

Education

"Buildings Of Portland's African American History"

By Prof. McKinley Burt

A very educational and inspiring account of these "Cornerstones of Community" was presented Saturday at the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church (Rev. Amzie Bailey).

Once again, many members of this community, volunteers, professionals and social groups have formally organized in a successful year-long effort to create a very valuable and useful social document. And along with other supporting members of the Greater-Portland Community, over a hundred of these dedicated citizens were on hand for the public presentation of a massive and superbly-crafted community resource.

And once again, both the project and Saturday's program structure reflected the long-term interest and community involvement of the sponsoring "Bosco-Milligan Foundation Architectural Heritage Center." And

no where is their purpose better stated or related to our own African American community than in the following excerpt from their formal 'mission statement'.

"Once lost, the vintage and historic buildings that play such an important role in defining our unique community identity are gone forever. The history of Portland and its citizens is irrevocably linked to these buildings, which stand as physical testaments to the hopes, dreams and talents of those who came before us..."

Some of the hard, cold facts which prompt such maxims were underlined by shocked gasps from many members of the audience, when during the slide presentation given by Cathy Galbraith, project coordinator, people realized that many of the structures they viewed were only a 'virtual reality' the buildings were

gone; development, urban renewal, whatever the commercial and social metaphors. An almost palpable sense of loss seemed to pervade the hall as people realized there would be no more walks through those familiar places or rooms occupied by friends and relatives from yesterday. Sadly, there would be no "time and again."

And here, we are at the heart of the matter, the reason we described this African American History Project as producing a "valuable social document", a very critical resource, if you will. Certainly, the suddenly shocked audience was brought to realize anew that the socio-economic health of a community, and most importantly its continuity and further development is a 'real' preservation and interaction of place and person. The circumstances that generate friendship, fraternity and associations, partnerships and businesses - a vibrant soci-

ety.

And these things indeed, were so much the topic of conversation after the more formal ceremonies were over.

In the short speeches given by members of the history committee, the emphasis was on "how much we have lost-needlessly, but never again! These projects and over-research have made us aware"! citizens were warned of new threats that could be waiting in the wings to come on stage and create more fragmented urban shambles - "A Geography Of Nowhere". They warned each other of new threats to their properties; new "Urban Renewals", new "Hospital Expansion Projects", and new "Subsidized Transportation Routes (Light Rail).

There is never enough room to list all the dedicated participants in a community event. These were some

and the others will have to understand and forgive me. Bill Hart, Architect was Master of Ceremonies and gave the welcome and introduction; Rev. Amzie Bailey gave the opening prayer; Dr. Darrell Milner, PSU spoke on the History of African Americans In Oregon and Portland; projects Revised and Expanded publication (a massive and comprehensive document, the computer-generated index of buildings and persons is 225 pages alone).

The Project Team: Otto & Verdell Rutherford, Community Historians. Dr. Darrell Milner, Black Studies, P.S.U.; Prof. McKinley Burt, Black Studies, PSU (Retired); Dr. Carl Abbott; Urban Studies, PSU; Kimberley Moreland, Interview Coordinator; Valerie Campbell, Research; Kristen Stallman, Research and production; Jim Edwards, Data Entry; Dale Slusser Production, The

Bosco-Milligan Foundation; Cathy Galbraith, Executive Director, The Bosco Milligan Foundation.

The publication was made possible through the generous support of The Black United Fund; The Ralph L. Smith Foundation, Oregon Council For The Humanities, A Territory Resource, Oregon State Historical Preservation Office, National Park Service, Seattle Film Works, and format.

I hope that I have been able to communicate the sense of concern and determination the African American community has to be a very real, valued and 'respected' part of the Greater Portland Metropolitan Area - and that it realizes that it has friends in all parts of this city. The meeting ended on a high note.

Copies of this useful community publication may be purchased at the Reflections Bookstore.

Woodlawn Kids Create Artwork To Raise Funds For Garden Classroom

A group of 30 students at Woodlawn Elementary School in Northeast Portland will learn pottery techniques and create art pieces that will help raise money to build a garden at their school.

With funding from the Regional Arts & Culture Council's Neighborhood arts Program, renowned local artist Baba Wague Diakite (Wague) will work with the students 3:00 pm-5:30 pm March 2-6 at Woodlawn

School. Wague will help the students transfer African parables about food and plants onto painted tiles.

The tiles will be sold in a silent auction at the "From The Ground Up." Presented by AT&T Wireless Services, the event will raise funds to construct The Garden Classroom at Woodlawn School, a garden project that will teach children how to eat right through the process of planting, caring for, harvesting and cooking fresh products.

The Garden Classroom, and an adjoining community garden, will serve as a focal point for residents of the Woodlawn neighbor and surrounding community.

Famed chef/author Alice Waters of Chez Panisse Restaurant in Berkeley, California, will be the featured guest at the "From The Ground Up" gala event scheduled for May 9 at Atwater's Restaurant & Bar. Waters will create a special menu and discuss how she helped develop the

"Edible Schoolyard" in Berkeley.

The Garden Classroom at Woodlawn School is being developed by teachers at Woodlawn School and the Community Gardens program of Portland Parks & Recreation. Funding for the project is being raised from sponsors and attendees at "From The Ground Up" by 16 Girls & 1 Guy, a volunteer committee that develops fundraising projects for community organizations. The committee that develops

fundraising projects for community organizations. The committee developed "Art & Soul" in 1994, an event that has raised over \$500,000 for Northeast Portland based Self Enhancement, Inc.

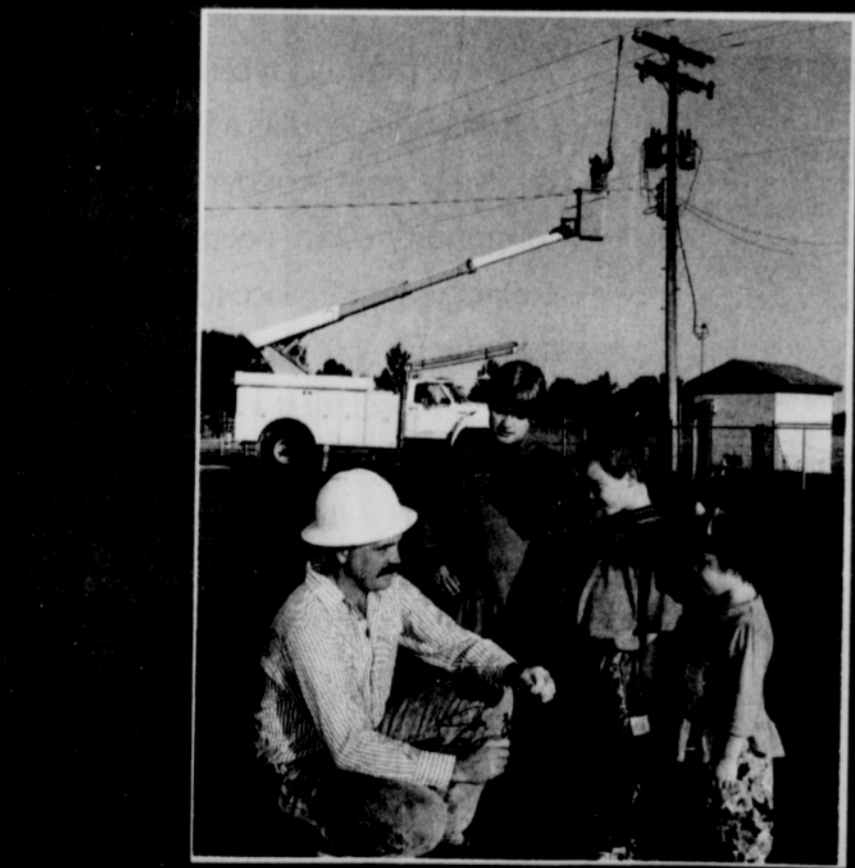
Wague was born in Bamako, Mali, in West Africa. He spent most of his early childhood in a small village with his grandparents and his many cousins, aunts and uncles. Although he grew up drawing, Wague began to work with clay when he moved to the

United States in 1985. Since then, he has been using clay surfaces of pottery as his canvas.

Wague's numerous solo exhibitions throughout the United States have been highly acclaimed here and abroad.

He recently published "The Hunterman and the Crocodile," a children's book that includes his colorful artwork. He lives in Portland with his wife, artist Ronna, and his two daughters.

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