

# Family Album Northwest

By Kathryn Hall Bogle

Robert Bagnall, director of branches for the New York office of the NAACP, thought highly of the work of Mrs. Cannady, gave her credit for "organizing a number of branches of the NAACP and acting as arbiter in differences between the races."

Bagnall also credited Mrs. Cannady with obtaining the consent of the Board of Education for all Portland public high schools to have lecture courses on Negro history (to dispel) prevalent misconceptions of the Negro held by the (average) high school student. Mrs. Cannady organized a group to deliver these lectures, Bagnall continues, and she, herself, was "foremost in the delivery of them."

Lincoln high school faculty availed themselves of the opportunity to have Mrs. Cannady lecture to their history classes. Letters from some of the teachers and their 1929 students reveal a part of the appeal they found in hearing what Mrs. Cannady had to say. "You come to us without bitterness," one teacher said. "You frankly and simply put the problem before us. By touching, as you have here, between 150 and 200 students (in the history class) per year, you are doing a great work towards promoting good will and happy group relations in Portland." Mrs. Cannady was an unpaid lecturer for four years at Lincoln.

Letters from Bend high school students seeking information from Mrs. Cannady appear along with "Thank you" notes from club women in Prineville who had already received a book, a bibliography or a piece of sheet music from this lady so generous with her time.

Letters inviting Mrs. Cannady to speak to a Methodist Church group in McMinnville follow similar letters from small college groups in Salem, with a sad little letter from La Grande informing Mrs. Cannady about Black children being excluded from the white school there.

Closer to Portland, Vernonia was having problems too. In the words of J.J. Handsaker we learn that, in 1929, Vernonia had "a population of about 1,000 people supported in the main by a sawmill. The proprietors, goes the account by Mr. Handsaker, "brought in a number of colored workers and their families. (Among them were five Black children)." The owners of the mill decided that these children should not go to the public school but should attend a one-room school for which they had



Mrs. Cannady with 49th Street School students, taken in 1973 when a building of the school was rededicated in her name.

provided a teacher but no equipment. There was no objection to the presence of these children on the part of the school Board or the patrons of the school.

"Mrs. Cannady took up the fight on request of the colored people of Vernonia, who, like many others in the Northwest, instinctively turned to her in time of need. She interviewed the manager of the mill, urged the (Black) people to stand by their rights, and enlisted the help of influential whites. She finally won her point. The Black children returned to Vernonia public school." While she was in Vernonia, Mrs. Cannady organized a new chapter of the NAACP.

At about the same time, a call came from Longview, Washington that Black children there were encountering the same brand of segregation under very similar circumstances. Again Mrs. Cannady journeyed to the troubled families, gave them her counsel and followed her successful format of talking

with the whites involved. Again she helped the children find their rightful place in public schools - and again she organized another chapter of the NAACP before she left the vicinity.

Sandwiched in among the album's account of the race relations activities of Mrs. Cannady is a thin layer of clippings from the morning *Oregonian*, the *Oregon Daily Journal*, the *Portland News* and the *Portland Telegram* telling readers about court trials involving Mrs. Cannady, Mrs. E. D. Cannady, as an attorney-at-law. Robbery, a stabbing in Corvallis, and a Portland murder were charges her clients had faced. Of the three cases mentioned in the album, Mrs. Cannady won the first two rather handily. The third one had been lost before a desperate man denounced his attorney and asked Mrs. Cannady to represent him on appeal. The appeal was denied and the courts went on to other business.

A variety of community organizations such as the Portland 1928 Community Chest claimed Mrs. Cannady time and kept her interest. The women's Advertising Club heard Mrs. Cannady speak to them at a luncheon meeting at the Benson Hotel. Her topic? "The Negro Woman in Business." The Oregon Labor Press made announcement of Mrs. Cannady's forthcoming appearance at the Labor Temple when she would address the Labor College Forum the evening of May 25, 1928 on the subject of "Labor and the American Negro."

"Colored girls" had never before attended the Older Girls Conference in Oregon until Mrs. Cannady made up a delegation of seven which she chaperoned to Corvallis. She herself delivered the principal address at one of the great mass meetings. There were 600 white girls present from all parts of the state some of whom were meeting Black girls for the first time. Another "break-through."

The year of 1927 saw a reading room established in the A.M.E. Church in Anaconda, Montana. The church pastor, the Rev. Lewis B. Stewart, collected donated books to stock the shelves in the room and dedicated the room to the name and work of Beatrice Morrow. In his note to Mrs. Cannady, the Rev. Stewart drew attention to the meaning of "Beatrice:" "Making Happy" which he felt was a part of Mrs. Cannady's mystique.

On one summer morning Mrs. Cannady was invited to speak to 500

children in attendance at a "Daily Vacation Bible School." Minutes before Mrs. Cannady arrived at the Arleta Elementary school where the vacation school was being held, Ku Klux Klan members or cohorts passed out handbills intended to dissuade the children or their parents from attending the lecture. "If you attend," some of the placards read, "Your name will be read from the housetop."

The teachers mobilized and shielded Mrs. Cannady from the knowledge of the unwelcome activity and the program was carried out as planned. She spoke to the intermediate and high school grades and, said one teacher, "The antagonism and the inclination to sneer gave way as they came under the spell of her magnetic personality. The effect was marvelous audible expressions of approval and enthusiastic applause marked the close of the talk."

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Operation Big Vote Committee will be hosting an Election Watch Party on November 4, 1980 from 8:00 p.m. til 10:30 p.m., at On The Rocks, 15 N.W. 6th. Admission is free and drinks will be two for the price of one.

Celebrate Election Night with Ron Wyden, November 4, 1980 at 8:00 p.m., Coliseum Holiday Inn, 10 N. Weidler.

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Victory for Namibia! a Southern Africa speaking tour, Sunday, November 2, 7:00 p.m., Mallory Church, 126 NE Alberta. Sliding scale \$2, 3, 4. Childcare will be available. Call ahead 284-5359.

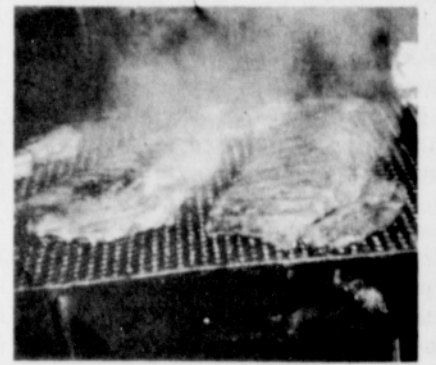
King Neighborhood Facility and Northeast Portland Community Agencies, invite you to a Halloween Party and room to room trick or treating at King, October 31, 1980, 7PM to 9:30 PM, King Grade School 4815 N.E. 7th Avenue. Everyone welcome. For more information call 288-0371, 288-6708 or 285-4222.

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Mrs. Cannady with delegates to the 4th Pan-American Congress, held in New York City in 1927.

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## FROM THE FRONT DOOR

BY TOM BOOTHE

From the front door, I was asked by the parents of some children participating in the Exodus Youth Program, to continue with more articles directed toward young adults here in our community. I have decided to do so.

Children, from the age of 6 to 18 years of age, it is important that you learn all you can. From all that you learn construct a specific "for real" purpose related to who you are, and what you can do, and what you are preparing to do in the future.

Learn that knowledge is primary to purpose. Know who you are, and who you are not, know what you can do, and what you cannot do. Learn that knowledge is also primary to understanding. Learning and knowing something and not understanding when and how to use it is almost as bad as knowing nothing at all.

Children, you are the future. However, the future will be directed and controlled by those of you who have learned the most knowledge and understanding as to the application of that knowledge.

If you learn nothing else, learn that success always come to those who have learned that the key to success is to know and understand that **PURPOSE, PREPARATION, DIRECTION and CONSISTENCY** is the foundation you must lay in order to build a "for real" **FUTURE OF INDEPENDENCE**.

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