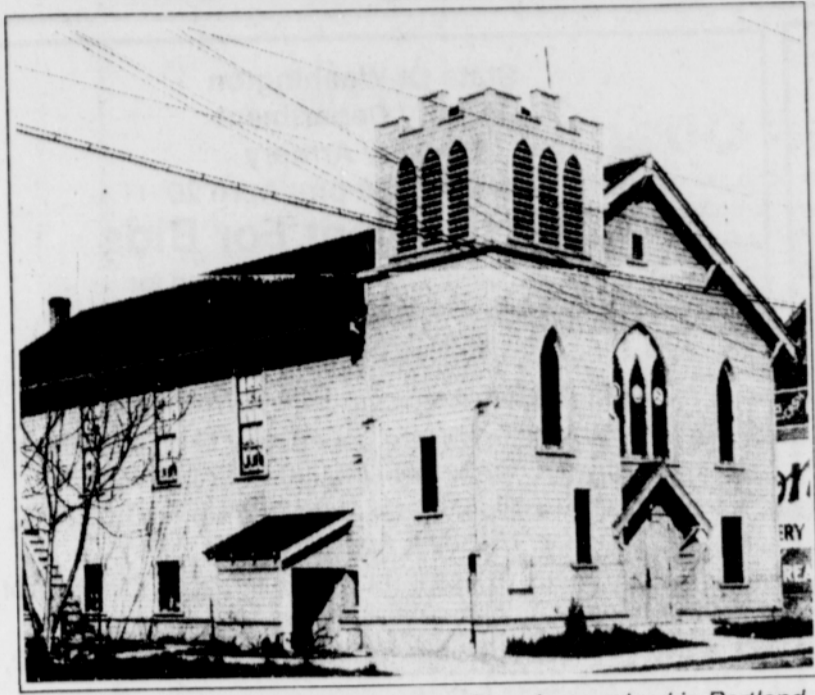


Early Black Churches Played Many Roles In Members' Lives



The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church organized in Portland in January 1869 and originally held services on the west side of the Willamette River. The congregation moved in 1916 to this location at 417 Williams Ave. The current site is at 2007 N. Williams Ave.

(Taken From The Oregonian, February 27, 1993 issue)
BY JANN MITCHELL,
OF THE OREGONIAN STAFF

Portland's early black churches were one of the very few places a person of color could go and see a familiar, welcoming face.

In the book "A Peculiar Paradise: A History of Blacks in Oregon, 1788-1940," author Elizabeth McLagan for the Oregon Black History Project quotes a native black Oregonian: "The only time I came in contact with black people, and all of us did, was when we went to church. Because black people were scattered over the city, and that was...the reason we went to church so much. That's the only time we got to see one another."

Churches were not only a social hub of the black community, but also provided children opportunities they didn't get in school. Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church produced several performances of Shakespeare's plays. Churches held speech contests. Mount Olivet Church had its own

queen contest during Rose Festival, the crown went to the woman selling the most tickets for charity. A black children's band won awards in the Junior rose Festival Parade. And in 1932, the Bethel Negro Chorus (with more than 100 members) presented an outdoor concert series called "Spirituals Under the Stars" at Multnomah Civic Stadium.

Early black churches also became a unifying political force for change. J.L. Caston, a young minister at Mount Olivet, led the most successful pre-World War II membership campaign for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The Portland branch was organized 1914 with 165 members, but by 1928 Caston had boosted local membership to 694.

In the early '40s, housing for both black and white defense workers was short. Negro workers were confined to either a Vancouver, Wash., dormitory or available housing on Williams Avenue. Others found shelter in churches or on tavern billiard tables.

Pastor J.J. Clow of Mount Olivet pleaded for a citywide open housing policy. Churches and social groups asked the Portland Council of Churches to petition the federal housing policy authority to provide adequate housing.

The first black religious organization was The People's Church, organized in 1862, when the entire black population of Oregon (according to the U.S. Census) was only 138. Services were held in the homes of members, particularly that of Mary Carr, who owned a boardinghouse on First Street (most of the black residents initially lived on the west side of the Willamette River, until the population began shifting in the teens to the east side.)

Seven years later, it became the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church when it incorporated and bought property in Northwest Portland, relocating to the east side in 1916.

The second church was established in 1895 by the California African Methodist Episcopal Conference and became the Bethel A.M.E. Church. The third black church, Mount Olivet Baptist, also was established in the 1890s. When it moved to the east side, lumber was donated by a branch of the Ku Klux Klan. By 1923, the black community boasted five churches and two missions.

Today, Portland has more than 50 predominantly black churches, whose congregations are growing while white, mainline churches shrink. Concerns about crime, drugs and gangs have driven people back to church, black leaders say.

"People have nowhere else to turn but the church," says the Rev. Joe Hardie, chairman of the newly formed African American Clergies and pastor of St. Mark Baptist Church.

"Churches are the backbone of our community. When you're down, destitute, have no where else to turn, they come to the church. Whom else can you call 24 hours a day? No social agency is willing to do that."



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Aid To Families With Dependent Children

It's hard enough being a kid these days. But without one or both parents, growing up can be a lonely ordeal.

Thanks to a program called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (ADC), kids deprived of parental care and support don't have to go it completely alone. If one or both parents die, take off, lose their jobs or become incapacitated, ADC may provide cash and medical benefits through Medicaid. You may be eligible for ADC if you are raising your child alone or are a brother, sister, grandparent or other relative taking over the child's upbringing.

According to Adult and Family Services (AFS), a child is considered deprived, and thus eligible for ADC, if the absent parent lives somewhere else and visits the child less than four times, or a total of 12 hours, a week. You must provide proof of this. For example, you could show that the absent parent receives mail, pays rent and utilities, or keeps his or her personal things someplace other than the child's home. The absent parent's new rental lease or a statement from his new roommate should convince AFS. A statement from your neighbors or landlord saying that the parent

no longer lives at your house should also do.

As soon as the absent parent moves out, your child is eligible for ADC. But if the parent has been gone less than 30 days, more proof may be sought that he's living somewhere else, unless you were already getting ADC when he moved. This additional proof could come in the form of filing for divorce or separation, or of signing an AFS Declaration of Abuse form, if you separated to avoid mental or physical abuse. The 30-day rule can also be satisfied if either the absent parent or the child are homeless, and you can get two people to verify the parent doesn't live with the child.

Once approved for ADC, your child can still see the absent parent without fear of losing benefits. For example, AFS allows the absent parent to visit four times each week in the child's home, for a total of 12 hours a week. Going over 12 hours a week could mean an end to ADC payments, but additional visits outside the home are allowed. But even if visits in the home go over the 12-hour limit, benefits may continue if the absent parent is not providing the child with care, guidance or support. However, a hear-

ing may be required to prove this.

AFS also allows the absent parent to sleep over at the child's house less than 30 percent of the time each month. If the parent sleeps over more than that, the child will lose ADC for that month, unless you can prove the absent parent gives no care, support or guidance. But you may have to show up at another hearing to prove it.

If both parents share the burden of providing care, control and supervision of the child, including joint legal custody, ADC may be cut off if the child spends at least 30 percent of each month living with each parent. If its less than 30 percent, your child remains eligible.

It's best to play it safe, staying within the AFS rules to avoid threatening your child's support.

Multnomah County Legal Aid Service provides legal advice and representation to low-income people in Multnomah County who have welfare problems. Appointments may be made by calling our downtown office at 224-4086 or our North/Northeast Community Law Office (on the Portland Community College Cascade Campus) at 295-9494. Or call Legal Aid's Welfare Rights Hotline at 241-4111.

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How long has it been since your car has had a new fuel filter? This is a common cause of power loss, which also can be due to some of the same conditions that cause poor gas mileage.

Louisiana Social Club

We the Louisiana Social Club of Oregon are having a Easter Party for the children in the metro area, April 3, 1993 at the Annex Building 1625 NE Alberta, from 10am to 1pm. We are asking all parents to stay with their children during this event. The age group will be from 2 to 12 years old. No teenagers please.

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Employment In Oregon: February 1993

Oregon's nonagricultural wage and salary employment (the number of payroll jobs in the state) increased by 12,300 between January and February, according to the Oregon Employment Division. After adjusting for regular seasonal trends, payroll employment reached an all-time high of 1,292,900.

Construction employment bounced back strongly in February. Mild weather and low interest rates provided incentive enough for 1,800 construction jobs to be added in February, a time of year when the loss of 900 jobs is normal. All components of the industry added jobs, with general contractors; street and highway construction; and roofing contractors leading the way.

Oregon's lumber industry also benefitted from this good weather, particularly in the logging sector. Logging basically accounted for all of the 900 lumber jobs added in Febru-

ary. Education employment, both private and public, returned to pre-holiday levels. Employment in private schools now stands at 16,800, while public sector schools employ 116,500.

Oregon's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained at 7.3% in February, unchanged from the revised January rate. One year ago, Oregon's rate was 7.6%.

The number of people who want to work in Oregon—the labor force—has grown by 53,000. The total number of jobs in Oregon has increased by 51,100. This includes all those who earn a paycheck from an employer, agricultural workers, and the self-employed. Even though the number of Oregonians who want to work has increased by more than 50,000, the number unemployed has grown by just 1,900. There are now 127,300 unemployed Oregonians, compared with 125,400 one year ago.

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