



THE LOST HISTORY



THE SKANNER

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History Special Edition

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Of Bikes and Race

Our staff has long looked for ways to cover our city's famous bike culture, because when we look outside our offices in the heart of North Portland we see Black bicyclists all the time – but the community is almost never reflected in the “bike movement.”

Why? Opinions on race and bikes in Portland are all over the map.

One person we interviewed for this edition, Dellores Jones, who with her husband Chuck Crews ran a bike shop in North Portland for 11 years, says the cost of bikes is too high for some families to afford.

Pferron Doss, who recreated the 1,900-mile ride of the 25th Infantry, says, “The only opinion I have is you either are a bicycle enthusiast or you're not, and I don't see it as a race issue as much as kids nowadays don't use bicycles.”

Still another source we found was a short film produced by Emmy-winning “Primetime” anchor John Quinones in his “What Would You Do?” series, in which two actors – one White, one Black – pretended to steal bikes in a public park. As cameras rolled, the White

actor successfully broke through the bike lock while dozens of passersby largely ignored him.

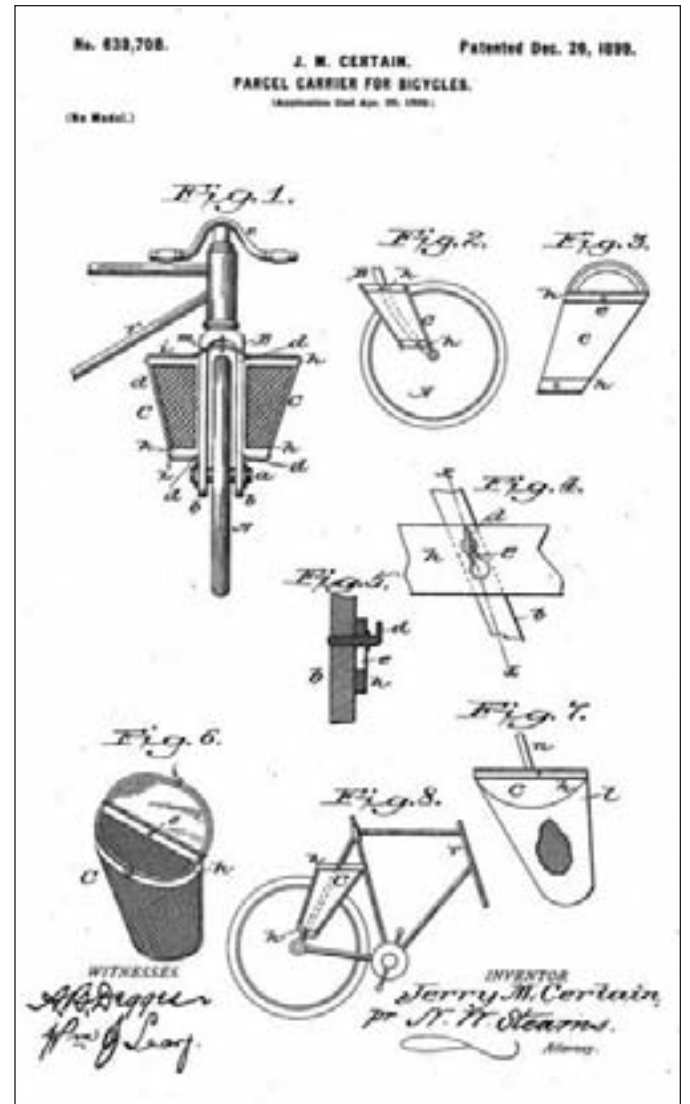
But when the Black actor succeeded in cutting through the lock, a crowd of angry people confronted him immediately, even seemed ready to threaten violence – until Quinones' camera crew revealed itself.

It's a fact that the Portland Police collect racial profiling statistics on bicycle riders and pedestrians (the numbers are lumped together, unfortunately). But it raises the question: Are Black cyclists singled out for confrontations?

From Brother Alonzo on his canary yellow three wheeler to the three youths who gleefully participated in the Naked Bike Ride last year, it's for sure that African Americans are riding through our city's streets alongside everyone else.

We at *The Skanner News* hope that this History Month Special Edition sparks some conversations about these issues and changes minds about race and bikes.

The Skanner News Staff



African American inventor J.M. Certain patented the first bike basket in 1899.

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