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Letters Written by Rosa Parks

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"Let us look at Jim Crow for the criminal he is and what he had done to one life multiplied millions of times over these United States and the world," Parks wrote in 1956. "He walks us on a tight rope from birth..."

She also reflects on feeling isolated in a world of legalized segregation: "I want to feel the nearness of and the institute she founded. something secure. It is such a lonely, lost feeling that I am cut off from life. I am nothing, I belong nowhere and to no one. There is just so much hurt, disappointment and oppression one can take. The bubble of life grows larger. The line between reason and madness grows thinner."

According to Battle, Parks was a "prolific writer," constantly jotting down the things that bothered her and made her happy.

"Writing things down was a way of releasing some of that pressure," she said, noting Parks' stress from her arrest, the subsequent unfolding of the Montgomery bus boycott, and losing her job as an assistant tailor at the Montgomery Fair department store Parks held on to much of this writing - not to mention postcards, invitations, polltax receipts, and handwritten recipes - throughout her life. The artifacts spent years in limbo due to a legal dispute between her family

Parks died in 2005 at age 92.

Her papers, which go on display to the full public next month, will sit alongside the papers of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony and Thurgood Marshall at the Library of Congress.

"One of the reasons she held on to all of this material is because, at some point, she wanted people to know the real her." Battle theorized. "Years later, we can tell the whole story. History can be rewritten to include more information."

Born Perfect!

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such as letters to elected officials on behalf of the proposed measure and other legislation they hope to push forward this legislative session, including a Youth Mental Health Protection Act, an end to racial profiling, a ban on questions on prior convictions for employment, an increase of

the Oregon minimum wage, and a pledge for more earned sick days for workers.

All community members are welcome to attend the open house on Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 6 p.m. at the Basic Rights Oregon offices, located at 310 S.W. Fourth Ave., Suite 300, downtown. Dinner will be provided. The location is wheelchair accessible and provides easy access by public transit.



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