

A woman stalled by Saturday's Juneteenth parade on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard takes a moment to get out of her car and watch the diverse procession pass by.

PHOTO BY DAVID PLECHL/  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



# Juneteenth Celebrates Freedom

continued from Front

curious onlookers and gave commuters pause as they stepped outside their cars to watch it pass. Parade marchers chanted for "40 acres and a mule." A promise that was made to families of freed slaves by the government, but ultimately never fulfilled.

Neighbors sold handmade African gifts and community advocates passed out information on everything from AIDS prevention to helpful hints on black home ownership.

Barbecues sizzled and the aroma filled the block. Kids checked out the carnival rides, munched on cotton candy and listened to the wisdom of their distinguished elders.

Parents found the event especially important for children to learn more about who they are, where they came from, and the struggles their ancestors endured to bring the people of their community to where they are today.

Gloria Smith passed out water and shared her vision of the holiday with thirsty celebrants.

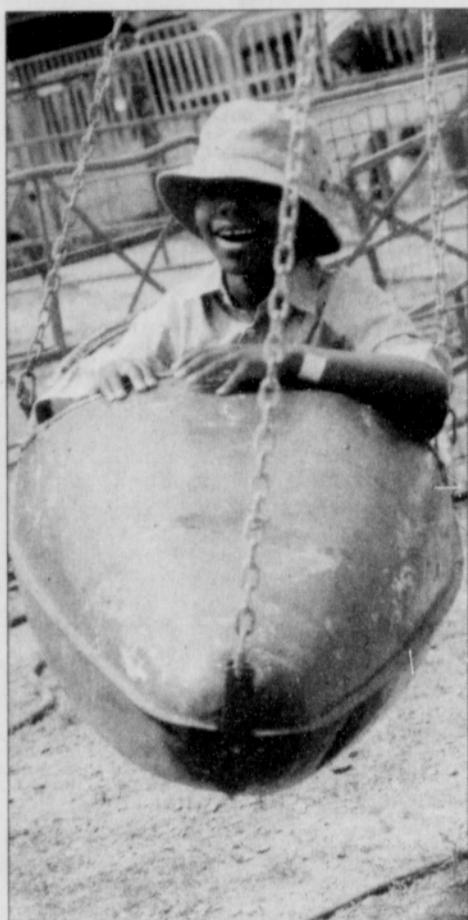
"It is really nice to have black people come together around their history and heritage," she said.

A moving performance of the black national anthem by Kendra Rosser was performed Sunday afternoon as the fair wound down.

"Let us march on 'til victory is won," she sang in a voice drenched in powerful emotion, "Martin Luther King did not die for no reason."

Her words swept over the crowd and brought swaying listeners to their feet.

"Rosa Parks, my sister Rosa Parks," she wailed, "She sat down and she made a stand. Do we have anyone that will make a stand today? Gotta march on...Gotta march on...Keep the dream alive, March on! Keep the hope alive, March on!"



Marnier Nicholson (above) spins himself silly on one of the many carnival rides at the Northeast Portland Juneteenth Festival Saturday afternoon.

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The Buffalo Soldiers (left), a Portland group that pays tribute to the African American soldiers who fought for the U.S. Cavalry in the 1800s, marches in the Juneteenth parade.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/  
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A parade celebrating freedom is enjoyed by families and friends atop a classic convertible.

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Juneteenth parade participants share the histories of enslavement of Africans in America and the loss of tribal lands by America's native tribes.

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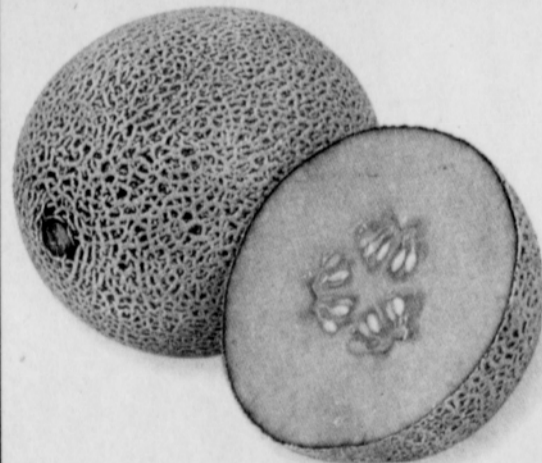
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