected national railroad network when Northern Pacific completed its transcontinental route at Independence Gulch, Montana. The first transcontinental train on the new line arrived in Portland on September 11, 1883.} \]

\[\text{162 Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American Community, 12; Robbins, “Railroads, Race, and the Transformation of Oregon.”} \]

\[\text{163 The Portland Hotel is no longer extant. It was located in downtown Portland between SW 6th Avenue, Broadway, Morrison Street, and Yamhill Street (now the location of Pioneer Courthouse Square).} \]

\[\text{164 National Register of Historic Places, Otto and Verdell Rutherford House, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #14001076, 12.} \]


\[\text{166 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 15.} \]
in Portland’s local government. 167 Although three out of the four candidates they supported were denied positions, they were successful on one count. Through their efforts, Moody E. Scott was hired as a typist clerk at the Multnomah County auditor’s office, becoming the first African American woman in public service in Portland. 1894 brought additional successes, as African Americans George Hardin and John Harry Hooper were hired as patrol drivers for the Portland Police Bureau. Both were laid off within a year, ostensibly due to the effects of the economic depression that had started in 1893, but Hardin would persist in his desire to serve on the force. He was finally hired as Multnomah County’s first African American sheriff’s deputy in 1915. 168

Black-owned Small Business in Early Portland
Portland’s greater African American community also benefitted from the city’s growing number of Black hotel employees and railroad porters, who used the economic rewards of their stable, relatively well-paid positions to establish and patronize emerging Black-owned businesses. In at least one instance, a group of African Americans working in the hospitality industry pooled their resources to increase their investment capacity; of the eight men who formed the “Enterprise Investment Company” in the early twentieth century, seven were employed by the Portland Hotel. In 1901, the Enterprise company put up a capital investment of $10,000 to purchase property and construct a building at 1018 N Larrabee Ave. The building was completed in 1903, and by 1907, the value of the company’s investments had grown to $13,500. The building was home to the Enterprise Lodge of Masons, one of Portland’s first African American fraternal organizations, and hosted formal dances for members of the local Black community. 169

Most other early Black-owned businesses were smaller in scale, and they appear to have emerged primarily to serve other African Americans, who were restricted from patronizing White-owned restaurants, hotels, movie theaters, and entertainment halls. 170 For this reason, Black-owned and -operated business in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Portland were typically located near Union Station (800 NW 6th Ave.), Portland’s major employer of Black men and the center of the city’s emerging African American community during the period. 171

In this environment, early Black-owned establishments such as William Brady’s tailoring shop (727 SW Morrison St.), the Arcadia Saloon (NW 4th Avenue and Everett Street), and the Enterprise Investment Company Building (1018 N Larrabee St.) all provided services that were generally denied to African American Portlanders by the city’s dominant White power structure. There may have been instances, however, in which Black-owned businesses were patronized by members of the White community: one

167 See Context VII, Civil Rights, for additional information on the New Port Republican Club and other African American advocacy organizations.
168 J.D. Chandler, Hidden History of Portland, Oregon (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013), 88-91. Hardin served as a sheriff’s deputy until 1926, at which time he joined the Multnomah County jail unit. He continued in this position until his death in 1938.
169 Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American Community, 52; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 18, 51; McLagan, Peculiar Paradise, 113. Enterprise Hall is not listed in the City Directory of 1910 and may have been sold before the end of the decade. See Context V, Benevolent and Fraternal Societies, for additional information on African American fraternal organizations in Portland.
170 Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American Community, 54.
171 See Context I, Settlement Patterns, for additional information on the geographical dispersion of the African American community in early Portland.
example is that of the horseshoeing shop of Nelson McBrien and Cubet Crawford (1315 SW Naito Pkwy.),
which held a contract to shoe horses for Portland’s police and fire departments.  

Growth of African American Business in the Early Twentieth Century: 1905-1930
The Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair of 1905 marks a major
inflection point in the history of Portland, and, more specifically, in the history of Black employment in the city.
In hosting the Lewis and Clark Fair, Portland leaders hoped to establish the city as a major West Coast
commercial center ripe for outside investment. The fair attracted nearly 1.6 million visitors to the city between
June 1 and October 5, 1905, and triggered a surge of growth that raised the city’s total population from
90,426 people in 1900 to 207,214 people in 1910.  

The vast majority of these new residents were White,
with the African American population of the city growing by fewer than 150 people in the same ten-year
period; nevertheless, Portland’s overall population increase during the first decade of the twentieth
century had a profound impact on African American employment and industry. The influx of new residents
created a strong demand for employees in the service industry, including roles that were historically filled
by African Americans. Expanded employment opportunities provided financial stability for an increased
number of Black Portlanders and enabled more and more African American entrepreneurs and
professionals to establish their own business ventures in the growing city. In 1907, the Black-owned New
Age newspaper celebrated the proliferation of African American enterprise in the early twentieth century,
writing: “We find barbershops, grocery stores, restaurants, tailor shops, cafes, boarding and rooming
houses, furniture stands, laundries, etc., all being run by Afro-Americans, and comparing favorably with
any like establishments in the city.”  

African American Entrepreneurialism and the Golden West Hotel
As in the late nineteenth century, the new Black-owned businesses that proliferated after the Lewis and
Clark Fair were primarily (perhaps exclusively) patronized by other Black Portlanders. Segregation led to
the creation of flourishing Black industries that paralleled those operated and patronized by White
Portlanders. This phenomenon is best illustrated by the Golden West Hotel (707 NW Everett St.), which
was founded by African American entrepreneur and Tennessee native William D. Allen in 1906. The hotel
served an entirely Black, predominantly male clientele and provided both short- and long-term lodging for
patrons who, because of their race, would be denied accommodations at the city’s White-owned hotels.  

The Golden West Hotel was Allen’s second business venture, the first being a Portland restaurant named
the Climax Café. After marrying Lillian Medley in 1905, the Allens together opened the Golden West Hotel
to serve African American railway porters, cooks, barbers, waiters, and other visitors to Portland.  

The Golden West included 100 hotel rooms and ground-floor commercial spaces for local Black-owned
businesses; in this way, Allen’s hotel served both out-of-town guests and Portland residents alike. In the

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172 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 17; Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American
Community, 49-50.
174 “A visit to several business enterprises...,” The New Age (Portland, OR), March 2, 1907. See Context III, Journalism,
for more information about The New Age and other African American newspapers.
175 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 32-33; Polk’s Portland City Directories.
176 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 32. The Allens lived at 1926 NE 40th Ave. in 1916 and had
three children together. The oldest, William Duncan, Jr., graduated from Oberlin College; by 1930, he was on the faculty
at Howard University’s Music Department and had performed at Carnegie Hall. The Allens’ youngest son, Robert,
attended college at Howard University and the couple’s daughter, Nellie, attended Oberlin College.
early twentieth century, small businesses housed within the Golden West included Richardson’s Confectionery and Fountain Lunch, operated by former expressman Erastus Richardson; A.G. Green’s Candy Shop, an ice cream parlor and confectionery; the Golden West Athletic Club, which was operated by George Moore and featured amenities like a Turkish bath and gymnasium; and the Golden West Barbershop operated by Waldo Bogle, who was a second-generation barber from a prominent Black pioneering family in Walla Walla, Washington.¹⁷⁷

For a quarter-century, Golden West Hotel served as a hub of Black business enterprise and a center of African American community life. The Mount Olivet Baptist Church was located in a neighboring building until 1921, and after regular Sunday morning church services, many Black churchgoers visited the Golden West to share a meal and socialize. Residents and visitors included some of the most respected members of the community at the time, and prominent Black entertainers, politicians, and musicians regularly stayed at the hotel; notable guests included the Honorable Oscar DePriest, African American Congressman from Illinois, and A. Philip Randolph, who founded the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925.¹⁷⁸ Randolph visited Portland several times in the 1920s, speaking at the relocated Mt. Olivet Baptist Church (1734 NE 1st Ave.) and Bethel AME Church (1239 N Larrabee Ave.) and establishing a small local arm of the African American labor union.¹⁷⁹

The Rise of Black-Owned Small Business in the Early Twentieth Century

Just as segregation effected a parallel hospitality industry for African Americans in early twentieth-century Portland, it also gave rise to a number of small businesses that were operated by African Americans and served an almost exclusively African American clientele.¹⁸⁰ Emerging Black professionals and entrepreneurs came from a variety of backgrounds—some had been born in Portland, and some were recent in-migrants; some were college-educated, while others were self-taught or trained through apprenticeships; but all were pioneering professionals in the sense that they established practices and business ventures in a city that systematically limited their vocational opportunities.¹⁸¹

Portland’s discriminatory real estate practices, restrictive covenants, and hostile White attitudes placed constraints on African American business owners and professionals, both directly and indirectly.¹⁸² Indirectly, these practices restricted African American residential settlement to only a few prescribed areas and because Black-owned businesses were almost exclusively patronized by other African Americans, it was generally necessary for them to locate their establishments within these nodes of African American settlement. Directly, some African American entrepreneurs were met with resistance from White Portlanders when they attempted to establish their businesses in White dominant areas. For example,


¹⁸⁰ Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 33-34.


¹⁸² See Context I, *Settlement Patterns*, for additional information regarding the obstacles that hindered African American residency and property ownership in Portland during the twentieth century.
when Jessie and Carrie Ingersoll attempted to relocate their garment-care business, Up-to-Date Cleaning and Tailoring Company, to 318 NE Sacramento St. in 1930, several White residents protested the idea of African Americans buying property in the neighborhood. By withholding their signatures from a petition necessary to allow a commercial venture in the residential area, these residents prevented the Ingersolls from relocating their business.  

In early twentieth-century Portland, Black-owned small businesses included garment-care ventures, barber shops and beauty salons, restaurants, retail establishments, and more. A handful of African American professionals even engaged in traditionally White-dominated fields like medicine and law also opened their own practices. The following are a representative sampling of entrepreneurs and professionals operating in the period after the Lewis and Clark Fair.

**Medical Offices**

Portland claimed only a few Black medical professionals in the early twentieth century, despite the patent need of the African American community. At the time, African Americans could not receive treatment in hospitals, and house calls were a necessity; with just one or two African American physicians practicing in the city at one time, it could be challenging to meet the needs of the growing community.

Dr. James A. Merriman was Portland’s first African American doctor, opening his practice in 1903. In 1909, he was joined by Dr. Stanley Lucas, who had come to Portland after leaving his position as railroad physician for the Oregon-Washington Railroad and Navigation Company. The practice ended in 1930, when Dr. Merriman and his wife Barbara relocated to Phoenix, Arizona; little is known regarding either doctor’s education or the dissolution of their partnership.

Throughout the 1930s, Portland’s only Black medical practitioner was Dr. DeNorval Unthank. Dr. Unthank received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Kansas and his medical doctorate from Howard University, a Black university in Washington, D.C. Three years into his practice, he relocated to Portland and opened his first offices in the city in 1929. A front-page article in *The Advocate*, a popular local Black newspaper described in Context III, celebrated his arrival and listed his many credentials. Dr. Unthank would go on to become a prominent leader in the Black community and in Portland; he was named Doctor of the Year by the Oregon Medical Society in 1958 and Citizen of the Year by the Portland chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1962.

Despite his qualifications and high standing within the greater community of Portland, Dr. Unthank, his family, and his practice regularly faced discrimination from White Portlanders. He and his wife, Thelma Shipman, were threatened and harassed when they attempted to settle in a predominantly White

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183 “Owner Will Rent to Colored Tenants,” *The Advocate* (Portland, OR), March 15, 1930. When those opposed claimed that it was the business that they protested and not the Ingersolls’ race, the property’s owner, Deputy District Attorney William Hoesly, called their bluff and responded by posting a new sign that read “Colored Tenants Desired.”


185 Moreland, *The History of Portland’s African American Community*, 33.


187 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 93; Pearson, “DeNorval Unthank (1899-1977).” Dr. Unthank received a number of other awards, including the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission’s Distinguished Achievement Award in 1971 and the Brotherhood Award from Portland’s B’nai B’rith Lodge in 1973.
neighborhood, and they were ultimately forced to move four times before settling peacefully. Over the course
of his nearly-fifty-year-long practice, Dr. Unthank was also forced to move from two offices due to urban renewal projects that targeted centers of African American community; of his many office locations, only the last (511 SW 10th Ave., Portland Medical Center) still stands.188

**Dental Offices**

African American dentists were similarly rare in early twentieth-century Portland. The city did not see its first African American dentist until 1924, when Dr. Hugh Bell opened a practice in his mother’s home on N Williams Avenue. Dr. Bell was a graduate of the University of Southern California and passed board examinations in both California and Oregon; when he received news that he had passed the latter, *The Advocate* ran a front-page story celebrating his achievement and recommending his practice to its readers.189 Dr. Bell soon moved out of his mother’s home and into his own live/work space at 3213 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.190

Soon after Dr. Bell had established his offices, Dr. Elbert Booker opened another dental practice; born in Yakima, Washington, Dr. Booker received his bachelor’s degree from Howard University and was the only African American to graduate from North Pacific Dental College, which closed in 1945.191 His former dental office at 534 NW 3rd Ave. remains extant.192

**Legal Practices**

Portland’s first African American attorney was McCants Stewart, who came to Portland in 1903. Stewart was born in Brooklyn to a well-educated middle class family; his parents, T. McCants and Carlotta Stewart, were both college graduates, and his father worked as a lawyer and professor of mathematics. T. McCants Stewart was also a personal friend of Booker T. Washington, and impressed upon his children Washington’s principles of frugality, self-help, and moral reform. At age sixteen, McCants Stewart was sent to Washington’s Tuskegee Institute, an all-Black industrial education college in Tuskegee, Alabama. He then earned a law certificate from New York University a Master of Law degree from the University of Minnesota Law School.193

The Twin Cities had already developed a small African American professional class by the late nineteenth century, leading Stewart to seek a smaller city with reduced competition from other African American lawyers. Taking White clients was presumably not an option, or at least not sufficiently common for a turn-of-the-century African American attorney to earn a living from this practice. Stewart moved first to the Dakotas and then to Portland. Stewart was admitted to the Oregon Bar Association in 1903, apparently without any obstruction related to his race; but in Portland as in Minnesota, he struggled to earn a comfortable income. Racial etiquette dictated that White Portlanders did not hire Black attorneys, and Portland’s small, predominantly working-class African American population ensured only a modest stream

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189 “Admitted to Practice Dentistry Here,” *The Advocate* (Portland, OR), December 6, 1924.
190 “Dr. Bell in New Quarters,” *The Advocate* (Portland, OR), March 7, 1925.
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

Name of Multiple Property Listing

State

of legal work. Stewart's most prominent case was the 1906 Oregon Supreme Court case *Taylor v. Cohn*, in which an African American man named Oliver Taylor brought a suit against S. Morton Cohn, the owner of a downtown Portland theater, who refused to seat him on the main floor of the theater during a show for which he purchased tickets (see Section VII for a discussion of this case, its resolution, and related implications).

Other African American attorneys practicing in early twentieth-century Portland include Eugene Minor and Beatrice Cannady. Minor had shown a demonstrated interest in the legal system for some time, first working as a US District Court Messenger and then rising to bailiff before receiving his degree from the Northwestern School of Law 1918. Cannady, who was also assistant editor of *The Advocate*, also attended the Northwestern School of Law. Upon her admission to the Oregon Bar in 1922, she became the state's first female African American lawyer.

**Real Estate Businesses**

Despite the challenges imposed on prospective African American homebuyers in early twentieth-century Portland, a small number of Black Portlanders are known to have established real estate agencies serving other members of the city’s African American community. Some, such as *The Advocate* founder E.D. Cannady, who advertised in his own paper during the late 1920s and early 1930s, may have worked predominantly or even exclusively with African American sellers and buyers. In contrast, Walter Greene, who was described as a “White-passing” African American real estate broker, often served an intermediate role between White sellers and prospective Black buyers. Because he was frequently regarded as White, Greene was able to quietly purchase homes for other African American Portlanders from the 1910s onward. Both of these men were early pioneers in the Portland real estate system, which systematically worked to limit African American housing options in the early twentieth century.

**Barbershops and Beauty Parlors**

A number of African American barbers and “beauty culturists” established their own small businesses in the late 1920s and 1930s. While many African American barbers were employed by White-owned hotels, they were prohibited from working in the hotel barbershops, which were staffed by White barbers; instead they worked as “private barbers” and provided in-room haircuts and shaves to hotel guests. In contrast, African American barbers who began their own businesses seem to have worked from dedicated barbershop spaces, as was standard for White barbers. Whether these independent Black barbers served a predominantly or entirely African American clientele is undetermined; however, most established their shops in known centers of Portland’s African American community, near Union Station in the early

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198 “Cannady Real Estate Co.,” *The Advocate* (Portland, OR), October 11, 1930.
199 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 59; Lang, “A place under the sun.” 369. Greene lived in Portland from 1899 until his death in 1954, and his last residence, an apartment at 3820 NE Mallory St., still stands.
200 See Context I, *Settlement Patterns*, for additional information on discriminatory real estate and zoning practices in Portland during the early twentieth century.
201 National Register of Historic Places, Otto and Verdell Rutherford House, 12.
twentieth century and in the Lower Albina neighborhoods of Inner North and Northeast Portland a few decades later.

Some independent Black barbers began their careers in the White hotel industry. Brothers William and Edward Rutherford both worked as private barbers at the Portland Hotel before launching their private venture, the “Club Café Shaving Parlor,” at NW 9th Avenue and Flanders Street in 1907. They eventually hired a third barber and began to offer men’s furnishings, changing their business name to Rutherford Brothers Barbers and Haberdashery. In 1914, they moved the business to 414-418 NW 6th Ave., just a block from the popular Golden West Hotel. At this time, the Golden West housed Waldo Bogle’s Barbershop, but the competition does not seem to have strained either business. Both barbershops remained in their Northwest Portland locations until 1930, when the Golden West closed. At this time, both relocated across the river to 1608 N. Williams Ave., which was then at the heart of Portland’s growing African American community. They operated at this location until the Great Depression forced their closure in 1934.202

Portland’s African American beauty culturists (beauticians), who were exclusively female and who served only female African American customers, commonly operated their businesses out of their homes rather than from dedicated commercial spaces. Black entrepreneurialism related to beauty culture was a nationwide trend in first three decades of the twentieth century, as this was one of the only professional fields accessible to African American women at the time.203 In Portland and across the country, women who pursued work in the beauty industry regularly built independent and profitable ventures despite a lack of access to substantial capital or formal business training.204

Portland’s first African American certified beautician was Inez Duke Mayberry, who graduated from Portland Sanitary Beauty Parlors in 1927. Mayberry worked first out of her home at 1736 N Vancouver Ave. and then at We-Three-Salon of Beauty at 2940 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Other Back beauticians in early twentieth-century Portland include Zepha Baker, who lived and worked at 3427 NE Rodney Ave. and later 6535 NE Grand Ave.; Eula Anthony, who worked from her home at 6835 SE Boise St.; and Bertie Davison, who lived and worked at 129 NE Mason St. and later 8335 SE 7th Ave. All four of these women were primary caregivers who raised families at the same time that they built and managed their businesses. Additionally, Davison owned and operated the Golden Rule Café on NE Russell Street, where she both employed and served other members of Portland’s African American community.205

Carpentry and Building Trades
Almost all local building contractors in Portland during the early twentieth century were White; White residents were reticent to approve of a Black contractor working on their homes, and few African Americans could afford to commission an entirely new dwelling. Because their race limited their clientele, Black contractors and handymen could find only limited work as plasterers, painters, and plumbers; very

203 In the early twentieth century, Black women’s career options were typically limited to jobs in the service industry. Many worked as maids in private homes or as maids or elevator operators in select department stores (McLagan, Peculiar Paradise, 114-115).
205 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 36-37, 129.
few of them could survive on the income they received, and most did not pursue a career in the field. African Americans in early twentieth-century Portland were also discouraged from joining the building trades because they were barred from joining trade unions, which fought for safe working conditions, fair pair, and stable positions for their exclusively White membership.206

One of the few known African American carpenters from this period is Shelby Golden, a Missouri-born African American man who arrived in Portland by 1905. He initially worked as a porter, but he was a skilled carpenter and received contracts from individuals and organizations within the African American community. In 1931, he replaced the roof on the Bethel AME Church’s parsonage after it was damaged by fire.207 He also built his family home at 944 SE Sherrett St., where he and wife Sadie lived from at least 1910 through the 1940s. He left this home to his son, Shelby Jr., and built another at 1003 SE Sherrett St. where his son Chuck Williams later lived.208

Restaurants and Retail
Because African American Portlanders frequently faced discrimination when attempting to dine or shop in White-owned establishments, a number of African American-owned retail outlets and restaurants also found success in the early twentieth century. They regularly advertised in local African American-run newspapers, such as the Advocate and the New Age, and like other Black businesses of the period, they tended to be located in Northwest Portland near Union Station or in the Lower Albina area of Inner North and Northeast Portland, the two nodes of African American settlement in the early twentieth century.

Establishments operating west of the Willamette River in the early twentieth century include the Alpha Restaurant, opened in 1906 at 269½th NW Washington St.; S.S. Walker Soft Drink, established in 1919 at 395 NW Flanders St.; P.J. Summers Second Hand, established by at least 1919 at 340 NW 16th Ave.; and the Colored American Club and Smith's Cafe, established at an unknown date at 420 NW 9th Ave. Shops opened in Inner Northeast Portland include Edward and Ida Freeman's Freeman Second Hand at 754 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Fred and Molly Thomas’s Fred D. Thomas Catering Service at 312 NE Shaver St. By the early 1940s, virtually all Black business in Northwest Portland would close permanently or relocate to the Lower Albina neighborhoods on the east bank of the Willamette River.209

The Great Depression and Its Impact on African American Business: 1930s
The redevelopment of Portland’s downtown crowded the African American community near Union Station during the first quarter of the twentieth century; by the 1930s, many Black Portlanders had relocated to neighborhoods in Lower Albina, on the east side of the Willamette River. Black businesses that had established themselves in Northwest Portland were no longer located at the heart of the community they served, and long-running institutions like the Golden West Hotel and the Rutherford Brothers Barbers and Haberdashery saw their clienteles diminish. This problem was compounded by the onset of the Great Depression, a period in which Portlanders of every race and ethnicity found themselves unemployed and homeless as a result of the county’s economic collapse and the decade-long stagnation that followed.

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206 Family members of Ross Newby, Timothy Tillman, and Edward Rawlins, interview by Catherine Galbraith, 1996.
207 “Bethel Church Notes,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), February 14, 1931.
208 Shelby Golden, Jr., interview by Catherine Galbraith, 1996.
209 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 36; Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American Community, 48-49.
The situation was especially dire for Black Portlanders, as the few avenues of employment that had typically been reserved for African Americans were suddenly coveted by out-of-work White men. White-owned businesses systematically replaced many African American employees with White Portlanders in search of employment: for example, the Portland Hotel replaced its African American waiters with White employees for several years during the Depression, and the African American managers of the Columbia Country Club were also ousted in favor of new White hires.210

Because so many African American Portlanders lost their incomes and their livelihoods during the Great Depression, the Black-owned businesses that they had faithfully patronized in the early twentieth century suffered as well. Made especially vulnerable by their sole dependency on African American customers, the Golden West Hotel and numerous other African American businesses that had flourished in previous decades shuttered in the early 1930s.211 William Allen of the Golden West, the Rutherford barbering brothers, barber Waldo Bogle, and others briefly operated new business ventures in Lower Albina, but these businesses also failed by the mid-1930s.212 Employment opportunities for educated Black professionals in Portland also dwindled during the 1930s, and many were forced to take menial, low-paying jobs in order to remain in the city.213 The economic conditions of the time were so dire that some unemployed African American men resorted to selling fruit and nuts door-to-door in Portland neighborhoods, desperate to bring in any income at all.214 Many Black Portlanders remained underemployed until the outbreak of World War II, which created thousands of local jobs in wartime industries.

African American Involvement in Wartime Production Industries: World War II, 1941-1945
The outbreak of World War II marked a second major inflection point in the history of Black employment and business in Portland. As many White American men were called to fight overseas, racial and gender barriers were relaxed as thousands of African Americans and women entered into defense industry positions. A large number of African Americans, many of them from the South, relocated to wartime production centers like Portland in search of employment and relief from the racial prejudices of the Jim Crow South. Some were recruited by the shipbuilding industry and carried to their destinations on “Kaiser Specials,” trains from New York City, while others paid their own way.215 In Portland, more than 8,700 African Americans were employed in war-related industries by January 1945, with 8,493 employed by the Kaiser shipyards alone.216

Although wartime labor demands ensured that African American men and women would find paying work, they did not guarantee equitable treatment. Executive Order 8802, issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in response to the activism of A. Philip Randolph and other Black civil leaders, declared, "There shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries and in Government, because of race, creed, color, or national origin," and established the Fair Employment Practices Committee by way of

210 “Whites Replace Colored Employees,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), January 18, 1930; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 44.
211 Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American Community, 54.
213 Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American Community, 54.
214 Otto Rutherford, interview by Catherine Galbraith, 1996.
215 March, "Guild’s Lake Courts," 93.
enforcement. However, the Executive Order and the new commission were not entirely successful in securing truly equal treatment for African American workers, many of whom struggled with workplace segregation and a limited range of employment opportunity during the war years. Labor shortages and production demands would somewhat erode the racial classification of labor, but in Portland and other production centers, most Black workers remained relegated to unskilled positions for the duration of the war.

African Americans in the Pacific Northwest’s Kaiser Shipyards

Wartime industry in the Pacific Northwest was dominated by the Kaiser Corporation shipyards, established by industrialist Henry J. Kaiser in Portland and across the Columbia River in Vancouver, Washington. The first and largest of Kaiser’s shipyards was the Oregon Shipbuilding Company, also called the OSC or “Oregonship,” which opened on the Willamette River, northwest of Portland’s St. John’s neighborhood, in early 1941. Before the United States officially entered the conflict, the shipyard assembled merchant ships for the British government; after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Oregonship expanded its original site from 87 acres to more than 300, and began rapidly producing cargo ships, small aircraft carrier, tankers, and other military vessels for the U.S. Maritime Commission. In 1942, Kaiser constructed two more shipyards to meet growing demand: the 200-acre Vancouver Shipyard was constructed on the Columbia River in January 1942, and the 400-acre Swan Island Shipyard began operation in July of the same year. All three operated twenty-four hours a day.

With Kaiser’s active recruitment, the shipyards attracted African American men and women from across the country, and from the South in particular. Although both the Kaiser Corporation and Executive Order 8802 had promised them equal employment opportunities, upon arrival they immediately encountered discrimination with regard to job placement and union membership. The International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, and Helpers of America (known simply as the “Boilermakers”), the largest of the shipyard unions, actively worked against the employment of African Americans in skilled positions and relegated them to all-Black “auxiliary” unions that offered fewer benefits and weaker protections. The Boilermakers in Portland initially refused to hire Black workers except for the most menial and lowest-paid positions; most were employed as janitors, chippers, tank-testers, deck-sweepers, or painter’s helpers. In late 1942, ten African American men who had been recruited in New York lodged a complaint with the Oregon State Bureau of Labor and the United States Employment Services, asserting that they had not been given the skilled positions that they had been promised upon recruitment. A core group formed the
Shipyard Negro Organization for Victory to protest union discrimination, and in short order they drew up a list of demands. Threatened with a strike, Kaiser officials agreed to reclassify eight Blackemployees as journeymen and offer vocational training without restriction.

While Henry Kaiser apparently held firm in his decision to hire African Americans for skilled positions, the Boilermakers’ resistance mounted. In 1941, the union had secured a “closed-shop” agreement with Kaiser that granted them sole discretion over hiring and firing in the West coast shipyards; they weaponized this agreement to restrict African American employment, claiming that Black workers who refused to join the segregated auxiliary unions were not qualified to work in the shipyards and should be dismissed. When hundreds of African American shipyard workers on the West Coast refused to pay their dues in summer 1943, the Kaiser shipyards were compelled by the Boilermakers to fire 350 dissenting Black workers from the Portland and Vancouver shipyards.

Local Black organizations responded immediately. Julius Rodriguez, president of the Shipyard Negro Organization for Victory, and Reverend J. James Clow, president of the Portland chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with national officers of the NAACP and to file an official complaint against both the Boilermakers and the Kaiser Company with President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Fair Employment Practices Committee. Most of Portland’s Black community leaders supported Rodriguez and Clow; however, a small faction led by Wyatt Williams, a local Black attorney and past president of the Portland NAACP, argued that the auxiliary union provided Africans Americans with sorely needed employment and should be tolerated despite the Boilermakers’ abuse. Williams went so far as to volunteer his services in organizing Black workers into the auxiliary union. Local Black-owned paper *The People’s Observer* derided Williams for his stance, and the national leadership of the NAACP expelled him from the organization.

In response to Rodriguez’s and Clow’s complaints, the Fair Employment Practices Committee held public hearings in Portland on November 15 and 16, 1943. The FEPC found that the auxiliary unions had “no vote or voice in the conduct of the union’s affairs” and suffered from “unfair differences in insurance benefits provided for members of the union and in the age limits for admission to membership.” The Boilermakers were subsequently ordered “to eliminate all membership practices which discriminate against workers because of race or color,” and “to reinstate all Negro workers discharged because of their refusal to pay dues to Boilermaker auxiliary unions.” However, the Boilermakers protested the ruling, and the war had ended before it completely complied with the FEPC’s ruling. Most African American shipyard workers remained status restored or transportation back home” to New York, from where they had been recruited and where they could find unskilled positions comparable to the ones that they had been offered in Portland.

225 “Kaiser Stands Firm on Negro Decision – Portland, Ore.,” *Oakland Tribune* (Oakland, CA), October 21, 1942.
228 Quintard Taylor, “The Great Migration,” 119-120.
underrepresented by their unions and limited to less desirable, less lucrative positions for the duration of the war.  

**African American Employment in Other Wartime Industries**

African American Portlanders in other wartime defense industries faced similar discrimination at other employment sites, including Portland’s three non-Kaiser-owned shipyards—Willamette Iron and Steel, Commercial Iron Works, and Albina Engine Works—which were also controlled by the Boilermakers’ Union. In 1945, when Black machinists at the Union Pacific’s Albina yard saw the posting of “White” and “Colored” signs at yard facilities, they also attributed this development to the Boilermakers, who had members at the railyards as well the shipyards.

Other Whites-only unions created obstacles to African Americans’ wartime employment, as well. The labor shortages of World War II at last enabled some African American men to work at the docks as longshoremen, but they were denied admission to the local chapter of the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union. When Harry Mills, a Black longshoreman who had held his position for a year, was refused union membership in December 1943, the vice-president and spokesperson of the local chapter stated, “We are not opposed to Harry Mills. We are fighting the Negro race! We cannot open our doors to the Negro people after having kept them closed all of this time.”

The Portland chapter of the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union would not accept African American members until the early 1960s, more than a decade after other West Coast chapters had integrated.

**African American Employment Outside of Wartime Industry**

Although the vast majority of Portland’s African American workforce was engaged in wartime industry, about 1,100 remained engaged in service positions with the railroads and hotels; a small number also found positions as maids and janitors with Portland’s major downtown department stores. An even smaller number of African Americans found professional opportunities in the growing City of Vanport, a wartime housing project that accommodated 6,317 African American in-migrants by May 1945. Vanport upheld a non-discriminatory policy in public places, and integrated schools and recreational facilities were standard. By 1945, W.L. Van Loan, Superintendent of Vanport City Schools, reported that the Vanport school system employed four African Americans in childcare centers and three in elementary schools. Several African American men were also employed as Vanport policemen. Despite these advances, however, African Americans were rarely hired for civil service positions outside of Vanport until after the war had ended.

Portland’s increased African American population also revived local Black-owned small business, to some extent. One of the most successful Black business ventures established during the war was Kelly Foster’s Royal Palm Hotel (310 NW Flanders St.). Foster, who had lived in Portland before World War II and who had owned and operated a number of restaurants, purchased the hotel from Japanese owners who were

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236 Moreland, *The History of Portland’s African American Community*, 74. See Context I, Settlement Patterns, for additional discussion of the Vanport housing project.
forced into internment camps when the United States went to war with Japan. He directed his new business in much the same way that William Allen had the Golden West Hotel, providing hotel rooms as well as a barbershop, restaurant, and other facilities for African American patrons.238

**African American Employment and Entrepreneurialism after World War II: 1945-1973**

Even before the end of the war, a majority of African Americans in Portland began bracing themselves for widespread unemployment when the shipyards curtailed production. According to an *Oregonian* survey published in mid-1945, an estimated 96 percent of the Black workforce in the greater Portland area were employed by the shipyards, with another 1.1 percent in other wartime industries, compared to 77 percent of the White workforce in defense industries at the same time.239 Outside of wartime industry, White-owned companies resisted the idea of absorbing Portland’s greatly-expanded African American population into their postwar workforce, clinging to racial stereotypes that branded Black employees as “lazy,” “undependable,” and “aggressive.”240

As they had feared, thousands of African American men and women were left without jobs in the months immediately following the war. Some in-migrants returned to their pre-war domiciles, while others sought employment in Seattle or California. By 1947, the number of African Americans in the greater Portland area had plummeted from a wartime peak of approximately 22,000 to around 11,000.241 About 4,500 were members of the labor force. Many of those who remained found service positions with the railroads and hotels, but around 1,500 remained unemployed two years after the war had ended.242 Even more were underemployed; many Black Portlanders with college degrees and professional licenses found themselves limited to working at filling stations, as waiters or janitors, and in other menial and service-oriented positions. Many men were forced to work two or more part-time jobs to care for their families.243

With the passage of Oregon’s Fair Employment Practices Act in 1949 and the help of local advocacy organizations like the Urban League of Portland, other avenues of employment were eventually opened to African Americans. Black Portlanders, previously relegated to a narrow range of service industry positions, were eventually employed in department stores, civil service positions, public schools, and other fields that had previously been closed to them. African American small businesses also began to regain strength, and many new ventures opened along N Williams Avenue in Inner North and Northeast Portland, the commercial heart of Portland’s postwar African American community. The business aspirations and compounded economic gains of the community eventually contributed to the creation of Portland’s first Black-owned commercial bank, the Freedom Bank of Finance, which was part of a larger trend of Black-owned banks established in the late 1960s across the United States.

**The Urban League of Portland**

An affiliate of the National Urban League, the Urban League of Portland formed in 1945 to help manage the employment challenges of the 11,000 African American former shipyard workers remaining in Portland after

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242 Hogg, “Negroes and Their Institutions in Oregon,” 281. The Portland Hotel was demolished in 1953, but the Benson and Multnomah Hotels began to employ African American workers after World War II when they previously had not.
243 Moreland, *The History of Portland’s African American Community*, 89.
the war had ended. Portland city officials had initially contacted the National Urban League for help relocating African American “temporary residents” to other states; the Urban League, which had formed in 1910 to help African Americans in New York find housing and job training, refused the City’s request to facilitate relocations and instead established a local chapter in Portland.\(^{244}\) Around 400 people attended the chapter’s first meeting in September 1945, where they heard Lester B. Granger, executive secretary of the National Urban League, speak of the organization’s commitment to securing equal housing and employment opportunities for Black Americans.\(^{245}\)

The Urban League of Portland opened its first local headquarters within Dr. DeNorval Unthank’s medical office at 6 SW 6\(^{th}\) Ave., where an examination room was converted into a small office space. Edwin C. “Bill” Berry, an African American activist and graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, was hired as the organization’s first executive secretary.\(^{246}\) Berry had come directly from the Pittsburgh Urban League, where he had worked as the community organization secretary for nearly a decade, and he remained in Portland until 1956, when he was selected to head the Chicago branch of the organization.\(^{247}\) Berry worked closely with E. Shelton “Shelly” Hill, whom he hired as the Urban League’s Director of Industrial Relations and who eventually replaced him as executive secretary. Hill had previously worked as a labor recruiter for Union Pacific, as an employee relations officer for Portland Air Base, and as race relations officer for the Vancouver Housing Authority.\(^{248}\)

Under the two men’s leadership, the Urban League worked tirelessly to challenge employment discrimination and to desegregate unions.\(^{249}\) They joined a variety of liberal politicians, veterans, and churches in lobbying the Oregon Legislature to adopt a Fair Employment Practices Act, which passed in 1949 and legally barred discrimination due to race, religion, color, or national origin by labor unions and employers with more than five workers.\(^{250}\) Although the act was not immediately successful in eliminating discriminatory hiring practices and segregated unions (the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union did not accept its first African American members until 1964, for example), it did provide a legal foundation for the Urban League’s efforts to place African Americans in positions that had long been denied to people of color.\(^{251}\)

In the decades following World War II, the Urban League successfully placed African American workers with more than 180 Portland business.\(^{252}\) They engaged directly with White employers, regularly performing extensive market research in order to anticipate and counter their possible objections to hiring Black


\(^{245}\) “Most Negroes Seen Staying,” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), September 20, 1945; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 67.

\(^{246}\) Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 67-68; McElderry, “Building a West Coast Ghetto,” 141.

\(^{247}\) Berry’s Portland home stands at 628 NE Roselawn St.

\(^{248}\) Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 68. Hill’s 1940s and 1950s homes stand at 445 NE Cook St. and 4612 NE Rodney Ave.

\(^{249}\) McElderry, “Building a West Coast Ghetto,” 141.

\(^{250}\) Serbulo, “Small Steps on the Long Journey to Equality,” 378; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 92; Taylor, “The Great Migration,” 123. Oregon was the sixth state in the nation to have a law banning employment discrimination.

\(^{251}\) Gibson, “Bleeding Albina,” 11.

\(^{252}\) Gibson, “Bleeding Albina,” 11.
employees. For example, Shelly Hill surveyed transit company officials in several major American cities that employed Black drivers before he approached the head of Rose City Transit; through his efforts, African Americans Robert Dillard and Arvoll Rae became Portland’s first non-White bus operators.  

Berry and Hill also appealed to companies that regularly hired African American employees, but placed them exclusively in menial service positions. By appealing to the local management of major department stores including Meier & Frank, Lipman Wolfe, Olds Wortman & King, and the Eastern Outfitting Company, the Urban League leaders were able to begin placing African American women in positions that exceeded the dignity and pay of their customary roles as housekeepers and maids. Beginning with Alene Grice and Clara Mae Peoples at the Eastern Outfitting Company (SW 10th Avenue and SW Washington Street), many African American women were soon employed as elevator operators by Portland’s downtown department stores.

The Urban League eventually outgrew its small office at 6 SW 6th Ave., moving to 408 SW 3rd Ave. in the 1950s and to the Dekum Building at 519 SW 3rd Ave. in 1960. Of the Urban League’s later offices, its 1970s (718 W Burnside St., with a field office at 5329 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Jr. Blvd.) and 1980s (4128 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.) locations are extant. In the early 1990s, the Urban League moved into the Tivoli Theater Building at 2525 N Williams Ave., where the organization continues to offer workforce services, civic engagement opportunities, and other community programming.

**African American Portlanders in Civil Service**

While many African American professionals struggled to find positions in their relevant fields during the early postwar years, significant gains were made during the postwar period with regard to African American employment in civil service positions. Only fifteen African Americans were employed by the City of Portland in July 1945, but that number would climb steadily through the late 1940s and after. In many cases, these men and women began their careers in Vanport, where the high percentage of African American residents had facilitated their entry into the field. It was also common for African American civil servants, particularly schoolteachers, to have gained their professional qualifications and experience prior to settling in Portland.

**Law Enforcement**

The Multnomah County Sheriff’s Department, which had hired George Hardin as the county’s first Black sheriff’s deputy in 1915, took the lead in hiring Black law enforcement officers during and after World War II. Beginning in 1942, the Sheriff’s Department was responsible for enforcing laws in the City of Vanport, and a number of African American policemen were hired to work in Vanport during the war years. Following the Vanport Flood, Vanport sheriff’s deputies Matt Dishman and Bill Travis were employed by the

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257 Chandler, Hidden History of Portland, 91.

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Multnomah County Sheriff’s Department, and Dishman would go on to become the County’s first African American sheriff.259 Little is known about the circumstances surrounding their transfer to the County after the Vanport Flood or their promotion.260

With the exception of George Hardin and John Harry Hooper, both of whom were served as patrol officers for a short time in the late nineteenth century, the Portland Police Bureau remained an entirely White organization through the 1940s.261 However, the bureau finally opened its ranks to African Americans in the early postwar years. Although the bureau had hired a few Black officers as part of the “Veterans Patrol” during the war years,262 these part-time appointments were not official members of the police force; the first official African American policeman in postwar Portland was Charles Duke, who had served as a Tuskegee Airman during World War II and scored first place on the civil service exams in 1946.263 As the only African American on the force, many White officers refused to partner with him, and he stayed with the bureau only five years. His younger brothers, Horace and George Duke, who were also military veterans, were installed as officers in the late 1940s and faced similar discrimination. Although White officers refused to work with them, the brothers partnered together and both had long, distinguished careers as police officers.264 Integration of the Portland Police Bureau continued to progress slowly for the next several decades, not achieving significant progress until the 1970s.265

Public Education
Prior to World War II, no African American schoolteachers were employed by Portland Public Schools; by 1945, Vanport schools employed seven African American educators, two of whom—Robert G. Ford and Leota E. Stone—went on to become the first Black teachers in the Portland Public School system. Both were wartime in-migrants who had been educated outside of Portland, and both were placed at Eliot Elementary School, which possessed a student body that was 38 percent African American at the time. This move toward integrating the public schools’ faculty apparently did not signal a desire to alleviate de facto school segregation, as Eliot Elementary’s student body was fully 80 percent African American by 1957.266

African American teachers in early postwar Portland do not appear to have been limited to schools in the Albina area; in 1952, Robert Ford left Eliot Elementary to teach English and Social Studies at Roosevelt High School in North Portland, and Thomas Vickers was later hired at Marshall High School in Southeast Portland.267 However, it may have been some African American educators’ preference to work in the heart of Portland’s African American community. Carmen Parrish Walker, who worked for the Vanport Housing Authority during the war and Williams Avenue YWCA immediately after, became the first African American to teach in Portland Public Schools’ Home Economics Department and later became a counselor at

259 Bill Travis lived at 2837 NE 10th Ave. and Matt Dishman lived at 4035 N Haight St. The former Knott Street Center at 77 NE Knott St. was renamed the Dishman Center in recognition of Matt Dishman’s work in the community.
260 See Context I, Settlement Patterns, for additional discussion of the Vanport Flood and its aftermath.
261 Chandler, Hidden History of Portland, 91.
262 The “Veterans Patrol” functioned primarily as air raid wardens.
263 Chandler, Hidden History of Portland, 91.
266 “Wartime Shipyard Welder First Negro to Teach High School in Portland,” The Sunday Oregonian (Portland, OR), October 12, 1952.
Jefferson High School. Like Eliot Elementary, Jefferson High School had a particularly high percentage of African American students in comparison to other public schools at the time.268

Twenty-five years after the city hired its first African American public school teacher, Portland finally saw African American representation on the Portland Public Schools Board of Education. Gladys McCoy, a social services worker with the city’s Head Start program, was elected to the Portland School Board in 1970. McCoy was the first African American person to win an elected office in the state of Oregon.269

**City, County, and State Government**

By the 1970s, a handful of Portland’s African American civil servants made their first forays into state and local politics. Encouraged by the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s (see Context VII, Civil Rights, for additional information), some local African American leaders turned to political offices after securing voters’ rights and other advances for minority communities. The first African American to serve on Portland’s City Council was Charles Jordan, who came to Portland in 1970 to work on the federal anti-poverty Model Cities Program. In 1974, Portland mayor Neil Goldschmidt appointed Jordan to an empty council seat, which he won by election in 1976 and again in 1980. As a member of city council, Jordan pushed the Portland Fire and Rescue Bureau to hire more people of color and argued for greater civilian oversight of the Portland Police Bureau.270

Outside of the period of significance of this MPD, other African American Portlanders have been elected to serve in city, county, and state governments. Gladys McCoy, who served on the Portland Public Schools Board of Education beginning in 1970, was elected to the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners in 1979. Her husband, William McCoy, became the first African American elected to Oregon State Legislature when he entered the Oregon House of Representatives in 1974. McCoy was appointed to the Oregon Senate in the next term and continued to serve in that role until his death in 1996. Margaret Carter, a former counselor at Portland Community College, became the first Black woman in the Oregon Legislative Assembly in 1985, and Avel Gordly, who served in the Oregon House of Representatives from 1991 to 1996, became first Black woman in the State Senate in 1996.271

**Black-Owned Small Business and Investment in the Postwar Era**

African American-owned and operated small businesses, buffeted first by the Great Depression and then by wartime industrial demands, gradually recovered in the postwar years. Continuing the trend that had begun in the late 1920s and early 1930s, most African American businesses established themselves in Inner North and Northeast Portland, specifically along N Williams Avenue, north of Broadway. Because

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268 Carmen Walker, interview by Catherine Galbraith, 1997; Johnson and Williams, “Desegregation and Multiculturalism in the Portland Public Schools,” 25.
270 Anna Griffin, “Charles Jordan remembered: Portland’s first African-American commissioner and longtime parks director was ‘a giant in this city,’” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), January 10, 2019. In 1984, Jordan moved to Austin, Texas, where he served as director of the city’s parks department. In 1989, he returned to Portland and assumed the position of Director of Portland Parks & Recreation, a role which he would hold for fourteen years.
housing options for Portland’s African American community were largely confined to the Albina area in the decades after World War II, N Williams Avenue naturally functioned as the commercial heart of the African American community. Service-oriented neighborhood businesses, cafes and restaurants, and other commercial establishments lined Williams Avenue, co-existing with the older residences on the street.

African American entrepreneurs established a variety of businesses in the postwar years, and while some expanded into relatively new industries, most Black-owned businesses maintained a strong connection with the service industry. Hotels, barbershops, restaurants, and grocery stores remained some of the most common and successful business ventures for Portland’s postwar Black entrepreneurs. However, some entrepreneurs made noteworthy forays into real estate and specialized industry, such as automotive service and record sales.272 One of the most important entrepreneurial developments of the period was the development of African American banking institutions, which were born from a tradition of Black investment clubs.

**Barbershops and Beauty Parlors**

Barbershops and beauty salons continued to play a powerful role in Black consumer culture in the postwar era, and many new establishments were opened along N Williams Avenue and nearby blocks in the late 1940s through the 1960s. As had been common in the 1910s and 1920s, some barbers built their clientele by first working out of Black-owned hotels; Charles Maxey and Ulese Raiford had both operated out of Kelly Foster’s Royal Palm Hotel during the war, and both went on to establish their own stand-alone barbershops in the Albina area. Raiford opened Ray’s Barber Shop at 2833 N Williams Ave., and Maxey began Maxey’s Better Buy Grocery and Barber Shop on 20 N Cherry St. Within a few years of establishing their businesses, however, Maxey and Raiford were forced to relocate due to Portland’s schedule of urban renewal programs in Inner North and Northeast Portland.273 Raiford reopened at 5126 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Maxey at 4603 N Williams Ave.274 Other Black-owned barbershops to open in the postwar era include F & F Barber Shop at 2017 N Williams Ave., Friendly Barbershop at 3705 N Williams Ave., and Sportsman Barber Shop at 3638 N Williams Ave.275

Several new African American beauty culture businesses also opened in northeast Portland after the end of World War II; beauty culture remained only of the only lucrative industries controlled primarily by Black women, and therefore these businesswomen were some of the most economically autonomous women within their community.276 While many Black beauty culturists continued to operate out of their homes, as had been common in the 1920s and earlier, dedicated salons and beauty shops became more prevalent in the postwar era: Rosemary Dean initially ran Rose’s Beauty Salon from her home address, but she and her husband Benjamin Dean opened Dean’s Beauty Salon and Barber Shop at 215 NE Hancock St. by 1959.277 Lillian Williams, who had come to Portland in 1945 seeking work in the shipyards, operated Lillian’s Beauty Salon first from 2529 N Williams Ave. and later 2322 NE Martin Luther King Blvd.278

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273 See Context I, *Settlement Patterns*, for additional information on urban renewal programs and their impact on Portland’s African American community.
277 Dean’s Beauty Salon and Barber Shop continues to operate at this location as of 2019.
Restaurants
A number of new African American-owned restaurants opened along N Williams Avenue in the postwar era. Several shared a building and occasionally an owner/operator with other types of Black-owned businesses: for example, the Citizen’s Fountain Lunch shared its 2531 N Williams Ave. location with the Lillian’s Beauty Salon, and 2017 N Williams Ave. was home to both F & F Barber Shop and Blue Ribbon Barbeque. Extant postwar, Black-owned restaurants along N Williams Avenue include Wallace’s Barbeque at 3217 N Williams Ave. and later 3240 N Williams Ave., the House of Fortune Café at 3940 N Williams Ave., Rudy’s Tavern & Billiards at 3037 N Williams Ave. The Chat and Chew Restaurant at 2707 N Williams Ave., Doug’s Tavern at 22 NE Russell St., and Scotty’s Barbeque at 2829 N Williams Ave. were demolished in connection with the Emanuel Hospital expansion project.280

Retail Stores
A broad range of Black-owned retail establishments were also established along the N Williams Avenue commercial corridor in the postwar period. Grocery stores such as Maxey’s Better Buy Grocery at 4603 N Williams Ave. (which was owned by Charles Maxey and operated out of the same building as Maxey’s Barber Shop), Brooks Grocery and Meats at 3634 N Williams Ave., and the Albina Cash Market at 36 N Russell St. existed alongside specialty stores including Hunter Baby & Gift Shop at 2647 N Williams Ave., Charlene’s Tot & Teen Shop and the Melody Amusement record store at 2713 N Williams Ave., the House of Sounds Records at 3620 N Williams Ave., and Bop City Records at 3213 N Williams Ave. (later 5130 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.). The concentration of these restaurants along a short stretch of the same major thoroughfare illustrates the immense importance of N Williams Avenue to both the African American business community and the African American consumer in postwar Portland.

Real Estate Businesses
The proliferation of Black-owned real estate businesses in mid-twentieth century Portland was a particular achievement for the African American community, who were long denied unrestricted access to housing in Portland. In the early twentieth century, the city’s White-dominated real estate industry had systematically restricted areas within which houses were sold to African Americans, only admitting to the practice after a front-page exposé in The Oregonian in 1949.282 The success of a small number of Black real estate agents in the postwar period actively challenged these restrictions and aided African American Portlanders in settling outside of the areas that had historically been available to them. Herman and Lonnetta Plummer of Herman C. Plummer & Company at 2752 N Williams Ave. were celebrated by one local African American-owned newspaper for “making it possible for Negroes to buy and live in communities of their own choosing.”283

Additional research is necessary to ascertain the extent to which Black real estate agents in the postwar era were able to expand African Americans’ housing options; however, the establishment of several Black-owned

280 See Context I, Settlement Patterns, for additional information on urban renewal programs and their impact on Portland’s African American community.
281 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 101-102. Several of these businesses were displaced or closed permanently by the Emanuel Hospital expansion project. Charlene’s Tot & Teen Shop had previously been displaced for construction of the Memorial Coliseum. See Context I, Settlement Patterns, for additional information on urban renewal programs in Portland.
282 See Context I, Settlement Patterns, for additional information on discriminatory real estate practices in Portland.
283 “Real Estate Firm Helps Integration,” Portland Challenger (Portland, OR), February 20, 1953.
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real estate companies certainly represents an important inroad into a predominantly White field. African American real estate agents and business owners in postwar Portland included Samuel Whitney (Whitney Real Estate, 3203 N Williams Ave.), Olandus Webb (Hartley Real Estate), Vivianne Barnett (Barnett Real Estate, 27-29 N Killingsworth St.), Curtis McDonald (Albina Real Estate, 3120 N Williams Ave.), and Venerable Booker (Booker Real Estate, 1533 NE Alberta St.).

African American Independent Banking

This first financial institution created by and for Portland’s African American community was the NAACP Federal Credit Union, initially run from the home of Otto and Verdell Rutherford (833 NE Shaver St.). Its primary goal was to help African American Portlanders secure home loans, and the credit union does not seem to have been widely used for business investment. Instead, African Americans with stable positions occasionally created “investment clubs,” pooling their capital in order to invest in larger business ventures and thereby increase their profits. This system had been pioneered in early twentieth-century Portland by the Enterprise Investment Club, composed primarily of Portland Hotel employees. One similar postwar investment club was the “Cosmopolitan Business Club,” named for Portland’s Cosmopolitan Club (614 SW 11th Ave.), which employed many of the club’s members.

Portland’s second African American-owned bank, the Freedom Bank of Finance, was a for-profit commercial venture inspired by these ambitious businessmen and by the African American-owned Bank of Finance in Los Angeles, California, which had opened in 1964. The idea was conceived by a group of local African American businessmen for the express purpose of providing capital for emerging businesses in the Albina and North Portland area; they felt that White-owned banks would not offer them the services necessary to grow their investment and their community. Founders included realtor Venerable F. Booker, grocery-store owner Silas Williams, dentist Dr. Booker T. Lewis, and restaurateur Roy Granville, who persuaded his cousin Onie B. Granville, one of the founders of the Bank of Finance in Los Angeles, to temporarily move to Portland to help establish their new bank.

The Freedom Bank of Finance opened at 728 NE Killingsworth St. in 1969, with Venerable Booker as president. The bank was something of an anomaly in the 1970s, as most other successful African American-owned banks were located in cities in cities with Black populations larger than half a million. Interestingly, some of the Freedom Bank’s largest investors were Multnomah County, the State of Oregon, and the Federal Government’s Model Cities Program. In 1971, the bank relocated to 2737 NE Martin Luther King Jr Blvd., and in 1975, it was renamed the American State Bank and refocused to serve a broader Portland community; lest its origins be forgotten, however, it bore the motto, “The bank

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284 [Advertisement], Portland Challenger (Portland, OR), February 20, 1953; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 76, 82, 89, 101, 107.
286 Lang, “A place under the sun,” 371. The NAACP Credit Union continued to serve Portland’s African American community through the end of this document’s period of significance, consolidating with Multco Employees Credit Union in 1991.
287 Among the members of the Cosmopolitan Business Club, those whose houses still stand are: John Minor, living in the 1930s at 4113 NE Mallory Ave. and 4812 NE 27th Ave. and then from the early 1940s at 3105 SE 29th Ave.; Thomas Vickers, a Cosmopolitan Club waiter, living at 1326 N Benton Ave. and later 4426 NE Rodney Ave.; and Earl Elkins, Southern Pacific Club Car attendant and entrepreneur, living at 7034 N Knowles Ave., from the 1930s through the 1950s.
289 Lang, “A place under the sun,” 372.
that integration built and continues to build.”290 Ironically, the bank would face criticism for not loaning to minority entrepreneurs, a reproach that Booker defended by arguing that solvency and risk avoidance were the bank’s foremost concern.291 Booker continued to manage the American State Bank well beyond the end of the period of significance of this document, finally selling to the Albina Community Bank in 2000.292

Context-Associated Property Types
Section F of this MPD lists the predominant property types associated with African American resources in Portland, Oregon, during the period of significance (1865-1973). Resources significant for their association with Context II, Business and Employment, are mostly likely to belong to Property Type II, Commercial and Professional Buildings, although some resources belonging to Property Type I, Residences, may also be significant for their associations with significant figures discussed in this context and/or Black-owned businesses that were operated out of private homes. Additional research and evaluation of significance and integrity are necessary for any property or group of properties to be determined eligible for listing in the National Register under this MPD.

CONTEXT STATEMENT III: JOURNALISM
Summary
As was the case in many major American cities, the emergence of a Black press in Portland provided a powerful counterbalance to the neglect and distortion that African American individuals and institutions often experienced at the hands of dominant media outlets. For much of the period of significance of this MPD, the national and local mainstream press often misrepresented African Americans both individually and collectively, failed to cover issues pertinent to local Black communities, and upheld dominant White perspectives and power structures. The Black press emerged in an effort to literally rewrite this narrative, portraying African Americans on their own terms and sharing relevant news stories that were not carried by the mainstream media. African American communities in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and New Orleans were early leaders in the field of independent Black journalism, establishing their own local newspapers prior to emancipation; Portland finally joined their ranks in 1896 with the founding of its first African American newspaper, The New Age.

Although mainstream journalism (dominated primarily by The Oregonian and secondarily by The Oregon Daily Journal during the period of significance of this MPD) established the dominant journalistic narrative in Portland, the emergence and evolution of a local Black press established a counter narrative that proved hugely influential in connecting and supporting Portland’s growing Black population.293 The founding of The New Age established the African American journalistic presence in Portland, a presence that has remained influential through the time of this writing. Although The New Age’s run was relatively brief, a second newspaper known as The Advocate would become the dominant Black periodical in Portland for much of the early twentieth century.

As described in other contexts within this MPD, the social, economic, and political turbulence of the 1930s and 1940s altered nearly every aspect of life in Portland. The impact on the Portland press was no

290 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 107.
291 Lang, “A place under the sun,” 372.
293 The Oregon Daily Journal was established in 1902 and tested the supremacy of The Oregonian for seventy years.
exception. During the Great Depression, Portland’s dominant print newspapers suffered significant
financial losses but outlasted this hardship by expanding into new radio markets.294 The African American
press, unable to fund their own radio station or continue publishing periodicals, purchased time on White
networks to advertise businesses and events, broadcast recordings of sermons and choirs, and eventually
release their own programs. The onset of World War II revitalized print media and similarly resurrected the
Black press in Portland, as the influx of African American in-migrants generated demand for a reliable and
unifying news source.

As in cities across the country, Black Portlanders rallied in the postwar years to actively resist the status
quo and fight for equal rights.295 Much of this movement was coordinated and spread through the Black
press. Weekly publications such as The People’s Observer and Portland Challenger celebrated
accomplishments, encouraged patronage at Black-owned businesses, and provided information about
upcoming civil rights events. In response to the destructive urban renewal programs of the 1960s and
early 1970s, Black journalists established two newspapers that are still in publication as of this writing: the
Portland Observer and The Portland Skanner.

In summary, the African American press in Portland, operating almost continuously from 1896 through
1973 (the close of the period of significance of this MPD), emerged in response to the city’s White-
dominated media and provided a critical resource for nearly every aspect of life within Portland’s Black
community.

Portland’s Dominant Newspapers
The emergence and expansion of Portland’s Black press did not occur in a vacuum. Throughout the entire
1865-1973 period of significance, the Black press existed alongside—and often in response to—
Portland’s dominant media outlets. The two most powerful of these outlets, The Oregonian and The
Oregon Journal, established the journalistic standard for many Portlanders and often upheld a White-
dominant narrative of local and national news and events.

The Oregonian (1850-present)
Founded in 1850, The Oregonian would quickly grow to become the most impactful and widely-read
newspaper in the state.296 Initially founded as a weekly newspaper, The Oregonian became a daily
publication in February 1861.297 By the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865, The Oregonian had become
Oregon’s primary news source. Early editors Thomas J. Dryer (1850-1860) and Harvey W. Scott (1865-
1872, 1877-1910) established the “Oregon style” of journalism with principles of “denunciation,

294 Harry H. Stein, “The Oregonian,” The Oregon Encyclopedia, last modified March 17, 2018,
https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregonian/#.Xe1I3ndFxPY.
295 See Context VII, Civil Rights, for additional information on postwar activism within Portland’s African American
community.
296 Leslie M. Scott, “The Oregonian Newspaper in Oregon History,” Oregon Historical Quarterly 29, no. 3 (September
1928): 225-235. The Oregonian was the fifth newspaper established in the region but the first in Portland and the only
paper to continue publication today. The four prior newspapers operated out of Oregon City, Milwaukie, and Hillsboro and
were founded as early as 1846. These first five newspapers only provided weekly editions, with the first daily newspaper
established in the same year as statehood in 1859.
297 Scott, “The Oregonian,” 228. Three daily newspapers preceded the daily edition of The Oregonian in Portland, but all
would end publication within a few short years. The first three newspapers in Portland with a daily publication were the
Daily News in 1859, the Advertiser from 1859-1862, and the Times from 1860-1864. It is likely that The Oregonian
transitioned to daily service as it transitioned ownership to Henry L. Pittock in 1860.
vituperation and sarcasm.”298 Despite the aggressive and sometimes hostile stance that the editors held towards progressivism, they typically permitted their writers latitude to cover a variety of viewpoints during moments of political shifts locally and nationally.299

Perhaps more than any other individual during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Oregonian editor Harvey Scott shaped public opinion in Oregon through the newspaper’s expansive circulation network and strong reputation. Scott viewed The Oregonian as an educational tool for pioneer residents and later as the chronicle of Oregon’s great history.300 Scott, who had himself come West via the Oregon Trail, held Oregon’s pioneers in the highest regard, comparing them to the founders of England and the United States.301 Scott’s scholarly pursuits distinguished him from other early founders, and he would come to be exalted on a regional and national platform as one of Oregon’s leading historians.302

Scott’s conservative views were widely known and exhibited for decades in his Oregonian editorials. Although he was pro-abolition during the Civil War, Scott sympathized with Southerners during Reconstruction and was a fierce opponent of equal rights and integration of African Americans.303 Scott also vehemently opposed women’s suffrage, leading to lengthy editorial arguments with his sister, Abigail Scott Duniway, who published the progressive Portland New Northwest between 1871 and 1887.304 Scott did not shy away from an argument and viewed his early years at The Oregonian as a constant battle for which no maneuver was too immoral. Although it maintained its position as Portland’s dominant media

299 Scott, “The Oregonian,” 230-232; Stein, “The Oregonian.” Under Scott’s leadership, The Oregonian outlasted all previous Portland and Oregon publications. In 1881, newspapers were delivered to locations three-hours distance from Portland; by 1909, subscriptions went as far as twelve-hours distance from Portland. Residents did not always positively view Scott’s partisan publication style, as is evidenced by a decline in circulation from 22,000 to less than 12,000 in the 1890s during the “free silver” debate. The first African American to be employed in the newsroom of The Oregonian was William Hilliard, publisher of the Portland Challenger, in 1952.
300 Lee M. Nash, “Scott of the ‘Oregonian’: The Editor as Historian,” Oregon Historical Quarterly 70, no. 3 (September 1969): 201-203. Scott viewed Oregon’s residents as intelligent beings whose ignorance was based on a lack of proper education and not on disinterest or ineptness. Scott sought to educate his kinsman in local, regional, and national matters, even comparing The Oregonian to the “church” in terms of moral influence. Scott was the first graduate of Pacific University in 1963 and the first person to attain a college degree in Oregon.
301 “Mr. Scott’s Address,” The Morning Oregonian (Portland, OR), July 6, 1899; Nash, “Scott of the ‘Oregonian,’” 210. Scott not only compared Oregonians to earlier pioneers but argued that that Oregonians are more “pure” than others, such as migrants to California.
302 Nash, “Scott of the ‘Oregonian,’” 197, 204, 219, 221. Scott served as one of Oregon’s leading historians in a variety of capacities. Scott was continuously called upon to speak at state and nationwide events, such as to the Historical Congress of the Lewis and Clark Exposition and at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York; edited the History of Portland, a 650-page book from a New York publisher; was considered a “Prominent Contributor and Reviser” for volumes IX-XI of the National Cyclopedia of American Biography, published 1899-1901; and served as the first president of the Oregon Historical Society, a title which he held for four years.
303 Nash, “Scott of the ‘Oregonian,’” 209. Scott is characterized as being “wary of innovations in government and society.” Another example is an editorial aside in an Oregonian edition from January 23, 1868: “The Democratic idea of the whole duty of the black man: That he shall work for others without pay, and be content with no more rights as a freeman than he had as a slave.” While it cannot be proven that Scott penned this sentence himself, it surely was approved by the editor and in the same year when Oregon rescinded its ratification of the fourteenth amendment.
304 Jean M. Ward, “Abigail Scott Duniway (1834-1915),” The Oregon Encyclopedia, last modified March 17, 2018, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/abigail_scott_duniway/#.Xe1LZXdFxPY. Duniway was a leader in Oregon’s suffrage movement and the first woman to vote in the state.
outlet throughout the period of significance, *The Oregonian*’s preeminence was challenged throughout much of the twentieth century by its mainstream competitor, *The Oregon Daily Journal*.

**The Oregon Daily Journal (1902-1982)**

*The Oregon Daily Journal* (*The Journal*) began publishing a daily afternoon paper in 1902. From its inception, the newspaper sought to challenge the dominance of *The Oregonian*, which was a daily morning publication. In response to the conservativism of *The Oregonian*, *The Journal* regularly featured progressive writers and editorials. Like *The Oregonian*, whose offices were located in a stately building at 537 SW 6th Ave. from 1892 to 1950, *The Journal*’s offices were also located downtown, starting in the Goodnough Building at SW 5th Avenue and Yamhill Street before moving to the Jackson Tower at 806 SW Broadway in 1912.\(^{305}\)

**Portland’s Early African American Press: 1896 through the Great Depression**

Beginning in 1896, African American newspapers began to assert themselves as important alternatives to the city’s dominant journalistic narrative. In the years between 1896 and the outbreak of World War II, one and sometimes two African American publications served the city’s Black residents.\(^{306}\) During years of overlapping coverage, the various African American newspapers were not always in accord; despite the periodic conflict between publications, however, the Black press remained united in their shared mission to educate and energize Portland’s African American population.\(^{307}\)

**The New Age (1896-1907)**

Portland’s earliest African American newspaper was *The New Age*, founded by editor Adolphus D. Griffin.\(^{308}\) Exchanging news stories with the more than forty African American periodicals that already existed across the United States, *The New Age* kept Portlanders informed of nationwide news pertinent to the African American experience.

Griffin was a lifelong Republican, and the paper often reflected his partisan views. Readers of *The New Age* included African American and White Portlanders, and Griffin regularly featured advertisements for both White- and Black-owned businesses. Griffin urged his fellow Black Portlanders to adhere to Booker T. Washington’s “conservative philosophy of accommodation,” which argued that education and economic success would better effect progress than political or legislative activity.\(^{309}\)

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\(^{305}\) “Barbara Mahoney, Charles S. (Sam) Jackson (1860-1924),” *The Oregon Encyclopedia*, last modified February 28, 2019, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/jackson_charles_s_sam_1860_1924_/#.Xe1NJndFxPY . The Jackson Tower was commissioned by *The Journal* and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996 (National Register of Historic Places, Journal Building, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #96000995).

\(^{306}\) While it is not known why this was usually the case, it is possible that Portland’s small Black population could not financially sustain two newspapers.

\(^{307}\) News articles from both the White and Black press show a series of libel suits filed by Black editors against other Black editors.

\(^{308}\) Jason Stone, “Historic Oregon Newspapers: Portland New Age,” *University of Oregon Libraries*, accessed September 26, 2019, https://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/history/newage/. Griffin was likely born in Louisiana in 1871 and had lived in Los Angeles, California, and Spokane, Washington, prior to his arrival in Portland by 1896. His publication was also known as the *Portland New Age*.

With the founding of Portland's second Black-owned newspaper, *The Advocate*, in 1903, Griffin's *New Age* faced competition from a publication that was demonstrably more progressive. In 1907, *The New Age* succumbed to the growing popularity of *The Advocate* and Griffin, the founder of what was to be the first in a long tradition of Black periodicals in Portland, left Oregon for the Midwest.310

*The New Age* operated from a variety of buildings during its eleven-year run, including 215 SW Stark St., the Cambridge Building at SW 3rd Avenue and Morrison Street, the Haseltine Building at 133 SW Second Ave., and finally 115 SW Second Ave. It is possible that Griffin operated out of downtown Portland locations to maintain proximity with other publishers like *The Oregonian*.311

*The Advocate* (1903-1936)
Portland's second African American newspaper, *The Advocate*, became Portland's longest-running and most influential African American newspaper prior to World War II. Initially a four-page weekly publication, *The Advocate* expanded to sixteen pages in 1929. At its peak, the paper was estimated to have more than three thousand subscribers, including Oregon Governor A. W. Norblad and Oregon Supreme Court Chief Justice John Rand.312 Unlike *The New Age*, editors of *The Advocate* actively incorporated a progressive agenda into the pages of the publication.313

*The Advocate* was founded in 1903 by a group of ten men, nine of whom were Portland Hotel employees, under the editorial leadership of E.D. Cannady.314 Early editions demonstrate the paper's stark tonal contrast with *The New Age*; where Griffin frequently appeased White businessmen, Cannady regularly challenged their treatment of African Americans. In 1912, E.D. Cannady married fellow-Texan Beatrice Morrow, who would become assistant editor of *The Advocate* and a driving force behind progressive change at the newspaper and in the city.315 In her many editorials, Beatrice Cannady displayed her willingness to challenge oppression, both as a woman and as an African American.316
At a time in which White Americans still questioned the capabilities of African Americans, *The Advocate* challenged preconceived notions of intellect and interest. The relative isolation of Portland’s small African American community necessitated a mechanism to keep Black Portlanders attuned to the larger issues and events of their day, resulting in a thorough and worldly weekly publication. In addition to coverage of the mainstream news stories in the dominant White press, *The Advocate* reported on African American individuals and institutions fighting against oppression. Readers were encouraged to join the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and attend lectures delivered by nationally prominent African Americans who visited Portland. In addition to targeted reporting on African American resistance to White-dominated power structures, *The Advocate* featured continuous reporting on various social aspects of Portland’s Black community. For example, each edition offered coverage on Black places of worship, fraternal organizations, and benevolent societies. While subtle, such constant reminders showed existing residents and potential newcomers that Portland’s small pre-World War II African American community was a resilient force able to support its own institutions.

*The Advocate* featured local social news which it published alongside other regional and national news of interest. One of the paper’s popular local features, “Hotel News,” kept readers apprised of career changes, promotions, and other news about the African American workers at various downtown hotels. Editions included sections devoted to youth happenings in the city, homes for sale or rent, and travels of local citizens. Such news tempered the antiquated characterization of African Americans as “the other,” a narrative that remained alive in Portland through institutions such as the Ku Klux Klan.

Depression-era financial strife caused *The Advocate* to cease publication in 1936, having never missed a weekly issue and having provided an intimate picture of daily life in the African American community for

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husband E. D. Cannady. After marrying E. D. Cannady, Beatrice (Morrow) Cannady became *The Advocate’s* assistant editor and in the 1920s the lead editor.

Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 38-42. The Cannadys edited and published *The Advocate* together for two decades and were prominent in Portland’s social and political circles as a couple and as individuals. Beatrice Cannady became the Northwest’s first African American female attorney and was a tireless civil rights advocate, with a steady stream of speaking engagements at Reed College, First Congregational Church, Willamette University, multiple annual NAACP conventions, the first Pan-African Congress in New York, and countless others. She ran for the Oregon State Legislature in 1932, and although she did not win election, she gained 8,000 votes among an overwhelmingly White electorate. E. D. Cannady was a charter member of the Rose City Elks Lodge #111 and served as its Exalted Ruler for 15 years. In the 1910s and 1920s, their home at 2516 NE 26th Ave. was the site of regular “inter-racial teas” of up to 250 guests. The Cannadys divorced in 1930, but Beatrice continued as the paper’s lead editor until the end of its run in 1936.

*The Advocate* was certainly not the only mechanism that counter-balanced this isolation; many of Portland’s African American men traveled extensively during their railroad work, and individual Portlanders traveled to other parts of the country for family and business reasons and carried on extensive correspondence to the same end.

Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 41. Porter Keddie Culp was a regular “Hotel News” Contributor. Culp came to Portland from Arkansas in 1921, and Culp’s family home from 1925 through the 1960s stands at 1535 NE 59th Ave.

Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 37. Scholars agree that the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in Oregon primarily targeted Catholics and Jews, but supporters of the KKK also did not want to see the relatively powerless minority of African Americans in Portland gain any ground. Movies like *The Birth of a Nation* reinforced implicit and explicit biases, and as Portland had the largest Klan membership west of the Mississippi, it is likely that many residents believed these prejudicial portrayals. See Context VII for more on the KKK in Oregon.
The Advocate offices were located in the Lowengart Building at 204 SW 8th Ave. from 1913 through 1920, in the Buchanan Building from 1920 through 1925, and at 414-418 SW Washington St. from 1925 through 1936.

**The Portland Times (1918-1923)**

Prominent local African American businessmen united in 1918 to establish *The Portland Times* as a journal for all of Portland’s citizens. These businessmen included W. R. Lee, Erastus Richardson, Dr. James Merriman, William McLamore, William D. Allen, George P. Moore, and J.D. Emery. Although both *The Advocate* and *The Portland Times* prioritized the advancement of Portland’s African American community, primary sources reflect tension between the two publications and their editors.

The founding principle of *The Portland Times* was that of an unbiased publication serving White and Black residents of Portland regardless of religious or social affiliations. The *Portland Times* criticized Black benevolent and fraternal societies at a time in which *Advocate* founder E.D. Cannady was the Exalted Ruler of the Rose City Elks, arguing that Black business, not social organizations, was the best way to gain recognition by dominant White society. A contentious libel suit filed by *Advocate* assistant editor Beatrice Cannady against five *Portland Times* editors would follow in that same year. The suit was eventually dropped, but it is unlikely that the two papers ever fully reconciled.

*The Portland Times* challenged *The Advocate* as the dominant Black press in Portland, but the city could not sustain two African American newspapers simultaneously; *The Portland Times* closed its doors after only five years. The Abington Building, located on the east side of SW 3rd Avenue between Stark and Washington Streets, housed the paper’s offices and was demolished in 1967.

**The Northwest Enterprise (1920-1952)**

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320 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 42. *The Advocate* arguably provides the most complete record available for information about Portland’s African American community during the first four decades of the twentieth century.

321 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 41. It is possible that *The Advocate* offices were located in downtown Portland in deliberate proximity to other established newspaper offices.


327 Newspaper clippings from *The Sunday Oregonian* and *The Oregon Daily Journal* show a libel suit between W. D. Allen and Beatrice Cannady in 1919. In a similar vein as *The New Age* and *The Advocate* lawsuits in the first decade of the twentieth century, this lawsuit was possibly the result of the two papers vying for readership in Portland (“Negroes Accused of Libel,” *The Oregonian* [Portland, OR], November 2, 1919; “Colored Editors Are Accused of Criminal Libel,” *The Oregon Daily Journal* [Portland, OR], November 2, 1919; “$25,000 Suit Withdrawn,” *The Oregon Daily Journal* [Portland, OR], January 12, 1920).

328 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 42. The building was also home to the African American-owned Times Publishing Company, which featured the Golden West’s William Allen as president, Dr. Merriman as vice president, and George Moore as secretary/treasurer. Moore was also the director of the Golden West Athletic League and a major national boxing promoter. Allen and Moore were brothers-in-law.
Alongside the local African American press existed regional and national African American publications, including the notable *Northwest Enterprise*. Based in Seattle, Washington, *The Northwest Enterprise* established a local Portland office and hired a Portland editor to write a one-page spread of Portland news for each weekly issue. *The Northwest Enterprise* was the Pacific Northwest’s first regional Black newspaper; it was also notable in that it was one of the first newspapers in Portland to regularly feature images of African Americans.329

While most papers featured more than just local news, the presence of a separate office in Portland for a Seattle-based paper demonstrates the regional support given to the small Black community in Portland. Unlike the local Black press outlets in Portland, *The Northwest Enterprise* continued publishing during the turbulent times of the Great Depression and World War II.

**Beyond Print Journalism: Radio Broadcasting**

Nationally, the lexicon of journalism experienced a major shift with the introduction of commercial radio in the 1920s. *The Oregonian* was Portland’s first newspaper to establish its own station, KGW, in 1922. Other newspapers would quickly follow suit, and by 1926, five radio stations were operating in the metropolitan region. *The Oregon Daily Journal* purchased KOIN in 1931 after its parent company folded during the Great Depression.330

Radio sustained the dominant local newspapers during the Great Depression as circulation and advertising revenues were decimated by economic strain. While many radio broadcasts covered news items traditionally printed on paper, radio also served as popular entertainment. Regularly programmed shows included actors, musicians, singers, and even tap dancers. Advertisements featured catchy jingles designed to last in listeners’ memories long after the program was over.

National and local radio broadcasts often stereotyped African Americans and insulted their culture. A popular radio program called “Amos ‘n Andy” satirized southern African American’s attempts to make a life in the northern states.331 Played by two white men, the show utilized racial ventriloquy to convey the “Blackness” of the characters.332 The program eventually evolved into a more dramatic exploration of human nature and toned down the overtly racial dialogue.333

In contrast, Portland’s Black community’s broadcasts featured intelligent and articulate leaders from the community. One of the first broadcasts by local African Americans was a service at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in January of 1927.334 Beatrice Cannady would become Portland’s most frequent African

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333 Mel Watkins, “What Was it About ‘Amos ‘n Andy’?” *The New York Times*, July 7, 1991. As the show evolved, Amos and Andy were gradually portrayed as being similar to working-class Americans regardless of race.
334 “Mt. Olivet Church Will Be Heard over Radio,” *The Advocate* (Portland, OR), January 15, 1927. This advertisement for the event on January 30, 1927 highlights that Reverend E.C. Dyer will provide the sermon and Lola McCants direct the choir. A follow-up piece states the event was seen as a success with many “white friends” in attendance or listening in.
American radio guest during the pre-World War II years, speaking about events like “Negro History Week” and delivering lengthy addresses about Black contributions to society. Local leaders like Cannady used their radio appearances to counter racist and oppressive programming that made it into the dominant local and national broadcasts.

The Interplay of Portland’s White and Black Press Prior to World War II
The two dominant local newspapers of the early twentieth century, The Oregonian and The Oregon Daily Journal, coexisted with The Advocate for more than thirty years. Although their social coverage and special interest articles were targeted toward different audiences, the papers often reported on the same local, national, and international events. However, the angle of this coverage differed markedly between the three papers. Preliminary research indicates a level of mutual respect between The Advocate and The Oregon Daily Journal, with both newspapers maintained a generally antagonistic attitude toward the more conservative Oregonian.

Coverage of one racially-charged incident from 1927 highlights these complicated relationships. When the Cannadys’ son George was refused entrance at an ice rink on a school trip due to his race, both The Oregonian and The Oregon Daily Journal published articles about the event. The Oregonian provides a seemingly objective retelling of events, with no commentary on the treatment of the young boy, although the author did note that he “ranked well above average of his class in scholastics.” In stark contrast, The Oregon Daily Journal published coverage of the event alongside an editorial about the general treatment of African Americans in Portland, using George Cannady’s experience as an example. The Journal wrote that African Americans have “made greater mental and spiritual progress than any other [race]” and that “no city has a higher-minded colony of colored people than Portland.”

A 1931 debate regarding the radio program “Amos ‘n’ Andy” provides another example of how the three newspapers interacted on the topic of race relations. The Oregonian published an editorial arguing that African Americans had lost all sense of humor and were being “too sensitive” in objecting to the program’s derogatory stereotypes, which were reminiscent of minstrel shows. The editorial continued by stating that “one Oregon up-state newspaper…stands with an almost invisible minority” in its opposition to the program. This not-so-subtle jab at The Oregon Daily Journal prompted a response by The Advocate, in which authors stated that the only “pertinent remarks” with which they agreed were those said sarcastically in The Oregonian regarding the universality of the characters if stripped of their racist accents.

and an editorial in the same edition praises the efforts of all involved as “another means of helping to solve the race problem.” (“The Radio Program,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), February 5, 1927; “Longview News,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), February 5, 1927). “Speaks over Radio,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), February 12, 1927; “Give Radio Program to Broadcast from KEX,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), April 7, 1928. It appears that such programming became more frequent in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

“[Illegible] Frolic Ends When One [Illegible] Kept out Because of Racial Difference,” The Morning Oregonian (Portland, OR), January 28, 1927. Their Loyalty,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), February 12, 1927. Reprinted from The Oregon Daily Journal. The Advocate did not state in the original reprint of this article that the article was sourced from The Oregon Daily Journal. The next week’s edition of The Advocate included a correction stating this fact.

In yet another display of the animosity between *The Oregonian* and *The Advocate*, the two papers publicly criticized each other’s journalistic efforts through a series of editorials in 1922. A report about a proposed national anti-lynching law in *The Oregonian* on December 4, 1922, was countered by an *Advocate* editorial entitled “Timely, yet too Late.” In the editorial, *The Advocate* staff stated that while *The Oregonian* published a compelling argument for the passage of the bill, the publication was too close to the vote to persuade any representative to alter their vote and therefore was a farcical effort by *The Oregonian*. *The Oregonian* simply responded by asking how something could be both “timely and yet too late,” then continued to patronize *The Advocate* staff by offering an explanation of the legislative process.\(^{340}\)

While the conflicts between the papers are notable, not all interactions between the newspapers were tense. When Sam Jackson, the editor and publisher of *The Oregon Daily Journal*, died in 1924, Beatrice Cannady penned a sincere tribute in *The Advocate*. In this article, Cannady complimented Jackson’s “spirit of fair play, helpfulness and friendliness,” and noted that Jackson assisted *The Advocate* in its early days, never once refusing a request.\(^{341}\)


Following the closure of *The Advocate* in 1936, Portland’s Black press went silent for the first time in forty years. A brief start of a paper, *The Portland Observer*, was founded by recent Morehouse College graduate William H. McClendon in 1938. However, it suffered from a lack of funding and did not last a year.

As detailed in Context I, Settlement Patterns, World War II brought major changes to Portland and a significant increase in the size of the city’s Black population. The war also effected the resurgence of the Black press in Portland. Fledgling publications begun in the 1940s primarily focused on the war effort and familiarizing Black in-migrants with Portland’s friendly institutions. As World War II came to a close, Portland’s expanded African American population would begin again to rely on the local press to counterbalance the dominant media and advocate for issues important to the Black community.

The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, explored in Context VII, Civil Rights, gave Black journalism a new mandate to elevate the accomplishments of the African American community and demand change from Portland’s White institutions. From the hiring of African American clerks in grocery stores to electoral victories in state elections, the Black press played a critical role in celebrating victories and advocating for change during the years leading up to 1973, the close of the period of significance for this MPD, and beyond.

**The People’s Observer (1943-1950)**

In the spring of 1943, five years after his *Portland Observer* had failed, William McClendon was summoned again to the printing press. As Portland’s rapidly-expanding African American community reached 15,000 strong, the Shipyard Negro Organization for Victory (SNOV) requested McClendon revive *The Portland Observer*. McClendon resumed his editorial post and renamed the paper *The People’s Observer*, working out...

\(^{340}\) “Timely, Yet Too Late,” *The Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), December 13, 1922.

\(^{341}\) “Sam Jackson Passes,” *The Advocate* (Portland, OR), January 3, 1925. Although no further details could be located regarding the type or extent of assistance received from *The Oregon Daily Journal*, it is possible that *The Advocate* used *The Journal’s* printing press.
of an office at 2017 N Williams Ave. The newspaper covered local and national issues regarding race that were intentionally ignored by White news outlets like The Oregonian.

Like Portland’s Black editors before him, McClendon utilized his publication to challenge preexisting notions of racism, sexism, and African Americans’ place in Portland. His controversial stances would lead to his dismissal from his job at the shipyards in July 1943, but he continued to publish The People’s Observer until 1950.

**Portland Inquirer (1944-1946)**
Although short-lived, the Portland Inquirer played a major role in uniting Portland’s fragmented Black community at the close of World War II. Editor Ralph H. Faulk distributed the newspaper from offices located in Portland, Vanport, and Vancouver, where significant numbers of Black in-migrants and established residents were living during the war.

The bulk of this eight-page weekly publication was devoted to the African American experience on the home front. The paper covered local and national news, with an emphasis on mobilizing the African American community to vote. Multiple pages in each weekly issue contained encouragements large and small regarding voter registration sites, the benefits of gaining representation in government, and the importance of fulfilling one’s patriotic duty. Similar to the publications predating the Portland Inquirer, each newspaper featured information about African American religious services, benevolent and fraternal organizations, and youth events.

**Portland Challenger (1952-1954)**
The Portland Challenger was the first media endeavor of journalist William Hilliard, a recent graduate of Pacific University at the time of the paper’s founding in 1952. Hilliard’s particular brand of journalism was influenced by a nationwide trend toward statistical analysis, including analysis of African Americans who were previously ignored by the White majority except during election season. The bi-weekly Portland Challenger published quantitative and qualitative data to urge African American participation in politics, such as a report regarding a voter survey in November 1952 and evidence of illegal housing discrimination in May 1953.

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342 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 59-60. Other properties associated with McClendon during this era include 1803 NE 1st Ave., 825 NE Holland St. and 4140 NE Holman St.


344 Fonseca, “William McClendon (1915-1996).” The supposed article that got McClendon fired was the coverage of a protest at the shipyards regarding racial slurs used to describe female African American workers. After 1950 McClendon began a career as a social worker and later as an educator at Reed College and Portland State University, where he helped to establish the Black Studies program. McClendon was also a jazz musician and owner of McClendon’s Rhythm Room, which opened in 1949.


346 “Portland Patter,” *Portland Inquirer* (Portland, OR), September 8, 1944.

347 Due to the bi-weekly nature of the newspaper, Hilliard often covered the same topics in each edition as the news evolved. For example, digitized copies of the Portland Challenger on University of Oregon’s “Historic Oregon Newspapers” database show the continued reporting on plans for the Eliot Elementary School in each edition for more than four months. Routine topics included civil rights activities, elections, education, housing, and employment.

The *Portland Challenger* was in circulation during the landmark passage of Oregon’s Civil Rights Bill in 1953, but it was discontinued in 1954 following Hilliard’s departure for a position at *The Oregonian*. Hilliard, who was initially hired by the White-owned *Oregonian* in 1952, was the first African American employed in the paper’s newsroom. After years of covering sports, religion, and general reporting assignments for *The Oregonian*, Hilliard began to ascend through the editorial ranks and secured a position as the paper’s executive editor in 1982.

**Oregon Mirror (1959-ca.1962)**

Much like the *Portland Challenger* before it, the *Oregon Mirror* reflected the aspirations of Portland’s Black community as it navigated the challenges and victories of the Civil Rights Era. Established by J. Marcus Willington and Don Alford, the *Oregon Mirror*’s weekly edition focused on the Black community in Albina, with pages of advertisements for Black businesses along Williams Avenue and a “classifieds” section devoted to Inner North and Northeast Portland. Although the paper did not remain in circulation for long, it existed at a time when Portland’s African American community was still largely ignored by many of Portland’s dominant institutions.

**Other African American Publications**

In the 1950s and 1960s, at least one if not multiple African American newspapers continuously served the Portland community. Other known newspapers include the *Advocate Register*, published in 1951 by Oliver Smith at 1453 N Williams Ave.; *The Northwest Clarion*, initially published between 1943 and 1961 and revived under Jimmy “Bang Bang” Walker as *The Clarion Defender* from 1967 to 1973 at 1223 NE Alberta St.; the *Consumer Review*, published in 1958 and 1959 by Earl Hampton at 3211 N Williams Ave.; and the *Oregon Advance Times*, published from 714½ NE Alberta St. in the late 1960s.

Although many of Portland’s African American newspapers of the mid-century period lasted only a short time, two newspapers founded near the close of the period of significance still exist as of this writing. The *Portland Observer* (which has no affiliation with William H. McClendon’s Depression-era publication of the same name) was established in 1970 by Rev. Alfred Henderson of Bethel AME through the efforts of the Albina Ministerial Alliance. The *Portland Observer*’s first offices stood at 2201 N Killingsworth St., and as of 2019, it continues publication at 4747 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. under the management of Mark

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349 *Portland Challenger*’s office was located at 3300 N Williams Ave.

350 Tom Hallman, Jr., “William A. Hilliard, former editor of *The Oregonian*, has died,” *The Oregonian* (Portland, OR), January 16, 2017; Sam Roberts, “William A. Hilliard, 89, Pioneering Black Journalist, Dies,” *The New York Times*, January 20, 2017. In his time as editor, Hilliard strove to change the way minority communities were covered and described by *The Oregonian*; he generally omitted racial references in criminal suspect descriptions, arguing that they were too generic to help identify suspects and that they needlessly perpetuated racial stereotypes, and he stopped the paper’s sportswriters from referring to team nicknames that were demeaning to Native Americans. In 1993, Hilliard was named the first Black president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (now the American Society of News Editors); in the same year, he was honored by the National Association of Black Journalists for his role in integrating the mainstream media.


African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

Washington. A second 1970s-era publication, *The Skanner News*, was established by Bernie Foster in 1975 at 2337 N Williams Ave. The paper relocated to 415 N Killingsworth St. in 1997 and also continues publication as of 2019.  

**The Interplay Between Portland’s Press Outlets after World War II**

Competing news outlets in Portland during and immediately following World War II reflected the heightened racial tension of the rapidly densifying and diversifying city. Reporting on a meeting of Portland and Vancouver leaders in August 1944 by *The Oregonian* and *Portland Inquirer* provides insight into the persistent racial divide upheld by the dominant press. A three-paragraph article in *Portland Inquirer* titled “Mayor Taboos Discrimination” stated that although “petty bickering was indulged in by some of those present,” Mayor Earl Riley offered his commitment to work toward an end to discrimination.  

Alternatively, *The Oregonian* reported on the same event in a full-column article titled “Racial Issues Cause Dissent: Harmony Meeting Ends in Tension,” describing how “uninvited persons” disrupted the meeting and faulting African Americans for instigating racial tension in the city.  

As social change gripped Portland in the postwar decades, public opinion gradually moved toward more inclusive and racially-tolerant views. Although African American periodicals of the time still largely appealed to a Black audience, the mainstream outlets of *The Oregonian* and *The Oregon Daily Journal* began hiring more diverse reporters and reporting on more inclusive stories during the 1950s. For example, Hugh A. Scott of *The Oregonian* reported on the “Negro Housing Situation in Portland” in a three-article series in May 1953. Scott’s first article explained the policies leading to the majority of African Americans settling in Albina; his second article argued that Black people were living in every Portland neighborhood; and his third article dispelled the notion that Black residents decreased neighboring property values. Such a lengthy, well-researched, and insightful series about the African American experience in Portland demonstrated an editorial shift for a dominant media outlet with a history of inflammatory articles.  

Increasingly more inclusive, *The Oregonian* and *The Oregon Daily Journal* remained the dominant newspapers in Oregon throughout the close of the period of significance. The advent of television, a deemphasis on print journalism, and transitions of ownership at both papers precipitated talks of a merge between the two in 1959, with *The Oregonian* seeking to buy out *The Oregon Daily Journal*. This sparked outrage amongst employees and union members at both papers, prompting a five-year strike that later evolved into resistance against the mechanization of the industry.  

In the end, the two papers consolidated under one owner and gradually *The Oregon Daily Journal* faded behind *The Oregonian*, ceasing publication in 1982.  

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354 “Mayor Taboos Discrimination,” *The Portland Inquirer* (Portland, OR), August 18, 1944.  
357 Many suspected that *The Oregonian* encouraged its workers to join the strike to make acquisition of *The Oregon Journal* more appealing to the general public. This is the third-longest newspaper strike in U.S. history.  
The continued publication of both the *Portland Observer* and *The Skanner News* as of 2019 represents a continuation of the significant contributions made by African American journalists in Portland during and after the period of significance of this MPD.

**Context-Associated Property Types**

Section F of this MPD lists the predominant property types associated with African American resources in Portland, Oregon, during the period of significance (1865-1973). Resources significant for their association with Context III, *Journalism*, are mostly likely to be newsrooms belonging to Property Type II, *Commercial and Professional Buildings*. Some resources belonging to Property Type I, *Residences*, may also be significant for their associations with significant figures discussed in this context. Additional research and evaluation of significance and integrity are necessary for any property or group of properties to be determined eligible for listing in the National Register under this MPD.

**CONTEXT STATEMENT IV: ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION**

**Summary**

Implicit and explicit racial discrimination throughout the period of significance of this MPD compelled Portland’s African American community to establish their own activities and institutions for social life and entertainment. As with places of business and worship, the location of Black social venues generally corresponded with the geography of African American settlement patterns as described in Context I, *Settlement Patterns*, beginning on the west side of the Willamette River in the nineteenth century and transitioning to Inner North and Northeast Portland in the early twentieth century.

In the late nineteenth century, Black-owned gathering spaces were few, and Black Portlanders generally patronized White-owned establishments. Many of these spaces were segregated or even inaccessible to African American customers, but informal, word-of-mouth knowledge of friendly establishments served to prevent the humiliation or danger of service refusal at White businesses that were hostile to African American patrons. As Portland’s Black community became larger and more established after the turn of the twentieth century, a clearer demarcation emerged between White-owned and -patronized establishments and those that were created by and for the African American community. In the early decades of the twentieth century, African American homes, fraternal lodges, and churches often played host to parties, theatrical performances, and lectures when racial discrimination or budgetary constraints prohibited the rental of another venue.

Economic and population growth after World War II facilitated the development of a flourishing entertainment and recreation scene within Portland’s African American community during the later decades of the period of significance. While many White residents and business owners continued to discriminate against Portland’s expanded Black community in the postwar years, African American entrepreneurs invested in their own social and athletic clubs, ballrooms, and music venues, providing a range of entertainment opportunities not seen in the city’s early history. These spaces solidified a multifaceted African American community in Albina, supported the rise of successful athletes and performers, and fostered a music scene that attained regional and national fame.

**African American Entertainment and Recreation in Early Portland: 1865-1905**
Entertainment options for all audiences were fairly limited in Portland during the early years of the state’s history, consisting predominantly of art exhibitions, theatrical plays, live musical performances, and activities held at private businesses such as saloons and restaurants. As Portland’s African American population was extremely small in late nineteenth-century Portland, numbering just 775 individuals at the time of the 1900 census, few Black-owned entertainment venues existed to cater to the recreational needs of Portland’s African American community. Instead, African American Portlanders generally sought entertainment in those White-owned venues that would admit them. Where Black patrons were freely admitted, they were still regularly required to adhere to segregated seating restrictions. Mainstream entertainment of the period was also problematic with respect to the African American experience, frequently employing racial stereotypes and cultural appropriation in the guise of popular comedy.

**Entertainment Venues and the African American Experience in Early Portland**

African Americans living in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Portland had few available entertainment options and only limited opportunity to host gatherings and community events outside of their own homes. White-owned venues exercised discretion in admitting African American patrons, and few appear to have been available for rent by Black individuals or social groups. The Enterprise Investment Company building (1018 N Larrabee St.), which was constructed by a group of African American men in 1903, was one of the few spaces in which African American organizations were able to hold formal social events around the turn of the century. Black-owned social clubs and taverns, which welcomed patrons for leisure activities including dining, drinking, and gambling, also appear to have been rare within the small community. One of the only known Black-owned taverns in turn-of-the-century Portland is the Arcadia Saloon, which opened at NW 4th Avenue and Everett Street in 1899. Burr Williams, who co-founded the Arcadia after moving to Portland from Ohio in 1898, told the local Black press that he saw a need for a Black-owned saloon in Portland after immediately observing “the absence of respectable places of resorts for the many members of his race that reside in the city.” Williams may have been alluding to the existence of social organizations such as the Colored Cooks’, Waiters’, Porters’ and Janitors’ Social Club, which operated out of a former horse stable on NW 8th Avenue and was raided by Portland police for selling liquor without a license in the early twentieth century. It is likely that other

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359 One popular form of mainstream entertainment in the late nineteenth century was the “cyclorama,” a type of artistic installation comprising a panoramic image curved into a cylindrical shape and surrounding a viewing platform. The medium was frequently used to depict historical battles and other scenes, providing an immersive experience for viewers. Portland, like many other major American cities, displayed its own cyclorama depicting Civil War battle scenes in the 1880s. Although many other cities’ Civil War cycloramas included depictions of African Americans joining in battle or celebrating a Union victory, Portland’s engaged in a form of erasure as it lacked depictions of African Americans entirely (Jeffry Uecker, “Portland’s Gettysburg Cyclorama: A Story of Art, Entertainment, and Memory,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 1 [Spring 2012]: 56-57; “The Battle of Gettysburg,” *The Oregonian* [Portland, OR], August 11, 1887; “The Cyclorama,” *The Oregonian* [Portland, OR], December 30, 1887).

360 Moreland, *The History of Portland’s African American Community*, 52. See Context II, Business and Employment, for additional information on the Enterprise Investment Company, which was formed in 1901 and counted seven Portland Hotel employees among its original members.

361 “As evidence of what pluck and energy . . .,” *The New Age* (Portland, OR), July 7, 1900.

362 “Social Club in a Barn,” *The New Age* (Portland, OR), March 4, 1905; “Editors are at War,” *The Sunday Oregonian* (Portland, OR), March 5, 1905; “Editor Griffin’s Statement,” *The Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), March 6, 1905. The Colored Cooks’ Waiters’, Porters’ and Janitors’ Social Club, which was owned by a staff member of Portland’s African American newspaper *The Advocate*, was derided in the city’s other African American news outlet, *The New Age*, for being “a disgrace to the decent colored population of the city” (“Editor Griffin’s Statement,” *The Morning Oregonian* [Portland, OR], March 6, 1905).
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

Black-owned and -operated social clubs such as this existed to serve the African American community of early Portland, but little is known about these venues as of this writing.

For mainstream entertainment such as theater and musical performances, African Americans in early Portland often had to look to White-owned private entertainment venues. Articles and advertisements in the contemporary Black press suggest that Black Portlanders were allowed entrance to at least some of these establishments, but the extent of their ability to frequent White-owned venues and to freely select seating is undetermined. It is certain that African Americans were regularly discriminated against in White-owned theaters until at least 1906, when an African American man named Oliver Taylor brought a suit against a theater owner who refused to seat him in the box seats for which he had purchased tickets. The case was eventually heard by the State Supreme Court, which declared it illegal for Oregon theaters to refuse admission to paying guests on the basis of their race. Even after the high court’s decision, however, explicit prejudice towards Black theater patrons in Portland continued for decades. For example, both William Allen, the owner of the successful Golden West Hotel (707 NW Everett St.), and James McArthur, a Spanish-American War veteran, were rebuffed from White-owned theaters in 1929.

African Americans in Mainstream Entertainment and The Reception in Portland

Mainstream musical acts and plays featuring Black performers were uncommon in Portland during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; however, Black culture had been commonly parodied, mocked, and monetized in White American entertainment since before the Civil War. From the 1840s through the late 1880s, American show business was dominated by “minstrelsy” or “minstrel theater,” in which White Americans blackened their faces with charred cork, adopted heavily accented dialects, and delivered performances that satirized plantation work songs and spirituals authentic to African American culture. These productions developed and reinforced a set of cruel stereotypes surrounding invented Black American personalities, including the loyal “mammy,” the happy banjo-strumming “darky,” and the conceited “city slicker.”

363 “At the Theaters,” The New Age (Portland, OR), December 2, 1899. In this column, shows at two separate theaters are highlighted: Cordray’s Musée-Theatre at SW 3rd Avenue and SW Yamhill Street and the Marquam Grand Opera House on SW Morrison Street between 6th Avenue and Broadway.

364 Taylor v. Cohn, 47 Or. 538, 84 Pac. 388 (1906). See Context VII, Civil Rights, for further information on Taylor v. Cohn, argued by African American attorney McCants Stewart before the Oregon Supreme Court in 1906.


366 Abolitionist and writer Frederick Douglass described performers who donned blackface as “the filthy scum of white society, who have stolen from us a complexion denied to them by nature, in which to make money, and pander to the corrupt taste of their white fellow citizens” (Frederick Douglass, “The Hutchinson Family—Hunkerism,” The North Star [Rochester, NY], October 27, 1848).


368 Toll, “Blackface.” The cruel and false stereotypes perpetuated by these popular minstrel shows have echoed in popular cultural for more than a hundred and fifty years. One early twentieth-century Portland dining establishment, part of a chain of White-owned fried chicken restaurants, dubbed itself the “Coon Chicken Inn” and featured the caricatured visage of a smiling Black porter on its plates, menus, and matchboxes; the entrance to the restaurant was a gaping-mouthed version of the same. The restaurant’s branding was inspired by the minstrel show character “Zip Coon,” described as “a Black urban dandy,” a fool “putting on airs” for the amusement of White audiences, his braggadocio affirming their perceived supremacy over the African Americans his character was intended to represent. Portland’s Coon Chicken Inn building, though significantly altered, is still extant at 5474 NE Sandy Boulevard. Despite opposition, the three-restaurant chain (other locations in Seattle, Washington, and Salt Lake City, Utah) operated from 1925 through the 1950s. The Portland
In the late nineteenth century, some African American performers broke into mainstream American show business by playing to the same caricatured personas that White theater had developed to mock and commercialize their culture. Promoters billed African American minstrel actors as “authentic portrayers of plantation life,” and the performers themselves were generally compelled to appear black makeup and to adopt a heavy dialect. One popular American play performed in Portland in 1899, entitled “Brown’s in Town,” featured songs in the minstrel style and an African American actress in the role of Primrose, the Black “lady cook.” Portland’s foremost White media outlet, The Oregonian newspaper, reviewed the play positively but was reserved and possibly ironic in its praise for the play’s sole Black actress. While the paper complimented the White actors and actresses on their dramatic capabilities, the actress who performed as Primrose was commended for her “clever” execution of the heavily-accented, stereotypical dialogue and minstrel-style musical numbers assigned to her character.

Nationally, African American performers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were typically limited to racially demeaning and highly caricaturized roles such as Primrose in “Brown’s in Town”; with few other performance options available to Black actors, dancers, musicians, and entertainers at the time, however, minstrelsy provided an important avenue by which African American performers could secure a career in the American entertainment industry. W.C. Handy, the composer of “St. Louis Blues” and other popular American songs, began his career as a Black minstrel and stated that “all the best [African American] talent of that generation came down the same drain. The composers, the singers, the musicians, the speakers, the stage performers—the minstrel show got them all.” One of Portland’s African American-run newspapers, The New Age, ran its own complimentary review of “Brown’s in Town” in 1899, suggesting that African American participation in minstrelsy or minstrel-inspired theater was accepted by Portland’s broader Black community at the time.

**African American Portlanders and the Lewis and Clark Fair of 1905**


371 “Yes, ‘Brown’s in Town,’” The Morning Oregonian (Portland, OR), November 27, 1899. Also in 1899, the African American newspaper The New Age ran a review of the Black Patti Troubadours, a traveling musical and acrobatic act led by African American soprano Sissieretta Jones. The paper described the group as “without parallel,” having received “distinguished honors” for their “extraordinary excellence” in the United States and Europe (“At the Theatres,” The New Age [Portland, OR], December 9, 1899). In contrast, The Oregonian was again reserved in its commendation of an African American performer, making no mention of the troupe’s critical acclaim and reducing the performance to “a carnival” orchestrated by “capable performers.” As this review demonstrates, explicit and implicit derision of Black entertainers was commonplace during the time, even in the case of world-renowned performers (“Black Patti Coming,” The Sunday Oregonian [Portland, OR], December 3, 1899).

372 Campbell, Popular Music in America, 29.

373 “Coming Attractions,” The New Age (Portland, OR), November 25, 1899.
Fairs and expositions became a primary source of entertainment in large and mid-sized American cities during the late nineteenth century, attracting visitors from across the country and showcasing modern technologies, art, architecture, film, and carnival-like attractions. Seeking to establish a reputation as a vibrant urban destination and an emerging economic power, Portland organized its own event, the Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair, in the summer and early fall of 1905. The Lewis and Clark Fair sold nearly 1.6 million tickets and brought national attention to the relatively young city; over a quarter of the fair’s attendants came from outside of the Pacific Northwest. The Fair marked a significant inflection point in Portland’s history, as it altered national perception of the growing city and catalyzed a period of booming economic and population growth.374

Alongside these arguably positive outcomes, the Lewis and Clark Fair also reinforced racial stereotypes and upheld dominant narratives of White superiority. Like other American expositions and fairs held in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Portland’s event featured live-displays of “exotic” human beings, presenting Native Americans, the Igorot people of the Philippines, and people of Japanese descent as novelties in virtual “human zoos.”375 Persons of African descent are not known to have been included in these “exhibitions,” but nor were they expressly welcomed to the Lewis and Clark Fair. Issues of African American interest are absent from the official Fair catalog, apart from one Census Bureau exhibit displaying “negro statistics” alongside immigration figures and domestic production data.376 Photographs of the construction of exhibit halls show African Americans assisting in the creation of the fairground, but people of color are not represented in photographs of the Fair. Portland historian Carl Abbott characterized the nature of the Lewis and Clark Fair as “by and for White Americans.”377

**African American Social Gatherings, Entertainment Venues, and Musicians: 1905-1941**

Portland’s African American community grew slowly through the early twentieth century, establishing small businesses, fraternal organizations, and places of worship that paralleled those created by the city’s White community. As the community developed its own social institutions and community organizations, demand also grew for entertainment venues that would serve African American patrons. African Americans owned few venues in early twentieth-century Portland, and although Portland’s public spaces were not officially segregated, people of color were still frequently denied service or admission to venues of all kinds during the years leading up to World War II.378 As a result, many members of Portland’s early

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378 “Color Line Drawn Pupils Leave Rink,” *The Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), January 28, 1927; “Colored Boy Barred Class Leaves Rink,” *The Advocate* (Portland, OR), February 12, 1927. Reprinted from *The Oregon Daily Journal*. For example, George Cannady, the son of *The Advocate* editors Beatrice and E.D. Cannady, was denied entrance to an ice
African American community hosted social gatherings and sponsored entertainment in their churches, fraternal lodges, and even their own homes during the early twentieth century. Despite the lack of freedom in selecting venues, however, a small but vibrant African American nightlife gradually developed in the 1920s. As the city’s Black community grew more established, a number of musical ensembles were born of relationships built through business communities, fraternal organizations, and religious congregations in the first decades of the twentieth century.379

Private Homes, Churches, and Fraternal Halls as Recreational Gathering Spaces
With the exception of the African American-owned Golden West Hotel (707 NW Everett St.), a handful of African American-owned restaurants and bars, and the “Colored” YWCA building (6 N Tillamook St.), few dedicated public spaces existed for African Americans to participate in mainstream leisure activities prior to World War II.380 As a result, many members of the community hosted social activities in Black churches, fraternal lodges, and private homes. For example, one group of Black Portland couples organized a popular dinner party circuit in the 1930s, with each couple hosting the other members in turn. The dinner parties focused on different themes, with each host trying to outdo the last in ingenuity, hospitality, and flair.381 Although seemingly inconsequential within the larger context of entertainment and recreation, organized events like dinner party circuits provided an important opportunity for African American Portlanders to socialize and converse in an environment free from explicit racism.

For larger and more formal gatherings such as public lectures, Portland’s African American churches were naturally suited to serve as entertainment venues.382 Churches provided a large seating capacity and acoustically sound design, and where White-owned venues may have segregated seating or denied access to African American guests, Black-owned churches offered a welcoming atmosphere that existed apart from the city’s White prejudices. Prominent Black churches such as Mt. Olivet Baptist and Bethel AME played frequent host to visiting lecturers and national leaders in the African American community.383 Black leaders such as A. Philip Randolph, organizer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and Addie Waites Hunton, a race relations leader and suffragist, often spoke at these venues when visiting Portland.384 A few of these speakers even drew White Portlanders to Black-owned churches: in 1930, African American orator and essayist William Pickens spoke at Bethel AME to a diverse crowd of more than 700 people.385

skating rink in early 1927. Although such instances, particularly those involving children and prominent African American families like the Cannadys, often resulted in publicity and heightened awareness, they do not appear to have meaningfully changed discriminatory practices at the time.

379 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 31, 45.
380 For additional information on the Golden West Hotel and the types of activities it hosted, see Context II, Business and Employment.
381 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 45.
382 See Context VI, Religion and Worship, for more information on African American churches in early twentieth-century Portland.
383 Mt. Olivet Baptist Church was located at NW 7th Avenue between Everett and Flanders Streets from 1902 to 1921 and at 1734 NE 1st Ave. from 1921 to 1994. Bethel AME Church was located at 226 NW 10th Ave. from 1898 to 1916 and at 1239 N Larrabee Ave. from 1916 to 1959.
384 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 31. Some visiting Black leaders also spoke at places of worship that were not organized for or typically patronized by members of Portland’s African American community. In 1913, Booker T. Washington spoke at St. David’s Episcopal Church, the Unitarian Church, and Temple Beth Israel (“Negro Educator Due Next Week,” The Oregon Journal [Portland, OR], March 16, 1913).
385 “Pickens Triumphs: Crowds Pack Bethel to Hear Famous Orator,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), May 24, 1930.
Fraternal halls were a third major venue for African American entertainment during the period, hosting annual charity balls, fundraisers, and guest lectures planned and sponsored by local African American fraternal organizations and their women’s auxiliaries. Individuals, couples, and social clubs would also rent these spaces for private parties, frequently hiring talented musicians and elocutionists from within the local Black community to provide entertainment. Hibernia Hall at 128 NE Russell St. and the Elks Club Stag Auditorium at 413 SE Morrison St. were both popular locations for parties, dances, and musical gatherings in the early 1900s.386

Portland's African American Music Scene in the 1920s

The 1920s in America witnessed the rise of mass entertainment and a consumer-oriented economy, circumstances born of the prosperity and globalization that followed World War I. The resultant "revolution in morals and manners" was evinced in changing tastes in American popular culture, particularly in fashion, dance, and music.387 Audiences of all colors were taken with genres such as ragtime, big band jazz, and swing, which feature syncopated rhythms and exuberant tunes well-suited to dancing. These musical stylings had their roots in African American music traditions that originated in the Southern United States during the nineteenth century. However, they were commonly performed by both White and Black musicians in the twentieth century.388

Within Portland’s small African American community, the growing popularity of these genres gave rise to a new class of local musicians and performers. These men and women were rarely professional entertainers but were often employed by the railroad and hospitality industries, the two most common career paths for African American Portlanders in the early twentieth century, and they operated their musical groups and orchestras in addition to their primary occupations.389 The Brown Strutters Band, for example, was organized in 1925 with Portland Hotel hat checker and Advocate newspaper founder E.D. Cannady as its president.390 In 1926, another group of Portland Hotel employees joined Downing’s Orchestra, led by African American porter and shoeshiner Charles “Speck” Downing.391 Local church groups also played a prominent role in the African American musical community, leading to the development of ensembles such as the Olivet Mixed Quartette and Mt. Olivet Jubilee Singers at the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church (1734 NE 1st Ave.) in the 1920s.392

Portland’s amateur Black musicians formed and reformed their orchestras and musical ensembles, frequently maintaining involvement in multiple musical pursuits at any given time. For example, D’Oracie Oliver, a Portland Hotel bellhop, was a saxophonist in Tom's Dixie Tavern Dance Orchestra as well as a member of the Chanters Orchestra, led by Advocate typesetter Yancy Franklin; pianist Donald Anderson,

386 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 45.
388 Campbell, Popular Music in America, 49-52, 63-64.
390 The Brown Strutters Band was organized in 1925 in the home of Edward Conway, a Seward Hotel engine room worker, at 78 NE Stanton St. The band played in two Rose Festival parades alongside the Dahlia Temple drill team.
391 Octavia Williams, “Mt. Olivet Baptist Church,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), May 8, 1926. Downing’s last home at 724 NE Sumner St. is extant.
392 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 47.
As Americans’ taste in popular music broadened in the late 1920s, the vitality and variety of Portland’s African American musicians began to acquire regional fame and attain recognition from White and Black audiences alike. The Mt. Olivet Jubilee Singers embarked on a 3,000-mile tour of the Pacific Northwest in 1927, and the Olivet Mixed Quartette performed at a prologue to the showing of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” at Portland’s Oriental Theater (828 SE Grand Ave.) in 1928. African American band leader Billy Webb, who formed the Billy Webb Orchestra with fellow Elks Lodge members in the 1910s, played at local venues as well as on a steamship line that operated between Seattle and Los Angeles in the 1920s. One local vocalist, Frieta Shaw, was even selected to sing at the NAACP National Convention of 1928. Shaw later moved to Los Angeles, where she won a film industry contract to train African American singers for Vita Phone Movies, beginning with “Hearts in Dixie” in 1929.

African American Entertainment and Recreation in World War II and Beyond: 1941-1973

World War II drastically altered demographic counts and race relations in Portland, which saw a tenfold increase in its African American population between 1940 and 1945. African Americans in-migrants brought with them different cultural patterns, attitudes, and aspirations, introducing new entertainment forms and musical genres while also challenging established racial dynamics in the city’s mainstream entertainment industry. The relatively well-paying and stable defense industry jobs that employed many African Americans

393 Donald Anderson’s late 1920s home at 3936 NE 10th Ave. remains extant at of early 2019.
394 The Turners’ 1930s homes at 2326 NE Rodney Ave. and 1308 SE 49th Ave. are extant. The Coconut Grove’s banjo player, Texas-born J.O. Jamison, lived in an apartment at 131 NE Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.
396 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 47. One member of the Jubilee Singers, Shirley McCanns, went on to head the Music Department at Morgan College in Baltimore; her home and music studio at 440 NE Roselawn were demolished in the 1990s.
397 Edgar Williams, “Olivette Jubilee Singers Return after Long Tour,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), October 8, 1927; Edgar Williams, “Olivet Jubilee Singers’ Tour,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), October 15, 1927; “The Olivet Mixed Quartette are...,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), September 1, 1928. Three of the quartette’s members’ homes of that era are extant. Clarence Ivey, a porter at Northern Pacific Terminal, lived at 3120 SE Tibbetts; Timothy Tillman, a plumber, resided at 3956 NE 10th Ave. from 1930 until at least 1944; and William Bowers, also a porter, lived at 27 NE Ivy St. from 1923 through the 1940s. Edgar Williams’s 1920s residence has been lost, but his 1930 through 1963 residence is extant at 2726 NE Going St.
398 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 46; “Doings of the Elks,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), November 1, 1924. Billy Webb died in 1925 after a prolonged illness, and the 1912-1925 home of Webb and his wife Laura at 429 NW 13th Ave. is no longer extant. The Billy Webb Elks Lodge, housed at 6 N Tillamook St. since 1959, was named for the musician and bears testimony to his stature in the local community. See Context V, Benevolent and Fraternal Societies, for more information on the Billy Webb Elks.
399 “Friends of Frieta Shaw...,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), May 18, 1929. Shaw’s family home at 8031 NE Couch St. remains extant as of early 2019. In 1925, while still living in Portland, she organized the Shaw Quartette and performed for the Episcopal Church banquet at the Portland Hotel.
400 Millner, “Blacks in Oregon.” See Context I, Settlement Patterns, for further information regarding race relations in Portland during and after World War II.
during World War II provided the community with capital to establish and support Black-owned businesses, social clubs, and other entertainment options in the early 1940s. Fostered by the interests and purchasing power of the growing community, a small and talented group of professional African American entertainers, musicians, and athletes also emerged in Portland during this period.

**Entertainment Venues and the African American Experience After World War II**

African American Portlanders enjoyed a broader and more accessible range of entertainment venues in the postwar years than they had in the early twentieth century. The city’s expanded African American population was capable of supporting a number of new Black-owned clubs, and some White-owned and -operated venues began to accept African American patrons, as well. While no formal declaration exists to explain this change in White clubs’ previously discriminatory policies, the increased purchasing power of the expanded African American community may have been an important factor. Larger mainstream venues such as Murlark Hall at 4 NW 23rd Ave., Cotillion Hall at 406 SW 14th Ave., and McElroy’s Ballroom at 426 SW Main St. all began hosting social events for African American patrons in the 1940s. 401

These few accepting White-owned venues were neither the sole nor the primary entertainment options available to African Americans in postwar Portland, however. A vibrant strip of Black-owned entertainment venues emerged along N Williams Avenue in this period, established primarily to serve the expanded African American community living in the Albina neighborhood. 402 The 1956 Polk City Directory indicates that the two-mile stretch of N Williams Avenue between Clackamas and Killingsworth Streets featured more than 135 businesses and churches at the time, and many were owned or patronized by Portland’s African American community. 403 The Williams Avenue entertainment venues were varied in nature and included meeting halls, taverns, cocktail lounges, jazz clubs, and billiard halls. The Rinehart Building at 3037 N Williams Ave. was home to several of these business types in the postwar period, including Cleo’s Tavern and Rudy’s Billiards beginning in 1957 and the Cleo-Lilliann Social Club beginning in 1968. 404 Founded in the 1950s as a charitable and social organization, the Cleo-Lilliann Club was a multifaceted, membership-based organization that provided recreational and social opportunities as well as social support programming. Social clubs like the Cleo-Lilliann had a long tradition of emphasizing community connection through card-playing, food, and music; after moving to the Rinehart building, the Club also served liquor, offered gambling and billiards, and hosted nationally-famous African Americans such as boxer George Foreman and musical artist B.B. King. 405

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401 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 72. Cotillion Hall, now called the Crystal Ballroom, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 (National Register of Historic Places, Cotillion Hall, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #79002130).

402 See Context I, *Settlement Patterns*, for a discussion of the forces that concentrated a large percentage of Portland’s African American population into this limited geographical area.

403 National Register of Historic Places, Rinehart Building, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #13000982. 15. See Context II, *Business and Employment*, and Context VI, *Religion and Worship*, for information on other African American businesses and churches that located near or on N Williams Avenue during the postwar era.

404 National Register of Historic Places, Rinehart Building, 16. Rudy’s Billiards was established in the building’s south storefront by Rudolph “Rudy” Young, and Cleo’s Tavern was established in the north storefront by his sister Cleo Hampton. In 1962, the establishments became Danny’s Billiards and Ray’s Tavern, respectively. Danny’s became Rudy’s Cardroom in 1965 and Rudy’s Billiards & Cards in 1967, and Ray’s Tavern became Rudy’s Tavern by 1967 as well. The Cleo-Lilliann Social Club took over the south storefront from Ray’s Billiards & Cards in 1968.

Other Black-owned and -operated entertainment venues operating along N Williams Avenue in the 1940s and 1950s included the Fraternal Hall (“Frat Hall”) at 1412 N Williams Ave., which featured a bar downstairs and a ballroom and women’s lounge upstairs, and the Williams Avenue YWCA at 6 N Tillamook St., which sponsored community dances, lectures, and other social events. Like the Cleo-Lilliann Social Club in the Rinehart Building, these two venues were founded under the auspices of African American community groups. See Context V, Benevolent and Fraternal Societies, for additional information on these types of African American social organizations and the types of events and entertainment that they sponsored.

A large number of Black-owned and -operated nightclubs, many of which fostered a vibrant jazz scene, provided an additional form of recreation and entertainment in postwar Portland. Popular clubs that opened on and near N Williams Avenue in the 1940s and 1950s included the Savoy Billiard Parlor at 1508 N Williams Ave., Li’l Sandy’s at 1516 N Williams Ave., Paul’s Paradise at 19 N Russell St., and the Cotton Club at 2125 N Vancouver Ave. The most celebrated nightclub in this entertainment strip was the Dude Ranch, a Western-themed venue at 240 N Broadway. The club was co-owned by African Americans Sherman “Cowboy” Pickett and Charles “Pat” Patterson, as well as two White men. “Pic and Pat,” as the African American owners were known to patrons, booked both local talent as well as nationally famous acts including Lionel Hampton, Jack McVea, Art Tatum, Louis Armstrong, Thelonious Monk, and the Nat “King” Cole Trio. Although the club was open less than two years, it was popular amongst both White and Black citizens and was one of the few locations with an interracial staff. An officer-involved shooting, open gambling, or perhaps the mingling of races on the club’s dancefloor led Portland city officials to shut down the Dude Ranch in 1946, but it is still remembered for the quality and variety of bop, boogie-woogie, and jump performed within its walls.

Several of these venues changed hands among members of the local African American community in the postwar years. The Savoy was purchased by newspaper publisher and amateur jazz pianist William McClendon and reopened as McClendon’s Rhythm Room in 1949. Both the Cotton Club and Paul’s Paradise were purchased in 1963 by Paul Knauls, who hosted a vaudeville-inspired show at the Cotton Club.

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407 Dietsche, Jumptown, 50, 54, 189, 199.
408 Of all Portland’s notable African American jazz clubs, only the Cotton Club and Dude Ranch remain extant as of early 2019. The Dude Ranch’s name may have been inspired by a 1938 Life magazine article featuring African American boxing champion Joe Lewis learning to ride a horse at an all-Black dude ranch in Victorville, California (Dietsche, Jumptown, 2).
409 Pickett’s former homes at 2028 NE Rodney Ave and 1326 N Benton Ave. are no longer extant. Patterson’s 1950s-1970s home at 3566 SE 38th Ave., where he lived with wife Susie Anderson (divorced from pianist Donald Anderson) is extant.
411 Dietsche, Jumptown, 9, 16; “Dude Ranch Doorman Wounded,” Portland Inquirer (Portland, OR), December 28, 1945. The Dude Ranch’s African American doorman, Joseph Walter Brooks, was shot by African American Deputy Sheriff Sam Blanchard in an apparent robbery attempt on Christmas Eve, 1945.
412 Dietsche, Jumptown, 94; Fonseca, “William McClendon (1915-1996).” Under a pseudonym, McClendon wrote column on jazz in his newspaper, the People’s Observer.
so popular that The Oregonian claimed it “could not draw more people if he were to give ten dollars away after each number.”413 The tenure of these businesses were relatively short-lived, however. Increasing tension and race riots were a factor, as were the urban renewal programs that swept Lower Albina in midcentury Portland.414 Although the Cotton Club building still stands at 2125 N Vancouver Ave., McClendon’s Rhythm Room, Fraternal Hall, Li’l Sandy’s, and many other night spots were demolished for the construction of the Veterans Memorial Coliseum in 1960. Paul’s Paradise fell to Emanuel Hospital’s planned expansion a few years later.415

**Jazz and Portland’s Postwar African American Music Scene**

The thriving entertainment scene that developed along N Williams Avenue during and after World War II owed its vitality not only to the jazz clubs and dance halls, but also to the local artists who played in them. Jazz music, which originated in the African American community of New Orleans, Louisiana, during the late nineteenth century, was likely introduced to Portland through the musical acts that performed on steamships traveling along the West Coast in the early twentieth century. Despite the genre’s roots in African American music traditions, Portland’s early jazz scene was dominated by White musicians; in the 1930s, the city’s most popular local jazz ensemble was the Castle Jazz Band, a group of White men who played in the Dixieland style.416 The massive influx of Black in-migrants that occurred during World War II, however, brought with them a tradition of uniquely African American jazz music. As a result of these newcomers’ interests and talent, a large community of jazz musicians and appreciators developed in postwar Portland. The city’s music scene developed an even more unique and local character than in the prewar years, and Portland became known regionally for its professional jazz performers.

As Portland’s local jazz community developed in the postwar years, and as the city’s growing population developed a collective appreciation for the genre, internationally famous jazz musicians were booked at local venues along N Williams Avenue, in downtown Portland, and at Jantzen Beach, where they played for Black, White, and mixed crowds. Some of the larger, White-owned venues did not admit Black patrons at the time, resulting in performances by Black artists to all-White crowds; in 1952, when segregation of public spaces remained commonplace, four African American couples were turned away from a performance of Lionel Hampton at Janzten Beach. Hampton responded by refusing to perform until the couples were admitted, and as an internationally famous Black jazz performer, his actions garnered immediate results. However, it is unlikely that local African American musicians and ensembles wielded similar influence within Portland’s White-owned venues of the period.417


414 See Context I, *Settlement Patterns*, for additional information on urban renewal programs in Portland during the 1960s and 1970s. See Context VII, *Civil Rights*, for background on the race riots that occurred during the same time period.

415 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 94.


Although prominent Black jazz artists were appreciated for their talents by Black and White audiences alike, many visiting performers still found it difficult or impossible to secure lodging in most White-owned downtown hotels. Instead, they were frequently put up in the homes of African American Portlanders in Albina. They made formal and informal appearances at clubs along Williams Avenue, dined in Black-owned restaurants, and inspired the local African American musicians with whom they interacted. One Portland artist, James “Sweet Baby James” Benton, facilitated these interactions by regularly hosting an informal, after-hours jam session out of his home at 317 N Shaver St. in the 1960s. At Benton’s “The Backyard,” local musicians played with world-renowned artists such as Sammy Davis, Jr., honing their performance skills and incorporating new influences into their art.

The synergy between Portland’s popular jazz clubs, visiting performers, and local talent produced a musical community that attained regional fame in the postwar era. The city produced an abundance of accomplished African American musicians during this era, many of whom are profiled in detail in Robert Dietsche’s *Jumptown: The Golden Years of Portland Jazz, 1942-1957*.

**Sports and Athletic Achievement**

As had been the case with music venues and social clubs, prejudice and segregation necessitated that Portland’s African American community create their own avenues for athletic opportunity and enjoyment. In 1944, African American golfers who had long been prohibited from playing on Portland’s many White-only golf courses organized their own Leisure Hour Golf Club. This founding group included prominent local businessmen such as Stephen Wright, who co-owned an African American-owned taxi company in Portland; public figures like Mallory Walker, a social worker who later served as a Multnomah County Deputy Sheriff and eventually an Assistant United States Attorney; and men who worked in traditional service positions with the railroads and local hotels. The Leisure Hour Golf Club’s first annual tournament,

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419 James Benton, interview by Catherine Galbraith; Cain, *Jazz Town*.
420 The Williams Avenue YWCA and the gymnasium of the Golden West Hotel were early sites of African American physical recreation in Portland (see Contexts V and II, respectively).
421 African Americans were prohibited from playing on Portland’s privately-owned golf courses but could play on public courses. This led to an interesting discussion in 1929, wherein an *Oregonian* article discusses the second-place finish of an African American man in a local golf tournament. The *Oregonian* article raises multiple racially insensitive points, including a Black person’s seeming inability to become successful at golf or tennis due to the “social restrictions” of the game, and ends by saying that no racial restriction has been placed on such competitions (Bunker Green, “Fore! Maybe More,” *The Morning Oregonian* [Portland, OR], July 13, 1929). *The Advocate* responds to the article claiming that it nearly calls upon clubs to put in place a racial restriction or transition tournaments to players at private-clubs so as to prevent an African American from winning a tournament, as Herman Crawford almost did (“Protest against Limitation in Future Golf Tournaments,” *The Advocate* [Portland, OR], July 27, 1929).
422 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 55. A graduate of Washington High School, Wright lived with his family at 3344 SE Yamhill St. following his mother Ruby’s marriage to Deputy Sheriff George Hardin. He later moved into his own home at 2906 SE Tibbetts St. With his business partner Benny Hamilton, Wright co-owned Apollo Cab, which was dispatched from the Medley Hotel (no longer extant).
423 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 96. Walker and his step-father Walter Ricks came to Portland from Kansas City to work with the Union Pacific Railroad. Mallory Walker was first a social worker and Deputy Sheriff for Multnomah County and later worked for the Federal Immigration and Naturalization Bureau and as an Assistant United States Attorney. He eventually accepted a judgeship in California.
424 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 96; Harold Gaskin, interview by Catherine Galbraith, 1996-97. Other charter members include brothers Harold and Vernon Gaskin, Walter Ricks, Harry Hardy, Billy Law, Charles
the “Pacific Northwest Negro Amateur Golf Tournament,” was held in 1944 at Eastmoreland Golf Course (2425 SE Bybee Blvd.). The event was reprised at this location for the next several years, moving to the Tualatin Country Club from 1951 to 1966.426

A number of athletically talented African Americans living in postwar Portland also went on find success in professional sports careers. Charles “Pat” Patterson, who went on to co-own the aforementioned Dude Ranch nightclub, graduated from Benson High School (546 NE 12th Ave.) and attended the University of Oregon; he was the first African American to play in the Northern Division of college basketball and also played professionally for the Bellingham Indians.426 Mel Renfro excelled in both track and football during his time at Jefferson High School (5210 N Kerby Ave.) in the 1950s; he attended the University of Oregon, and in 1964 left college early to play professional football for the Dallas Cowboys; in 1996 he was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame.427 Jimmy “Bang Bang” Walker, who moved to Portland with his family in 1955, enjoyed a long and popular boxing career before turning his attention to a myriad of professional pursuits; in addition to working as a radio DJ, inventing a household cleaner, and establishing the multiracial “Miss Tan Portland Beauty Pageant,” Walker founded, edited, and published the Northwest Defender in 1962 and eventually assumed ownership of the Northwest Clarion in 1967.428 Artie Wilson, a Portland transplant who played for the Portland Beavers baseball team in 1955 and 1956, stayed in the city following his 1962 retirement and was inducted into the Negro League Baseball Hall of Fame in October 1995. In his honor, the Portland City Council proclaimed November 15, 1995, “Artie Wilson Day.”429

Context-Associated Property Types

Rawlins, and Boyce Strain. Harold Gaskin and Vernon Gaskin came to Portland as youths circa 1930. Harold first worked for the Union Pacific railroad, but later graduated from Fisk University and went to work as a physicist for Bonneville Power. In 1951, he purchased a home on 29th Avenue from Dr. DeNorval Unthank. Vernon Gaskin worked as a waiter for Union Pacific and then Southern Pacific. Charles “Chick” Rawlins, the son of Edward and Jane Rawlins, came to Portland from Barbados in the 1910s. He worked as a Northern Pacific Terminal porter and became a recruiter for the Urban League’s Project Outreach. Finally, Boyce Strain was a footman at Meier and Frank and doorman at the Heathman Hotel.425 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 95-96. The Leisure Hour Golf Club’s reason and/or ability for hosting the tournament at Eastmoreland Golf Course and the Tualatin Country Club is undetermined as of this writing. The Club remains active in the Pacific Northwest today (“About Us,” Leisure Hour Golf Club, accessed December 10, 2019, http://leisurehourgolf.org/lhg/about-us/).

426 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 97.

427 Mel Renfro, interview by Catherine Galbraith, 1996; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 97. During WWII, Mel Renfro’s family moved to Portland from Texas to work in the shipyards, leaving Vanport six weeks before the 1948 flood. Eventually they bought a home at 51 NE Fargo St. Renfro played for the Dallas Cowboys for 14 years.

428 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 208. Jimmy “Bang Bang” Walker lived in a variety of homes over his fifty-year residency in Portland, including at 4642 N Vancouver Ave., 4318 N Vancouver Ave., and 4403 N Concord Ave. See Context III, Journalism, for more information about his publications.

429 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 97; The Oregonian (Portland, OR), February 1995 [copy in possession of Bosco-Milligan Foundation/Architectural Heritage Center]; Kelly House, “Negro Leagues star and former Portland Beaver Artie Wilson has died at age 90,” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), October 31, 2010. In his prime, Artie Wilson played for the Negro League in Birmingham, Alabama. Going on to play for the Cleveland Indians and New York Yankees, he eventually moved to the Pacific Coast League where he played for Oakland and the Seattle Rainiers. After his retirement from baseball, Wilson worked as a car salesman at Gary Worth Lincoln-Mercury in Gladstone until the age of 85.
Section F of this MPD lists the predominant property types associated with African American resources in Portland, Oregon, during the period of significance (1865-1973). Resources significant for their association with Context IV, Entertainment and Recreation, are mostly likely to belong to Property Type II, Commercial and Professional Buildings, Property Type III, Entertainment Venues, and Property Type V, Civic and Social Organization Buildings. Some resources belonging to Property Type I, Residences, may also be significant for their associations with significant figures discussed in this context and/or entertainment and recreation activities that occurred in private homes. Because relatively few examples of African American entertainment venues and social organization buildings remain extant, residences may be the only (and therefore the best) resources associated a significant individual or group. Additional research and evaluation of significance and integrity are necessary for any property or group of properties to be determined eligible for listing in the National Register under this MPD. Refer to Section F, Property Types, for additional information regarding properties’ potential eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

CONTEXT STATEMENT V: BENEVOLENT AND FRATERNAL SOCIETIES
Summary
Benevolent and fraternal societies have long existed to provide benefits to their respective memberships, including financial support, social networks, business connections, leadership experience, and political backing. While their legacies have become closely intertwined over time, benevolent and fraternal societies have historically differed in both mission and membership. A benevolent society is a voluntary association of individuals formed to further a social cause, creating a sense of shared commitment amongst members, while a fraternal society is a self-selecting institution providing mutual aid to members based on shared values and identities. While benevolent societies were generally inclusive and transparent in their efforts and practices, fraternal societies typically relied on secrecy and ritual.

Benevolent and fraternal societies came into existence in the United States shortly after the arrival of Europeans. These early organizations admitted White members only, and they are known to have fought

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430 Peter Feuerherd, “The Strange History of Masons in America,” JSTOR Daily, August 3, 2017, https://daily.jstor.org/the-strange-history-of-masons-in-america; Bayliss J. Camp and Orit Kent, “What a Mighty Power We Can Be: Individual and Collective Identity in African American and White Fraternal Initiation Rituals,” Social Science History 28, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 440. The first fraternal lodge in the United States was founded in Boston in 1733. Fraternal organizations were extremely influential in early American society as they were in number and membership only second to churches amongst American voluntary associations.

431 Robert L. Harris, Jr., “Early Black Benevolent Societies, 1780-1830,” The Massachusetts Review 20, no. 3 (Autumn 1979): 613. Differences amongst members span a variety of inherent and socially-constructed paradigms, including race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, and political beliefs. In the case of African American benevolent societies in Portland, it is likely that members identified with different ethnicities, geographic origins within the United States, educational backgrounds, religious denominations, income level, and fraternal affiliations.

432 Theda Skocpol and Jennifer Lynn Oser, “Organization Despite Adversity: The Origins and Development of African American Fraternal Associations,” Social Science History 28, no. 3, Special Issue: African American Fraternal Associations and the History of Civil Society in the United States (Fall 2004): 367. Various terms are used when describing fraternal societies, organizations, or associations. A fraternal “society,” “organization,” or “association” refers generally to an unspecified group. The term “fraternal order” refers to a specific group, such as the Elks or the Odd Fellows. The term “fraternal lodge” refers to a specific subset of an order and refers to the members within that community and not the building utilized. For example, the Rose City Elks Lodge #111 describes the members in Portland who are one chapter of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks of the World, which is a fraternal order.

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the establishment of formalized Black societies due to the resources and influence that such organizations could provide to their members and beneficiaries.433 Despite the objections of White-dominant benevolent and fraternal societies, however, African Americans were successful in creating formal institutions similar in structure to dominant benevolent and fraternal societies and with missions unique to the lived experience of African Americans.434

The first African American fraternal organization and the first nationally-recognized African American benevolent society were both founded in New England in 1787, although unrecognized and unchartered African American benevolent societies existed as early as the seventeenth century.435 After emancipation, African American benevolent and fraternal societies expanded nationally and worked to mitigate the rights and opportunities denied to them by implicit racism. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, African American fraternal and benevolent societies became second in number only to religious institutions in terms of locations and membership.436

The creation of African American benevolent and fraternal societies in Portland during the period of significance of this MPD built community among African American Portlanders and connected the relatively isolated local population to organizations with national membership and influence. Many participated in multiple organizations, and local leaders in the business, newspaper, entertainment, and religious communities were often leaders in benevolent and fraternal societies, as well. These societies united Portland’s small African American community prior to World War II, integrated in-migrants into local politics during the 1940s, and continued to build community through the Civil Rights Era.437

African American Benevolent Societies in Portland
Although few in number throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Portland’s African American benevolent societies worked to mitigate the oppression of Black residents and provide valuable services.

433 Camp and Kent, “What a Mighty Power We Can Be,” 457. When White fraternal organizations refused to integrate or allow for parallel African American organizations, African Americans petitioned “mother” groups in England to gain legitimacy and used somewhat devious methods such as spying on ceremonies and stealing manuals to learn the rituals of fraternal organizations.


435 Paul Lawrence Dunbar, “Hidden in Plain Sight: African American Secret Societies and Black Freemasonry,” Journal of African American Studies 16, no. 4 (December 2012): 632; Skocpol and Oser, “Organization Despite Adversity,” 383-384. America’s first Black fraternal order was the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge founded in Boston, and its first nationally-recognized Black benevolent society was the Free African Society founded in Philadelphia. This and other early benevolent organizations often highlighted the African roots of their members and focused on means of liberation for enslaved people.

436 Dunbar, “Hidden in Plain Sight,” 623-624. Many recent historians, including Dunbar, argue a historical underrepresentation of the importance of Black fraternal societies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Historians over time have emphasized the Black Church as the center of African American life in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, citing the Church as the genesis of the civil rights movement. A more nuanced argument is emerging in national scholarship, portraying the interplay of fraternal organizations, benevolent societies, and Black churches as equal contributors to the African American experience and emergence of the civil rights movement. Historians cite a variety of reasons for the previous lack of scholarship regarding the importance of fraternal organizations, including the secretive nature of the societies, decline of fraternal societies in the twentieth century, and hyper-focusing on religious institutions. In fact, it is estimated that membership in the four dominant African American Fraternal organizations (Odd Fellows, Pythians, Masons, and Elks) nationwide was 774,000 in 1910. Contrarily, historians have long argued that White fraternal organizations were not only paramount in society but arguably the cornerstone of the American Revolution.

437 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 51.
that were frequently denied by the city’s White-dominated power structure. These societies were broadly accessible to members of the African American community, differing from religious institutions and fraternal organizations in that oftentimes no profession of faith or monthly dues were required to join or receive the societies’ services.\(^{438}\)

Benevolent societies sponsored various community initiatives, and the missions of long-running societies often changed over time. Early Portland organizations sought to acclimate newcomers to the city and build community sentiment, while later organizations worked within Portland’s established African American population. African American women’s clubs, which formed parallel to the White women’s clubs that emerged in the Progressive Era, were particularly popular within the Portland African American community and proliferated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These and later organizations in the mid-twentieth century would emerge as bastions of the civil rights movement, merging Christian moral obligations with social justice initiatives. Although often overlooked in both local and national histories, African American benevolent societies spanned divisions within the Black community to offer compassionate assistance, leadership opportunities, shared experience, and recreation.

**Portland Colored Immigration Aid Society (1879-ca.1891)**

Portland’s earliest known Black benevolent society was the Portland Colored Immigration Aid Society (PCIAS). The organization was formed in 1879 by a group of prominent local African American men who desired to provide assistance and encouragement to Black refugees from the Southern states.\(^{439}\) Among the activities advanced by the PCIAS was the active recruitment of Black Southerners through Southern newspapers. *The Morning Oregonian* reprinted two circulars originally published by the PCIAS in the American South and Southwest: one original advertisement published in December 1879, and a secondary advertisement with further instructions that followed in February 1880.\(^{440}\) According to these articles, the PCIAS’s mission was “compiling and diffusing useful information on the products, resources and climate of the state of Oregon, for the benefit of such persons in other states as may desire to come and settle among us.”\(^{441}\) The February 1880 reprint responded to the success of the first circular and even included the address of the PCIAS Secretary for further correspondence.\(^{442}\) Census data shows a significant increase in the African American population of both Portland and Oregon between 1880 and

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\(^{438}\) Harris, “Early Black Benevolent Societies,” 614. Many Black benevolent societies did have their roots in a religious tradition, such as the YWCA, and early Black benevolent societies in the northeastern United States often established congregations shortly after their creations, such as the Free African Society and Bethel AME in Philadelphia. \(^{439}\) Chandler, *Hidden History of Portland, Oregon*, 89. African American Portlanders Allen Flowers, William H. Glasee, and Henry Stone were named as founders. Although a specific date is not provided, an article in *The Morning Oregonian* from December 17, 1879, states the society formed approximately three months prior ("Colored Immigration Society," *The Morning Oregonian* [Portland, OR], December 17, 1879). President Hayes’s withdrawal of troops from the Southern states in 1876 ended the Reconstruction period and generated national concern for the vulnerability of African Americans. \(^{440}\) "Colored Immigration Society," *The Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), December 17, 1879; "Colored Immigration: A Circular Letter Penned by the Portland Colored Immigration Society," *The Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), February 14, 1880. \(^{441}\) "Colored Immigration Society," *The Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), December 17, 1879; "Colored Immigration: A Circular Letter Penned by the Portland Colored Immigration Society," *The Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), February 14, 1880. \(^{442}\) "Colored Immigration," *The Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), February 14, 1880. The Secretary of PCIAS at this time was identified as Alexander Ferguson with a mailing address of 30 Stark St. (note that this address dates before the renumbering of Portland addresses that occurred in 1931).
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

1890, possibly highlighting the effectiveness of organizations like the PCIAS in recruiting new African American residents.443 The PCIAS assisted African American in-migrants in their initial relocation to Portland and in the months of adjustment that followed. According to the organization’s own mission statement printed in *Morning Oregonian* articles, the PCIAS was committed to providing “encouragement, available and material aid as may be necessary,” “securing cheap fares,” making temporary arrangements for newcomers and advising them “in the selection of lands,” and furnishing “such other services as may be needed.”444 The PCIAS’s services provided potential in-migrants with the social and practical resources necessary for establishing a life in Portland. The organization’s work demonstrates the cohesion and solidarity of Portland’s small Black community during the late nineteenth century.

The historical record does not clearly indicate the reception that the PCIAS’s activities received from Portland’s White residents. One contemporary article in *The Oregonian*, the city’s primary White media outlet, seems to portray the organization very positively, reporting “the society, we are gratified to state, is in a flourishing condition, and the secretary is in receipt of numerous applications for immigrants.”445 However, the larger narrative of African American suppression at the hands of Portland’s dominant White power structure during the nineteenth centuries suggests that African American in-migrants were not universally welcomed into the city.446 The PCIAS continued their recruitment and assistance programs through at least 1891, by which time Portland’s African American community numbered nearly 500.447

The Oregon Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs (1912-present)

A byproduct of Progressive era social reform, women’s welfare clubs proliferated around the nation at the turn of the twentieth century. Although these clubs took many forms, they were generally composed of White Protestant women and focused on education, child labor rules, food and drug regulations, and the temperance movement. The rise of parallel organizations for African American women, much like the rise of Black churches and fraternal organizations, was fraught with debate and rejection by dominant White institutions. Between 1900 and 1905, *The Oregonian* printed multiple stories regarding the “debate on color” within the National Federation of Women’s Clubs, including a discussion about whether to allow

443 Gibson and Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States*, Table 51; Gibson and Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States*, Table 38. In Portland, the African American population jumped from 192 persons in 1880 to 480 persons in 1890. In an even bigger swing, Oregon’s African American population jumped from 487 persons in 1880 to 1,186 persons in 1890, the largest increase of African Americans in the state during the nineteenth century. The growth of the railroad industry and the proliferation of career opportunities for African American men in Portland, discussed in Context II, Business and Employment, was likely an important factor in the increase.


446 See Context I, Settlement Patterns, and Context VII, Civil Rights, for more information on the treatment of African American in-migrants to Portland, a predominantly White city, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

447 Gibson and Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States*, Table 38. Similar recruitment and assistance campaigns brought African Americans from Southern states to Portland in the late 1890s to staff the Portland Hotel and in the 1940s to work in the Kaiser Shipyards and other war-related industries. See Context I, Settlement Patterns, and Context II, Business and Employment, Business and Employment, for further information about African American in-migration during World War II and the Portland Hotel, respectively.
African American delegates at the Lewis and Clark Exposition held in Portland in 1905. Although the debate over inclusion in the National Federation would be largely silenced during World War I, welfare clubs continued to differ greatly between White and Black women: White women’s clubs tended to focus on aiding those outside of their own membership circle, including racially marginalized groups, while Black women’s clubs generally focused insularly on the African American community. This national pattern also held true in Oregon, where Black women’s groups exerted their influence for the advancement of the state’s small African American population.

African American women’s clubs proliferated in Portland and Oregon in the early twentieth century, and in January 1917, fourteen separate organizations united to form the Oregon Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs. Collectively, these clubs focused on “charitable work among their own people, educational and uplift projects among the colored race, and efforts to bring about a better understanding between the better class of the negro and white races,” according to one Springfield, Oregon newspaper. Within Portland, club women established kindergartens, nurseries, reading rooms, youth clubs, camp programs, and homes for orphaned or dependent children, the elderly, and young working women. In conjunction with other African American community institutions, many of these women’s clubs were also involved in advocating for women’s suffrage, fighting discriminatory public accommodations practices, advancing educational initiatives, and promoting the temperance movement. The Federation’s member organizations included the Lucy Thurman Women’s Christian Temperance Union (a local branch of the national Women’s Christian Temperance Union), which was founded in Portland in 1912 and advanced Christian ideals of domesticity and philanthropy; the Rosebud Study Club, which composed an Oregon history and studies on food conservation and nutrition in the 1910s; and the Colored Women’s Republican Club, which was formed in 1914 to advocate for the Republican Party and to further Black women’s interest and participation in politics.

Many African American women in Portland were members of multiple clubs, and they were often leaders (or wives of leaders) in the city’s Black community. Although club activity was strongest prior to the Great Depression, it continued to thrive into the middle of the twentieth century, when African American women were influential in the fight for civil rights, women’s rights, and the advancement of the African American community.
Depression, African American women’s clubs endured through the mid-twentieth century, evolving alongside membership trends and prevailing social issues in the decades before and after World War II. For example, junior clubs emerged in the 1920s to expand the number and range of African American Portlanders involved in women’s clubs. The theme of the Oregon Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs’ 1941 convention was “Success through Harmony and Tolerance,” a reference to the tense race relations in Portland during World War II, and in 1946, the Federation created a race relations committee to promote better understanding of racial problems following the war.

The Oregon Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs and its member organizations provided an information-sharing network and a source of support to the African American women of Oregon, focusing on improving the lives and education of women, children, and the community in general. The Oregon Federation of Women’s Clubs continues today as the Oregon Association of Colored Women’s Clubs (OACW).

The Colored Young Women’s Christian Association (1921-1959)

The Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) is an international women’s organization formed in 1855 to address the practical and spiritual needs of single women working in London during the Industrial Revolution. The first YWCA chapters in the United States were established shortly after, opening in New York in 1858 and in Boston in 1866, and the organization subsequently spread across the nation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From the beginning, YWCA membership was segregated by race, with separate clubs for African American, Japanese, Chinese, Southern European, and American-born White women. The first African American chapter of the YWCA opened in Dayton, Ohio, in 1889.

Portland’s White YWCA was established in 1901, but its African American branch was not formed until two decades later. African American women in Portland began to campaign for a dedicated YWCA

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454 “Social Events,” The Advocate (Portland, OR), June 15, 1929.
455 “Convention Date Set,” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), June 3, 1941. This convention, along with others in the 1930s and 1940s, was held in the Williams Avenue YWCA at 6 N Tillamook St.
456 “New Groups Created,” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), June 10, 1946.
458 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 49. Many of Portland’s prominent African American women served as presidents of the Federation, including Jessica Coles Grayson (president 1935-1937), who was active in the NAACP’s 1925 campaign for a Public Accommodations bill; Letitia Brock (president 1941-1944), whose family was honored as the 1967 National Urban League’s “Family of the Year”; and Marie Smith (president 1944-1945), who went on to become the first female president of the NAACP in 1949.
Even prior to the existence of Portland’s African American YWCA, a national debate emerged within the YWCA organization regarding segregated facilities. In the 1930s, the national organization condemned lynching and mob violence against African Americans.
branch soon after World War I had ended, and after three years of raising public support and funds, the “Colored” YWCA opened in a portable facility at 6 N Tillamook St. in October 1921.463 This temporary structure was replaced by a permanent building in 1926, funded by contributions from African American organizations and a donation from Mary Collins, a White woman active in the local YWCA.464

The organization housed at the 6 N Tillamook St. building, commonly known as the Williams Avenue YWCA, became a prominent force within the local African American community. It organized classes and recreational activities, assisted young African American women in finding housing and employment, provided office space for the NAACP, and hosted an annual “Negro history week” in its building.465 Although the national YWCA was strictly a women’s organization, the Williams Avenue branch also provided programming for African American men and boys, who did not have a comparable facility available to them in Portland at this time.466 By 1923, almost 200 individuals were members of the Williams Avenue YWCA, and it is estimated that far more took part in the organization’s various activities.467

The Williams Avenue YWCA frequently coordinated its programs with local African American church congregations, fraternal societies, and social organizations, as many of the YWCA’s patrons were also active in the greater Black community of Portland. The building was briefly loaned to the United Service Organizations (USO) for the use of African American soldiers during World War II, but it was returned to YWCA use in 1946 and was the site of meetings held by the NAACP, the OACW, the Urban League, and the Congress of Racial Equality during the late 1940s and 1950s. Following passage of the Oregon Public Accommodations Law in 1953 and the completion of a new downtown YWCA headquarters in 1959, Portland’s YWCA integrated its segregated branches and sold the 6 N Tillamook St. building to the Billy Webb Elks Lodge, a local African American fraternal organization.468

Other African American Benevolent Societies in Portland

Benevolent societies helped to build and sustain Portland’s growing Black community by advancing educational, recreational, and political programming, and by providing practical and social support. The benevolent societies described in this MPD were almost certainly not the only African American
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Oregon

State

benevolent societies in Portland during the period of significance; it is very likely that many more existed to serve the diverse needs of Portland’s Black community, but additional research is required to determine their identities, missions, and impacts. While the variety and breadth of African American benevolent societies in Portland is undetermined, those that have been identified played a demonstrably important role in the history and development of Portland’s African American community.

African American Fraternal Societies in Portland

Fraternal organizations played an immensely important role in the lives of African Americans, second only to the Church and arguably more important than benevolent societies.469 Often called “secret societies,” historians have struggled to define the breadth and power of fraternal organizations due to inaccessible records and an overemphasis on more familiar and transparent institutions, such as those associated with religious institutions. However, scholarship has demonstrated the interrelation of fraternal organizations with other African American institutions such as benevolent societies, churches, and civil rights organizations. In Portland and across the country, these societies were multifaceted and served educational, political, charitable, and social functions within Black communities. Additionally, the formalized, multi-tiered structure of fraternal orders (local lodges, state grand lodges, and national orders) facilitated mobilization and unity in times of change.470

Nationally, the creation of African American fraternal organizations was resisted by White society for more than a century.471 An early example is the experience of Prince Hall, an African American from the West Indies who joined a British military lodge of Masons in Boston in 1775. Following the American Revolution and in light of continued discrimination toward African Americans, Hall requested a separate charter for a Black fraternal lodge from the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts. However, he was refused. Hall circumvented the refusal by petitioning the Grand Lodge of England directly, receiving a charter in 1787 and establishing what would later become the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge.472 The Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, established by members of an African American literary club in New York City in the early 1840s, would follow a similar course. After being refused an affiliation by the all-White Independent Order of Odd Fellows in New York, they applied for and received a charter through the Grand United Order, an English branch of the organization, in 1843.473

In other cases, African Americans were able to gain access to White orders and their secret rituals only through subterfuge. For example, light-skinned Black men surreptitiously joined the Knights of Pythias fraternal society to learn the rituals of the order; in 1880, they left the organization to establish their own parallel lodge, the Supreme Lodge of Knights of Pythias of North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and

471 Liazos and Ganz, “Duty to the Race,” 487. Many scholars assert that the formation of parallel fraternal orders directly challenged the superiority of the dominant White society by calling into question the fraternal codes of morality, dignity, brotherhood, and equality.
473 Skocpol and Oser, “Organization Despite Adversity,” 386. The auxiliary women’s group associated with the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows is the Household of Ruth, established in 1857 (384).
Oceanica. In 1898, another group of African American men obtained a copy of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks’ secret ritual through unknown means; finding that it was not copyrighted through the Library of Congress, the men obtained their own copyright, claiming the ritual for themselves and establishing the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World later that year.

Besides struggling to secure charters from White national organizations, early Black fraternal organizations fought court cases that directly challenged their legality. The formation of African American fraternal orders directly challenged the superiority of White society by equating White and Black adherence to professed fraternal codes of morality, dignity, brotherhood, and equality. In an attempt to eliminate the threat of parallel Black institutions, a coordinated legislative and legal campaign to abolish Black fraternal orders began in 1904 in Mississippi, New York, and Georgia. Eventually spreading to twenty-nine states and leading to U.S. Supreme Court cases in 1912 and 1929, this campaign articulated a blueprint for successful nationwide resistance to discriminatory practices and created a foundation for the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

Despite these significant challenges, African American fraternal societies flourished nationally during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Many established women's auxiliary organizations for the wives, daughters, and other female family members of fraternal society members. After decades of prominence and popularity, however, the institutions' membership began to decline slightly in the 1910s and fell rapidly during the Great Depression. This was likely a result of the financial structure and benefit system associated with Black fraternal organizations. As founding members began to age, more money was withdrawn from reserves to assist sick members, fund funerals, and assist widows and children. Funds were subsequently depleted, meeting spaces and benefits could no longer be furnished, and the organizations experienced a rapid decline in membership. A small number of African American fraternal organizations have sustained over time and remain prominent today, but they have not regained the volume of membership or the broad community influence that they held in the early twentieth century.

Characteristics of African American Fraternal Societies in Portland
The proliferation of African American fraternal organizations in Portland during the period of significance of this MPD paralleled national trends. In Portland and across the country, small communities developed an overabundance of lodges; members tended to participate in multiple orders simultaneously; and auxiliary orders were formed for women members.

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474 Skocpol and Oser, “Organization Despite Adversity,” 387. The auxiliary women’s group associated with the Order of Calanthe, established in 1883 (384).
476 Liazos and Ganz, “Duty to the Race,” 487. Oregon was not one of the twenty-nine states.
477 Edward Nelson Palmer, “Negro Secret Societies,” Social Forces 23, no. 2 (December 1944): 211. Membership within White fraternal orders also declined during this time period for the same reason. Membership increased in both White and Black fraternal orders in the 1940s and beyond although they never achieved the same membership numbers and influence as in the early twentieth century.
478 Skocpol and Oser, “Organization Despite Adversity,” 403. To join a women’s auxiliary order, one had to be related to a member of the male fraternal order; mothers, daughters, sisters, and wives qualified and remained auxiliary members despite the death of one’s male counterpart. Due to the multitude of ways women could join auxiliary orders and increased life expectancy of women, women’s membership often outstripped that of the dominant male order.
Most fraternal organizations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had strict criteria for admittance; for example, the Enterprise Lodge of Masons required that its members be “free born,” literate, able to pay their dues in cash, and of high moral character. Lodges generally required that men be “settled” (i.e., not “transient”). The annual dues collected from members paid for meeting spaces and social events, but they also provided practical benefits. Lodges often provided financial support for ill or disabled members, paid for cemetery plots and conducted funerary services for deceased members, and contributed financially to the ongoing care of members’ widows and children. Members of women’s auxiliaries performed charity work and provided nursing care to members who were ailing. Above all, brothers and sisters of all orders were expected to uphold a certain moral standard and place of honor in their community; a person could be swiftly evicted for poor behavior.479

In addition to annual dues, African American fraternal orders also relied upon fundraising events and donations to sustain themselves. Sometimes fundraising efforts played to existing racial stereotypes, participating in the popular genre known as “minstrel theater.”480 For example, the Rose City Elks put on a “down South” show in 1928 for White Portlanders in an effort to raise funds for their organization. The performance spanned four days and was advertised multiple times in The Oregonian. Highlights listed in advertisements included plantation scenes, real cotton, and the promise that “all performers will be colored people.”481 While such events did provide much needed support to fraternal societies, they may have also reinforced the racist attitudes held by their White audiences.

Early Fraternal Societies
Very little information has been preserved and made public regarding African American fraternal organizations in Portland. The Odd Fellows Lodge #2554, established in 1883, is the earliest local African American fraternal organization that could be identified in existing scholarship and primary sources, but little is known about the lodge’s membership and activities. Similarly limited information is available concerning other African American fraternal organizations prior to 1903, when the African American Enterprise Lodge of Masons began to meet in the newly-completed Enterprise Investment Company building at 1022 N Larabee Ave.482 The Enterprise Masons would eventually merge with other African American fraternal organizations in 1925 to create the “United Grand Chapter of Washington and its jurisdiction, order of the Eastern star,” which met at 128 NE Russel St. through much of the 1930s.

Dahlia Temple and Billy Webb Elks Lodge
Portland’s first Black Elks Lodge, the Rose City Lodge #111, was organized in 1906 as a branch of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World, an African American fraternity

480 See Context IV, Entertainment and Recreation, for information on minstrel theater and cultural appropriation in popular entertainment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.
481 “Negroes to Entertain,” The Sunday Oregonian (Portland, OR), January 15, 1928.
482 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 51-52. The Enterprise Lodge of Masons moved to 1453 N Williams and then to 128 NE Russell St. in the mid-1920s. The Russell Street location was later the Grace Collins Memorial Center and currently operates as an entertainment venue. The Enterprise Investment Company was founded in 1903 by eight African American investors, with seven of them employed at the Portland Hotel, including William H. Rutherford, Lewis Goodwin and John Payne. The founders of the Enterprise Investment Company were also likely members of the Enterprise Lodge of Masons. Known members of the fraternal organization include Sherman “Pic” Pickett, Albert A. “Double A” Jones, William H. Jones, John C. Logan, Clarence B. Ramsey, and Avril W. “Sie” Denton; known members of the women’s auxiliary organization include Katie Henderson, Grace Scott Jackson, Clarisse Randolph, and Leola Towne.
established in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1897. The Rose City Lodge was founded by a Pullman porter named Sam Washington, and The Advocate editor E.D. Cannady served as its Exalted Ruler for fifteen years. Meetings were held at the Elks Club Stag Auditorium (413 SE Morrison St.), which also hosted social gatherings and meetings for multiple fraternal orders. Billy Webb, a well-known band leader in Portland and across the West Coast, was a charter member of the Rose City Elks Club and recruited members to play in his orchestra.

The Rose City Elks disbanded during the Great Depression, although the Dahlia Temple remained solvent. As an auxiliary to the men’s organization, the Temple risked losing its charter if a companion Elks Lodge did not reemerge; determined to remain viable, members of Dahlia Temple led the effort to reestablish a men’s lodge in Portland. In 1940, they were successful, and the Billy Webb Elks Lodge #1050 received its charter. The new Lodge met at Fraternal Hall on North Williams Avenue (a venue shared among several local fraternal organizations) until 1958, when the building was destroyed for the construction of the Memorial Coliseum. In 1959, the Billy Webb Elks took ownership of the former YWCA building at 6 N Tillamook St. The Elks Lodge and Dahlia Temple remain at this location as of 2019.

Other African American Fraternal Societies in Portland

Other pre-World War II African American fraternal organizations included the Prince Hall Masons, Knights of Pythias’s Syracuse Lodge, the African American Fraternal Association (both located at 1412 N Williams Ave.), and a second Elks Lodge (1504 N Williams Ave.). The Sons of Haiti Lodge (3503 N Mississippi Ave.) was established in 1954 and remains one of the few remaining African American-owned businesses along N Mississippi Avenue in Lower Albina. The Sons of Haiti, a Masonic Lodge, and its women’s auxiliary, the Sisterhood of Eastern Stars, still retain ownership of the building.

487 Martha Gies, “Historic Elks Lodge Grateful for Volunteers.”
488 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 52. Known members of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge include Avril W. “Sie” Denton, Robert Dillard, Roosevelt Anderson, Elijah Graham, James J. Lee, James R. Walkon, Sr., Mack Stanfield, Julius Moore, and Wilson Cochran, and members of the auxiliary organization Order of the Eastern Star include Sallie Stanfield, Viola Moore, and Winifred Cochran.
489 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 51; McLagan, “Sober, Industrious, and Honest,” 220. These early meeting halls would all be destroyed during the late 1950s construction of the Veterans Memorial Coliseum.
The Lasting Legacy of Portland’s African American Benevolent and Fraternal Societies
Throughout the period of significance, Black benevolent and fraternal societies have served significant social, spiritual, educational, and political roles in the lives of African American Portlanders. Benevolent societies performed an important community-building function within the city’s relatively small African American population, and fraternal societies supplied their members with brotherhood, leadership skills, and national bonds in spite of White oppression. Although much is still unknown about these social organizations, it is certain that they have left a lasting imprint on Portland’s African American community. Several remain active today.

Context-Associated Property Types
Section F of this MPD lists the predominant property types associated with African American resources in Portland, Oregon, during the period of significance (1865-1973). Resources significant for their association with Context V, Benevolent and Fraternal Societies, are mostly likely to belong to Property Type V, Civic and Social Organization Buildings, although some repurposed meeting halls may also fall into Property Type III, Entertainment Venues. Some resources belonging to Property Type I, Residences, may also be significant for their associations with significant figures associated with Portland’s African American benevolent and fraternal societies, or for their roles as meeting places for these kinds of organizations. Additional research and evaluation of significance and integrity are necessary for any property or group of properties to be determined eligible for listing in the National Register under this MPD.

CONTEXT STATEMENT VI: RELIGION AND WORSHIP
Summary
Religion and spirituality have functioned as unifying sources of hope, strength, and resilience for many African Americans since the arrival of the first slaves of African origin in the Americas.491 Many African Americans, both enslaved and free, practiced forms of Christianity in the years leading up to the Civil War, but White Christian churches were frequently unwelcoming to Black congregants.492 Prior to emancipation, free African Americans formed two new Christian denominations: Bethel Church in Philadelphia in 1787, which gave rise to the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) in 1816,493 and AME Zion

492 John B. Boles, Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870 (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 4-9. Boles states that Southerners’ initial resistance to indoctrinating enslaved peoples to Christianity was cemented in the generalized fear of the “other” and that enslaved peoples would be unable to comprehend the complexities of organized religion. Boles explains how English missionaries were the first to begin converting Southern slaves to Christianity in the 1720s and then later Northern Christian dissenters. By 1750, most Southern enslaved people were practicing a form of Christianity, mainly Baptist and Methodist, and continued to do so after emancipation.
in New York in 1821. During Reconstruction, these two denominations spread from the Northern United States to the South and the West, amassing hundreds of thousands of congregants by 1880. Bethel and Zion’s proliferation united disparate communities across the country through the teachings of Christianity and the unique experience of African Americans in the United States.

Much like the Black-owned newspapers, entertainment venues, and benevolent and fraternal societies described in Contexts III, IV and V, respectively, African American churches nationally and in Portland during the period of significance (1865-1973) assumed multifaceted spiritual and practical roles in their communities. Christian churches and other places of worship offered congregants not only spiritual guidance but also social support, financial resources, and a platform for advocacy.

In Portland, one of the earliest signs of a budding African American community was the establishment of the First AME Zion Church in 1862. This church and others that would follow in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were generally located near Union Station, on the west side of the Willamette River and at the geographical center of the city’s small African American community. Portland’s earliest African American churches facilitated relationships between recent African American in-migrants and established residents, who could assist new arrivals in finding homes and employment. As Portland’s African American community grew during the early decades of the 1900s, additional Black churches were established—and many existing congregations were relocated—to meet the evolving needs of the Black community, especially as the population largely moved from the west to east side of the Willamette River.

The shifting size and makeup of the Black population during and after World War II greatly altered African American places of worship in Portland. Not only was there a necessity for more places of worship as the population ballooned in size, but many of the new arrivals were younger, less established, and more progressive than the somewhat insular community that had existed prior to World War II. While many of Portland’s prewar churches adhered to traditional rituals, a crop of new postwar churches reflected the religious inclinations of African American in-migrants from the South, who trended towards less formal services. The establishment of a small yet defined African American Islamic community in the 1960s was another departure from the conventional Christian tradition that had dominated the years before the war.

During the entire period of significance, African American religious institutions in Portland served not only as venues for spirituality, but as important forces for community, empowerment, and social justice. Beginning as early as the 1920s, Church leaders often held prominent roles in significant civil rights battles and used the pulpit as a platform to denounce racism and advocate for Portland’s Black community. Churches such as

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494 “American Religion: African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church,” The Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed November 11, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/African-Methodist-Episcopal-Zion-Church. AME Zion first formed in 1796 when a group of African Americans left the John Street Methodist Church due to discrimination. For the first twenty-five years, the congregants were still under the branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church and provided White ministers. In 1821, James Varick was elected the first Black Bishop and a new denomination was formed.

495 “American Religion: African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.” Bethel AME alone had an estimated 400,000 adherents by 1880.

496 Boles, Masters and Slaves, 17-18. The acceptance of Black Congregants in Southern evangelical Christian Churches under Methodist and Baptist denominations paved the way for these denominations to be the foundation of the first independent Black Churches.

497 See Context I, Settlement Patterns, for additional information regarding the geographical trends in African American settlement in Portland.
Vancouver Avenue First Baptist continued this tradition through the tumultuous civil rights movement of the 1960s, playing a significant advocacy and education role within the community.498 Although their belief systems and religious practices frequently mirrored those of their White counterparts, African American places of worship were unique manifestations of the experiences and beliefs of their members.499

**Portland’s Early African American Congregations: 1862-1920**

Portland’s earliest African American congregations were Protestant Christian groups located on the west side of the Willamette River, where the heart of Portland’s African American community was concentrated in the second half of the nineteenth century.500 The first two Black churches established in Portland were branches of nationally recognized Methodist denominations, and both recruited Black reverends from the American South. After the turn of the century, other Protestant denominations—including those adhering to the Baptist and Episcopal traditions—emerged in Portland and reflected the increasingly diverse interests of the growing Black community. Nearly all of Portland’s nineteenth-century Black churches held their services in the homes of congregants until enough capital had been raised to fund the construction of dedicated spaces for worship.501

**The First Four Churches**

Portland’s first African American church was established in 1862 in the home of Mary H. Carr, who owned a boarding house on SW 1st Avenue. Christened “the People’s Church” at the time of its founding, in 1869 the church incorporated as the First African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church and relocated to NW 3rd Avenue between Burnside and Couch Streets. At this time, the church was led by Reverend J.O. Lodge. In 1883 the congregation moved again, erecting a new building at 1229 SW Main St. in downtown Portland. It would remain at this location until 1916.502

Portland’s second African American church, Bethel AME, was established in 1889. The church was founded by Reverend Shepard S. Freeman and his wife, Lenora, out of a two-story building near Union Depot (this early rail terminal would be demolished and replaced by Union Station a few years later).503 During this time, the Freemans also operated a boarding house and restaurant for African American railroad workers at 314 NW Everett St. The capital raised from this business enabled the couple to purchase an old Japanese mission building at 226 NW 10th Ave. for Bethel AME, and the congregation

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499 Boles, *Masters and Slaves*, 13-18. As Baptist and Methodist denominations emerged in the South, new congregations were biracial. Unlike dissenting Anglicans, Baptist and Methodist congregants were often from the working class and less educated, resulting in an initial sense of kinship towards newly-freed African Americans. While this biracial harmony would not last past Reconstruction, these two denominations shaped the founding principles of African American churches. In general, “...services are longer, the music is more expressive, emotions are more freely expressed, [and] there is greater congregational participation” than in their White counterparts.
500 See Context I, *Settlement Patterns*, for information regarding the geographical center of Portland’s African American community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
503 Reverend Shepard S. Freeman was pastor of Bethel AME Church from 1895 to 1901. Only the surname of the owner of the building near Union Station is known (Mr. Jenkins).
worshipped in that space from 1898 until 1916. Bethel AME would eclipse AME Zion—and the other early Portland Black churches—as the largest African American congregation in the city in the years leading up to World War I.

In 1897, the Reverend Robert Jennison established a third African American congregation, First African Baptist Church, near Union Station. That church disbanded relatively quickly, but by 1902 the Reverend J. L. Allen had revived it under the name “Mt. Olivet Baptist” on NW 7th Avenue between Everett and Flanders streets. According to accounts from the time, the early Mt. Olivet congregation adhered to a stricter religious doctrine than their contemporaries. Mt. Olivet was the first African American congregation in Portland to fund and build its own sanctuary space, which it did in 1907 on NW 7th Avenue using lumber donated by four separate lumber yards. Mt. Olivet Baptist Church is not only the earliest extant resource associated with African American places of worship, but is believed to be Portland’s first church to be built by and for African Americans. All earlier places of worship were located in places adapted from previous uses.

St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church was the fourth and last known African American congregation established on the west side of the Willamette River during the period of significance. The group were initially served by a White pastor at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, a predominantly White parish, beginning in 1911. They may have established a dedicated worship space at NW 24th Avenue and NW Saviert Street soon after, but they did not have their own pastor during their tenure at this location; instead, services were conducted by White Archdeacons with lay readers and chaplains.

As was the case with African American residences and businesses in twentieth-century Portland, commercial redevelopment following Portland’s Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition of 1905 pushed the Black religious community to the east side of the Willamette River in the early first two decades of the twentieth century. After the early African American churches followed their Black congregations to North and Northeast Portland, all of the early African American worship spaces on the west side of the river were subsequently demolished. Each of the four early African American congregations, however, is still active more than a century later.

504 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 17.
505 Moreland, History of Portland’s African American Community, 21.
506 National Register of Historic Places, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #16000604, 33.
507 The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, OR), October 9, 1907. This article lists the building permit application. The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, OR), October 27, 1907. This article discusses the donation of lumber and the plan to raise the remaining $2,400 in cost amongst congregants. The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, OR), January 15, 1921, 14. This article discusses the cost of the building and the pledge by congregants and local businessmen to raise the needed funding. It also cites Church membership of 165 people though attendance at services is generally 275 people. “New Mount Olivet Building Fund Gains $5824 Over Sunday,” The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, OR), June 27, 1921. This article discusses the immense fundraising efforts of congregants, including a rally by Reverend J. W. Anderson. At the time of this article, over $12,000 in pledges had been received.
Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 29.
509 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 29. St. Philip the Deacon was not formally incorporated by the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon until 1921, after it had relocated to 242 NE Russell St.
The Second Generation of African American Congregations: 1920-1941

By 1920, all the African American congregations in Downtown and Northwest Portland had relocated to the east side of the Willamette River. In 1916, Bethel AME Church moved to 1239 N Larrabee Ave., completing a new brick structure in 1922. The First AME Zion Church followed a similar trajectory, settling at 2007 N Williams in 1916 and completing a full church remodel and construction of a new parsonage by May 1929. Mt. Olivet Baptist Church rebuilt at 1734 NE 1st Ave. in 1921; the majority of the new building’s $20,000 cost was raised by the congregants. St. Philip the Deacon, the youngest of these congregations, settled in a storefront at 242 NE Russell St. in 1919 and later purchased Rodney St. Christian Church (variably called the Church of Christ) at 2660 NE Rodney Ave.

The building campaigns advanced by established African American congregations in the 1920s and 1930s demonstrated the influence and community organization of Black Portland residents at the time. As Portland’s African American population was increasingly concentrated in the Lower Albina area during the first decades of the twentieth century, congregations mobilized in order to relocate their churches to the new geographical heart of the community. For the most part, congregations supplied the capital campaign funds for renovations or new construction themselves, further establishing the churches as important cornerstones of Portland’s Black community.

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511 The Advocate (Portland, OR), July 6, 1929. This new structure was financed by couples William and Lottie Rutherford and Shelby and Sadie Golden who mortgaged their homes to finance the new building. In 1929, Pastor Daniel G. Hill, who had recently moved with his wife Mae after completing their education at Howard University, successfully conducted a Mortgage Rally and raised enough funds to guarantee community ownership of the building. The Bethel AME congregation was again displaced in 1958 for construction of Memorial Coliseum and this building demolished.

512 The Advocate (Portland, OR), May 11, 1929. Reverend John F. Moreland arrived in 1925 from AME Zion in Seattle to serve as First AME Zion’s new pastor. Moreland was followed by Reverend Walter R. Lovell from Vallejo, CA, in 1928. Both the church and the parsonage were demolished in the 1960s, and the congregation moved to 109 N Skidmore (at Vancouver), where it remains today.

513 The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, OR), January 15, 1921. This article discusses the cost of the building and the pledge by congregants and local businessmen to raise the needed funding. It also cites Church membership of 165 people though attendance at services is generally 275 people.

“New Mount Olivet Building Fund Gains $5824 Over Sunday,” The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, OR), June 27, 1921. This article discusses the immense fundraising efforts of congregants, including a rally by Reverend J. W. Anderson. At the time of this article, over $12,000 in pledges had been received.

Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 29. Mt. Olivet Baptist Church is not only the earliest extant resource associated with African American places of worship but is believed to be Portland’s first church to be built by and for African Americans. All earlier places of worship were located in places adapted from previous uses.

514 “Church History Location Profile,” n.p. Chris Peterson, “Carl Deiz – Oral History Interview,” transcript of an oral history conducted May 30, 2012 by Chris Peterson, Oregon Multicultural Archives Oral History Collection, Portland, Oregon, 2012, http://oregondigital.org/catalog/oregondigital:df70bk88d#page/1/mode/1up. Of these second-generation church buildings, only Mt. Olivet still stands. However, Mt. Olivet’s growing congregation moved to larger quarters on North Chautauqua in 1994. Mt. Olivet’s 1921-1994 home is the oldest African American church building in Oregon or Washington constructed by its congregation. St. Philip the Deacon razed the Rodney St. Christian Church in the 1940s and replaced it with a new church covering the original property and an adjacent parcel purchased in 1944; this building is extant at 120 NE Knott St. and still used by the congregation as of late 2019. Bethel AME’s Larrabee location and the First AME Zion Church’s Williams building were both demolished in the 1960s.

515 “New Mount Olivet Building Fund Gains $5824 Over Sunday,” The Oregon Daily Journal (Portland, OR), June 27, 1921. This article discusses the immense fundraising efforts of congregants, including a rally by Reverend J. W. Anderson. At the time of this article, over $12,000 in pledges had been received.
Establishment of New Congregations

While the four early congregations grew in number and adapted to serve the needs of Portland’s African American community in the 1910s and 1920s, new parishes were also formed during the period. These new parishes responded to the increasing diversity of Portland’s African American population, many of whom adhered to religious traditions other than those espoused by the first four Black churches and some of whom lived in small African American enclaves outside of Albina.

One such example was Shiloh Baptist Church, which opened in 1915 at 7533 NE Everett St. in Portland’s Montavilla neighborhood. The church occupied a small wood-frame building owned by Ida Thompson and Sarah Campbell James. Although a newspaper article from the period stated that the congregation included only nine members in 1920, the small enclave of African American residents in Montavilla managed to sustain the Shiloh Baptist Church for over forty years. It faltered and closed briefly several times in its first few years of operation, but the Shiloh Church revived itself with new members and new pastors in the 1920s. In 1929, with Reverend James Anderson as its spiritual director, it rejected requests to merge with Mt. Olivet and proudly announced it was “the first of the local Colored churches to pay itself out of debt.” Shiloh Baptist Church remained active at 7533 NE Everett St. until the mid-1960s, when the site was commercially developed.

The House of Prayer for All Nations was founded in 1920 by Pastor Robert Searcie as a Pentecostal Mission of the Church of God in Christ. First located at 28 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., the House of Prayer relocated to a substantial church building at 2205 SE 10th Ave. in 1929. It remained here until the 1960s, at which time it relocated back to North Portland, settling at 731 N Mason St.

The Mallory Avenue Christian Church was founded in 1922. The congregation undertook to build a church at 126 NE Alberta St., meeting in the basement beginning in 1925. The Great Depression and World War II prevented the completion of the church for many years, during which time the design for the building was modernized to reflect changing architectural tastes and trends. Two additional floors were added in the early postwar years, at which point the congregation moved out of the basement. The church building remains extant and currently operates as a studio space and performance venue.

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516 Moreland, The History of Portland’s African American Community, 30.
517 “Portland Times-1920” (1920), Portland Times (Portland, OR), https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/portlandtimes/1. This incomplete edition of Portland Times includes a section of happenings at African American churches, including information about the size of congregations, addresses, and times of services.
518 The Advocate (Portland, OR), October 19, 1929.
519 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 30. The 1925 through 1930s home of Shiloh Baptist Church’s 1927 pastor, Reverend George Gardner, and wife Susie stands at 6208 SE 70th Ave. Reverend Gardner then took over as Supply Pastor for a growing African American church in Vernonia, Oregon. He was succeeded at Shiloh by Reverend W.T. House, who lived with wife Hazel at 117 NW Trinity Pl. In 1929, Gardner left to pastor the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Helena, Montana.
520 Pastor Searcie and his wife, Rosa, lived on SE 66th Avenue from 1925 through the 1940s. Their home was demolished in the 1990s and the lot redeveloped.
521 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 30.
A Seventh-day Adventist mission operated for several years in the 1920s, holding services at 220 N Russell St. It possessed a small, exclusively female membership and operated without a pastor. By the late 1920s, the mission had stopped holding services at the N Russell Street location, and in 1929 the new Stewart Park Colored Church began serving African American Seventh-day Adventists at 3828 SE 62nd Ave.

The Expanding Role of Black Churches in Prewar Portland

Beginning in the 1920s, and possibly earlier, Portland’s African American churches and their pastors began to speak out publicly on issues of racial discrimination and civil rights, frequently offering church spaces for presentations, meetings, and rallies with major civil rights leaders of the day. For example, in 1924, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church hosted Marcus Garvey, the leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and its “Back-to-Africa” movement. A. Philip Randolph, organizer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, also spoke at mass meetings at Mt. Olivet and Bethel AME Churches in the 1920s. Other major speakers included Ben Wilson, a national and international lecturer on labor relations for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and Mrs. Addie Hunton, an internationally-known race relations leader from Brooklyn, New York, who spoke on behalf of the NAACP.

Also during this time, African American newspapers kept locals informed of happenings at the Black churches, including times of worship, guest speakers, events, capital campaigns, and social events. For example, The Advocate regularly published a column announcing worship services on one page and a separate, more editorial section on weekly church happenings on another page. As described in Context III, Journalism, sermons and choral performances were also some of the first radio broadcasts offered by Portland’s African American community.

African American Churches in Portland During and After World War II: 1941-1973

World War II marks an inflection point in the history of Portland’s Black congregations, similar in magnitude to relocation of African American churches from the west side of the Willamette River that occurred in the

Tillamook St. in 1959. In the 1970s, church leader Audrey Sanders launched her “People are Beautiful” program, which offered summer activities for local teams as well as outreach to women living in the Dekum Court housing project.

See Context IV, Entertainment and Recreation, for additional information on African American churches as venues for traveling lecturers.
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

State

1910s. New congregations of different denominations, including non-Christian denominations, arose to serve the rapidly growing and increasingly diverse Black population. Although most African American Portlanders settled in Albina after World War II, during the war more geographically-distant communities like Vanport included Black places of worship, as well. Postwar preachers advocated for civil rights legislation locally and nationally, utilizing sermons to inspire congregants and continuing to open their doors as meeting spaces. The proliferation of Christian churches and their increasingly prominent role in local politics spawned the formation of the Albina Ministerial Alliance in 1958 to combine the social justice messages of the various congregations and form a united religious front against prejudice.

The Postwar Proliferation of African American Churches

During World War II, new congregations formed in the African American communities that emerged in wartime housing projects. Mount Sinai Community Baptist Church was founded in 1941 in Guild’s Lake Courts, and the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church was formed in the Burton Homes project of Vancouver, Washington, in 1944. The latter congregation, which initially offered only a Sunday school for children sporadic services for adults, became more formalized when Reverend Oliver Booker Williams and his wife joined the ministry in 1945; he was quickly installed as senior pastor. Reverend Williams catered to the Kaiser war industry workers with a Sunday afternoon service and programs to improve working conditions for African Americans. When Burton Homes closed in 1946, the church moved around to other war housing projects including Bagley Downs in Vancouver, Washington, and Vanport until finally settling in Albina. It would be another five years before the parish could purchase its own space, the former Central Methodist Episcopal Church at 3138 N Vancouver Ave. Mount Sinai Community Baptist Church moved into a former Orthodox Jewish synagogue at 602 NE Prescott St. in 1952.

Like the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, many of these new congregations would be housed in buildings that had previously served predominantly White congregations. Mount Sinai Community Baptist Church eventually moved out of Guild’s Lake Courts and into a former Orthodox Jewish synagogue at 602 NE Prescott St. in 1952. Another example is St. Paul Church of God in Christ, which was founded in the 1940s in Vernonia, Oregon, and replaced the Rodney Avenue German Methodist Episcopal Church at 2859 NE Rodney Ave. in 1960.

Many existing congregations also relocated or constructed new buildings during the postwar period, likely because of the city’s increased African American population and the growing size of their congregations. St. Philip the Deacon demolished the old Rodney Street Christian Church and constructed a new building at the

531 National Register of Historic Places, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #16000604, 18-20. This church was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its association with Portland’s African American history, including its use by and support of civil rights groups.

532 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 78.
site, now addressed 120 NE Knott St., in 1946.\textsuperscript{533} Bethel AME Church moved to 5828 NE 8\textsuperscript{th} Ave. in 1959, and the First AME Zion Church moved to 109 N Skidmore St. in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{534}

**The Albina Ministerial Alliance**

To help administer the abundance of Christian churches that came into existence in the 1940s and 1950s, Rev. Eugene Boyd organized a fellowship of African American clergy called the Albina Ministerial Alliance in 1958. The Alliance worked to identify needs in the African American Christian community and then organized resources to meet those needs.\textsuperscript{535} The Alliance quickly evolved into a delegation for the African American community to City officials. For example, Alliance members met with the Deputy Police Chief and Mayor Terry Schrunk in 1967 following riots in Albina, urging the outside community to empower Albina’s residents instead of isolating them.\textsuperscript{536} The Alliance was formally incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1971 and continues to represent 125 churches in North and Northeast Portland today.\textsuperscript{537}

**Islamic Congregations in Postwar Portland**

While the vast majority of new and existing African American congregations during the postwar period were Christian denominations, two Islamic congregations emerged in the 1960s. Charles CX Debiew and his wife, Sister Iantha, opened the Temple of Islam at their home at 4056 N Williams Ave. in the early 1960s; however, due to strong opposition from African American Christian church leadership, Debiew was unsuccessful in his efforts to establish a Muslim community. A second African American Muslim congregation, which began in the mid-1960s with informal meetings in members’ homes, established a dedicated worship space at 707 NE Fremont St. in 1969. Later known as the Nation of Islam Temple #62, community members operated a school, bakery, fish market, and café by the 1970s.\textsuperscript{538}

**A Second Calling: African American Churches and the Civil Rights Movement**

African American churches were often at the center of civil rights advances in Portland. For example, the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church held job fairs, adult education courses, voter registration fairs, and provided advice about housing discriminatory practices during the 1950s and 1960s.\textsuperscript{539} Many

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\textsuperscript{533} Rev. Lee Owen Stone to “friend,” Portland, OR, May 11, 1946, Lee Owen Stone Papers (Mss 2423-2, “Cor: Church Finances, Insurance, and Building Fund”), Oregon Historical Society Davies Family Research Library. St. Philip the Deacon started an interracial and interfaith drama group, the St Philip’s Players, in 1951 under the direction of African American woman Geneva Franklin. While they were broadly identified as an endeavor of St. Philip’s Church, they also performed for other audiences of other faith denominations. The St. Philip’s Players’ work included performance of “Queen Esther” at Temple Beth Israel, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Gresham, and The Portland Music Association (“Acting Pleasures, Thrills Bind Director, Players,” *Portland Challenger* [Portland, OR], November 28, 1952).

\textsuperscript{534} Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, A17, A65.

\textsuperscript{535} Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, A3. Bishop Willie McKinney, Jr., was a president of the Albina Ministerial Alliance, as was Rev. Wendell Wallace.

\textsuperscript{536} Leanne C. Serbulo and Karen J. Gibson, “Black and Blue: Police-Community Relations in Portland’s Albina District, 1964-1985,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 114, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 8. This article refers to areas like Albina and similar inner-city neighborhoods across the country as “internal colonies, dependent on outsiders for political and economic resources and subject to the authority of white-dominated institutions such as the school district, police, and welfare bureaucracy.”


\textsuperscript{538} Moreland, *The History of Portland’s African American Community*, 108.

\textsuperscript{539} National Register of Historic Places, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church.
prominent figures visited Portland and chose to engage with the public in church settings; Martin Luther King, Jr., for example, visited the Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church in 1961. Along with individuals, conferences such as the National Baptist Sunday School and Baptist Training Union Congress attracted more than 5,000 visitors and facilitated dialogue between Portland and other communities.

African American pastors, often seen as leaders in the civil rights movement, were occasionally recognized by local government officials and included in decision-making processes, even if in a limited capacity. For example, Reverend O. B. Williams of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church was invited by the Portland City Council in an opening prayer on February 18, 1953, and Reverend Jesse L. Boyd of Bethel AME Church was appointed to the Commission of Evangelism by the Portland Council of Churches in March 1953.

While Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church is often the congregation most associated with the civil rights movement in Portland, many other African American worship centers were also meaningfully involved. Context VII, Civil Rights, provides further detail on civil rights advances in Portland, including additional examples of church involvement.

**Context-Associated Property Types**

Section F of this MPD lists the predominant property types associated with African American resources in Portland, Oregon, during the period of significance (1865-1973). Resources significant for their association with Context VI, Religion and Worship, are mostly likely to belong to Property Type IV, Religious Facilities. Some resources belonging to Property Type I, Residences, may also be significant for their associations with significant figures associated with African American congregations and/or religious activities that occurred in private homes, particularly during the early years of the period of significance. Additional research and evaluation of significance and integrity are necessary for any property or group of properties to be determined eligible for listing in the National Register under this MPD. Refer to Section F, Property Types, for additional information regarding properties’ potential eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

**CONTEXT STATEMENT VII: CIVIL RIGHTS**

**Summary**

While the Civil Rights Era generally refers to the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, a national movement for African American civil rights has existed since people of African origin were first enslaved and forcibly removed to the United States. Throughout the history of the United States, African Americans individually and as a group have challenged structural racism, asserted the equality of the races, and systematically resisted discriminatory legislation. This fight was manifest in Portland during the period of significance of this MPD through the persistence, leadership, and achievement of African American residents, visitors, and allies.

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540 National Register of Historic Places, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church.
541 National Register of Historic Places, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church.
542 *Portland Challenger* (Portland, OR), February 20, 1953.
543 “Pastor Gets Post,” *Portland Challenger* (Portland, OR), March 6, 1953. This commission served as chaplains for county hospitals, state tuberculosis hospitals, the city jail, and rest homes. The commission also helped Portland congregations at Easter time with the four daily services on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, and Easter Day.
544 National Register of Historic Places, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church.
Jim Crow laws passed by Southern states in the decades after the Civil War established rigid, legal systems of segregation in many parts of the country. Oregon also instituted legal mechanisms for segregation in the years leading up to statehood, including a provision in the original 1857 State Constitution prohibiting African American settlement and later legislation including limitations on ownership of property, the use of public accommodations, and interracial marriage. In addition to legal structures, casual and routine racism were implicit in Portland daily life during the nineteenth and early twentieth century and arguably longer.

As described in detail throughout this MPD, Portland’s Black community responded to implicit and explicit acts of discrimination by establishing a range of institutions that paralleled those controlled by the city’s majority-White population. Despite the many obstacles limiting their quality of life in Portland, African Americans built a small but vibrant community in the nineteenth century. Parallel institutions including businesses, periodicals, civic institutions, fraternal and benevolent societies, and churches worked to circumvent and challenge the discriminations imposed by the city’s White-dominated power structure.

The rapid and significant expansion of Portland’s African American population during World War II elevated the local and regional discourse on race relations at a time when many high-profile civil rights battles were playing out across the country. The city’s greatly-expanded postwar Black population lobbied for a public accommodations bill, advocated for equal rights, advanced fair housing practices, and resisted destructive urban renewal projects.

Although many victories were won by Portland’s African American community during the Civil Rights Era, the campaign for civil rights did not end in 1973, the close of the period of significance of this MPD. To this day, organizations such as the NAACP, Urban League of Portland, and Albina Ministerial Alliance continue to advocate for African Americans and other historically underrepresented populations. In addition to organizations founded during the period of significance, new advocacy organizations and social movements continue to be established as of this writing, challenging the discriminatory policies and behaviors in Portland, Oregon, and the United States.

**Early Civil Rights Advances: 1865 through World War II**

Portland’s African American population was relatively small during the early decades of the period of significance, numbering fewer than 2,000 individuals at the time of the 1940 census and fewer than 1,000 at the turn of the twentieth century. Perhaps because of their size in relation to the White population of Portland, little is known about the early African American community’s efforts to circumvent or eradicate discriminatory policies and advance civil rights. One major victory was won in the 1860s, when African American Portlanders were promised an opportunity for public education for their children. This was qualified, however, by the fact that the Portland school system refused to immediately integrate and instead established a “Colored School” at SW 4th Avenue and Columbia Street. Eventually the added cost of maintaining a segregated school eventually proved too onerous for the school system, and African American children were integrated into Portland public schools in 1872.

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545 See the Historical Background for further information on the African American experience in Oregon through Reconstruction.
early victory eliminated the segregated school systems that became entrenched in many other communities across America.

Although few other civil rights victories are known to have occurred in Portland during the nineteenth century, the early years of the twentieth century would prove foundational for future campaigns to advance African American interests in Portland and Oregon.

Portland's Early African American Advocacy Organizations

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, several African American advocacy organizations were organized to challenge the limitations imposed upon the community’s geographic and social mobility. One of the earliest advocacy organizations was the New Port Republican Club, organized among Portland Hotel waiters in 1892. While the club was initially formed to support the reelection of President Benjamin Harrison, the men also endorsed African American candidates for employment in Portland’s local government. Through their efforts, Moody E. Scott was hired as a typist clerk at the Multnomah County auditor’s office, and George Hardin and John Harry Hooper were hired as patrol officers by the Portland Police Bureau.

Other Portland advocacy groups were founded as local chapters of national organizations. The Portland chapter of the Afro-American League, founded nationally in 1887, was established in 1900 by a group of African American men who desired to advance the organization’s ideals of self-advocacy and equal citizenship. A Portland chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was chartered in 1913. This organization would attract a broad membership and effect meaningful changes within the city and state throughout the period of significance, using legislation, court cases, and battles to remedy discriminatory laws. Still active at the time of this writing, the NAACP’s Portland branch is only four years younger than the national organization and holds the oldest continuous charter west of the Mississippi.

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549 Chandler, *Hidden History*, 89. Hardin, whose home from 1917-1939 at 3344 SE Yamhill St. still stands, went on to become a County Deputy Sheriff and then Assistant County Jailer until his death. His wife Ruby remained in the family home well into the 1970s. See Context II, *Business and Employment*, for further information regarding African American employment in early Portland.
550 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 24; Taylor, “The Emergence of Black Communities,” 347. The League’s founding officers were President William Brady, a tailor; Vice President William Boldt, a Portland Hotel waiter; and Treasurer James Fullilove, who owned and operated Fullilove and Moore Barbers at 230 SW Washington St. Of the Afro-American League’s three founding officers, Fullilove’s contributions are best documented and his homes alone remain from the 1910s. Fullilove and wife Mary were living at 4505 NE 14th Ave. when the Afro-American League was founded. Later in life, Fullilove was a messenger for the U.S. District Court when the Afro-American League sponsored the first Civil Rights Public Accommodations Bill to the State Legislature in 1919. The Fulliloves owned multiple properties in Northeast and Southeast Portland; after James passed away in 1923, Mary remained at their NE 14th Avenue address.
551 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 27. The homes of three founding officers still stand: 2516 NE 26th Ave., which was home to Beatrice Cannady (Secretary) and E.D. Cannady (Executive Committee), and 1527 SW 18th Ave., where J.S. Bell (Treasurer), a Portland Hotel waiter and photographer, lived in 1914 and 1915. Edgar Williams, an elevator operator at the Portland police station, moved to Portland in 1918 and also held an important advocacy role within the organization. Williams’s home from 1928 through 1963 is at 2726 NE Going St. His wife, Daisy Blanchard Moore, and her first husband, expressman William Moore, owned the house beginning in 1916.
Portland’s NAACP chapter did not have a dedicated meeting space for the first several decades after its establishment. It frequently held meetings in African American churches and, after 1926, the Williams Avenue YWCA (6 N Tillamook St.). An editorial in the African American newspaper *The Advocate*, possibly written by *Advocate* assistant editor Beatrice Cannady, criticized the relocation of meetings to this building, which was also known as the “Colored YWCA.” Although the editorial opined that the segregated YWCA branch was a “jim-crow place,” meetings and events continued to be held in the space through at least the early 1960s. Beginning in the 1940s, the NAACP also held meetings in the Multnomah County Central Library (801 SW 10th Ave.) in downtown Portland.

The Portland NAACP chapter annually campaigned the legislature to remove the vestiges of pioneer racism embedded in the Oregon Constitution, with one of the organization’s greatest early victories being the removal of some of that language following a general election referendum in 1926. As the twentieth century advanced, the Portland branch of the NAACP would be one of the most important players in the African American community’s persistent drive for equality and access to education, housing, and public accommodations.

**Taylor v. Cohn**

The 1906 Oregon Supreme Court case *Taylor v. Cohn* stands as a prominent example of Portland’s prevailing racial prejudices in the early 1900s. In 1905, an African American man named Oliver Taylor brought a suit against S. Morton Cohn, the owner of a downtown Portland theater, who refused to seat him on the main floor of the theater during a show for which he purchased tickets. A Multnomah Circuit Court judge ruled in favor of Cohn, upholding widely practiced forms of illegal segregation. *The Oregonian* also supported Cohn’s “right” to discriminate, arguing, “it is obvious that any place of public amusement would speedily lose patronage if it were not understood that certain discriminations might be made with reference to certain classes of people.” The paper did not attempt to disguise its racial bias,

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552 In 1956, the NAACP established its first-ever offices in the Williams Avenue YWCA’s basement. “New Headquarters of NAACP Workers,” *The Oregonian* (Portland, OR), March 29, 1956.


554 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 27. The Central Library was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 (National Register of Historic Places, Central Building/Public Library, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #79002129).


instead insisting that “colored people are wise who accept conditions that they cannot change or control, and go their way cheerfully, realizing that after all, their condition in this country is much improved over that of their ancestors of a century or two ago.”\textsuperscript{560} In 1906, the case was appealed to the Oregon Supreme Court; McCants Stewart, the state’s first African American attorney, argued the case on behalf of Taylor.\textsuperscript{561} Marking a significant legal milestone for civil rights in Oregon, the State Supreme Court overturned the circuit court’s ruling by declaring the seating restriction a breach of contract. Despite this resolution, however, African Americans continued to experience bias at theatres and other public venues for decades.\textsuperscript{562}

**World War I and the Codification of Discriminatory Housing Practices**

All over the country, Americans treated World War I, the "Great War," as a patriotic crusade from which there could be no dissent. In Portland, ethnic intolerance was not only socially acceptable, but fashionable. Distrust of immigrants, especially Germans, ran high; German-born residents had to carry a registration card to work near the waterfront, and Portland’s Brooklyn neighborhood showed its loyalty by finding new names for Bismarck and Frankfurt Streets.\textsuperscript{563}

The advent of World War I also brought rapid and unanticipated commercial growth to Portland, creating an immediate and desperate housing shortage. In the early postwar period, the turmoil in the housing market prompted the Portland Realty Board to supplement private restrictive racial covenants by adopting a formal ethics policy instructing members not to sell properties to Asians or African Americans in “white residence districts.”\textsuperscript{564} The Realty Board disclaimed racial prejudice, maintaining that their motivation was purely the good business of protecting property values—coded language for racial discrimination that remained until the reforms of the midcentury period.\textsuperscript{565} Portland’s rapid population growth during the period was also a primary impetus for city planning efforts that would culminate in Portland’s first zoning code in 1924. See Context I, *Settlement Patterns*, for additional information on discriminatory real estate practices, restrictive racial covenants, and Portland’s early zoning code.

Following World War I, White America demonstrated its discomfort with the pace of economic and social change by following wartime intolerance with a series of regressive movements.\textsuperscript{566} Ostensibly intended to better social conditions in communities across the nation, these efforts ultimately looked backward rather than forward. Examples included the repression of left-wing political dissent, the restriction of immigration, the enactment of Prohibition, and the reemergence of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The growing unwillingness of African Americans to slip quietly back into the second-class position that had been relegated to them before the war also triggered a national spate of race riots in 1919, characterized by White mobs invading and

\textsuperscript{560} “Color Line in Theaters,” *The Morning Oregonian* (Portland, OR), May 20, 1905.


\textsuperscript{562} For example, both William Allen, the owner of the successful Golden West Hotel (707 NW Everett St.), and James McArthur, a Spanish-American War veteran, were rebuffed from White-owned theaters in 1929 (“Theatre Refuses Admittance to Negro,” *The Advocate* [Portland, OR], August 24, 1929; “Theatre Draws Color-Line,” *The Advocate* [Portland, OR], October 5, 1929).

\textsuperscript{563} Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 21-22.

\textsuperscript{564} McLagan, *Peculiar Paradise*, 142.

\textsuperscript{565} McLagan, *Peculiar Paradise*, 142.

\textsuperscript{566} Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 22.
plundering Black communities, burning, looting, assaulting, and wantonly killing African Americans.\footnote{Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 22.} However, possibly because of the relatively small size of Portland's African American community, Portland did not join the long list of American cities that experienced race riots in the late 1910s.

**The Ku Klux Klan**

The “Invisible Empire” of the KKK reemerged and spread across the South, Midwest, and West in the early 1920s, appealing to White Americans who feared that their familiar small-town world was disappearing under the pressures of social change.\footnote{Shawn Lay, \textit{The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s} (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004): 1. The first iteration of the Ku Klux Klan began in Tennessee in 1866 as a direct reaction to the defeat of the Confederacy in the Civil War. Membership was predominantly in the Southern states and peaked between 1868 and 1870. This first iteration of the Klan ended in the 1880s as the organization’s mission to restore White supremacy in the South had all but been achieved through Jim Crow laws ("Ku Klux Klan," \textit{The Encyclopaedia Britannica}, accessed December 8, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ku-Klux-Klan). Although there was not a chartered branch of the Klan in Oregon during this period, an editorial in \textit{The Oregonian} from April 1868 openly questioned whether a local branch should be formed (\textit{The Morning Oregonian} [Portland, OR], April 11, 1868).} Klansmen blamed people of color, immigrants, and members of the Jewish and Roman Catholic religions for what they perceived to be unsettling changes in American society, such as inflation, unemployment, the growth of giant corporations, and a perceived decline in moral standards.\footnote{David A. Horowitz, “Social Morality and Personal Revitalization: Oregon’s Kl Klux Klan in the 1920s,” \textit{Oregon Historical Quarterly} 90, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 366.} The Klan desired to protect the benefits and privileges bestowed upon the country’s White protestant population through the preservation of White supremacy that had defined the country’s race relations during slavery and the Jim Crow era.\footnote{Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 22.}

The Klan officially came to Portland in 1921, finding fertile recruiting territory in a city that had already proved its racist tendencies. The KKK claimed to have 35,000 members residing in Oregon by the next year, and hundreds of others joined ancillary groups including the Women of the Ku Klux Klan, the Junior Order of Klansmen (for teenagers), and the Royal Riders of the Red Robe (for foreign-born Protestants).\footnote{Eckard Toy, “Ku Klux Klan,” \textit{The Oregon Encyclopedia}, last modified September 24, 2018, \url{https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/ku_klux_klan/#.XOSviy3MzLY}.} Klansmen wielded their alarming rise of political influence to great effect. In 1922, Klan-backed candidates won two of three seats on the Multnomah County Commission and twelve of the county’s thirteen seats in the state legislature. It is unclear whether Portland Mayor George Baker himself joined the Klan, but he openly welcomed their political support. Walter Pierce, a Democratic Party progressive from La Grande, Oregon, also tacitly supported the Klan and won the governorship in 1923 with their help.\footnote{William G. Robbins, “Walter Pierce (1861-1954),” \textit{The Oregon Encyclopedia}, last modified March 14, 2019, \url{https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/pierce_walter_1861_1954_/#.XOSxyy3MzLY}; “George Baker,” \textit{The Oregon History Project}, last modified September 19, 2019, \url{https://oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/biographies/george-baker-biography/#.Xds7VC-ZOt8}.}

African Americans in Portland had resisted the growth of Klan influence in 1915, more than five years prior to the group’s official establishment in Oregon. They attempted to ban \textit{The Birth of a Nation}, a pro-KKK motion picture that glorified the birth of the Klan and depicted African Americans in a grossly stereotypical and prejudiced fashion. D.W. Griffith, the son of a Confederate army officer who held the

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conventional racial views of the South, directed the controversial film which received both praise and admonishment across the country. The film received support from powerful public figures like President Woodrow Wilson, who endorsed it as the true history of the Civil War era and was known to preview it in the White House for visiting dignitaries.573

In Portland, hundreds of African American and White citizens urged the mayor to ban the movie showing.574 He refused. Although their efforts failed to result in a ban on the film, the confrontation energized and organized Portland’s African American community and its White allies in a way that had been impossible a generation earlier. Portland’s growing African American community, while still small and geographically removed from other African American population centers, asserted that it would not be silent or absent from the racial controversies of the country.575

By the mid-1920s, KKK influence in Oregon faded due to internal conflicts and corruption. But the decline of the Klan as a public vehicle of racial and ethnic hatred did not connote the beginning of a more harmonious environment for Portland’s African American residents. The Klan was an extreme form of a pervasive belief in White superiority that continued to manifest itself within twentieth-century popular culture and American society.576

Changing Attitudes Toward African Heritage

The first two decades of the twentieth century saw, for the first time on a national scale, a reconnection of the African American experience with the status and fate of Black people throughout the world. During the nineteenth century, most prominent African Americans attempted to integrate into dominant White society and were hesitant to emphasize their African lineage. Euro-American culture at the time generally identified Africa as a primitive continent, accepting a White-centric narrative dominated by European imperialism and colonial domination.577

By the early twentieth century, new perceptions of Africa began emerging for some African Americans. America itself had come into a more prominent global role as a result of the Spanish-American War, World War I, and the emergence of early multi-national corporations which sourced products from areas with large populations of color (e.g., the Firestone Rubber Company in Liberia, Africa, and the United Fruit Company in Central and South America). Many African Americans began to see America’s problems in the larger context of global issues like colonialism. Consequently, many began to envision their future in a global rather than purely national context.578

574 The Portland Branch of the NAACP condemned the film in the Black press through then-Secretary Beatrice Cannady during its premiere in 1915. When the film returned to Portland’s theatres in 1918, Cannady engaged with the public through The Advocate and at public speaking events urging Portlanders to boycott the film. In 1922 when the film returned to Portland, Cannady wrote to the NAACP headquarters in New York who wrote to Governor Olcott to ban the film. In 1931, Cannady finally successfully advocated for the film to be banned in Portland forever when a theatre attempted to screen the film again (Mangun, “As Citizens of Portland we Must Protest,” 385-399).
575 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 26.
576 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 27.
The Pan-African Congress was one result of this emergent vision. Like many African American advocacy organizations of the twentieth century, the Pan-African Congress organized on both national and local levels. Beatrice Cannady organized Portland’s local Pan-African Congress in 1927 and also represented Oregon at the national Pan-African Congress’s convention in New York City.\footnote{Quintard Taylor, “Beatrice Morrow Cannady (1889 - 1974),” \textit{The Oregon Encyclopedia}, last modified March 17, 2018, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/cannady_beatrice_morrow/#.XQcGnC3Myt9.} Portland’s Congress was held at the Multnomah County Central Library (\textit{801 SW 10th Ave.}), and the list of local participants reflects Cannady’s efforts to bring together prominent members of both the African American and White communities and to create a dialogue reflecting all of Portland. This integrated approach diverged somewhat from that of the national organization, which has been described as more “Black nationalistic” in nature.\footnote{Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 44.} Locally, Cannady was able to garner significant coverage of the event in both White and Black newspapers.\footnote{“Pan-African Congress Has Many Notables,” \textit{The Advocate} (Portland, OR), August 27, 1927.}

The Pan-African Congress was one of several new movements organized in the 1920s; other expressions of the same dynamic would take such forms as Marcus Garvey’s “Back-to-Africa” movement with the United Negro Improvement Association. Because so many new national and local organizations addressing race relations were created in a relatively short time, many African Americans came to believe that some unifying structure should be established so that resources and efforts could be focused on the overarching challenges facing Black Americans.\footnote{Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 44; “Their Good Will,” \textit{The Oregon Daily Journal} (Portland, OR), November 24, 1927, reprinted in \textit{The Advocate} November 26, 1927. An editorial in \textit{The Oregon Daily Journal} penned by a White Portland resident called for similar gatherings of peoples of all races to occur more frequently in Portland and across the nation.}

Toward that end, Beatrice Cannady organized a Race Conference in 1929 to organize Portland’s various African American advocacy groups. The event, like the 1927 Pan-African Congress, was held at Multnomah County Central Library and was notable for a few reasons. First was the role played by Mrs. Cannady, a national Urban League speaker. Second, there was a total of thirty Black organizations within Portland’s relatively small African American community, demonstrating to the larger White community the potential power and effectiveness of African American organizations, both individually and as a unified societal force. Third, a review of the outcomes and participation demonstrated the central and powerful role played by the church in the events of the African American community. Finally, despite the magnitude of the event, the findings and solutions reached at the conference were very general, lacking in specifics, and essentially impossible to implement.\footnote{Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 44; “Findings of the First Annual Conference,” \textit{The Advocate} (Portland, OR), June 8, 1929. Findings of the Race Conference include urging religious organizations to be more inclusive; establishing a religious education program; creating an annual meeting of religious leaders to facilitate cooperation; urging further involvement and support of the NAACP; establishing an African American business center with the help of the YWCA and fraternal societies; and forming an Urban League.} This frustrating conclusion was not soon rectified, as the economic challenges of the Great Depression would temporarily silence community leaders and stymie racial progress.

\textbf{Portland’s Civil Rights Era: 1945 to 1973}

World War II marked a critical point in African American life and race relations in Portland. The wartime industries of the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area attracted more than a hundred thousand in-
migrants to the city in just a few years, and the African American population swelled from a prewar total of about 2,000 individuals to a peak of roughly 22,000 in 1944. In-migrants of all races and backgrounds were faced with a tight housing market and inadequate transportation services, but African Americans and other minorities faced the added challenges of discriminatory housing and employment practices. Barred from joining most labor unions and relegated to the cramped Albina area and the most rudimentary defense housing, African American in-migrants faced a unique and burdensome set of obstacles to securing fair employment and safe, adequate housing. See Context I, Settlement Patterns, and Context II, Business and Employment, for a discussion of the discriminatory practices that shaped the African American experience in Portland during World War II.

Despite the additional challenges imposed on African American in-migrants, Portland’s rapidly-expanding African American population was resilient and determined. In the postwar years, African American Portlanders and the institutions that they created would make significant gains toward ending the blatant, institutionalized racial discrimination that had historically characterized their experience of life in Oregon. Charismatic and politically active individuals and organizations like the Urban League of Portland, the NAACP, and the Black Panthers would advance meaningful change for African Americans in Portland and Oregon in the 1940s through the 1970s. Some of the most important achievements of the postwar African American community include the adoption of a statewide Public Accommodations Bill in 1953; the repeal of Oregon’s anti-mixed marriage law in 1955; the adoption of the Oregon Fair Housing Act in 1957; the passage of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965; and general advances in labor relations, housing accessibility, and political representation.

The Battle for Public Accommodations and Fair Housing

In the early postwar years, Oregon’s prior skirmishes over societal change exploded into a full-fledged battle over public accommodations and equal housing opportunities. In the winter of 1950, the Portland City Council passed an ordinance rejecting prejudicial housing policies and criminalizing race-based discrimination in public spaces within city limits. Although the majority of Portlanders supported a public accommodations bill at the time of the City Council ordinance in February 1950, the incongruously-named “Civil Freedom Committee,” led by an Episcopalian reverend and backed by the Oregon Restaurant Association, initiated a petition to put the ordinance to a public vote. The Civil Freedom Committee used misleading information to collect signatures, such as stating that they were actually supportive of the implementation of a public accommodations bill, and attempted to frighten White Portlanders by claiming that the city was already too progressive, and that African Americans would “mongrelize” the White race. The Civil Freedom Committee successfully garnered enough signatures and the public accommodations bill was put on the 1950 general

584 See Context II, Business and Employment, for additional information on the Urban League of Portland and its efforts to advocate employment opportunity for African Americans in postwar Portland.
586 Dan Hortsch, “City Rejects Ordinance for Equality,” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), November 8, 1982. This retrospective article from the early 1980s demonstrates The Oregonian’s efforts to be more inclusive in its reporting (notably, Bill Hilliard became the paper’s first African American executive editor in 1982). Oregonian coverage in 1950 was not as objective as this article, which also features an oral interview with E. Shelton Hill of Portland’s Urban League (see Context II, Business and Employment, for further information about the Urban League).
587 Hortsch, “City Rejects Ordinance for Equality.” Other tactics included preying on racial fears of overrun restaurants and other public venues. The Civil Freedom Committee was supported by many of Portland’s less reputable service-industry managers not wanting to lose working-class White patrons.
election ballot.\textsuperscript{588} Nine months after it had been supported by the City Council, Portland’s first attempt at a public accommodations ordinance was overturned by a solid margin of Portland voters in the November 1950 election.\textsuperscript{589}

While the ordinance was voided by popular vote, it set in motion a debate about the direction that racial policy would take in Oregon. With an expanded African American population in the postwar years, the NAACP focused its attention on a proposed statewide Public Accommodations Bill for the 1953 State Legislative session. The Urban League, African American churches, fraternal organizations, and others throughout the state joined the effort. NAACP President Otto Rutherford and his wife, NAACP Secretary Verdell Rutherford, printed thousands of informational pamphlets and flyers from their basement mimeograph machine at \textbf{833 NE Shaver St.}\textsuperscript{590} Despite concentrated opposition by the Civil Freedom Committee to circulate another petition and force a statewide vote, the Oregon Legislature did adopt a statewide Public Accommodations Bill in the 1953 session. This hard-won piece of legislation ensured that “[a]ll persons within the jurisdiction of this state shall be entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges of any place of public accommodation, resort or amusement, without any distinction, discrimination or restriction on account of race, religion, color or national origin.”\textsuperscript{591} Private examples of racial discrimination in public accommodations would linger throughout the state for decades, but these now lacked the weight and power of public policy. Also in the 1950s, the State Legislature repealed the anti-mixed marriage law adopted in 1866, bringing Oregon one small step closer towards equality.\textsuperscript{592}

The next major civil rights battle faced by African Americans in Portland was that of fair and equal access to housing. With origins in the Black exclusion and homestead laws of Oregon Territory, attempts to control where and under what conditions African Americans could live were deeply entrenched in Oregon social practice and legislation. As school desegregation and bus boycott confrontations lit up the national scene, Oregon’s African American population chafed under the restraints imposed by the private prejudice and discriminatory public real estate practices that prevented their economic resources and personal preferences from determining where they could live.

In 1953, \textit{The Oregonian} published a series of articles that refuted the perceived negative impact of African American residency in majority-White neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{593} The articles profiled Black families already living in

\textsuperscript{588} “Public Vote Due on Racial Issue,” \textit{The Oregonian} (Portland, OR), March 31, 1950.

\textsuperscript{589} Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 80.

\textsuperscript{590} Otto and Verdell Rutherford, interview by Catherine Galbraith. The house was added to the National Register in 2015 (National Register of Historic Places, Otto and Verdell Rutherford House, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #14001076).


\textsuperscript{592} Sara Paulson, “Act to Prohibit the Intermarriage of Races, 1866,” \textit{The Oregon History Project}, last modified 2018, https://oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/act-to-prohibit-the-intermarriage-of-races-1866/#.Xe8_sHdFxPY. In 1921, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that the state’s miscegenation law did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment since the law applied equally to all persons regardless of race entering into a marriage with a person of a different race. The law was repealed in 1951.

\textsuperscript{593} No information regarding the origins or inspiration of this three-part series could be located by the authors of this MPD. Although \textit{The Oregonian} regularly asserted discriminatory views in editorials through at least the 1950s, the 1952 appointment of William Hilliard, the first African American employee in the paper’s newsroom, was an important milestone.
these neighborhoods and plied White readers with the reassurance that these residents had not precipitated an African American “invasion.”\footnote{African American Family in White Neighborhoods, \textit{The Oregonian} (Portland, OR), November 14, 1953; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 83-84. Among the African American Portanders featured in the \textit{Oregonian} articles, those whose homes still stand include Fred and Dessie Jackson, a Union Pacific waiter and his wife who had moved from 206 N Page \textit{St.} to 835 NE 30th Ave.; Scott Brown, a gardener, and his wife Ida at 516 SE 34th Ave.; Edward Jackson, a Pullman Company porter, and his wife Willa at 6909 SE 42nd Ave.; Mrs. Mary Duncan, who had lived with her late husband, Clem Duncan, at 2216 SE 37th Ave. in the 1930s and 1940s and who moved to 4024 NE 15th Ave. after his death; and Roy and Estella Gragg at 4903 NE 29th Ave. Roy Gragg was a maintenance man at Pacific Department Store and the brother of William Gragg, who had lived at 4902 NE 30th Ave. for the same period.} Among the African American Portlanders featured in the \textit{Oregonian} articles were Roy and Estella Gragg, who had owned their home at 4903 NE 29\textsuperscript{th} since 1921. This encouraging feature was sadly contrasted with a contemporary article headlined “Cross Marks Negro Lawn,” which discussed the police investigation of the cross burning at the Parkrose home of Charles Gragg, son of Roy and Estella Gragg, at 11261 NE Knott.\footnote{“Cross Marks Negro Lawn,” \textit{The Oregonian} (Portland, OR), May 11, 1953; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 84.}

The 1953 \textit{Oregonian} series openly discussed the long-denied real estate practice of restricting the homes that were shown to African American buyers dating. This form of racial discrimination had been institutionalized by the local real estate industry in their code of ethics as early as 1919.\footnote{McLagan, \textit{Peculiar Paradise}, 142; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 59; Binus, “National Association of Real Estate Boards Code of Ethics.”} The practice was brought into the open after the experience of William “Tony” Anthony, an African American railroad waiter turned steward, and his wife Marie, who was of Cherokee descent. The couple were living at 2817 SE 48\textsuperscript{th} Ave. by the early 1940s, and in 1949 purchased a home at 1524 SE 32\textsuperscript{nd} Pl.\footnote{Anthony had lived at 6835 SE Boise St. and then 4904 N Williams Ave. in the 1920s. He lived in Seattle prior to his residence at 2817 SE 40\textsuperscript{th} Ave.} The White real estate agent who facilitated the sale, Clarence Enders, was expelled by the Portland Realty Board for violating what \textit{The Oregonian} called “both national and local realty board codes of ethics in the sale of southeast district property to other than Caucasian persons.”\footnote{“Realty Board Expels Agent in Sale to Non-Caucasians,” \textit{The Oregonian} (Portland, OR), January 13, 1949.} The Urban League protested the expulsion of Enders to no avail. The Anthony family remained on 32nd Place until at least 1965, eventually moving to 2011 NE Knott St.\footnote{“Telephone Calls Frighten Negro Owner, Tenant,” \textit{The Oregonian} (Portland, OR), April 10, 1954.}

In addition to discriminatory real estate practices that limited their ability to freely select housing, some African American Portlanders also faced open hostility when attempting to settle in predominantly-White neighborhoods. In 1954, the \textit{Portland Challenger} and \textit{The Oregonian} both ran stories on the ordeal of Izella Kimmons, who had moved to Vanport with her family in 1944 seeking shipyard work.\footnote{Actor Paul Winfield also lived here as a college student. The house was moved in 1996 to 425 NE Tillamook St. as part of the Albina Corner project.} Kimmons and her four children moved to 217 NE Weidler St. in 1952, and then in 1954 attempted to rent a house at 425 NE San Rafael St. in a predominantly White neighborhood.\footnote{Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 84. Izella Kimmon remained at 217 NE Weidler St. until 1963, when she moved to 4207 N Gantenbein Ave. In 1970, she moved again to 5305 N Williams Ave.} Within three days, anonymous telephone threats drove Kimmons back to her previous home on NE Weidler Street, where she remained until 1963.\footnote{Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 84.}

and may have been indicative of broader reform in the racial biases of Portland’s dominant press outlet. See Context III, \textit{Journalism}, for additional information on racial bias in \textit{The Oregonian} and on Bill Hilliard’s career. See also Smith, \textit{Acting White}, 343-44; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 59-60. The Oregonian publications of 1953 and 1954 may have been indicative of broader reform in the racial biases of Portland’s dominant press outlet. See Context III, \textit{Journalism}, for additional information on racial bias in \textit{The Oregonian} and on Bill Hilliard’s career.

\footnote{594 “African American Family in White Neighborhoods,” \textit{The Oregonian} (Portland, OR), November 14, 1953; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 83-84. Among the African American Portanders featured in the \textit{Oregonian} articles, those whose homes still stand include Fred and Dessie Jackson, a Union Pacific waiter and his wife who had moved from 206 N Page \textit{St.} to 835 NE 30th Ave.; Scott Brown, a gardener, and his wife Ida at 516 SE 34th Ave.; Edward Jackson, a Pullman Company porter, and his wife Willa at 6909 SE 42nd Ave.; Mrs. Mary Duncan, who had lived with her late husband, Clem Duncan, at 2216 SE 37th Ave. in the 1930s and 1940s and who moved to 4024 NE 15th Ave. after his death; and Roy and Estella Gragg at 4903 NE 29th Ave. Roy Gragg was a maintenance man at Pacific Department Store and the brother of William Gragg, who had lived at 4902 NE 30th Ave. for the same period.}
house on San Rafael Street was ironically already owned by another African American woman, Malinda Bradwell, who had also been driven away from the neighborhood. “People threw garbage and junk on my porch,” Bradwell told *The Oregonian* in 1954. “One woman rang my doorbell at 2 o’clock in the morning to wake me up.” Bradwell’s neighbors also prevented her from opening a children’s nursery in the home, which led her to rent the property.

After years of advocacy, the Oregon Legislative Assembly adopted the state’s first fair housing legislation in 1957. The Oregon Fair Housing Act made it illegal for property owners or agents receiving public funding to discriminate “solely because of race, color, religion, or national origin,” in the sale, lease, or rental of any “dwelling place for a person or family…in a building containing five or more such apartments or units.” It was amended in 1959 to apply to any “person who, as a business enterprise, sells, leases or rents real property,” and a contemporary companion bill amended Oregon’s real estate code so that realtors acting in violation of the law might have their licenses revoked.

This hard-won legislation was an important step toward equal rights for the African American community, but it lacked enforcement provisions and did not immediately result in universal housing access for African Americans. Several examples illustrate this. In 1960, the *Oregon Journal* newspaper featured a set of articles that quoted Portland Mayor Terry Schrunk as “shocked and embarrassed” over the burning of the partially-completed Parkrose home of Rowan Wiley, a Benson Hotel waiter and Purple Heart recipient, under construction at 1630 NE 140th Ave. (despite the intimidations aimed at the family, the Wileys completed their home and settled at their new address). A year later in 1961, LaVerne Bagley Brown filed a complaint with the Civil Rights Division after being evicted from her apartment at 1906 NE Multnomah St. because of her race. An Oregon Public Welfare Commission child supervisor, Bagley Brown had been the first African American to attend Marylhurst College in Clackamas County. And in 1965, when John Whitesides, a Tektronix department manager, and his wife Janet, who was a bookkeeper for Dr. Unthank, moved from 8844 N Hamlin Ave. to 2933 NE 16th Ave., they received a torrent of hate letters leading to a police investigation.

Despite the intimidation and racism these families suffered, the Fair Housing Act and its companion bill removed the mantle of legality from those in Oregon who continued to discriminate in housing matters. The legislation accelerated the rate at which Portland’s African American residents could emulate their White predecessors in the flight to the suburbs. Many did take this path, primarily those African Americans who had found some level of professional and economic success despite prejudice against their race. African American suburban flight—a significant departure from the settlement patterns seen before the midcentury

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603 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 84. Malinda Bradwell’s son, Charles Bradwell Jr., was a member of the US Air Force’s first exclusively African American unit and went on to work for the Albina Office of Economic Opportunity. He lived at 4045 N Commercial Ave. after leaving the house on San Rafael Street.


605 Telephone Calls Frighten Negro Owner, Tenant,” *The Oregonian* (Portland, OR), April 10, 1954.

606 Oregon’s Fair Housing Act predated the 1968 amendment to the national Civil Rights Act which included fair housing legislation.


608 Binus, “Fair Housing in Oregon Study.”


610 LaVerne Bagley Brown, interview by Catherine Galbraith, 1997. Bagley was the daughter of Donald and Bessie Bagley.

611 Janet Whitesides, interview by Catherine Galbraith, 1997.
period—contributed to a steadily-growing list of challenges that would face the Black community in Albina during the second half of the twentieth century.

National Changes and Community Resistance
The 1960s were a decade of extraordinary change, both nationally and in Portland. African Americans won fundamental victories with the federal Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965), yet American cities exploded with racial violence and new voices that called for African Americans, Latinxs, and Native Americans to pursue separation rather than integration. The war in Vietnam also began to escalate in 1964, and by 1968 more than 500,000 American troops were serving in South Vietnam. Disillusionment with the American role fed an antiwar movement and contributed to the growth of a counterculture among the young. Indeed, 1968 was a year of widespread gun violence, the Vietnamese Tet Offensive, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy, and rioting in front of the television cameras at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

In a somewhat more restrained way, Portland reflected the national temper in the 1960s and 1970s. Racial violence along Union Avenue (now Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.) rocked Northeast Portland and negatively impacted local business. 612 A local chapter of the Black Panthers challenged Portland’s downtown establishment and older African American leadership, as well. Hippies congregated around the new Lovejoy Fountain and Forecourt Fountain downtown, challenging social mores surrounding public bathing and affectionate displays. 613 The invasion of Cambodia in 1970, which sparked campus shutdowns and strikes across the nation, prompted Portland State University students to occupy the South Park Blocks for several days before police violently cleared the park. As these events demonstrate, Portland was the site of an increasingly vocal, organized resistance to perceived injustices in the mid-twentieth century. In many ways, this environment fostered the civil rights battles fought by the city’s African American community in the 1960s and 1970s.

Advances in Labor Equality
Hazel Hays, the Community Services Director of the Portland Development Commission, was an NAACP officer and a strong figure in Portland’s early Civil Rights Movement. Calling for greater minority employment in the U.S. Postal System, she walked in picket lines at the U.S. Post Office where her husband Chauncey was employed. Thomas Vickers, the first African American teacher at Marshall High School and an NAACP president, was also involved in the picketing event.

In 1963, two African American Lewis and Clark College students, Nathan Jones and Samuel Macon, charged the Portland City Parks Bureau with discrimination in hiring practices. 614 Their grievance was


upheld. Macon worked for the City, \textsuperscript{615} and by 1965, Jones was a teacher at Woodstock Elementary School in Southeast Portland (\textit{5601 SE 50\textsuperscript{th} Ave.}). \textsuperscript{616} A few years later, Jones would join the coaching staff at Roosevelt High School (\textit{6941 N Central St.}) and later become an NFL referee and principal at Franklin High School (\textit{5405 SE Woodward St.}). \textsuperscript{617}

\textbf{Generational Transitions}

The children of the war-era in-migrants began to come of age in the 1960s, and their goals, objectives, and strategies for racial change different markedly from their parents'. They moved from childhood to adolescence to young adulthood having great influence on the course of events of the era. The 1960s were a period of great youth activism and agitation, and these young people were generally much less patient with the pace of progress than their parents and grandparents had been. They were also much more likely to partake in acts of civil disobedience than the previous generation. \textsuperscript{618}

In June 1967, \textit{The Oregonian} called attention to the frustration of African American youth in an article that discussed the long-simmering tensions and discontent that had reached boiling point in other cities. Frank Fair, a youth worker for the Church-Community Action Program (C-CAP) who had grown up in the Albina area, stated: “When you get to feeling locked in, that’s when the frustrations start.” \textsuperscript{619}

In late July 1967, these frustrations were demonstrated in confrontations with the police which escalated into riots in the area of \textit{3507-3511 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.} Reverend O.B. Williams of Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church, Reverend Wendell Wallace of Maranatha Church of God and Reverend John Jackson were asked to calm the rioting youth. \textsuperscript{620} Disturbances arose again in 1969. Many African American youth had come to view police as an army of occupation in the African American community. They wanted immediate change, and to achieve it they were willing to disrupt established patterns and social orders. Their actions on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (then Union Avenue) further depressed the perception of the street as a place where business could prosper. \textsuperscript{621} Uncertainties about the racial stability of Inner North and Northeast contributed to the economic decline that was associated with the area at the time and persisted for decades.

\textsuperscript{615} Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 91. Samuel Macon lived at \textit{4523 N Albina} in the 1960s.
\textsuperscript{616} Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 91. Nathan Jones lived at \textit{1336 SE Haig St.} by 1965, at which time he had taken a teaching job at Woodstock Elementary. In 1962, Jones had filed a complaint with the Civil Rights Division in a case brought against the landlord of a westside fourplex by Mark Smith, Civil Rights Administrator (\textit{411 N Shaver St.}). The apartment owner was ordered to “cease and desist” from discrimination after he had solicited negative votes from the other apartment tenants concerning Jones as a potential tenant.
\textsuperscript{617} Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 91.
\textsuperscript{618} Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 107.
\textsuperscript{619} Frank Fair was from the Portland pioneer Fair family and had lived at \textit{4216 N Haight Ave.} (1940s), \textit{1455 NE Going St.} (1950s), and then \textit{4623 NE 9th Ave.} (1959-70s). In addition to his work with the C-CAP, Fair was a juvenile court counselor and then a department director at the University of Portland; Bosco-Milligan Foundation, \textit{Cornerstones of Community}, 107; “Portland’s Teen-Age Negroes Refuse to Bear Frustrations of Parents,” \textit{The Oregonian} (Portland, OR), June 1, 1967.
\textsuperscript{621} Holley, ““Burn the Town Down” \textit{Portland Mercury} (Portland, OR), June 21, 2017.
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

Oregon

Name of Multiple Property Listing

State

Black Power Organizations

The 1960s also saw the impact on Portland race relations of new ideologies and racial strategies born in other national locations. These ideas were transported to Portland in the heated atmosphere of social turmoil that characterized the period. The Black Power movement, ignited by the 1965 assassination of Malcolm X and the urban uprisings of the mid-1960s, advanced racial pride, economic empowerment, and the creation of distinct cultural and political institutions. National Black Power organizations including the Black Berets and the Black Panther Party for Self Defense established local Portland branches. The latter’s membership was always small, but its aggressive rhetoric and progressive social programs had a significant impact on the attitudes of young African American Portlanders. The Panther headquarters was located at 3819 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Led by founding member Kent Ford, the Portland Panthers established Fred Hampton’s Peoples Health Clinic at 109 N Russell St. in the late 1960s and 1970s, offering free medical care five evenings a week to Portlanders of any race. They also operated a free children’s breakfast program at Highland United Church of Christ (4635 NE 9th Ave.). Despite their extensive involvement in these social programs, however, Portland Black Panther Party members were characterized as criminals in local newspapers and tracked by the FBI.

The Integration of Portland Public Schools

Arguably the most contentious civil rights issue of the 1960s, integration of schools, was closely tied to the previous battles over housing rights and discrimination. While the Fair Housing Act had enabled some families to move away from the African American neighborhoods circumscribed in the 1940s and 1950s, most African American families could not and did not leave. The reality of the geographical concentration of the Portland’s African American population guaranteed the city’s participation in the great debate over school integration that swept the country following the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling in 1954.

There were two kinds of educational segregation in American society. De jure forms of segregation were those established and preserved in laws and policies that prohibited racial mixing in school settings. This form predominated in most Southern states. School systems in northern and western areas, however, were often just as segregated as southern de jure systems due to de facto circumstances, resulting in segregated patterns that existed “in fact” but which had not occurred specifically as a result of laws or policies. De facto segregation was an indirect form of separation most often created by neighborhood schools serving segregated neighborhoods. It was the result of the laws, policies, and private practices of prejudice in the housing and real estate industries rather than in educational administrative arenas.

622 The Oregon Journal (Portland, OR), August 27, 1970. R.L. Anderson, who lived at 4045 N Missouri Ave. in the late 1960s, led the local arm of the Black Berets.
624 Ford was a student living at 23 NE San Rafael St. in 1970 (Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 109).
626 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 84.
627 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 87. It should be noted that majority-African American schools were not universally rejected by the African American community in mid-twentieth century Portland. As established by “separate, but equal,” African American students should, theoretically, have been able to receive a good education given good teachers, good materials, and strong models and support from the school system. Realistically, however, those “equal” educational elements were rarely provided under de facto segregation, and they were generally absent in Portland as well.
Although Portland schools had been officially integrated since 1872, African American students sometimes experienced special restrictions based on their race and until the 1940s, when Leota Stone and Robert Ford were appointed as Portland’s first African American teachers, they were instructed by White teachers only. The fact that the African American community remained small and introduced relatively few students into the school system made the integrated arrangement tolerable for the White community.

The *de facto* segregation of public schools began to generate tension as the African American community grew after World War II. Settlement patterns created neighborhood schools in Northeast Portland that were nearly all African American, as well as schools in other parts of Portland that were virtually all White. Albeit for different reasons, Portland schools in the 1960s were effectively as segregated as those in the South.

Ideologically, the leaders of the African American community during the 1960s become solidly committed to full integration of the school system. Leaders in the educational community were generally sympathetic to this concept, but many were wary that adjustments could negatively affect the educational experience of White students. However, many White Portlanders vigorously opposed any change to the status quo, for reasons ranging from Southern-style racism to objections based on a theoretical educational philosophy.

In the 1960s, the NAACP led a local campaign to address what was perceived as a serious problem to African American advancement. NAACP President Harry Ward put the Portland School Board on notice that the NAACP expected it to address *de facto* school segregation in 1963. By 1964, the Portland School District settled on one means of achieving integration: a “pilot relocation assistance project,” in which twenty-five qualified African American families living in Albina would receive financial assistance to relocate out of the area and into other school districts.

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628 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 76.
629 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 86.
630 Johnson and Williams, “Desegregation and Multiculturalism in the Portland Public Schools,” 6-37. Portland Public Schools commissioned a study in 1963 and to assess racial isolation and disparities in academic achievement entitled *Race and Equal Educational Opportunity in Portland’s Public Schools*, also known as the Schwab Report. The Schwab Report’s release in 1964 was largely rejected by the African American community who supported the NAACP’s findings from a 1962 report and objected to another study instead of taking action. White residents accepted the report’s findings that Portland’s Public Schools were not adequately meeting the needs of Portland’s vulnerable minority populations but also focused on the Schwab Report’s discussion of “cultural deficiencies” that made equal educational standards or integration of schools impossible.
631 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 86-87. Phil Reynolds, the 1958 NAACP president (living at 3130 SE Brooklyn) demonstrated a lifetime commitment to promoting education for African American youth. His dedication would be recognized in 1983 with the establishment of the Phil Reynolds Scholarship Fund.
632 Ward was a County Public Welfare caseworker and lived at 6625 NE 42nd during his tenure as NAACP president.
633 That same year, the school district staff also achieved better integration. In 1964, Robert Hughley became the first African American in an administrative position as Community Services Coordinator for the Albina Model Schools Program. Hughley had been a special education teacher with the School District before taking leave to complete his Ph.D. He lived at 4313 SE Taylor and later at 3965 SE Oak. A year later, Jim Winters became Portland Public Schools’ first African American sports coach. He had been a star athlete at the University of Portland and in 1966 accepted a position at Washington High School. Winters lived at 4733 N Kerby at the time. Bosco-Milligan Foundation, *Cornerstones of Community*, 87.
pastor Reverend Grady Brown, addressed the Portland City Club on the school segregation issue, calling segregation “a dragon with a strong constitution and almost limitless resistance.”

The conflict eventually culminated in the formation of a panel tasked to study the situation and make implementation recommendations to the school board. The commission’s recommendations committed the school district to an approach toward integration that relied on the ultimate dispersal of African American students throughout the district, with the eventual closure of all neighborhood schools in the African American community. A new school superintendent, Robert Blanchard, was hired to implement what came to be known as the “Blanchard Plan.”

Under this approach, the children of the African American community almost exclusively bore the burdens of integration. They often found themselves isolated in hostile environments, cut off from cultural and parental sources of comfort and support, and supervised by teachers who lacked the necessary knowledge, training, or inclination to overcome the disadvantages of this imposed approach to school integration. There were some success stories and much good intention within these efforts. But eventually the inherent flaws, inequity, and destructive effects of this approach became so apparent that a strong reaction arose from within that community and among White sympathizers who wished to overturn the Blanchard Plan for integration.

The tipping point in this controversy came in 1976 when the Portland School Board under the leadership of Jonathan Newman announced its plan to close Jefferson High School (5210 N Kerby Ave.). Jefferson was the designated neighborhood high school for much of Inner North and Northeast Portland and the African American community living in Albina. A firestorm of reaction and resistance erupted, culminating in the creation of a new protest organization called the Black United Front. The Front espoused direct action strategies that included occupations of School Board meetings, threats, and implementation of school boycotts, with a heavy dose of political actions and maneuvers. Finally, after the firing of Superintendent Blanchard in 1980, the resignation from the Board of Jonathan Newman in 1979, and the hiring of Matthew Prophet, the District’s first African American superintendent, in 1982, the Blanchard Plan was shelved and a new approach to school desegregation was designed. The new approach relied more on strengthening neighborhood schools, using magnet schools to attract White students to schools in African American neighborhoods, and retraining the existing teaching pool. This approach generated its own set of conflicts, issues, and problems that sometimes reached the level of national discussion. Educational issues arising from the patterns of residence and housing created in

634 Bosco-Milligan Foundation, Cornerstones of Community, 87. Rev. Brown lived at 6133 NE 8th Ave. at this time.
636 Johnson and Williams, “Desegregation and Multiculturalism in the Portland Public Schools,” 18-28. This was not the first nor the last time the Portland Public School (PPS) Board discussed closing Jefferson High School, although it was the closest the school ever came to closing. After the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, the school district publicly discussed closing Jefferson High School in 1969 as racial tensions continued to simmer. In 1971, the PPS discussed ways to end segregation at Jefferson High School, including by closing the school entirely. Instead, the school transitioned to a magnet academy in 1974. In the 1980s, Jefferson was again targeted for closure but saved by the closures of Adams and Washington-Monroe high schools instead.
638 Prophet’s approach came to be known as the Portland Plan and continued through the 1990s. The Portland Plan’s commitment to multicultural education was heralded as a national model for other school districts, although it still had
earlier generations of hostile racial policies continue to linger in the educational environment of Portland into the twenty-first century. 639

**A Wholistic Approach to Urban Renewal: The Model Cities Program**

In the mid-1960s, the Federal Government added social goals to its mix of urban programs. Model Cities Programs across the nation focused on remedying urban decay and poverty through grassroots organizations and publicly funded improvements, utilizing community leaders instead of elected officials. 640 The federal War on Poverty was the impetus for neighborhood and community organizing in both Northeast and Southeast Portland, laying the groundwork for strong neighborhood activism. The Model Cities program, which was applied to a large section of North and Northeast Portland in 1967, had similar impacts in Albina. The program was intended to concentrate and coordinate federal and local resources to make a real impact on targeted neighborhoods. To the consternation of Portland’s official leadership, community organization under Model Cities challenged class and racial biases in city programs while building community leadership capacity in the Albina neighborhoods.

Because Model Cities programming focused both public and private attention on the issues and problems of its target community, it became impossible for Portland to continue to ignore the problems and aspirations of a significant portion of the urban community. Although the entire Eliot neighborhood had been slated for redevelopment in the early 1960s, Model Cities uncovered and emphasized residents’ desires to rehabilitate and rebuild the area as a residential enclave. While this opinion had already been expressed through programs like the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project, the spotlight of a national campaign prevented local officials from tabling the discussion for a later date. 641

In addition to the residential programs described in Context I of this document, War on Poverty and Model Cities programming led to the creation of many social programs. The nationally-recognized Low Income Family Emergency (LIFE) Center opened at 321 NE Russell St. in 1970 with Gertrude Crowe as director; the Center eventually relocated to 6329 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, where it operated until 2005. 642 A pre-school Head Start Program started at the Highland Baptist Church in the 1960s would grow into a multi-facility operation that continues to serve the community in the twenty-first century. Ron Herndon, a Reed College alumnus and local educational activist, served as the director of the Albina Head Start School in Northeast Portland and later became chairman of the board of the National Head Start Association. 643 The Albina Art Center operated at 8 NE Killingsworth St. from 1964 through 1973, focusing on arts, music, and other cultural programs; Rufus Butler, a former Urban League field director,
was the Center’s first managing director. The Albina Youth Opportunity School, Portland’s oldest alternative school, opened in 1967 through the efforts of Frank Fair and Rance Spruill. It continues to operate at 3710 N Mississippi Ave, as of this writing.

One of the greatest achievements of the Model Cities Program was the development of local community leaders and emphasis on citizen participation through neighborhood organizations. Opal Strong, who had come to Portland in 1943 to work in the Kaiser Shipyards and later survived the Vanport Flood, was one resident who gave countless hours as a member of the first Model Cities Planning Board; she extended the same dedication to War on Poverty programs and Albina Tree Planting Program. Rozelle Jackson Yee, a beautician, also found herself speaking out at countless meetings as clearance plans near her home continued to be proposed. Charles Jordan, who was hired as the fourth Director for Portland’s Model Cities Program (and the first African American to hold the position), became the first African American on the Portland City Council when he was elected in 1974. Finally, Hazel Hays, an officer of the Citizens’ Planning Board loaned by PDC to the Model Cities Program, would eventually become the agency’s Community Services Director and lead the agency with a new emphasis on housing rehabilitation.

Civil Rights Beyond the Period of Significance

At the dawn of the 1970s, a new generation of leaders was coming of age in the African American community. These young people would join with established leaders to continue long-standing, community-based initiatives and to begin new ones on many fronts. Yet to come in the early 1980s were the Black United Front (led by Reverend John Jackson and Ron Herndon) and the Black United Fund, two of the many entities which would build community and achieve successes through protest and new initiatives. In the coming decades, African Americans would be elected to new political offices, successful business would be established and grow, and grassroots involvement would continue in meeting rooms throughout the community.

Despite political and economic advances during the Civil Rights Era, Portland’s African American residents continued to experience explicit and implicit racism in the years after the close of the period of significance, including at the hands of law enforcement. For example, in 1981, two police officers left four dead opossums outside a Black-owned restaurant, the Burger Barn, on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Although the suspected police officers claimed “no intent of racial harassment,” a similar occurrence at the Burger Barn the following year could not be so easily denied: a dead chicken with a Ku Klux Klan

644 The Oregon Journal (Portland, OR), April 16, 1970 [copy in possession of Bosco-Milligan Foundation/Architectural Heritage Center].
645 Sara Perry, “Salute to a Senator Hears Testimonials of Good Deeds,” The Oregonian (Portland, OR), April 21, 1996.
646 The Strong’s home at 5021 N Williams Ave. is no longer extant (Opal Strong, interview by Catherine Galbraith and Kimberly Moreland, 1996).
647 Rozelle Jackson Yee, interview by Catherine Galbraith and Kimberly Moreland, 1996. Yee’s home of the era is extant at 202 NE Graham St. and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001 (National Register of Historic Places, Lewis and Elizabeth Van Vleet House, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #01000937).
648 Griffin, “Charles Jordan remembered.” Jordan’s home of the era is extant at 1830 NE Klickitat St.
650 Benny Evangelista, Jr., “Police Admit Opossum Incident,” The Sunday Oregonian (Portland, OR), March 15, 1981. The Burger Barn at 3962 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. was demolished in 2017.
business card was left outside the restaurant and employees were threatened the same night over the phone.\textsuperscript{651}

Today, organizations such as the NAACP, Urban League, and Albina Ministerial Alliance continue to advocate for civil rights and equitable treatment of Portland’s African American community. New movements such as Black Lives Matter have also emerged on the national and local level, and in this way, the city’s African American community and its allies continue the struggle to overcome racial biases and inequalities established in the early days of the United States, Oregon, and Portland.

\textbf{Context-Associated Property Types}

Section F of this MPD lists the predominant property types associated with African American resources in Portland, Oregon, during the period of significance (1865-1973). Resources significant for their association with Context VII, \textit{Civil Rights}, may belong to any property type described in Section F, provided the resource maintains an association with a notable event, figure, or trend described in this context. For example, resources belonging to Property Type I, \textit{Residences}, may be significant for their associations with notable civil rights leaders, for their association with discriminatory or fair housing practices, or for their role as meeting spaces for advocacy groups. Similarly, resources belonging to Property Type IV, \textit{Religious Facilities}, or Property Type V, \textit{Civic and Social Organization Buildings}, may be significant for their roles as meeting spaces. Sites of protest or similar events may be significant under Property Type VI, \textit{Sites (Non-Archaeological)}. Additional research and evaluation of significance and integrity are necessary for any property or group of properties to be determined eligible for listing in the National Register under this MPD.

\textsuperscript{651} Tom Hallman, Jr., “KKK Chicken’ Thrown at Burger Barn’s Door,” \textit{The Oregonian} (Portland, OR), March 4, 1982.
F. Associated Property Types
(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

GENERAL REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS – ALL PROPERTY TYPES
All properties nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places must demonstrate historical significance and integrity. A property that has historical significance, but lacks sufficient integrity to convey that historical significance, is not eligible for the National Register. Similarly, a property that demonstrates high integrity, but cannot be found to be historically significant, is not eligible for the National Register. The four National Register Criteria for Evaluation, the seven aspects of integrity, and the interplay between these, are discussed below.

Significance
All properties nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places must demonstrate historical significance under one or more of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. The Criteria for Evaluation are:

- **Criterion A**: Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- **Criterion B**: Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- **Criterion C**: Embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; representative of the work of a master; possessive of high artistic values; representative of a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- **Criterion D**: A source of, or likely source of, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
The National Register program identifies several categories of properties that under ordinary circumstances are generally considered to be ineligible for listing. However, the National Register acknowledges through Criteria Considerations (A though G) that under certain narrow circumstances, properties belonging to these seven categories can be eligible for listing. While any of the Criteria Considerations may pertain, those most likely to be of relevance to properties nominated through this Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD) include those concerning religious properties, moved buildings, birthplaces or graves, and properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years.

Area of Significance
All properties nominated for listing in the National Register must identify an area of significance from among the categories established by the National Park Service. All properties nominated through this MPD will have significance under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage through their association with the African American experience in Portland, Oregon. The significance may rely solely on association with this area of significance or may draw significance through one or more additional areas.

652 For more detailed guidance on the application of Criteria Considerations, see National Register Bulletin #15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, pp. 25-43.
Level of Significance
All properties nominated to the National Register must also be assigned a geographical level of significance. A property may be significant at the local, state, or national level as determined by the relative importance of the resource, not necessarily by the limits of its physical location. The majority of properties nominated under this MPD will have significance at the local level. However, given the scale of certain historical themes (e.g., redlining and racist zoning practices, the civil rights movement, urban renewal programs), some properties may have significance at the state or national level.

Period of Significance
The period of significance is based on the period of use by an individual or individuals associated with the African American community. It is common for the beginning of the period of significance to postdate the original construction of the property, sometimes by decades. It is also common for properties to have been altered prior to or during the period of significance. In such cases, the integrity standards identified in this document should be applied in regards to the property as it was during the period of significance, and not at the time of construction.

A well-documented example of this is the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2016 for (among other reasons) its prominent role in Portland’s Black community during the midcentury postwar period, including the struggle for civil rights. The building was originally constructed in 1909 by the White congregation of the Central Methodist Episcopal Church, reflecting the then-predominantly immigrant White population of the area. As described in detail in the nomination and Section E of this document, the practice of redlining focused Portland’s African American population into Albina in the 1940s and 1950s, and the neighborhood quickly became predominantly African American. In 1951 the church was purchased by the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church congregation, establishing the beginning of the period of significance for that building, which spans the period 1951-1968. To better serve the new congregation, significant remodeling occurred in 1954 and 1956, diminishing the integrity of the original 1909 design. For the purposes of nomination to the National Register, however, the building retains a high level of integrity because its appearance remains relative to the relationship to the African American experience in Portland during the period of significance.

Integrity
For a property to qualify under the National Register’s Criteria for Evaluation, it must retain both significance and “historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance.” While a property’s significance relates to its role within a specific historic context, its integrity refers to “a property’s physical features and how they relate to its significance.” To determine if a property retains the physical characteristics corresponding to its historic context, the National Register program relies on evaluation of these seven aspects of integrity:

654 National Park Service, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 9.
655 National Register of Historic Places, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #16000604.
656 National Park Service, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 3.
657 National Park Service, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 44.
• **Location**: The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
• **Setting**: The physical environment surrounding a historic property.
• **Design**: The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a historic property.
• **Materials**: The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
• **Workmanship**: A historic property’s physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
• **Feeling**: A historic property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
• **Association**: The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.  

Because integrity is based on a property’s significance within a specific historic context, an evaluation of a property’s integrity can only occur after historic significance has been established. Section E of this MPD provides seven contexts within which a property associated with the African American experience in Portland, Oregon, may be evaluated for historic significance.

Assessing integrity necessitates an understanding of a property’s **character-defining features**. A character-defining feature is a physical feature that comprises an important aspect of the appearance of a property as exhibited during the property’s period of significance. Character-defining elements typically include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, and design details; character-defining elements can also include interior spaces and features, as well as various aspects of a property’s site and environment. Within this framework, assessing integrity can be understood as evaluating whether or not the character-defining features retained by a given property are sufficient to convey the property’s historic significance.

Consideration of the rarity of the property type and area of significance in question is also an important aspect of evaluating integrity. As noted in National Register guidelines:

> Comparative information is particularly important to consider when evaluating the integrity of a property that is a rare surviving example of its type. The property must have the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic character or information. The rarity and poor condition, however, of other extant examples of the type may justify accepting a greater degree of alteration or fewer features, provided that enough of the property survives for it to be a significant resource.

As detailed in Context Statement I, *Settlement Patterns*, Portland’s African American community was subjected to multiple waves of displacement during the period of significance and thereafter, typically followed by extensive demolition of properties formerly inhabited or used by African Americans. As a result, extant examples of various property types that were associated with the African American

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660 National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 47, emphasis added.
community during the period of significance may be rare. In general, the rarer the resource, the greater allowance for diminished integrity.

In addition, resources considered under this MPD may exhibit physical changes that reflect the African American community’s exclusion from White dominant systems of financing, construction, and employment throughout the period of significance. Exclusion from these White dominant systems necessitated Portland’s Black community to develop parallel approaches to building use, maintenance, and rehabilitation. In certain instances these parallel structures may have resulted in diminished integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to allow for the continued use of buildings by their African American inhabitants.

Property Categories

The National Register classifies properties into five categories:

- **Building**: Buildings are defined as a built entity constructed for the principal purpose of sheltering any form of human activity, such as houses, apartments, churches, commercial buildings, schools, etc.
- **Structure**: Structures are built entities constructed to provide a function other than shelter for human activity, such as bridges, roads, dams, fortifications, etc. Some properties classified as structures can be movable, such as locomotives and aircraft.
- **Object**: Objects are built entities that are primarily artistic or commemorative in nature and intended to be displayed or installed in a specific location and/or setting. Examples are sculptures or other works of art or artistic installations, statues, commemorative monuments, fountains, boundary markers, and benchmarks.
- **Site**: Sites are locations of significant events, activities, or the remains thereof, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural or archaeological value, either with or without identifiable physical remains of the event or activity. Sites can be, but are not always, archaeological in nature. Properties classified as sites include, but are not limited to, archaeological sites, battlefields, ceremonial sites, trails, routes, town sites, ruins of historical buildings or structures, and natural features such as springs, rock formations, or land areas having cultural significance.

These five property categories are those defined by the National Park Service to distinguish between the *kinds* of resources the National Register is designed to address. They are variously referred to as “categories” and “types.” This document prefers “categories” in order to clearly distinguish between the broad types of properties defined by the National Register, and property types derived from the original use or function of a property within a category. For example, within the category of “buildings,” this document defines “residences,” “commercial,” and “religious facilities,” among several others, each of which may include one or more sub-types further defining the use or function where these result in a distinguishable design or presentation. When preparing a National Register nomination through this MPD, the property category should be conveyed by selecting one of the five categories in Part 5 “Classification” section of the nomination form. Additionally, the relevant property type should be reflected in the Section 7 Narrative Description, with direct reference to this MPD.

Archaeological sites in Oregon are defined as: (A) Ten or more artifacts (including debitage) likely to have been generated by patterned cultural activity within a surface area reasonable to that activity; or (B) The presence of any archaeological feature, with or without associated artifacts. Examples of such features include: a culturally modified tree, cache pit, hearth, housepit, rockshelter, cairn, historic mining ditch, petroglyph, or dendroglyph (Guidelines for Conducting Field Archaeology in Oregon, November 2013 [revised 2016], available at: http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/HCD/ARCH/docs/Master_Final_FieldGuidelines_January2016.pdf).
• **District:** Districts are significant collections of historically associated sites, objects, structures, buildings, or a combination thereof, that share contextual, locational, or physical relationships which together demonstrate greater significance than the individual constituent components can convey when taken separately. Properties defined as Districts include, but are not limited to, central commercial areas, residential areas, industrial complexes, and areas historically associated with specific populations, including ethnicities or people of unified national origin.

**Eligibility through this Multiple Property Documentation Form**

To establish significance through this MPD, a property must demonstrate a close relationship to one or more of the Historic Contexts identified in Section E and assert the significance of that relationship directly through one or more of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Eligible resources must be associated with a defined area and period of significance.\(^{663}\)

Demonstrating a given property’s association with the African American community is not, in and of itself, sufficient. Significance is established through a comparative analysis that demonstrates that the property is important within at least one of the contexts identified in Section E. In addition, a property’s typological classification may not align with its historic use. For instance, a building constructed as a residence may be significant under this MPD for its commercial use, if, for example, the property is associated with an important African American business that was operated out of the proprietor’s home.

**Criterion A**

All properties nominated through this MPD must demonstrate significance at least through Criterion A, reflecting an element of the broad history of the African American experience in Portland, Oregon. Additional criteria may or may not be relevant depending on the property’s association. This association must relate to one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E, and the specific role and relationship within that context must be established in Section 8 of the nomination prepared for the specific property. Significance under Criterion A is derived from either the prominent role played within an identified historic context, or the high ability of a specific property to convey or represent the historical universe of properties associated with a historic context, either through the aggregate of its components or through the loss of a substantial portion of the historical universe of properties associated with that context.

Under Criterion A, integrity of association, location, and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, though most must be sufficiently present to convey the contextual association for which the property is being nominated.

**Criterion B**

All properties nominated under Criterion B must represent the property most closely associated with a person of historical significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this document. A property determined to be that which is most closely associated with a significant person will be the property that itself most closely represents the specific contribution of that individual with the

\(^{663}\) A property that is significant under one or more contexts in Section E of this MPD may also be significant under one or more criteria unrelated to this MPD. For example, a property nominated through this MPD under Criterion A for its association with a significant event in African American history could also be National Register-eligible under Criterion C for its architectural merit despite not being associated with any Section E contexts under that criterion.
identified context. If the building that historically was most closely associated with a significant individual is no longer extant, a property closely associated with that individual, but less closely associated with their significant role may be nominated. For example, a property nominated under Criterion B for association with an individual who is significant for their prominent role within a specific profession would most appropriately be the building in which they practiced that profession. A property nominated for association with an individual who is significant for their role in a specific event would most appropriately be the property where the event took place. In both cases, if the most appropriate building related to the significance of that individual is no longer extant, but the residence in which they lived during the period in which they were prominent in their field, or when the significant event took place is extant, then the residence may be nominated.

Because of the historical impact of urban renewal on African American neighborhoods, and the ongoing gentrification and redevelopment resulting from market forces, it is expected that historically significant individuals will be best represented under Criterion B by properties that may not be as closely related to the significance as those that once existed.

As with Criterion A, integrity of association, location, and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance under Criterion B than are integrity of design, setting, materials, and workmanship, though most must be sufficiently present to convey the contextual association for which they are nominated.

**Criterion C**
Properties eligible under Criterion C will demonstrate aspects of the African American experience through their design or physical character or represent the work of a prominent African American architect, designer, or builder. A property can be eligible if it demonstrates such distinctive characteristics either in its original design, or if it has been modified or adapted from an earlier design to incorporate such characteristics.

Under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself are of primary importance, including design, materials, and workmanship. While still relevant, location, setting, feeling, and association are of less relative importance, unless an aspect of the property suggests a heightened relevance, such as a building whose design responds directly and intentionally to the setting in which it was built.

**Criterion D**
Properties eligible under Criterion D will generally be archaeological in nature, but may also include other resource types such as buildings. Archaeological properties eligible under Criterion D will be those that can be clearly associated with one or more historical contexts identified in Section E of this document and that either have, or are demonstrably likely to yield, important information on some aspect of the African American experience that is poorly or not understood. For example, an archaeological site related to the residence of an early African American settler in Portland could be eligible under Criterion D if it has, or is likely to yield information regarding economic networking or purchasing power, measures available or taken for personal protection, interrelationships within the African American community or with other communities, or other related reasons. Potential research questions related to African American archaeological sites may include, but are not limited to the following:

- What was the extent of African American involvement in the fur trade in the Oregon Territory?
- What was the nature of African American participation in overland migration via the Oregon Trail?
- What was the geographical distribution of African American settlers in what is now Oregon prior to the period of significance?
- What types of activities were carried out at African American residences during the nineteenth century?
In what ways were early African American residences different from the residences of other communities of color or their White counterparts? In what ways were they similar?

What can be learned about Portland’s African American businesses and their customers that is not documented in the written record?

How did the diets and consumption patterns of African Americans living in Portland during the period of significance compare to those of other population groups living in Portland during the same period?

When compared to employment settings occupied by other communities of color, how does the material record distinguish itself as primarily associated with the African American population? How does that same material compare to those deposited by White Portlanders?

When compared to other communities of color in Portland, what does the associated material culture indicate about African Americans’ access to goods, purchasing power, consumer choice, or other factors?

What remains of Guild’s Lake and Vanport, and what does it reveal about housing developments and the changing nature of African American settlement patterns during World War II?

How does the material record account for drastic fluctuations in Portland’s African American population (e.g. increase with World War II labor demands; decrease at the end of World War II; displacement of residences from Vanport, and urban renewal and clearance)?

What remains of African American residences in urban renewal areas that were cleared for development in the mid-twentieth century? What does it reveal about the distribution of African American occupancy within these areas?

Certain aspects of integrity are of particular importance when applied to archaeological sites. Location, materials, and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance, and the ability to distinguish artifacts associated with one or more historical contexts identified in Section E, are critical for eligibility under Criterion D.

PROPERTY TYPES

This section describes the predominant property types associated with the Historic Contexts identified in Section E of this document, including historic significance and integrity considerations specific to each type. The identified property types are based on extensive survey work completed in conjunction with each of the Historic Contexts. The property types are:

I. Residences
II. Commercial and Professional Buildings
III. Entertainment Venues
IV. Religious Facilities
V. Civic and Social Organization Buildings
VI. Sites (Non-Archaeological)
VII. Sites (Archaeological)
VIII. Objects
IX. Historic Districts

See Section H for more background on existing survey documentation associated with African American resources.
The property type descriptions that follow also identify important subtypes (such as single-family homes) within each property type.

I. Residences
Residential properties are by far the category with the most numerous extant buildings associated with Portland’s African American community during the period of significance (1865-1973). The vast majority of these are detached, single-family residences, along with a small collection of multiplexes and apartment buildings. Residential properties are most likely to be significant for their association with the Settlement Patterns context in Section E, but they may also be significant under other contexts, such as Business and Employment or Civil Rights Justice.

Single-family Homes
The majority of extant buildings associated with Portland’s African American community during the period of significance are detached, single-family residences. While examples from throughout the period of significance exist, most such houses were built between 1890 and 1930 and are modest examples of residential styles popular in Portland during the period, including Queen Anne, Bungalow and Foursquare. Though some were built by African Americans, most of these houses were built for White owners and later rented or sold to African Americans. As described in Section E, as these houses aged and their original owners moved on, geographic policy restrictions and redlining concentrated Portland’s growing African American community into these extant homes in formerly predominantly-White neighborhoods.

Additional information is provided in the Additional Documentation section (“Discussion of Residential Architectural Styles”) regarding the most common architectural styles of residences that were occupied by Portland’s African Americans during the period of significance. Note, however, that the styles identified in the appendix are not intended to be exhaustive, and that residences would only be architecturally significant under the auspices of this MPD if they were known to be associated with an African American architect or builder. The appendix is included in order to provide concise background information that will help those submitting National Register nominations in the future under the auspices of this MPD contextualize the architecture of their specific property.

Multi-family Homes
Multi-family residential properties associated with Portland’s African American community during the period of significance consist of both small-scale multiplexes and larger apartment buildings. Most appear to date from the early twentieth century. The multiplexes often mimicked architectural styles that were popular for single family homes at the time, including Bungalow, Colonial Revival, Foursquare, and Queen Anne. Examples include 28 NE Fargo St. (Foursquare, 1907) and 2423 E Burnside St. (Queen Anne, 1910). Most of these dwellings were originally constructed as multi-family duplexes, triplexes, or fourplexes, often built to look more like single-family residences; only a handful appear to have been converted from single-family homes. These were most likely converted in the effort to house Portland’s rapidly growing population during World War II.

Many of the apartment buildings associated with Portland’s African American community are brick-clad buildings from the early twentieth century. Examples include 1000 NW 17th Ave. (1911), 117 NW Trinity Pl. (1912), and 2322 N Williams Ave. (1929).

Of the multi-family buildings discussed in Section E, most had documented evidence of individual African American residents with a rental tenure of five years or fewer; only a handful of residents appear to have stayed in one multifamily building for more than five (albeit almost always fewer than ten) years. Many apartment units were home to subsequent African American renters over a long period of time.
Registration Requirements: Residences

**Criterion A**

Each residential property nominated under the auspices of this MPD will possess significance under Criterion A for its association with some aspect of the broad history of the African American experience in Portland. Specific examples of areas of significance are discussed below.

A residential property may be significant for its association with a notable African American residential enclave, such as Hawthorne Park, Tibbetts Street, “Sugar Hill” or Montavilla.665 These enclaves are especially important because they were often the only locations where African Americans were permitted to reside in Portland due to a variety of discriminatory housing practices. Similarly, a residential property may be significant for its association with the rapid growth of Portland’s African American community during World War II and, in particular, its association with efforts to house that growing demographic group. Other residential properties may be significant for their association with the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Program, which rehabilitated nearly 300 homes in the 1960s and early 1970s providing a powerful example of community-led neighborhood improvement. A residential property located outside of Lower Albina or one of the known African American enclaves may also be significant as a notable exception to the settlement patterns described in Context I.

Many residential properties identified in this document may be significant for their association with events that were important to the fight for civil rights or other social justice initiatives, including public accommodations, equal housing, school integration, and hiring discrimination. The house at 1524 SE 32nd Pl., for example, may be significant for its association with the battle for equal housing. In this example, White real estate agent Clarence Enders was expelled by the Portland Realty Board when he sold the house to African American William “Tony” Anthony and his Native American wife Marie in 1949 (the Anthonys remained in the home into the 1960s.) Other residential properties may be significant for regularly hosting meetings of African American social clubs or civic organizations, which were often held in residences due to African Americans’ limited access to office space.

**Criterion B**

A residential property may be eligible under Criterion B if it is the property most closely associated with a person of historical significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this document. Persons of historical significance include, but are certainly not limited to, a key figure in one or more benevolent and fraternal societies; a prominent business owner (especially if the building that hosted the business is no longer extant); an important civil rights leader; or a pioneering journalist. For example, the house at 833 NE Shaver St., which was listed on the National Register in 2015, was found significant under Criterion B as the longtime residence of Otto and Verdell Rutherford, important leaders of the local civil rights movement.666

Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B. As noted in the National Register guidelines:

665 In general, such properties do not appear to retain sufficient concentration to be eligible for consideration as a district and would more likely be nominated as individual resources.

666 National Register of Historic Places, Otto and Verdell Rutherford House, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #14001076. As a primary site for meetings, strategy sessions, and other organizing events, the house was also determined eligible under Criterion A as a key property in the local civil rights movement.
A property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group. It must be shown that the person gained importance within his or her profession or group.667

In addition, the figure in question will need to have lived in the associated residential property during the period of significance (1865-1973). In cases where multiple residences are associated with an important figure, the property, or properties, that are most directly associated with the time period of the individual’s life during which they achieved significance are most likely to be considered significant. A residence, for example, that was only associated with an important figure before they achieved significance would generally not be deemed significant under Criterion B, unless it was the only remaining property associated with the individual.

**Criterion C**
To be eligible under Criterion C under the auspices of this MPD, a residential property needs to demonstrate, through its design or physical character, significant aspects of the African American experience or represent the work of a prominent African American architect, designer, or builder. For example, homes constructed by Shelby Golden, one of a very few African American contractors working in Portland in the early twentieth century, may be significant under this criterion.

Most of the residences identified in this document were built for White owners and later rented or sold to African American residents. With respect to this MPD, residences that are representative examples of an architectural style but were designed, built, and initially occupied by non-African Americans would generally not be eligible under this criterion.668 A potential exception is a residence that, following its initial construction, was substantially modified by an African American occupant or builder in a manner that appears to be significant in its own right and falls within the building’s period of significance.

**Criterion D**
A residential property may be significant under Criterion D if it can be associated with one or more historical contexts in Section E and either has or is likely to yield important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Portland during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources, it may also be appropriate for standing buildings if they have the potential to illustrate a particular method of construction, the peculiarities, skills, or markers of a builder, or other architectural elements about which little is known.

**Integrity**
Because African Americans were restricted as to where they could rent and buy homes, it was frequently easier for people to improve and update their homes over time than to purchase a new dwelling elsewhere. Consequently, alterations of single-family homes during the period of significance are prevalent. Common alterations include window replacement (typically with aluminum windows set within

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668 Such properties may be eligible under Criterion C for their architectural distinction, but that significance would not derive from any association with the African American community and thus would not relate to this MPD. See also footnote 10.
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

State

Name of Multiple Property Listing

-the original window openings); door replacement; porch enclosures (typically done to add living space); and siding replacement. Some residences have been converted to commercial use and may include a storefront addition. Depending on the extent of the modification, and whether or not it falls within the building’s period of significance, such a residence may be more appropriately evaluated via the Commercial and Professional Buildings property type. Typical alterations to multi-family dwellings include modifications to signage, awnings, windows, and exterior stairs and fire exits.

The degree to which such alterations compromise a property’s ability to convey its significance depends on the nature of that significance. For residential properties that are significant under Criterion A or B, integrity of association, location, and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion B, if such spaces are directly associated with how the significant person(s) used the building. For residential properties that are significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself, including design, materials, and workmanship are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess whether they fall within the period of significance and, if not, the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics that make the property significant. Finally, aspects of integrity of particular importance to properties that are significant under Criterion D include location, materials, and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts associated with one or more historical contexts identified in Section E.

II. Commercial and Professional Buildings

Extant commercial and professional buildings associated with Portland’s African American community during the period of significance consist of storefront buildings, midrise mixed-use buildings, and midrise hotels. These buildings are most likely to be significant for their association with the Business and Employment context in Section E. Subsets of the buildings may be significant for their association with the Journalism context and/or the Civil Rights context. Commercial buildings often provided space for community interactions and office locations for African Americans, who in the early- to mid-twentieth century found office space just as difficult to rent or own as residences.

Most of the extant commercial and professional buildings associated with this MPD were constructed between 1900 and 1940 and are representative of the early twentieth century commercial building style, featuring brick or stucco cladding, ground-floor store fronts divided into individual bays, and offices or apartments above. Good examples of this style include the buildings at 2322 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. (1911), 2525 N Williams Ave. (1911), 2940 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. (1922), 2531 N Williams Ave. (1911), and 3037 N Williams Ave. (the National Register-listed Rinehart Building, 1911).

Two of the grander commercial mixed-use buildings from this era, the Golden West Hotel (1900) and the Royal Palm Hotel (1913), were residential hotels that catered to both local and visiting African Americans. Both properties continue to function as residential hotels today. The Second Empire-style Golden West Hotel at 707 NW Everett St. served African American railroad workers and visiting African American travelers who could not obtain accommodations at Portland’s White-owned hotels. In addition, several African American men and couples resided in the building on a more permanent basis. The hotel also leased commercial space to African American-owned businesses, including Richardson’s Confectionary and the Golden West Café. The Royal Palm Hotel at 310 NW Flanders St. included a barbershop, restaurant and other facilities for African Americans after the building was purchased from Japanese owners with the onset of World War II. Because of their significance and integrity, both hotels are candidates for listing in the National Register under this MPD.
In addition to these early twentieth-century examples, there are a handful of associated commercial buildings dating from the nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century. The 1890 Italianate style two-story building at 806 NE Dekum St., for example, housed Woodlawn Cleaners, which was owned and operated by Mrs. Willie Ranson from 1963 to 1986. Examples of Midcentury Modern commercial buildings include 2737 NE Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. (1955), 215 NE Hancock St. (1956), 511 SW 10th Ave. (1956), and 415 N Killingsworth St. (1967).

While African Americans operated a wide variety of businesses in Portland during the period of significance, barbershops and beauty salons were most common. These commercial establishments were paramount in the community, not just for personal care, but for allowing patrons to maintain social contacts and stay abreast of current events in the community. Examples of these include Dean’s Barber and Beauty Salon at 215 NE Hancock St. (1956), the oldest continuously-operating barber shop and salon in the state of Oregon, and the wood-frame building at 4601 N Williams Ave. (1910).

Registration Requirements: Commercial and Professional Buildings

**Criterion A**

Each commercial or professional building nominated under the auspices of this MPD will possess significance under Criterion A for its association with some aspect of the broad history of the African American experience in Portland. First and foremost, a commercial property or professional building may be significant for its association with a longstanding business or group of businesses that were important to the African American community during the period of significance. While these would typically be businesses that were owned by African Americans, they could also include businesses that were important for employing large numbers of African Americans.

Commercial and professional buildings may be significant under Criterion A for a wide variety of reasons. Specific examples of types of significance include, but are not limited to:

- An association with African American employment in the railroad industry during the early twentieth century. While the Golden West Hotel and Portland Union Station appear to be the most prominent (and potentially only) extant buildings associated with this history, there may be others.

- An association with the emergence of an African American middle class in the early twentieth century, when de facto segregation gave rise to a small but talented African American professional class in the boom time following the Lewis and Clark Exposition.

- An association with the thriving commercial district that extended along N Williams Avenue during the 1950s and 1960s. This district served as the commercial heart of Portland’s postwar African American community and featured a wide variety of service-oriented businesses, cafes, and restaurants.

- An association with an organization devoted to promoting African American business interests, such as the Urban League or the Cosmopolitan Club (See also Property Type V, Civic and Social Organization Buildings.) For example, the Urban League of Portland formed in 1945, in large part to help with the employment challenges facing many of the 10,000 African American former shipyard workers who remained in Portland after the conclusion of World War II.

- An association with an African American-led newspaper, such as *The Advocate*, *The Clarion Defender*, *The New Age*, *The People’s Observer*, or *The Portland Observer*, that was influential during the period of significance.
**Criterion B**
A commercial property may be eligible under Criterion B if it is the property most closely associated with a person of historical significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this document. Within the context of commercial and professional buildings, persons of historical significance will likely be an important business owner or otherwise influential business leader. For example, the 1956 Portland Medical Building (511 SW 10th Ave.) may be significant under this criterion as the only remaining office of physician and civil rights activist Dr. DeNorval Unthank. Another example is the building at 3213 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., where Dr. Hugh Bell opened Portland’s first African American dental practice in 1924 (Bell’s office was in the Foursquare residence at this address; the modern storefront addition was built in 1970).

Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B. As noted in the National Register guidelines:

> A property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group. It must be shown that the person gained importance within his or her profession or group.669

In addition, the property’s association with the figure in question will need to fall within or overlap the period of significance (1865-1973).

**Criterion C**
To be eligible under Criterion C under the auspices of this MPD, a commercial property needs to demonstrate, through its design or physical character, aspects of the African American experience or represent the work of a prominent African American architect, designer, or builder.

Section E does not identify any extant commercial buildings that are associated with an African American architect or builder, but such an association, if uncovered through property research, would be especially important due to its rarity. The commercial buildings identified in this document were generally built by White architects and contractors for White owners and were later used by African Americans. Such properties would generally not be eligible under Criterion C under the auspices of this MPD. A potential exception is a property that, following its initial construction, was modified in some substantial way specifically to accommodate its use as a commercial building for the African American community. A residence, for example, that was converted to partial use as a hair salon, may have significance under this criterion if the changes made to the building to accommodate that commercial use are intact and considered character-defining.

**Criterion D**
A commercial property may be significant under Criterion D if it can be associated with one or more historical contexts in Section E and either has, or is likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Portland during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources, it may also be appropriate for standing buildings if they have the potential to illustrate a

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particular method of construction, the peculiarities, skills, or markers of a builder, or other architectural elements about which little is known.

**Integrity**

Typical alterations to commercial buildings discussed in this document include paint applied over original masonry and siding; exterior signage, awnings, window alterations or replacements; and entry relocations. Some buildings have had major additions since the period of significance. A property exhibiting these changes may be eligible for listing in the National Register, especially if the changes were made during the period of significance.

The degree to which these physical alterations compromise a property’s ability to convey its significance depends on the nature of that significance. For commercial buildings that are significant under Criterion A or B, integrity of association, location, and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion B, if such spaces are directly associated with how the significant person(s) used the building. For a building that is significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself, including design, materials, and workmanship are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess whether they fall within the period of significance and, if not, the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics that make the property significant. Finally, particularly important aspects of integrity under Criterion D include location, materials, and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts that are associated with one or more historical contexts identified in Section E.

**III. Entertainment Venues**

In response to institutionalized discrimination and the segregation it engendered, African American Portlanders were regularly forced to develop their own entertainment venues. Dance halls and performance venues provided a range of entertainment opportunities for Portland’s African American community and fostered the development of a musical community that attained regional and national fame. While essentially a subset of the commercial buildings discussed in Section II, entertainment venues have been addressed in a separate section because their architectural characteristics and historical significance tends to be quite different from that of other commercial buildings.

Extant entertainment venues are most likely to be significant for their association with the Entertainment and Recreation context in Section E. They may also be significant for their association with the Business and Employment and Civil Rights contexts.

As discussed in Section E, only a handful of buildings that served as entertainment venues associated with Portland’s African American community during the period of significance remain standing today. Notable examples include:

- **128 NE Russell St.** (1914): Hibernia Hall (now the Wonder Ballroom), the site of many balls, dances, and receptions hosted by and for members of the African American community;
- **406 SW 14th Ave.** (1913): Cotillion Hall (now the Crystal Ballroom), where large social events and other entertainment for African Americans were held in the 1940s and 1950s; and
- **240 N Broadway** (1920): former home of the Dude Ranch (now an office building), which was owned by African Americans Pat Patterson and Sherman Pickett and two White co-owners. This is the only World War II-era African American nightclub that is still extant.
These three venues are especially important given their striking rarity.

Registration Requirements: Entertainment Venues

**Criterion A**
Each entertainment venue nominated under the auspices of this MPD will possess significance under Criterion A for its association with an aspect of the broad history of the African American experience in Portland. An entertainment venue may be significant for its central role in contributing to the social life of the African American community during the period of significance. Cotillion Hall and Hibernia Hall, for example, served as community halls used by a variety of individuals or clubs to host large parties. More narrowly associated with the African American community, the building at 240 N Broadway was an important location for Portland’s vibrant jazz scene of the 1940s and 1950s and remains as a rare example of an extant jazz venue from the postwar period.

**Criterion B**
An entertainment venue may be eligible under Criterion B if it is the property most closely associated with a person of historical significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this document. For example, an entertainment venue may be associated with a prominent musician, event promoter, club owner, or building owner.

Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B. As noted in the National Register guidelines:

> A property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group. It must be shown that the person gained importance within his or her profession or group. 670

In addition, the property’s association with the figure in question will need to fall within or overlap the period of significance (1865-1973).

**Criterion C**
To be eligible under Criterion C under the auspices of this MPD, an entertainment venue needs to demonstrate, through its design or physical character, aspects of the African American experience or represent the work of a prominent African American architect, designer, or builder.

Section E does not identify any extant entertainment venue that is associated with an African American architect or builder, but such an association, if uncovered through property research, would be especially important due to its rarity. The entertainment venues identified in this document were built by White architects and contractors for White owners and were later used by African Americans. Such properties would generally not be eligible under Criterion C under the auspices of this MPD. A potential exception is a facility that, following its initial construction, was modified in some substantial way during the property’s period of significance specifically to accommodate its use as an entertainment venue for the African American community.

Criterion D
A property associated with an entertainment venue may be significant under Criterion D if it can be associated with one or more historical contexts in Section E and either has, or is likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Portland during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources, it may also be appropriate for standing buildings if they have the potential to illustrate a particular method of construction, the peculiarities, skills, or markers of a builder, or other architectural elements about which little is known.

Integrity
The degree to which physical alterations compromise a property’s ability to convey its significance depends on the nature of that significance. For entertainment venues that are significant under Criterion A or B, integrity of association, location, and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion B, if such spaces are directly associated with how the significant person(s) used the building. For a venue that is significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself, including design, materials, and workmanship are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess whether they fall within the period of significance and, if not, the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics that make the property significant. Finally, aspects of integrity of particular importance to properties that are significant under Criterion D include location, materials, and association, especially as it relates to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts that are associated with one or more historical contexts identified in Section E.

Regardless of the relevant criterion, any integrity analysis must take into consideration the marked rarity of extant entertainment venues that associated with the African American community during the period of significance. As noted in the National Register guidelines, “a greater degree of alteration” may be accepted for a property that is a rare surviving example of its type. That said, the intactness of important interior spaces or features such as a dance hall or stage may be essential to demonstrating integrity for this property type.

IV. Religious Facilities
Portland includes many churches and a handful of mosques associated with the African American community during the period of significance. Obviously, these properties are most likely to be significant for their association with the Religion and Worship context in Section E. Given the multi-faceted roles these institutions often played, however, they may also be significant for their association with the Civil Rights context.

Churches
Throughout the period of significance, churches regularly provided services that extended well beyond their core function as a religious institution, serving as a center of the African American community for moral, social, and psychological support, too. The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church at 3138 N Vancouver Ave., for example, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2016 in part “for 671 National Park Service, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 47.
its role in changing the lives of its congregation through its promotion of improved social conditions in the postwar and Civil Rights eras.\textsuperscript{672}

The church buildings occupied by African American congregations were typically built by and for European American congregations, such as the church at \textit{831 NE Fremont St.} founded as the Deutsch Church, the church at \textit{2903 NE Rodney Ave.} built by Swedish Lutherans, and the church at \textit{4304 N Vancouver Ave.} founded as the Danish Norwegian Church. As the demographics of the residential neighborhoods in Albina changed, several formerly White churches were adopted by African American congregations. The Mt. Olivet Baptist Church at \textit{1734 NE 1\textsuperscript{st} Ave.} is a particularly significant exception as it is a rare example of a church built by and for its African American congregation (the building, however, was designed by White architect Morrison H. Vail). This is especially remarkable given the church’s 1923 date of construction, which is early for a specifically African American church to have been built in Portland. A number of important African Americans, including Marcus Garvey, were featured in special appearances here and Portland political candidates regularly visited during election campaigns.

Most of the subject churches referenced in Section E were constructed between 1900 and 1930, with a handful of exceptions built earlier or later. Many of these early twentieth-century churches are of the Gothic Revival style. They are typically wood-framed with clapboard siding, and exhibit characteristics typical of the style: pointed arch stained-glass windows, square pinnacled bell towers, and front and/or cross gabled roofs. Representative examples of the style include the churches at \textit{202 NE Skidmore St.} (1904), \textit{3605 NE Mallory Ave.} (1911), \textit{2902 NE Rodney Ave.} (1907), \textit{602 NE Prescott St.} (1906), and \textit{103 NE Morris St.} (1904). With their squat massing and round arched windows, the churches at \textit{1734 NE 1\textsuperscript{st} Ave.} and \textit{4009 N Missouri Ave.} are interesting examples of brick churches that combine Gothic Revival and Romanesque Revival influences. The churches at \textit{731 N Mason St.} (1927) and \textit{2859 NE Rodney Ave.} (1909) include Craftsman elements, while the church at \textit{4635 NE 9\textsuperscript{th} Ave.} (1927) blends Gothic Revival and Tudor Revival influences. The church at \textit{126 NE Alberta St.} (1922) is a Portland City Landmark and a striking example of an ecclesiastical rendition of early Modernism.

All but one of the extant church buildings referenced in Section E are located in North or Northeast Portland. The Stewart Park Colored Church, a Seventh-day Adventist congregation that was located at \textit{3828-30 SE 62\textsuperscript{nd} Ave.} in the 1930s, is the lone exception.

\textbf{Other Places of Worship}

In addition to these Christian Churches, there are a handful of extant properties that are associated with two Islamic congregations that emerged in Portland in the 1960s. These include the residence at \textit{4056 N Williams Ave.}, which served as the home of the Temple of Islam in the early 1960s; \textit{707 NE Fremont St.}, where the Nation of Islam Temple #62 was established in 1969; and \textit{4000 N Mississippi Ave.}, where Temple #62 relocated in 1972.\textsuperscript{673} Additional properties that have historically housed majority African-American congregations in religious traditions other than Christianity or Islam may exist within Portland, but none have yet been identified.

\textsuperscript{672} National Register of Historic Places, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #16000604, 12.

\textsuperscript{673} In addition, two commercial properties that were associated with Nation of Islam Temple #62 during the period of significance are extant: 3955 N Mississippi Ave., which the Temple operated as a bakery and fish market from 1972 to 1976, and 3213 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, where the Temple operated a storefront café from 1972 to 1975.
Registration Requirements: Religious Facilities

**Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties**

Unlike the other property types identified in this document, religious properties are subject to special rules regarding their National Register eligibility. According to federal guidelines, properties owned by religious institutions cannot be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places based on “the merits of a religious doctrine.” However, a religious property may be eligible “if it derives its primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.” Therefore, a religious property can be eligible if it is directly associated with either a specific event or a broad pattern in the history of religion.

**Criterion A**

Each religious facility nominated under the auspices of this MPD will possess significance under Criterion A for its association with an aspect of the broad history of the African American experience in Portland. In light of Criteria Consideration A, that association should extend beyond a purely religious one. For example, a church may be significant for its association with the rapid growth of the African American community during WWII and the establishment during that time of cultural institutions, including religious ones, to accommodate the expanding population.

In many cases, African American religious properties served as important gathering places for those involved in the fight for civil rights or other social justice initiatives, including public accommodations, equal housing, school integration and hiring discrimination. A religious property may be significant under Criterion A for that association.

**Criterion B**

A religious facility may be eligible under Criterion B if it is the property most closely associated with a person of historical significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this document. A religious property may be significant under Criterion B if it is associated with an important figure in the African American community whose importance extended beyond a purely religious one. For example, the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church at 3138 N Vancouver Ave, was listed on the National Register in part for its association with Reverend O.B. Williams and his wife Willia Ida Williams, who “over nearly fifty years of leadership…made a significant difference in the lives of the congregation and ultimately in the social consciousness of the city of Portland across racial lines.”

Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B. As noted in the National Register guidelines:

> A property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group. It must be shown that the person gained importance within his or her profession or group.

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675 National Register of Historic Places, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #16000604, 12.
In addition, the property’s association with the figure in question will need to fall within or overlap the period of significance (1865-1973).

**Criterion C**
Criteria Consideration A does not affect how the architectural significance of religious properties are evaluated. As with other property types, religious properties can be significant under Criterion C if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values. To be eligible under Criterion C under the auspices of this MPD, a religious facility needs to demonstrate, through its design or physical character, aspects of the African American experience or represent the work of a prominent African American architect, designer, or builder.

Most of the religious properties identified in this document were built by White architects and contractors for White churches and were later used by African American congregations. An important exception is the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church at 1734 NE 1st Ave., which was built by White architect Morrison H. Vail for an African American congregation. Regardless, such properties would generally not be eligible under Criterion C under the auspices of this MPD, unless they were associated with an African American architect or builder.

**Criterion D**
A property associated with a religious facility may be significant under Criterion D if it can be associated with one or more historical contexts in Section E and either has, or is likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Portland during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources, it may also be appropriate for standing buildings if they have the potential to illustrate a particular method of construction, the peculiarities, skills, or markers of a builder, or other architectural elements about which little is known.

**Integrity**
Common alterations to religious properties discussed in this document include application of vinyl siding to all or a portion of the building exterior; entry modifications to expand accessibility; addition or removal of stairs; paint applied to stone or masonry; and the addition of elevators and fire sprinkler systems.

The degree to which such alterations compromise a property’s ability to convey its significance depends on the nature of that significance. For religious properties that are significant under Criterion A or B, integrity of association, location, and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion B, if such spaces are directly associated with how the significant person(s) used the building. For religious properties that are significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself, including design, materials, and workmanship, are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess whether they fall within the period of significance and, if not, the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics that make the property significant. Finally, aspects of integrity of particular importance to properties that are significant under Criterion D include location, materials, and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts that are associated with one or more historical contexts identified in Section E.

V. Civic and Social Organization Buildings
This section is intended to address the many buildings that, in addition to the religious properties and entertainment venues discussed above, played key roles in the civic and social life of Portland’s African American community during the period of significance. Such properties include benevolent and fraternal society halls, social clubs and community centers, social justice organization offices, and educational facilities. By providing important gathering spaces for the community and opportunities to engage in collective action, these properties were central to the African American experience. Properties that hosted these social institutions are most likely to be significant for their association with the Benevolent and Fraternal Societies and/or Civil Rights contexts in Section E.

One property in particular, the Colonial Revival-style building at 6 N Tillamook St., illustrates how a single property was often used by many different kinds of organizations. The building was constructed in 1927 by an African American women’s association to house a “colored” branch of the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). The building was designed by architects DeYoung and Roald, who are best known for designing the Heathman Hotel. The building served as a gathering space for women’s social clubs, political activities, youth activities, and more, and programs for both men and women were arranged in coordination with African American church congregations and social organizations. Beginning in 1942, the building was used by the United Service Organizations (USO) as a recreation facility for soldiers of color stationed in Portland, before returning to YWCA use in 1947. Throughout the 1950s, the building hosted meetings held by the NAACP, the Oregon Association of Colored Women’s Clubs (OACW), the Urban League, and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Following completion of a new YWCA building in 1959, the YWCA sold the 6 N Tillamook St. location to the Billy Webb Elks Lodge, a fraternal organization named for a prominent local African American musician and bandleader.

Fraternal organizations played important roles in the lives of African American men, and many possessed auxiliary organizations for women. These societies were multi-faceted and served educational, political, charitable, and social functions within Portland’s African American community. In addition, as described above in the Benevolent and Fraternal Societies Context in Section E, these organizations provided a social safety net in the years before Social Security and related governmental programs were established. In addition to 6 N Tillamook St., properties associated with African American fraternal halls and benevolent societies include the Italianate building at 116 NE Russell St. (1907), which housed the Prince Hall Grand Masonic Lodge and Eastern Star Order; and the Mission-style building at 128 NE Russell St. (1914), which housed the Enterprise Lodge of Masons.

Apart from the building at 6 N Tillamook St., few office spaces or related facilities have been identified as associated, during the period of significance, with civil rights organizations like the NAACP or the Congress of Racial Equality that were dedicated to fighting racial discrimination and improving the prospects of Portland’s African American community. An affiliated organization, the Albina Art Center, which focused on arts, music, and other cultural programs, was located in the 1929 building at 8 NE Killingsworth St. from 1964 to 1973. Further research may uncover additional relevant properties.

Registration Requirements: Civic and Social Organization Buildings

**Criterion A**
Each property associated with a civic or social group that is nominated under the auspices of this MPD will possess significance under Criterion A for its association with some aspect of the broad history of the African American experience in Portland. In general, properties in this category will be significant as the home of, or the place most closely associated with, one or more prominent organizations during the time those organizations were demonstrably influential within Portland’s African American community. The building at 6 N Tillamook St., in particular, appears significant under this criterion for its direct association...
with multiple prominent organizations, including the YWCA, the NAACP, the OACW, the Urban League and CORE.

**Criterion B**
A social institution may be eligible under Criterion B if it is the property most closely associated with a person of historical significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this document. The property's association with the figure in question will need to fall within or overlap the period of significance (1865-1973).

Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B. As noted in the National Register guidelines:

> A property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group. It must be shown that the person gained importance within his or her profession or group.\(^{677}\)

For example, a property would generally not satisfy this criterion simply by being associated with a prominent Mason. Instead, a nomination of a Masonic Hall under Criterion B would need to demonstrate how that Mason's actions as performed within that building influenced the broader life of Portland's African American community through their role in Masonry.

**Criterion C**
To be eligible under Criterion C under the auspices of this MPD, a property associated with a social institution needs to demonstrate, through its design or physical character, aspects of the African American experience or represent the work of a prominent African American architect, designer, or builder.

Most of the properties associated with social institutions that are identified in this document were built for Whites and only came to be used by the African American community after their initial occupants vacated the property. An important exception is the Billy Webb Elks Lodge, which was built in 1927 by White architects DeYoung and Roald to house a “colored” branch of the YWCA. Regardless, such properties would generally not be eligible under Criterion C under the auspices of this MPD, unless they were associated with an African American architect or builder.

**Criterion D**
A property associated with a social institution may be significant under Criterion D if it can be associated with one or more historical contexts in Section E and either has, or is likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Portland during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources, it may also be appropriate for standing buildings if they have the potential to illustrate a particular method of construction, the peculiarities, skills, or markers of a builder, or other architectural elements about which little is known.

**Integrity**

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\(^{677}\) National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 15.
Similar to most non-residential buildings in this study, typical alterations to these buildings include paint applied over original masonry and siding; exterior signage and awning additions, alterations, or replacements; window alterations or replacements; and entry relocations.

The degree to which these physical alterations compromise a property’s ability to convey its significance depends on the nature of that significance. For institutional buildings that are significant under Criterion A or B, integrity of association, location, and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion B, if such spaces are directly associated with how the significant person(s) used the building. For a building that is significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself, including design, materials, and workmanship, are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess whether they fall within the period of significance and, if not, the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics that make the property significant. Finally, aspects of integrity of particular importance to properties that are significant under Criterion D include location, materials, and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts that are associated with one or more historical contexts identified in Section E.

VI. Sites (Non-Archaeological)
While most of the discussion in Section E is focused on extant buildings that possess one or more important associations with Portland’s African American community during the period of significance, non-archaeological historic sites may also exist that retain similar associations. Potential examples include parks, streets, or other public spaces that were the locations of important events or are associated with important individuals. For example, the intersection of NE Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and NE Fremont Street could be evaluated for potential significance as the site of rioting by African American youth in July 1967 in response to racial oppression.

Registration Requirements: Sites (Non-Archaeological)
According to National Register guidelines, a site “is the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure.”

Criterion A
A non-archaeological historic site nominated under the auspices of this MPD will be significant under Criterion A for its association with patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the African American experience in Portland. For example, a significant non-archaeological site associated with a significant and impactful protest or march that led to a significant change in city policy, may be eligible.

Criterion B
A non-archaeological historic site may also be significant under Criterion B if it, among all extant associated properties, best illustrates a significant individual’s important achievements.

678 National Park Service, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 5.
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

Name of Multiple Property Listing: [Blank]

State: Oregon

**Criterion C**
To be eligible under Criterion C under the auspices of this MPD, a non-archaeological historic site needs to demonstrate, through its design or physical character, aspects of the African American experience or represent the work of a prominent African American architect, designer, or builder.

**Criterion D**
A non-archaeological historic site may be significant under Criterion D if it either has, or is demonstrably likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Portland during the period of significance. For example, one or more portions of the site formerly occupied by Vanport may retain important features associated with African Americans' former concentration there.

**Integrity**
Integrity of location is of paramount importance in assessing the integrity of a non-archaeological historic site; the site in question must be in its original location. Integrity of setting, feeling, and association are also important because they directly inform the extent to which a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today. Integrity of materials, design, and workmanship are less relevant when evaluating the integrity of a site.

**VII. Sites (Archaeological)**
Archaeological sites are the remains of human activity, as represented by the artifacts and features that comprise them. They are by their nature associated with the individuals and communities that left them behind, and may be historically significant under any one, or any combination of National Register Criteria for Significance.

An archaeological site associated with some significant aspect of the life or lives of African Americans in Portland, as related to one or more of the contexts in this MPD, will be significant under Criterion A. An archaeological site associated with the productive life of a historically significant African American Portlaner will also be significant under Criterion B. An archaeological site that demonstrates an important method of construction, design, or art will also be significant under Criterion C. An archaeological site that has or is likely to provide important information that expands the understanding of those who created will also be significant under Criterion D.

Portland’s African American population before and during the period of significance were underrepresented in the written historical record, a reflection of explicit and implicit erasure by the city’s White dominant power structure. As a result, significant gaps exist in the historical understanding of the everyday life of Black Portlanders before and during the period of significance. Archaeological sites and the features and artifacts that comprise them, when carefully identified, analyzed, and understood within their historical and cultural context, can add substantially to the understanding of the lives of people in the past. When archaeological sites are identified that are related to communities that are historically underrepresented in the existing academic literature, as is especially the case with the nineteenth century African American community in Portland, they can provide invaluable information previously unknown, and reveal important insights into their experience, both individually and collectively. Given these circumstances, most archaeological sites associated with the African American community in Portland will be significant under both Criterion A and Criterion D, and possibly in combination with one or two additional significance criteria.

**Registration Requirements: Sites (Archaeological)**
According to National Register guidelines, a site “is the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure.”

**Criterion A**
An archaeological site that reflects a significant aspect of one or more contexts that appear in Section E of this MPD is eligible under Criterion A. For example, the archaeological remains of the nineteenth century home of an African American family found in Northwest Portland may be significant under Criterion A for its direct association with an early African American enclave.

**Criterion B**
A site may be significant under Criterion B if it, compared to all extant associated properties, best illustrates a significant individual’s important achievements. For example, the archaeological remains of a prominent African American businessperson is significant under Criterion B if no buildings associated with that individual or their business remain extant.

**Criterion C**
A site may be eligible under Criterion C if it is the remains of an important or unique example of architecture, design, or art created by an African American, or if it demonstrates the characteristics of a unique type of construction associated with the African American experience, such as a building designed or built by an African American individual or community that is representative of a type or method of construction uniquely associated with Black communities in other regions of the United States.

**Criterion D**
In addition, a site may be significant under Criterion D if it either has, or is demonstrably likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the African American experience in Portland during the period of significance. To be nominated under Criterion D, some indication of the presence and potential significance of archaeological features should be evident, as determined through archival research and an understanding of the property's historic composition, or through physical evidence such as remnant buildings, features or artifacts either still visible on the surface or determined present by means of sub-surface archaeological testing. For example, one or more portions of the site formerly occupied by Vanport may retain important features associated with the African Americans experience there during and after World War II. A list of research questions that may be considered when evaluating an archaeological site can be found in the *General Registration Requirements* section.

**Integrity**
Since archaeological sites generally rely on Criterion D for consideration of listing in the National Register, the aspects of integrity used to evaluate this property type need to focus on the preservation of the quality of information contained within a site, or excavated assemblage. The assessment of integrity for properties defined for their archaeological significance generally relies on retention of several aspects of integrity, primarily the site’s location, design, materials, and association. Archaeological sites almost always have integrity of location. Additionally, the integrity of location can help enhance a researcher’s

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ability to also establish a site’s integrity of association. For archaeological sites, integrity of design can establish intra-site artifact and feature patterning, while materials can help identify intrusive artifacts and features, the completeness of the site’s assemblage, or the level of preservation. While it is important to consider all seven aspects of integrity, those involving setting, workmanship, and feeling are less relevant for determining the integrity of an archaeological site under this MPD.

An archaeological site with good integrity has archaeological deposits that are relatively intact and complete. Researchers evaluating sites that have been severely impacted by human and/or natural processes may have a difficult time determining the data potential as it may contain elements that are inconsistent with the period of significance or a clear connection to the African American community. Since significant private and public redevelopment has occurred in the locations of many of Portland’s African American enclaves dating to the period of significance, careful consideration of site formation processes must be considered during evaluation. Clear definitions of site integrity can be established with careful mapping of temporally diagnostic artifacts, thereby removing issues with the intermixing of unassociated debris.

VIII. Objects
Historical objects that are significant for their association with the African American community may exist in Portland. No such objects are identified in Section E, but future survey work or related assessments may uncover such objects.

Registration Requirements: Objects
According to National Register guidelines, the term “object” is used “to distinguish from buildings and structures those constructions that are primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed.”\(^{680}\) Though they are often moveable, an object should be associated with a specific setting or environment to be an eligible historic resource; objects not designed for a specific location are normally not eligible. Examples of objects include boundary markers, monuments,\(^ {681}\) mileposts, fountains, sculptures and statuary.

**Criterion A**
An object nominated under the auspices of this MPD will be significant under Criterion A for its association with patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the African American experience in Portland.

**Criterion B**
An object may also be significant under Criterion B if it is the only remaining resource associated with a significant individual’s important achievements.

**Criterion C**
An object may be significant under Criterion C if demonstrates, through its design or physical character, aspects of the African American experience or represent the work of a prominent African American artist, designer, or builder.

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\(^{680}\) National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 5.

\(^{681}\) A monument would need to be evaluated under Criteria Consideration F: Commemorative Properties. See National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 39-40.
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

Criterion D
In addition, a site may be significant under Criterion D if it either has, or is demonstrably likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Portland during the period of significance.

Integrity
For objects that are significant under Criterion A or B, integrity of association, location, and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations that have been made to an object will be less likely to render it ineligible as long as association, location, and feeling are retained. For an object that is significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the object itself, including design, materials, and workmanship, are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics that make the object significant. Finally, aspects of integrity of particular importance to objects that are significant under Criterion D include location, materials, and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance, and the ability to distinguish artifacts that are associated with one or more historical contexts identified in Section E.

IX. Historic Districts
Historic districts that are significant for their association with the African American community may exist in Portland. No such districts are identified in Section E, but future survey work or related assessments may uncover such objects. A district may be significant for its association for one or more of the contexts in Section E.

While the majority of properties referenced in Section E are located within North or Northeast Portland, they are dispersed throughout those quadrants. Associated commercial properties, in particular, are both few in number and widely dispersed, making a contiguous commercial historic district unlikely.

The NE Rodney Avenue corridor between NE Broadway and NE Fremont Street, however, includes a comparatively concentrated collection of residences and churches that are associated with the African American community during the period of significance. Most of these properties are within the boundary of City of Portland’s Eliot Conservation District, in recognition of their shared historical and architectural importance. Further study is needed to establish whether extant properties within this corridor (or a portion thereof) exhibit sufficient physical integrity and concentration to be a potential historic district.

In addition, there may be clusters of residences associated with the African American community in Portland that share historical or architectural significance. As detailed above in Section I, many of the residences associated with the African American community during the period of significance are single family homes that were built between 1890 and 1930 and are modest examples of popular residential styles of the period. Such properties are more likely to qualify as district contributors than individually-designated National Register listings.

As noted in Context II, Business and Employment, black-owned businesses during the period of significance, which were almost exclusively patronized by other African Americans, were generally located within established nodes of African American settlement. As a result, districts including a mix of property types might exist and be eligible under this MPD as well.

In some cases, association with the African American community may be one of several themes that make a potential district significant. Walnut Park, for example, a 1904 residential subdivision covering the 12 blocks immediately northeast of North Williams Avenue and NE Alberta Street, is notable for never
having restrictive covenants that expressly excluded African Americans and other ethnic groups from owning a home. As a result, the neighborhood came to include both African American and White homeowners. A recent survey found that, based on age and integrity, approximately 86 percent of the properties within the subdivision boundary may contribute to a possible historic district.\textsuperscript{682} Many, but not all, of these contributors are associated with the African American community.

**Registration Requirements: Historic Districts**

According to National Register guidelines, a district is a “significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.”\textsuperscript{683} The district contributors may lack individual distinction, “provided that the grouping achieves significance as a whole within its historic context.”\textsuperscript{684} Like an individual resource, a district must be significant under one or more of National Register eligibility criteria A, B, C, and D. While a district’s significance derives from the shared history of its contributing features, those features can include a wide variety of resource types. A district boundary can include both contributing and noncontributing properties. Though National Register guidelines do not cite a specific threshold, typically at least a majority, and often a strong majority, of the properties within a district boundary need to be classified as contributing.

**Criterion A**

A historic district nominated under the auspices of this MPD will be significant under Criterion A for its association with patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the African American experience in Portland.

**Criterion B**

Though unlikely, a district may be eligible under Criterion B if its contributing elements are each directly associated with a person of historical significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this document.

**Criterion C**

A district may also be significant under Criterion C if district contributors, through their design or physical character, demonstrate aspects of the African American experience, or represent the work of a prominent African American architect, designer, or builder.

**Criterion D**

In addition, a district may be significant under Criterion D if it either has, or is demonstrably likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Portland during the period of significance.

**Integrity**

According to National Register guidelines, determining district integrity entails assessing the integrity of the district as a whole as well as the individual integrity of the district’s contributing elements. Specifically, “the majority of the components that make up the district's historic character must possess integrity…”\textsuperscript{682}


\textsuperscript{683} National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 5.

\textsuperscript{684} National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 5.
the relationships among the district's components must be substantially unchanged since the period of significance."685

As further noted in National Register guidelines:

When evaluating the impact of intrusions upon the district's integrity, take into consideration the relative number, size, scale, design, and location of the components that do not contribute to the significance. A district is not eligible if it contains so many alterations or new intrusions that it no longer conveys the sense of a historic environment.686

For an individual contributing property to a district that is significant under Criterion A or B, integrity of association, location, and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations that have been made to an object will be less likely to render it ineligible as long as association, location, and feeling are retained. For an individual contributing property to a district that is significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the object itself, including design, materials, and workmanship, are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics via which the property contributes to the significance of the district. Finally, aspects of integrity of particular importance to individual properties that contribute to districts that are significant under Criterion D include location, materials, and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance, and the ability to distinguish artifacts that are associated with one or more historical contexts identified in Section E.

685 National Park Service, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 46.
686 National Park Service, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 46.
African American Resources in Portland, Oregon

Name of Multiple Property Listing

State

G. Geographical Data

The geographical area encompasses the 2019 city limits of Portland, Oregon, which is situated along both sides of the Willamette River from the Columbia River at the north and varied streets to the south (bordering the cities of Lake Oswego and Milwaukie), with an irregular boundary to the west near the city of Beaverton and to the east near the city of Gresham.
H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

The preparation of this MPD was primarily conducted by the Bosco-Milligan Foundation/Architectural Heritage Center and the City of Portland.687 The primary author was Catherine Galbraith (1950-2018). Galbraith was the founding director of the Architectural Heritage Center and led the organization’s work on the identification and documentation of buildings associated with Portland’s African American heritage, beginning in 1993 and culminating in the 1998 document Cornerstones of Community: Buildings of Portland’s African American History. In addition to Galbraith, Valerie Campbell Connerly, Kimberly Moreland, Dr. Darrell Millner Ph.D., Milo Reed, Holly Chamberlain, Matthew Davis, Caitlyn Ewers, and Kerrie Franey assisted with research, writing, and editing this MPD. Brandon Spencer-Hartle of the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability coordinated the project and provided additional editing services.

In 1993, the Bosco-Milligan Foundation’s initial effort to identify Portland’s African American building resources documented 325 standing buildings. By 1998 when Cornerstones of Community was published, 1,284 standing buildings with African American associations had been documented. Research in the 1990s relied heavily on the use of Portland city directories, interviews with key stakeholders, articles in The Advocate, and field visits. The documented buildings were located throughout the city as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Portland</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Mostly residential properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Portland</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>Mostly residential properties, religious facilities, commercial and professional buildings, and civic and social organization buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Portland</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>Mostly residential properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Portland</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Mostly commercial and professional buildings and residential properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Portland</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mostly commercial and professional buildings in Downtown Portland, and residential properties in Goose Hollow and South Portland.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In March 2017, the City of Portland converted the Cornerstones of Community database into a Geographic Information System (GIS) file. The updated database and other research performed for the...
MPD indicate that at least 100 buildings identified in *Cornerstones of Community* were demolished between 1998 and 2019.

Approximately 500 buildings were chosen from the 1998 *Cornerstones* index for prioritization in Sections E and F of this MPD. Selections were based on age, location, number of African American associations, and rarity of type. This list of properties formed the foundation for the contextual research included in Section E, and many of the buildings that were identified through the *Cornerstones* project—both extant and demolished—are mentioned directly in the text or by way of footnotes. The registration requirements in Section F were not part of the 1998 *Cornerstones* project but were completed specifically for this MPD.

Since the 1998 publication of *Cornerstones*, a few Portland buildings with African American significance have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. These include the Otto and Verdell Rutherford House,688 the Lewis and Elizabeth Van Vleet House,689 the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church,690 and the Rinehart Building.691 This MPD was undertaken, in part, to assist property owners in determining eligibility and to encourage them to pursue National Register listing.

In submitting this MPD with a period of significance encompassing 1865 through 1973, the authors acknowledge that the events, trends, and contexts relevant to the history of Portland’s African American community extend beyond the early 1970s and continue to develop today. In the future, this document may be expanded to include places, people, and events that hold significance for their association with the African American experience in Portland, but which fall outside of the 1865 to 1973 period of significance of this MPD.

The MPD was partially funded by federal funds from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior for the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. That grant was awarded to the City of Portland’s Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. The MPD was also partially funded by the Kinsman Foundation. That grant was awarded to the Architectural Heritage Center.

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688 National Register of Historic Places, Otto and Verdell Rutherford House, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #14001076.
689 National Register of Historic Places, Lewis and Elizabeth Van Vleet House, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #01000937.
690 National Register of Historic Places, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #16000604.
691 National Register of Historic Places, Rinehart Building, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #13000982.
I. Major Bibliographical References
(List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

Books, Articles, and Web Sources


https://oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/biographies/george-baker-biography/#.Xds7VC-ZOt8.


“Irma Martin reminiscences of Vanport, Oregon [manuscript], undated..” n.d., Coll. 442, Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Portland, OR.


Mangun, Kimberley. “‘As Citizens of Portland We Must Protest’: Beatrice Morrow Cannady and the African American Response to D.W. Griffith’s ‘Masterpiece.’” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 107, no. 3 (Fall, 2006): 382-409


Merriam, Paul G. “The ‘Other Portland:’ A Statistical Note on the Foreign-Born,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 80, no. 3 (Fall 1979): 258-268.


National Register of Historic Places. Central Building/Public Library, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. National Register #79002129

National Register of Historic Places. Laurelhurst Historic District, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. National Register #100003462

National Register of Historic Places. Otto and Verdell Rutherford House, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon, National Register #14001076.


National Register of Historic Places. Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. National Register #16000604


Archival Collections
The City of Portland Archives and Records
The City of Portland eFiles
Oregon Historical Society Davies Family Research Library
University of Oregon Libraries: Oregon Multicultural Archives Oral History Collection
Newspapers

The Advocate (Portland, OR)
The New Age (Portland, OR)
The New York Times (New York, NY)
The North Star (Rochester, NY)
The Oakland Tribune (Oakland, CA)
The Oregon Journal (Portland, OR)
The Oregon Mirror (Portland, OR)
The Oregonian (Portland, OR)
The People’s Observer (Portland, OR)
Portland Challenger (Portland, OR)
Portland Inquirer (Portland, OR)
Portland Mercury (Portland, OR)
The Portland Times (Portland, OR)
Portland Tribune (Portland, OR)
The Springfield News (Springfield, OR)
Topeka Plaindealer (Topeka, Kansas)
Vancouver Courier (Vancouver, BC)

Oral Interviews

Benton, James
Brown, LaVerne Bagley
Gaskin, Harold
Golden, Shelby Jr.
Hays, Hazel
Kimmons, J.V.
Knauls, Paul and Geneva
Newby, Ross (family members of)
Rawlins, Edward (family members of)
Renfro, Mel
Rutherford, Otto
Rutherford, Verdell
Strong, Opal
Tillman, Timothy (family members of)
Walker, Carmen
Whitesides, Janet
Yee, Rozelle Jackson
RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The majority of extant buildings associated with Portland’s African American community during the period of significance are detached, single-family residences. Additional information is provided below regarding the most common architectural styles of residences that were occupied by Portland’s African Americans during the period of significance. Note, however, that the styles identified below are not intended to be exhaustive, and that residences would only be architecturally significant under the auspices of this MPD if they were known to be associated with an African American architect or builder. The following information is intended to provide concise background information that will help those submitting National Register nominations in the future under the auspices of this MPD contextualize the architecture of their specific property.

Vernacular and Queen Anne Cottages

Before development of a national network of railroads, modest residences drew on local materials and were thus “more strongly influenced by geography than…architectural styles.” By the later decades of the nineteenth century, however, the ready availability of sawn lumber gave rise to comparatively standardized renditions of traditional folk forms. These residences differed primarily in the amount of ornamentation or stylistic detailing they exhibit. Among the buildings discussed in Section E, representative examples of vernacular folk cottages that are largely bereft of any ornamental embellishment are located at 226 N Page St. (1895) and 6126 NE Halsey St. (1903).

Many of the modest residences built in Portland during this period feature elements associated with the Queen Anne architectural style, including spindlework, bay windows, wall texture variations (for example, through use of decorative shingling), and prominent porches. Representative examples of Queen Anne cottages are located at 1803 and 1811 NE 1st Ave. (1885), 1745 NE 1st Ave. (1890), 3344 SE Yamhill St. (1891), 1517 SW 17th Ave. (1894), 2316 N Vancouver Ave. (1900), 2043 NE Rodney Ave. (1903), 3956 NE 12th Ave. (1908), and 546 NE Stanton St. (1908).

Foursquare

Named for the four square rooms comprising its ground-floor plan, the Foursquare was one of Portland’s most popular middle and upper class residences in the housing boom that followed the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition. The style represented a shift away from Victorian ornamentation and complex floor plans towards less ornate exteriors with larger, boxier interior spaces, a shift that would be further...
elaborated with the subsequent development of the Craftsman and Prairie styles. In addition to its plan, common features of Foursquare homes include hipped or pyramidal roofs, full-width porches, and shed or hipped dormers.

Among the buildings discussed in Section E, representative examples of the Foursquare style are located at 3537 N Williams Ave. (1903), 61 NE San Rafael St. (1904), 4207 N Gantenbein Ave. (1905), 2107 N Vancouver Ave. (1909), and 1811 SE 35th Pl. (1912).

Bungalow
In the early decades of the twentieth century, the bungalow was the most popular style for single family homes across the United States generally and Portland specifically. Bungalows typically represent simplified versions of the Craftsman Bungalows developed in Southern California around the turn of the century. Identifying features of these one- to one-and-a-half-story residences include a low-pitched roof with wide eave overhangs and exposed beams; full- or partial-width porches, and decorative beam ends or braces under gables. By the late 1920s, the style had rapidly declined in popularity, largely supplanted in Portland by various period revival styles, including American Colonial Revival and English Tudor Revival.695

The four principal subtypes of bungalow are classified according to their roof type: front-gabled, side-gabled, cross-gabled, and hipped. Many of the side-gabled bungalows are examples of what is sometimes called the “Portland Bungalow,” noted for its central entry porch flanked by symmetrical windows.696 The residences discussed in Section E include representative examples of the front-gabled, side-gabled and hipped-roof varieties:

- Front-gabled: 4749 SE Lincoln St. (1911), 3203 SE Tibbets St. (1912), 4505 NE 14th Ave. (1913), 827 NE Sumner St. (1919), and 714 NE Sumner St. (1923).
- Side-gabled: 2123 NE Rodney Ave. (1900), 3427 NE Rodney Ave. (1903), 2923 SE 35th Ave. (1906), 2027 N Williams Ave. (1906), 3817 N Williams Ave. (1908), 3405 NE Rodney Ave. (1909), 831 NE Holland St. (1913), 835 NE Jarrett St. (1913), and 3816 NE Rodney Ave. (1926).

Other Styles
While the vast majority of residences discussed in Section E are stylistically modest, larger and more elaborate examples of late nineteenth-century or early twentieth-century architectural styles can also be found, including: 1911 NE Rodney Ave. (Queen Anne, 1896), 2037 N Williams Ave. (Queen Anne, 1893), 1507 SE Alder St. (Craftsman/Colonial Revival, 1902), 5125 NE Garfield Ave. (Queen Anne, 1907), 5933 NE Flanders St. (Craftsman, 1911), 2703 SE Tibbets St. (Craftsman, 1911), 2936 NE 12th Ave. (Craftsman, 1913), and 4150 NE Beaumont St. (Colonial Revival, 1926). In addition, the residences referenced in Section E include a handful that were built after World War II. Most of these are Minimal Traditional, with a few Ranch and Colonial Revival examples.

695 McAlester, 567-568; Hubka, “Naming Portland’s everyday houses.”