

A Father's Day Salute

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having their problems in the tight little community. There was a period of time when Mother Walker arranged for James to bus to Vallejo for school during the week and return to her in Klamath Falls for the weekend.

At age 17, James took his own destiny in his hands and joined the army as a member of the 24th Infantry with the 25th Division, the all-Negro unit, the first to land in Korea. Incidentally, he made rank as Staff Sergeant, was wounded, had awards of silver star and three purple hearts — and was boxing champ of the 8th and 6th army at the time of his discharge three years later.

Tough physically, James did not smoke nor did he drink. Such things he passed on to others for money — which he saved.

Now he had a new career — boxing. He found a new home and a new wife, both in San Francisco, and life was sweet.

Boxing took James to Klamath Falls again, to Medford and up to Portland where he gained the attention of Tom Moyer, a prominent boxing promoter of the time and of Robert Duncan, now a Congressman, who became one of James' backers.

Because he had difficulty as a Black man in attempts to purchase a home for his family in Medford, the Walkers moved to Portland where they were able to buy a house to fit their needs. Their family grew from Debra, who was born in Klamath Falls, to include Ronnetta, Freda and James Zellton Walker III, all born in Portland.

The boxing career with its demands flourished through the years and James became Jimmy "Bang-Bang" Walker, well-known all along the Pacific coast. "I became immersed in my career," says Jimmy, "and my family had less and less of my time." He was in the gym training or on the road, was seldom at home.

The home became "heartbreak cottage" when the family's final breakup came.

"Bang-Bang" became a single father, a man with four children ranging in age from 19 months to eight years.

Some drastic changes in lifestyle were indicated. "Bang-Bang" made them.

That the right person to run the Walker household would be difficult to find was an early lesson for "Bang-Bang." His mother had died meanwhile, but he did have a sister, Gail Boles, whom he could call if needed.

The children and "Bang-Bang" went into conference. The decision was that together they would run their own household. Father would be ever accessible to them. He would now run his own business, work for himself, to be in charge of his own time.

Family rules were established. The oldest would always represent father in his absence in any situation, and the younger ones must obey which ever child was the oldest present. Household duties were shared things. Everybody learned to cook and anybody cooked, with Father holding Chef position.

Everybody cleaned and dusted and took care of personal belongings. They all went to the laundromat together and ran the machines as Father instructed. Each one held an assigned seat in the family car. Dad, and everybody, cleaned up the kitchen and washed the dishes and became good friends and good conversationalists while doing so.

Father started the day by getting breakfast for the family so that everyone started the day well fed. One other rule was strictly adhered to. No criticism of any kind was to

be heard from anyone in the family in the morning. So everybody started the day well fed and happy and secure inside when facing the world outside. Any criticism from within the family was leveled at nightfall, after dinner, when the family was together again and there was time to share and discuss all the happenings of the day.

The family shopped together and learned to watch money values early, with Father steering his daughters gently away from too expensive choices.

Punishment by Father was seldom necessary, but spankings were meted out on occasion. "I was honest and straight with my children", says "Bang-Bang." "I worked with them, I listened to them, and they listened to me. I gave them praise — a lot of it."

Mr. Walker taught his children to type. They all studied their lessons for school at one big table and those that were too young to go to school sat there, too, with pad and pencil to draw in silence while the older children studied. Father taught each child that, in school, the teacher was in charge and to consider her (or him) as right. They were taught to do as the teacher said and to tell Father later what had transpired.

The family business sometimes needed help and the family participated in this as much as they did in the home, in a unit venture without favorites.

In the course of the years, each child was encouraged to think and to move independently so that each could mature fully. Strong individualisms are emerging from the hearth of this "single parent" home, but there also is a strong family support system operating — a cohesiveness that distance, geographically, does not affect.

Soon Zellton Jr., a 15-year-old sophomore at Jesuit High School will be at home alone with his father. Zellton is an excellent student and is showing good prowess at basketball and baseball.

Freda, of sparkling, vivacious personality and just graduated from Jefferson High School with many scholastic honors, will be leaving home for Fisk University where she will study Political Science.

Ronnetta, an honor roll student and a Rose Festival princess while at Jefferson High, is presently attending the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Pasadena, a highly competitive campus in its field. Only one Black person has ever been graduated from this elusive Academy where acceptance comes only after stiff entrance examinations and a competitive place is won. This is Ronnetta's second year to have been accepted. We and her family are rooting for Ronnetta.

Debra, the eldest Walker daughter, set the pace for her siblings in high school by achieving and keeping her place on the National Honor Society while attending Jefferson. Debra was chosen by her classmates to be a Rose Festival princess in 1974, the first in the Walker family.

Currently, Debra lives in San Francisco where she is a student at University of San Francisco. Debra helps to support herself by working in the office of one of the City Commissioners at City Hall where her mother is also employed. Debra keeps in close touch with her Portland family by telephone and still calls to get advice, now and then, from her father.

All the children of Mr. Walker are expected to be in Portland to celebrate Father's Day this year.

The Walker cup must be running over with love, but we add our best wishes anyway — HAPPY FATHER'S DAY, "Bang-Bang — Hope it's a KNOCKOUT!!



Ericka Bogle, sixth grade spelling champion of Montclair Elementary School and Principal Larry Bosshardt of Montclair admire trophy awarded to Ericka earlier in the spring term.

Ericka spelled down the top spellers of three schools — Montclair, Raleigh Hills and Raleigh Park in open competition in her Southwest school district. The trophy is hers to keep. Ericka is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard W. Bogle. (Photo: Buddy Bogle)

New Hope presents play

The New Hope Missionary Baptist Church will sponsor a three-act religious musical play, written by Pamela R. Davis. The play is entitled, "A Divine Peace."

Character parts and ages needed are: men — two in their fifties, three in their thirties, three in their twenties, and three in their middle teens.

Character parts and ages needed

women: three in their thirties, two in their twenties, one in her forties, one in her fifties and four in their middle teens.

Auditions will be held June 25th, 27th, 28th from 6:00-8:30 p.m., at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Reverend A. Bernard Devers, Pastor, 3725 N. Gantenbein Avenue.

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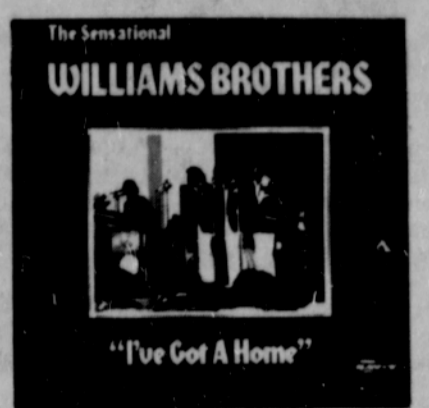
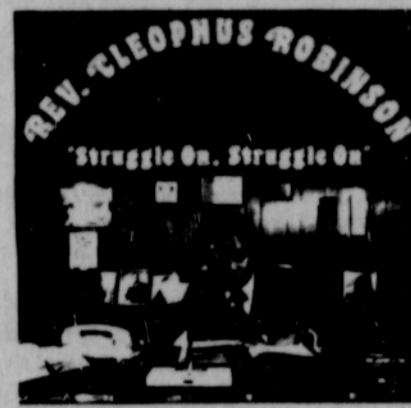
Sunday: 9:15 am Bible Band/Jr. Church 7:30 pm
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 Morning Worship "The Pastor Speaks" 7:30 pm
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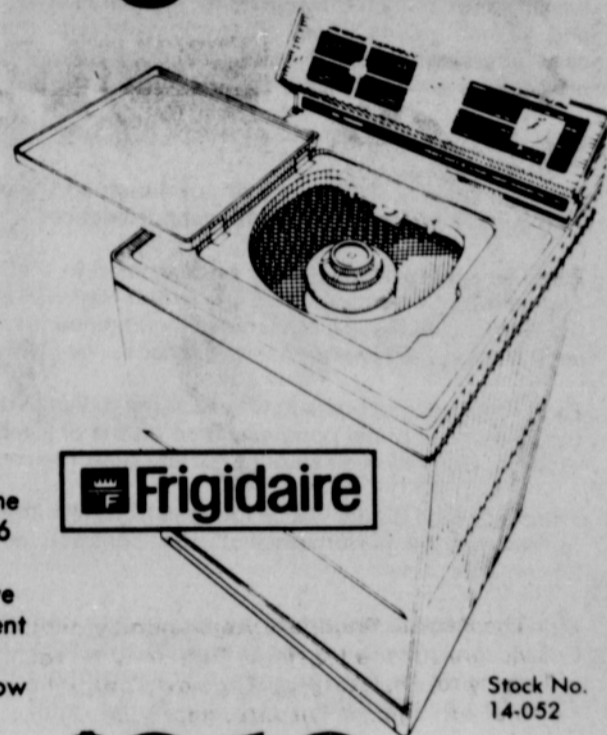
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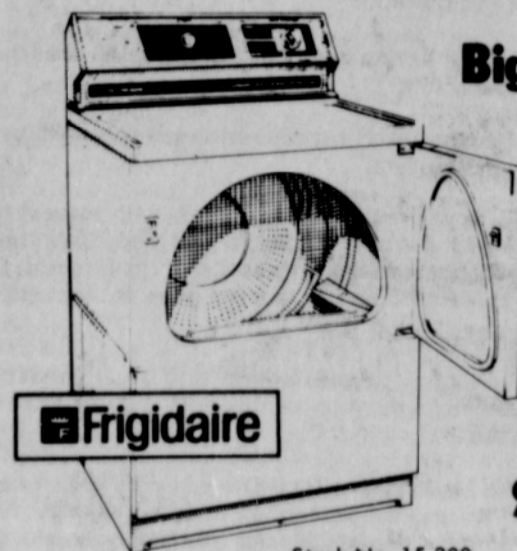
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