

Teddy Roosevelt's reign as President, Reverend Freeman, being a carpenter and a very aggressive man, decided that he would enter the Blacks to be represented in the parade. I don't think it was called the Rose Festival in that day, but it was a celebration.

So Reverend Freeman decided that since the Black soldiers from San Juan Hill was stationed at Vancouver Barracks, he would build a float that represented San Juan Hill. As a child I recall that in the front, just before the driver of the huge truck, were on each side a little "josh house" where the soldiers had their lookout. He placed Ruth, my sister, in one and me in the other. The soldiers were stationed all around the edge of the float with their guns and during the parade would fire the guns -- of blank cartridges -- and since the powder would blow back into our faces and burn, Ruth became irritated and began to cry. We had to take her out, but of course Clifford was such a show-off she stuck it out and stayed in the float until after the parade.

The parade was a prize, in money. This money was turned over to the purchase of the church.

These were very historic days and memorable days that we as Blacks should never forget.

Time went on and I went to school in what was known as Couch School, on 12th, between Everett and Davis.

The first hat checker and bell hop at the Portland Hotel was Reverend Freeman's brother, Gus Freeman. He came to Portland in 1906, acquired the job at the Portland Hotel and worked there for years. The next bell hop was Mr. Cannady. Cannady was a man whose keen memory was especially noticed. He never had to refer to any writing of any type when he checked in his customers. His memory was so keen. This was during the time of Teddy Roosevelt and all the big dignitaries in those days that he serviced. Mr. Cannady was known as a very efficient man in the Portland Hotel curriculum.

Mrs. Beatrice Cannady passed the bar in the State of Oregon around 1914. Mr. and Mrs. Cannady had one son, George, who went to California to make his way in life. He became known as a prominent attorney in Los Angeles after graduating from Willamette University in about 1938.

There were several barber shops in the community. The oldest I remember was the Rutherford brothers -- Ed and Will. Then came the Bogle Barber, which was in the Golden West Hotel. There were other enterprises also.

Reverend Freeman was a progressive man, always looking forward to the recognition of Blacks. He stayed pastor of AME church until 1901, when he was sent to Roslyn, Washington, a mining town. Moving his family there, he stayed for a year, until he was moved to Seattle to replace the pastor, Reverend Scott. Pioneers were the Harveys, Halls, Wileys, the Selbeys, and many others who have made history in Seattle, Washington.

After we were in Seattle for the first year, my father started a little paper trying in the church affiliations and using his office room back of our kitchen in the parsonage as the place where we set type. I learned to set type by hand when I was 12 years old and never began to know the difference between hand and machine setting until later years when I had the opportunity in Pueblo, Colorado, to use the linotype. The paper was called "Searchlight." A Mr. Depugh was his associate. The paper grew and became quite known among the population.

After my family, mother and sister, Lenore, moved to Seattle, my father returned to his home state which was Selma, Alabama. He became very ill and sent for my mother before his passing. After his passing, she returned to the State of Washington to raise her family and make a way of life for herself.

My music career started in Portland, Oregon around the age of seven, eight or nine years old. But I was schooled officially in music at 12 years old in Roslyn. I began to play for the church congregation on the organ and served the AME Church and the Baptist Church Sunday schools. This town was quite a promising thing because naturally being musical I followed up as years passed, coming to Portland and taking over the church choir as organist. Then the piano became more of an instrument of conversation so I turned to piano playing, and directed choirs up until recent years. I was at one time occupied as pianist in the Liberty Theater here in

Portland. I started out in the Liberty Theater as a maid in the restroom.

At that time we had a doorman, Henry LaBell, the younger son of Mrs. Clara Pickett, still living here in Portland. Henry was liked so well that the owners of the powers that be in the Liberty Theater gave him the opportunity to play the pipe organ. He became quite a musician through that avenue and became well known, going to California and becoming quite famous.

In 1918 when the soldiers returned after World War I, we celebrated with a civic celebration at the Civic Auditorium. I was named as the soloist for the celebration. And it was my first experience singing with a pipe organ accompaniment. Time grew and my music career grew with it -- teaching and directing was my vocation in music.

In the early days, my mother became quite civic mind-

ed and a political asset to the community. She was first given the honor of a police matron of Portland and going then into political affairs, she organized the women's organizations and went back and forth to Salem to meetings that brought the Blacks into recognition.

Bethel Church moved from the West side to the East side and located where the coliseum now stands, until they sold that property and moved to the present location at Northwest 8th and Jarrett.

It gives me great pleasure at the age of 85 to recall all of these events and to bring forward the things that are worthwhile knowing. Carry on where I left off.

- Mrs. Dixon died in 1976
- First AME Church is now known as Bethel AME Church



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