

Portland

continued from page 4

ally of the race, as well as in appearance, form and advertising.” In addition to a wealth of local news, the paper also printed pieces from correspondents based in Washington and Montana, helping to foster a sense of connection and common cause among the scattered African American communities of the Pacific Northwest. While it frequently printed criticism of race relations in Portland, the paper nonetheless boosted Oregon as a relatively welcoming place for blacks to live, and encouraged further immigration to the region.

Griffin’s was a position of significant influence. The editor of an eastern Oregon paper, the *Baker City Republican*, once referred to him as “the political leader of the colored people of the Willamette Valley.” This was a bit hyperbolic, perhaps, but Griffin certainly was outspoken in his insistence that black citizens register and vote in elections, and he did not shy away from endorsing Republican candidates whom he viewed as sympathetic to his cause. However, he was also quick to criticize the party: “...Negro voters are entitled to some recog-



soon as the votes are counted.” Though it was a progressive journal for its day, when judged by contemporary stan-

clubs,” he once editorialized, “we would be a more important factor in the commercial world.” The young newspaperman admired Booker T. Washington, and more or less shared his Accommodationist philosophy of race advancement. “Be brave, and true, and industrious, and sensible, brothers,” Griffin advised. “[For] the world is growing brighter for the colored race in America.”

The New Age continued to be published until 1907; an impressive accomplishment in an era when the average paper lasted less than a decade. The reasons are not entirely clear why the publisher suddenly closed up shop and left the state at this time. The small and decentralized nature of the black population in the Northwest may have made it too difficult to operate his paper at a profit, or it might be that Griffin’s self-avowed “roving nature” simply got the better of him. Before long, he resurfaced in Kansas, joining the staff of another African American newspaper, the *Topeka Plaindealer*.

By 1916, he was once again ready to edit a journal of his own, but his new enterprise, the *Kansas City Kansas Elevator*, was to last only a few months. Tragedy ended the paper’s run: while composing an editorial endorsing the policies of Woodrow Wilson, Adolphus Griffin died suddenly of heart failure. An obituary in the *Topeka Plaindealer* memorialized Griffin’s crusading spirit and tireless work ethic, declaring that “news of his death was a gigantic shock to thousands of people from Mississippi to the Pacific coast.”

When it ran photographs, they more often depicted white politicians or national dignitaries than local people of color. The paper also accepted advertisements from segregated businesses, such as the luxurious Portland Hotel. While Griffin did not hesitate to criticize the dominant society for its most egregious injustices, his message is generally one of racial self-reliance and self-improvement. Indeed, he reserved some of his most scathing critiques for people in his own community. “If co-operative associations and business enterprises numbered among us as many as our pleasure

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dition after election as well as before. Generally, the politicians forget them as

dards, *The New Age* may actually give the impression of being rather conservative.



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