

The Portland Observer



'City of Roses'



40

years of
community service

Committed to Cultural Diversity

Vanport: Portland's Katrina *Flood wiped out a multicultural community*

After Vanport was destroyed, many of the flood victims were given temporary housing in dilapidated war surplus mobile buildings at Guilds Lake in northwest Portland. But after more than a month of living in these circumstances, the residents organized a caravan to Salem to protest their conditions. (Photo by Allan DeLay, July 7, 1948)



BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

When Hurricane Katrina stuck New Orleans in 2005, people across the country watched as residents of the city had everything stripped from them by floodwaters only to struggle with government agencies that seemed indifferent, if not outright callous to their plight.

But 57 years earlier, a corner of Oregon, not unlike parts of New Orleans that were so devastated, experienced a similar catastrophe.

At the height of World War II Portland was home to shipyards that were feverishly churning out vessels for the war effort, and people from all over the country converged on the city looking for work.

Portland quickly experienced a housing crunch, which led to the creation of the Housing Authority of Portland. The agency built Vanport in 1943, the largest public housing project in the country at the time, to accommodate the influx of workers.

Vanport, named for being midway between Portland and Vancouver, attracted a motley group of people from regions as far away as the

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Ill Equipped

Mental health crisis ends in death

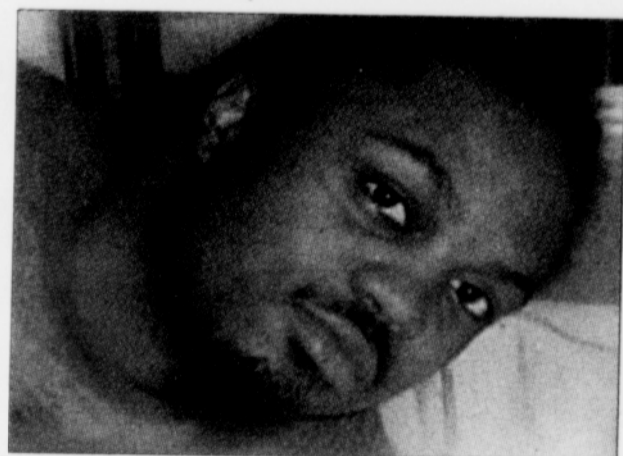
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The tense situation was broken when an officer fired his AR-15 rifle.

Police were responding to an emergency call that described Aaron Campbell as a suicidal man armed with a gun at an apartment complex in northeast Portland. There was information that said he was depressed over the death of his brother earlier in the day and had his girlfriend and children inside.

After an hour-long back and forth between Campbell, 25, and the police, the children were shepherded out of the Sandy Terrace apartments. Exactly what happened next isn't clear, but in the end, Campbell lay dead.

As Campbell's friends and family mourn his Jan. 29 death, questions still linger if the



Aaron Campbell

incident could have had a different outcome, and how effective efforts by the police bureau have been in making sure officers are equipped to deal with people in crisis.

Ever since the 2006 death of James Chasse,

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PHOTO BY JAKE THOMAS/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The entrance to the Northeast Sandy Boulevard apartment building where Aaron Campbell's confrontation with police led to his death.