

# OBSERVATIONS

FROM THE SIDELINES  
BY Kathryn Hall Bogle



**"IMAGES OF Labor,"** and "Building a New World: Black Labor Photographs," two exhibitions circulated by the Smithsonian Institute, drew many persons to a "Labor Festival" at the Portland Art Museum last Sunday. The traveling exhibitions included drawings, paintings, sculpture and constructions. Artists represented included Jacob Lawrence.

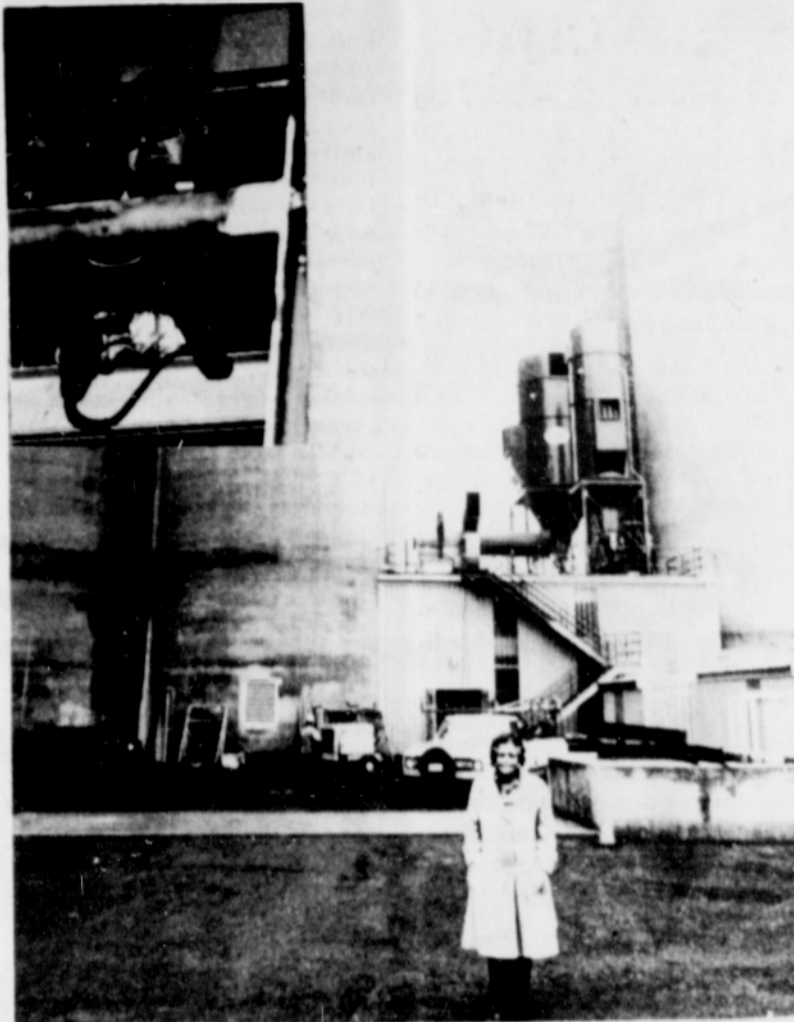
The 50 Black Labor Photographs "chronicled the history of Black labor in the United States and its contributions to America's economic development from the 1880s to the present." Gordon Parks' photography appears with frequency in this collection of black-and-white pictures.

A Sunday afternoon attraction, a slide-lecture produced and presented by Michael Grice, titled "The Railroad Generation: A view of Black labor history in Oregon," came under the banner of "Labor Festival." The Grice show was given a send-off of appreciation by Bob Baugh, secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO. Labor songs, some of them in the style of Pete Seeger, were sung by Harry Stamper who accompanied himself on the guitar.

Grice, with degrees from both Cornell and Reed College, worked on the railroad to put himself through college. He is a vice-principal at the Metropolitan Learning Center and is the producer of several oral history programs such as "From the Pulpit/From the People," an interpretation of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King. His stage presentations include "Youth Sound" and others.

Sunday's slide show portrayed activities of railroad dining car personnel in the employ of the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific railroads from the early 1900s to the fairly recent years. Slides shown came from private sources as well as from the Oregon Historical Society. Grice said that the Sunday presentation "should be considered as a preview of a larger work to be completed this year. We expect to chronicle a very special era," he said. "We will feature local railroad men and will tell of the specific services they performed for the traveling public, allowing the Union Pacific and the Southern Pacific to (rightly) boast of the railroad's high quality service given to passengers of the line."

The traveling exhibitions will be on view at the Art Museum until



Audrey Parsons emerges from new giant silos being constructed at Terminal 4. Apprentice plumber working inside silo is Steve Olsen. (Photos: Samuel Bryant)

February 12. The Oregon presentation of these exhibitions were made possible by the Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon AFL-CIO, and Black Colleges Committee, Inc.

**P**ORTLAND's Audrey Anne Parsons has been named to *Who's Who in the West*. The 19th edition of *Who's Who* contains the "most recent compilation of biographical information on men and women of distinction whose influence is concentrated in the western sector of North America." Parson's career position has made

her a "subject of current reference interest," according to a congratulatory letter informing her of her selection. Parsons has been employed by the Bureau of Labor and Industries of the state of Oregon as an apprenticeship field representative and consultant since 1978.

Her days are active and full as she is a coordinator of the Outreach program which includes recruitment of women and minorities for the state's apprenticeship programs. She sometimes travels the state with her staff of four to speak at schools and community colleges to acquaint students with the opportunities to learn a trade. Her audiences may be made up of Native Americans, people of Mexican background, or they may have come from somewhere in Indo-China. Parsons tells them all how to enter the apprenticeship programs, how to achieve success once they are enrolled.

"We recruit, we test and we make every effort to find the right pursuit for our clients," says Parsons. "Light work? We've got that. Inside or outside work training is available. For instance," Parsons went on, "we have a program called 'limited energy electricians.' This would be for those persons who want to learn how to install burglar alarm systems, or the installation of PBX, or even Cable TV installation. Then there are the construction trades—and sometimes women want to learn one of these to get ahead in a non-traditional job."

"There was at least one Black young woman who came to us in 1967 for a job training as a construction laborer. However, she did not stop with just the job. The young woman went on to school and she now is a licensed electrical engineer. If a woman wants to enter a non-traditional job that requires more strength or stamina than she possesses at the time of her application, we can even provide her with physical fitness classwork to help her qualify and maintain her place in the program. Of course we have classes in English, and in reading and writing to help anyone who needs it."

"Yes," Parsons laughed. "We are still training butchers. But our new program is meat wrapping. These people not only are trained to wrap the meat; they are taught to pass along to customers at the meat counter the proper methods of cooking meats."

"We are now looking at high-tech jobs—and even into some phases of medical training that we can adapt into our program. We want to help the people who want to earn how to get into the various trades."

"City Commissioner Jordan's office is interested in employment for the refugees in their programs for displaced people," said Parsons. "Commissioner Jordan's staff often consults with us about training a client. Over at David Douglas High School there is an Explorer Scout

program established to interest young people in entering an apprenticeship program while they are in school. That's a good idea to consider right now before summer begins."

Parsons, now 50, studied at Portland State University, Northwest Business College, and at Portland Community College. Her interests were in community organization, counseling and service-

related courses. She has been married and is the mother of three. Parsons is a member of the board of directors for several organizations including: the State of Oregon Displaced Homemakers; Oregon Human Development Commission; Metropolitan Youth Development Corporation; New Skills for Women; International Association of Personnel in Employer Service; and others.



Michael Grice discusses Black Labor Photographs display at Portland Art Museum with Kim Gardner of Denver, Colorado.

## Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

In this election year the **Street Beat** team asked, "Do you think Ronald Reagan could get re-elected?"



**Birdie Lee Taylor**  
Retired

"No. He has not done the people or the country right."



**Andrew Brown**  
Security Agent

In an instant replay, do you think the Redskins will win the Super Bowl?



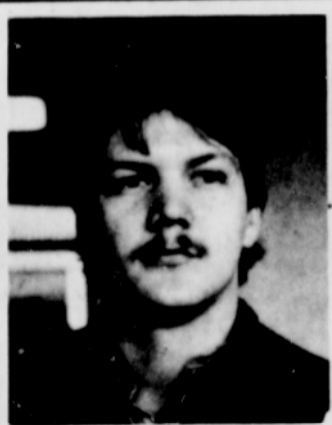
**Stephanie Volman**  
Housewife

I'm afraid he might be. I don't see a charismatic person rising or one with the financial backing. He may be hard to beat.



**Sher Lewis**  
Driver

God, I hope not. I can't stand him. I plan to vote against him.



**Don Cockrell**  
Security

I would think so. I'm going to vote for him. He has kept his word.



**R.G. Thomas**  
Janitor

No! He hasn't done anything for anybody. He is rotten. He stinks!

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