

# Family Album Northwest

by Kathryn H. Bogle

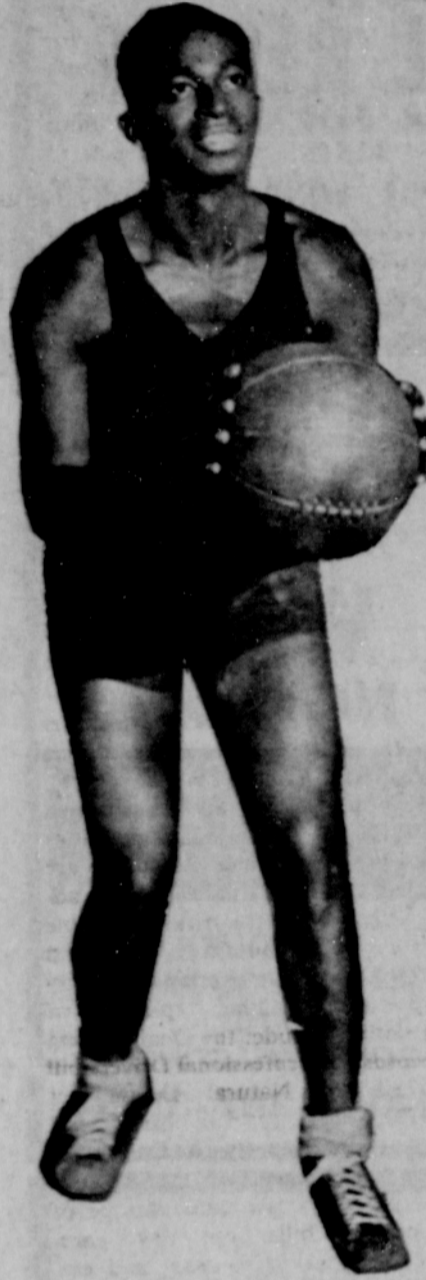
Back in the mid-twenties there was a boy who loved team athletics, individual sports, just any game that allowed him to use his considerable athletic skills. His name could be possibly called "legion" but he was christened Vernon Baker.

Abiding in Vernon was a burning desire to play, play the game. Out of Omaha, Nebraska he came at about age fourteen or fifteen. In his town he had played lots of sand-lot games, watched Black athletics play their baseball games in segregated leagues and longed to be just like them.

In Portland, Vernon was enrolled at Benson High School and he promptly was exercising with the track team. In his freshman year, he became the first Black to win a Ben-



"The Loyal Comrades"  
(Photo: Vernon Baker Collection)



Vernon Baker, 1926



"The Loyal Comrades"  
(Photo: Bogle Family Collection)

son letter.

The summer days grew long without organized sports activity in which Vernon could be involved and he, in a growing restlessness, enlisted as many as he could of his friends to play regularly with him in sand-lot games.

The little group enjoyed being together and as the seasons changed, so did their sports. With a re-energizing visit back to Omaha, during a summers scheduled vacation, Vernon's dream to have a team of some kind kept him hopeful for his Portland home.

Jefferson High School, under the renowned principal Hopkins Jenkins, received Vernon in transfer from Benson and here he played varsity track, basketball and baseball. That was during the week.

On weekends, Vernon kept at organizational things and he and his teams began to be known as the "Loyal Comrades." A little financial help came from a few local Black businessmen to help with uniforms and equipment. Vernon enlisted the downtown YMCA for their gymnasium for indoor sports. Many basketball games and practice sessions were played at the little "Y" building on Tillamook Street.

The chance of playing with the Loyal Comrades drew the participation of several outstanding

Black athletes from other high schools and in one game or another might be playing such budding stars as Chuck Williams, Bobby Robinson, Guy Holmes and his brother Roy Holmes.

Several others who earned school athletic letters also were among the "Comrades": Willie Battles, Morris Mathews, Clifford Daniels, Richard Bogle, James Griffith, Gilbert Kirk, Art Hayes, James Williams, and Marshall and Elmer Fain.

Competition was found for big games with the boys from the Chinese Lions who played both basketball and baseball. Some games were played also with the Portland Trojans, a team of Black adults. The Helser brothers, a white family of six or seven brothers who added a few friends to make up a team, also afforded the Comrades weekend games. Portland Parks system provided the game space which never lacked for enthusiastic fans among families and friends.

College and the responsibilities of adulthood accounted for the dissolution of the "Loyal Comrades," but after a lapse of fifty years even time falls away whenever two "Comrades" meet and remember "when."

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## In-home aid training available

Registration is now open for "Older Workers," men and women 55 and over, for a concentrated 24-hour training course in Personal/In Home Assistance conducted by Older Worker Training and Employment from October 30th through November 3rd, 1978, according to Helen Warbington, Program Coordinator.

The focal point of the course will be to teach trainees to assist people who are unable to fully care for themselves — convalescents and the elderly — so that they may remain in their own homes rather than face in-

stitutional care. Content of the course includes such topics as nutrition, bed-care, work simplification, home safety, and job seeking skills. Registration is limited to twelve per class.

To be eligible for the program, participants must be unemployed or on a limited income, and residents of Portland or of Multnomah County. They will be paid for class hours attended. Applicants interested in helping other people while earning extra money should register with OWTE by calling 248-4704 and asking for Special Training Course.

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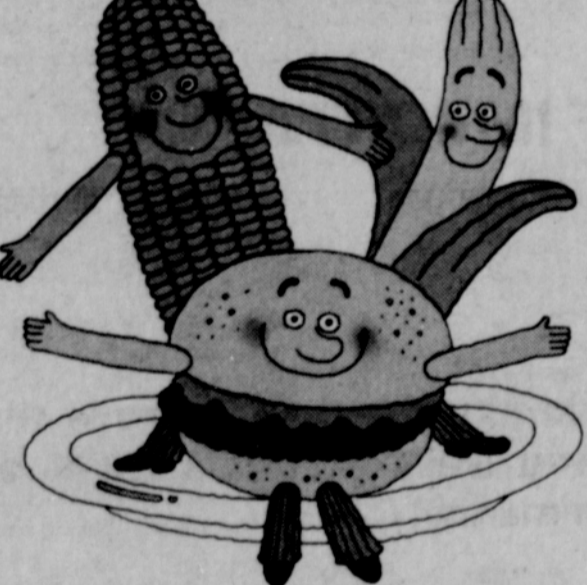
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