



FROM THE ARCHIVES **Jumptown: Storied Building Revived**

Once-hopping jazz spot

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Of The Skanner News
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240 N. Broadway. You could easily walk by this blighted building without ever noticing it. Known to many as Multi-Craft Plastics, the building has been vacant for years. But before that it housed a plastics factory, a pharmaceutical drug maker, a confectionery and ice cream parlor. Rumor says during the 1920s it was a speakeasy. But for a golden moment in the 1940s, it was The Dude Ranch, one of Portland's premier "Black and Tan" jazz clubs.

Now, a local developer and musician, Daniel Deutsch is lovingly restoring the building to create a community art space that will reflect its storied past.

Pat Patterson, the first African American to play basketball for the University of Oregon, owned and ran The Dude Ranch along with his friend Sherman "Cowboy" Picket. According to jazz historian Robert Dietsche, who wrote the Portland jazz history book "Jumptown," The Dude Ranch was "the shooting star in the history of Portland jazz, a meteor bursting with an array of the best Black and Tan entertainment this town has ever seen: strippers, then called shake dancers, ventriloquists, comics, jugglers, torch singers, world renowned tap dancers like Teddy Hale, and of course the very best of jazz."

No wonder it attracted legends such as Louis Armstrong, Thelonius Monk, Roy Eldridge, Coleman Hawkins and Lucky Thompson, as well as countless others. With hat check girls, waitresses dressed as cowgirls and all-night card games, Dietsche writes that the Dude Ranch was packed with everyone from politicians and Pullman porters to zoot-suited hipsters.

"Racially mixed party people who couldn't care less that



The Dude Ranch then...



...and now.

what they were doing was on the cutting edge of integration in the city that had been called the most segregated north of the Mason-Dixon line," Dietsche wrote.

In 1946, the city shut it down. Few believed that big stakes gambling and an accidental shooting were the real reasons behind its closure.

"There was too much race mixing," Dietsche told *The Skanner News*. "It was a black eye for City Hall. They looked for any excuse . . . and there were so many."

What the city couldn't close down was Portland's love affair with jazz. During those years, you could find jazz at any time of the day or the night. The city was bursting with newly arrived workers for the shipyards and other war support industries. And Williams Avenue — an economic area

that spanned many blocks on and off the street — featured a jazz joint on nearly every block.

"It was quite a scene," said Dick Bogle, jazz columnist for the *Skanner* and radio host on KMHD 89.9. During that period, Bogle said Blacks were confined to living west of Union Avenue (now Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.), giving club owners a targeted geographic area of talent and patrons.

Bogle said he began frequenting jazz clubs in the 1950s. He was too young to have entered the doors of the famed Dude Ranch when it was open. But he does remember the

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