

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

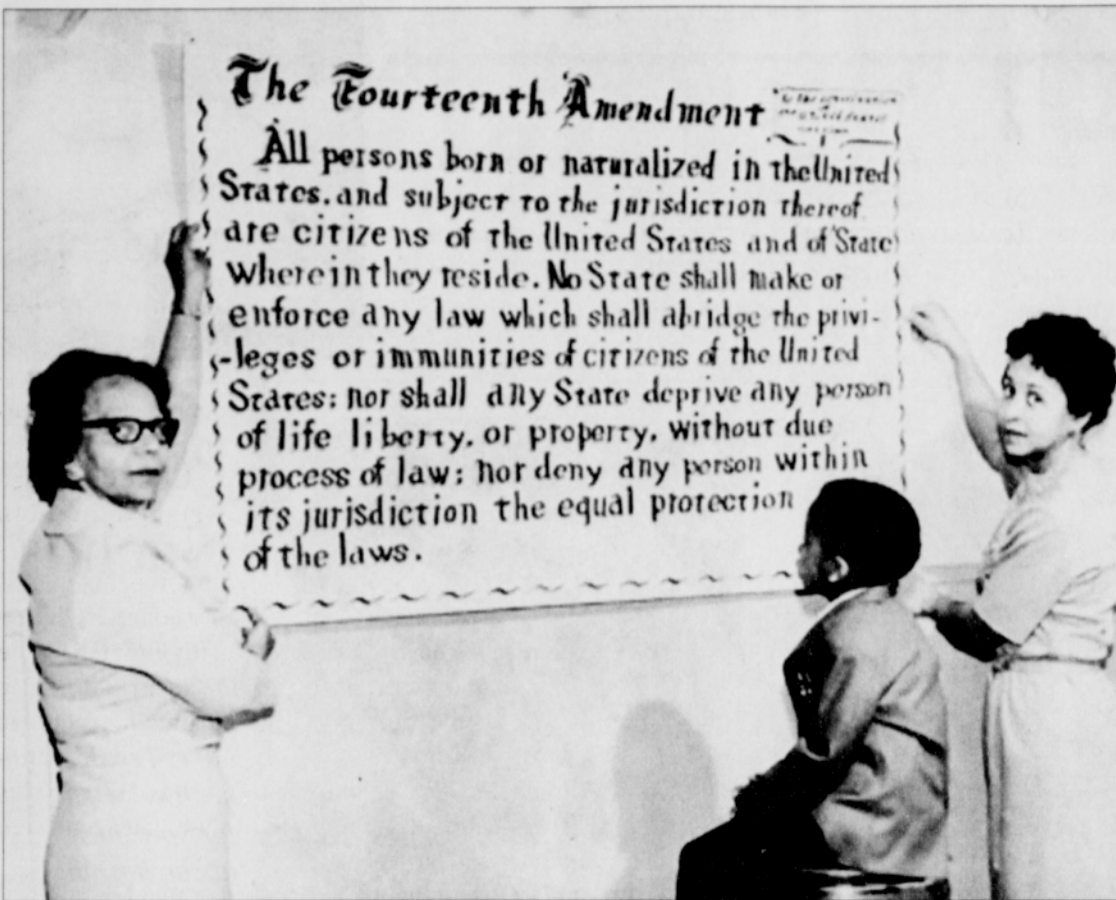


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This 1964 photograph shows Sylvia Thompson (left) with her daughter, Addie Jean Haynes, and her grandson, Bryan Haynes holding up a poster-sized copy of the Fourteenth Amendment at the Portland office of the NAACP on North Williams Avenue.

Pioneering Oregon's Civil Rights

First activists challenged discrimination with passion

Beatrice Morrow Cannady was one of Oregon's pioneer civil-rights promoters.

Born in Litig, Texas, on January 9, 1890, she moved to Portland in 1910, where she met her first husband, Edward Daniel Cannady, a waiter at the Portland Hotel and the editor and co-

founder of the Advocate, Portland's only African-American newspaper at the time.

Beatrice Cannady soon became an active member of the city's small African-American community. In 1914, she helped found the Portland chapter of the NAACP and quickly became one

of the state's most outspoken civil-rights activists.

Regularly challenging racial discrimination in public talks and in the pages of the Advocate, she became assistant editor of the paper in 1912, taking over as chief editor and owner in 1929. She wrote scathing editorials about the routine discrimination practiced in Portland and elsewhere in Oregon during the 1910s, '20s, and '30s, noting that "not even the pulpit has been as effective for the advancement of our Group, and for justice as the press."

A graduate of the Northwestern School of Law, Cannady helped craft the state's first civil-rights legislation, which would have mandated full access to public accommodations without regard to race. Though the legislation initially failed, in 1925 Cannady worked on the successful campaign to repeal Oregon's notorious "black laws," which prohibited African Americans from settling in the state and denied voting rights to people of color.

Cannady left Portland for Los Angeles in the 1930s, where she lived a quiet life until her death in 1974.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Beatrice Morrow Cannady, shown here in a 1929 photograph, was one of Oregon's pioneer civil-rights advocates for African Americans.

Fighting Laws of Discrimination

Portland's chapter of the NAACP stayed persistent

The Fourteenth Amendment, which Congress passed in 1868, gave African Americans the rights of American citizenship — including state citizenship and the right for men to vote. At that time, American women did not have the right to vote.

The Fourteenth Amendment effectively overruled exclusion laws written into the 1859 Oregon State Constitution, which sought to keep African Americans from settling, owning property or voting in Oregon.

The national NAACP formed in 1909. A Portland chapter opened in 1914 with Dr. J.N. Merriman as its first president, and Beatrice Morrow Cannady, the editor of an African-American newspaper, the Advocate, as the chapter's first secretary.

One of the chapter's earliest goals was to remove the exclusion laws from the state constitution. After numerous failed campaigns spanning thirty years, Oregon voters finally repealed the exclusion laws in 1926 and

1927. The Portland NAACP also worked for civil-rights legislation in Oregon, fought to get African Americans into labor unions and opposed discriminatory housing policies. In 1964, the NAACP chapter marked their 50th anniversary by a moving into new offices on North Williams Avenue in the Albina neighborhood of Portland. The new office also housed the NAACP Credit Union and a voter-registration office.

BLACK HISTORY TIMELINE

continued from A4

- 1887**
A ban on interracial marriages in the Washington Territory is lifted.
- 1889**
Washington gains statehood. The state constitution includes a ban on racial discrimination in schools.
- 1897**
California passes its first civil-rights legislation.
- 1914**
The Portland chapter of the NAACP, the oldest continually chartered chapter west of the Mississippi River, is founded.
- 1926**
Oregon repeals its exclusion law, amending the state constitution to remove it from the Bill of Rights.
- 1927**
The Oregon State Constitution is finally amended to remove a clause denying blacks the right to vote.
- 1948**
The Supreme Court declares California's law banning interracial marriages to be unconstitutional.
- 1951**
Oregon repeals its law prohibiting interracial marriages.
- 1959**
Oregon voters ratify the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.



W.E.B. Du Bois, civil-rights leader, scholar and one of the founders of the NAACP.



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"When evil men shout ugly words of hatred, good men must commit themselves to the glories of love. Where evil men would seek to perpetuate an unjust status quo, good men must seek to bring into being a real order of justice." —Martin Luther King, Jr.

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