

DIGEST OF CITY CLUB REPORT  
"THE NEGRO IN PORTLAND" JULY, 1945"

**EMPLOYMENT:** The survey covering economic opportunities for the Negro population in the Portland area reveals both attitudes and practices which will influence the immediate Post-War period in the field of employment.

**ORGANIZED LABOR:** In spite of the policies of non-discrimination in the treatment of individuals because of race, color, creed, or sex in the national organizations of both the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O., affiliated unions retain autonomy in determining the policies practised within local areas. "It is acknowledged by those within the ranks of labor, that discrimination against the Negro is practised by a minority number of the unions in this area." Discriminatory local practices were found, however, in the following forms: direct denial of membership, indirect denial by statements of "no available work" or "lack of qualifications of the applicant", and in segregated auxiliary unit membership. On the other hand, acting in accordance with non-discrimination policies, two unions met opposition from the members on the job refusing to work with Negroes referred to the job by the union.

**EMPLOYERS:** "Opposition from employers to hiring of Negroes has considerable bearing on the fact that Negroes do not hold membership in more trade unions in this area.....Employer's position in most instances has been guided by what he feels is an adverse attitude of his employees or the public who patronize his place of business."

"It is likewise true that private businesses and professions could find employment for Negroes in greater number if there were a will to do so."

Goodwill Industries' letter: "The Goodwill makes no distinction between Negro and white applicants for work.....Our Negro employees work along side our other workers at jobs suited to their abilities....."

**FEDERAL AGENCIES:** Executive order No. 9346 sets forth a non-discrimination policy of the Federal Government applying to war work and federal agencies.

Locally, the presentation of three certified individuals to an agency requesting employees leaves open the possibility of prejudice in Civil Service placement. Questionnaires were sent to 26 federal, Multnomah County and City of Portland agencies. Out of the 6943 total employment, there were 132 Negroes as of May, 1945, distributed as follows: 106 Hudson House, Vancouver, Wash., 15 of the remaining 26 Negroes were employed by the City of Portland. "It is interesting to note that the City of Portland is now employing a greater number of Negroes than is employed by all federal agencies operating in the City of Portland. Regarding Post War employment, data as of May indicates little, if any increase in personnel.

## EMPLOYMENT

Hotels: Hotel officials were reluctant to give total number of employees and the percentage of minority group workers. The Portland Hotel is the only major hotel that employs Negroes as porters and waiters. Several other hotels employ a few Negroes in service jobs of other categories. One hotel has recently employed a full staff of Negro bus boys. An official of the hotel states that the service of these Negroes is highly commendable. Filipinos are employed by almost all major hotels as waiters, bus-boys or porters. Limited employment of Chinese was found.

Restaurants: Negroes are generally excluded from employment in cafes and restaurants. A small number of restaurant officials stated that the policy of not hiring Negroes was not influenced by public opinion. The majority, however, were of the opinion that their patrons would object. A few of the institutions reporting stated that they did hire Filipinos.

Department Stores: The survey showed that these stores generally hired Negroes in service jobs such as maids, janitors, etc. While one or two reported they had Chinese salespersons, the general feeling was that the hiring of qualified Negroes in jobs other than of a service nature would not meet the approval of the public. All those interviewed stated that their Negro employees were efficient and competent.

Railroads: The general policy here is to hire Negroes as porters, waiters and cooks. One company employs some Chinese on its clerical staff.

## EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES THROUGH PRIVATE AGENCIES.

In this field, conditions appear to be anything but satisfactory for minority groups. Some operators are clearly prejudiced and others do not handle other than white workers because they claim either that they are not satisfactory, or that employers do not "ask" for them. Several private offices handle clerical help rather exclusively and at present this field seems pretty largely closed, to Negroes at least. Of course, if employers asked for Negro help, most of the offices probably would try to supply them.

One office, hiring for logging camps and small mill communities, claims, "A man is a man", but says colored people could not find living quarters if sent out. Hence, he does not try to place them. One office claims to be glad to place Negroes, but admits it is hard for them to find "suitable jobs."

One man claims that some "vicious Negroes" who were here in the past make it difficult for others now.



## SURVEY OF PORTLAND LABOR UNIONS TO ASCERTAIN POLICIES TOWARD NEGRO MEMBERS

From September 11 to September 19, 1945, a survey was made of fourteen labor unions in Portland to ascertain their attitudes regarding admission of Negroes into union membership. In each case contact was made by phone, briefly outlining the purpose of the survey, the sponsoring organizations, and requesting an appointment for a personal interview with the executive officer of the union. With but one exception, such interviews were arranged, or if a mutually acceptable time could not be found, the information was related by phone. Inquiries were made along the following lines: (1) extent of Negro membership; (2) the nature of the restrictions if there are no Negro members; (3) existence of educational programs promoting interracial tolerance; (4) willingness to distribute literature promoting better interracial relations if furnished by a reliable source.

Of the fourteen unions contacted, eight admit Negroes to full membership, and six do not admit them. Of this latter number, two have arrangements for Negro auxiliary unions. The survey did not attempt to contact all the unions, but it was hoped to get a representative picture in those fields in which Negroes will be most likely to seek employment.

### UNIONS NOT ADMITTING NEGROES TO MEMBERSHIP

Boilermakers' Union--Although there are members of many nationalities employed here, there are no Negro members. An auxiliary lodge for Negroes has been set up at Vancouver, Washington, which has several thousand members. This lodge is practically self-governing, but is under a supervisory board, directly responsible to the International Lodge of Boilermakers. The members must take out compulsory insurance, and are allowed the same privileges of bargaining collectively, etc. as are members in other lodges of this union. Several comments were, in effect: The Negroes are not excluded because of "maliciousness" or prejudice on the part of the Whites, but because there is less trouble and things run more smoothly when they are separate. The Negroes do not work as well or accomplish as much under Negro foremen or bosses as they do under White bosses. You can deal easily with the educated or talented Negro, but can't get anywhere with the mass of uneducated ones.

International Woodworkers of America--Although the International policy is one of non-discrimination, there are no Negroes in this union. They have been kept out by the prejudices of the men who refuse to work with them. The union has been lacking in sufficient personnel to carry out an effective educational program, but educational literature promoting interracial tolerance would be distributed if furnished to them.

### Laundry Workers' Union 107

There are no Negroes among the 1800 members of this union. Negro workers had been tried, but other members demanded segregation. As no facilities for segregation were available, they were let out. It was reported that the colored workers were not interested in union activities, in improving working conditions, and their work was not up to standard."

An educational program had been tried with the assistance of the United States Employment Service.

### Longshoremans' Union

Although the international policy is one of non-discrimination, there are no Negroes in the Portland union as the result of local prejudice. The few Negroes who had been employed were removed upon the demands of



follow workers. It was reported that men objected to working with the Negroes down in the ship's hold because "they smelled so badly." While there is no educational policy at this time, it was thought that literature would be acceptable for distribution.

#### Machinists' Union

There are no Negroes in this union as Negro membership is forbidden by the International constitution. There is no educational program in progress, and no literature is desired. There was little inclination to discuss any aspects of democracy which might be involved in the situation.

#### Sheetmetal Workers' Union

The constitution forbids Negro membership in the regular union, but it does provide for a Negro auxiliary if there are a sufficient number of requests. There has never been such an auxiliary in Portland. The few Negroes who have applied for work have been sent out to the job where the employer could accept or reject them. No work permits are issued. It was stated that there are no competent Negro sheetmetal workers in Portland.

There is no educational program for interracial tolerance. No commitments were made as to the use of such literature if furnished to the union.

### UNION WHICH ACCEPT NEGROES INTO MEMBERSHIP

#### Building Workers' Union, Local 296

Of a total of about 5500 members, there are 2000 Negroes. There are also a considerable number of Jews employed and a few Japanese-Americans, two of whom are ex-service men.

It is claimed that there are no interracial problems in the union, and it was stated that some of the best workers are Negroes. No educational program was felt necessary.

#### Carpenters' Local 583

There are no restrictions on the hiring of Negroes. Union cards are issued to them in the regular manner. It was stated that their experience has been that frequently after they have sent a Negro out to work, the contractor soon sends him off the job.

#### Electrical Workers' Union

It was estimated that there are between 500 and 1000 Negroes out of the present membership of 8000. (Because of the recent rapid shifting of workers, accurate statistics are impossible.) There are no racial discriminatory regulations but situations are met where the employer will not accept Negroes. Within the union, everyone has equal rights. Several years ago there were one or two instances in which White union members refused to work with Negroes who were fellow union members. In these cases, the Negroes were kept on the job and the White workers either went to another job or quit the union. Since these early cases, there have been no further instances of refusal to work with them.

During the past few years, personnel shortages have prevented educational programs, but a willingness was expressed to work out any reasonable program presented and to distribute good literature.

Office Workers' Union

There are no discriminations against Negroes in this union. Although there is at present only one Negro member, this is attributed to the small amount of organization of the clerical workers to date. An educational program for greater inter-racial tolerance has been started and literature would be accepted for distribution.

Painters' Union

There are no discriminatory regulations--all union members are treated equally well. There is no record of the number of Negroes in the union as no designation as to race is placed on the union records. Interest was manifested in giving all possible aid to help better the condition of Negroes and to create better inter-racial relations.

Shipwright Union, Local 1020

There are no regulations which discriminate against Negroes. The records do not indicate a member's race, but it was estimated that five percent (5%) of the membership is Negro. The union has exerted pressure on several contractors to break down their discriminatory practices. It has also exerted pressure on White fellow union members who objected to working with Negroes. The opinion was expressed that the same degree of irresponsibility exists among Negro and White workers. There is no educational program, but literature would be welcomed for distribution.

Union of Textile Workers

Negroes are encouraged to join the union, and the union council includes a Negro as member. Attendance and participation in regular meetings are encouraged. There are 42 Negro members, 40 of whom are employed in an all-Negro plant, and 2 work in another factory. There are 6-8 other plants supplied by the Textile union which do not employ Negroes. This latter situation was attributed to the record of irresponsibility compiled at the all-Negro plant. It was stated that the work record was good while they worked and that they were adaptable to new work, but the degree of absenteeism and turn-over was so great, they were considered too unreliable to hire elsewhere. There is no program promoting inter-racial tolerance at present.

Waitresses Union Local 305

As the international union forbids racial discrimination, the fact that there are no Negro members in the local union is due to another factor. It is considered to be unfair to accept their initiation fees and dues when it is practically impossible to place them in jobs in local restaurants. There are a number of Negroes in the cooks' union; some places, such as the Portland Hotel employs mostly Negro cooks and kitchen workers. The companion union of Railway Car Diner workers have a majority of Negro Members.



**PERCENTAGE OF NEGROES TO TOTAL LABOR FORCE IN WAR PLANTS  
SUPPLIED BY WAR MANPOWER COMMISSION, JULY 4, 1945\***

**NON-WHITE EMPLOYMENT  
Portland Metropolitan Area**

	Total Employment	Non-White Employment	Percent
September, 1943 . . . . .	140,893	2,706	1.9
July, 1944 . . . . .	130,367	6,204	4.8
September, 1944 . . . . .	132,422	7,541	5.7
November, 1944 . . . . .	99,445	7,088	7.1
January, 1945 . . . . .	112,498	6,794	6.0
March, 1945 . . . . .	115,738	6,950	6.0

**BREAKDOWN BY INDUSTRY  
63 Reporting Establishments  
July 1, 1944**

Paper and Allied Products . . . . .	3,661	5	.14
Iron and Steel Products . . . . .	1,962	133	6.78
Aircraft and Parts . . . . .	1,795	7	.39
Shipbuilding and Repair . . . . .	108,280	5,975	5.52
Aluminum Smelting and Refining . . . . .	1,595	44	2.76
Machinery (except Electric) . . . . .	1,637	1	.06
All other Manufacturing . . . . .	5,352	46	.86
Transportation, Communication, other Utilities . . . . .	7,776	4	.05
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>132,043</b>	<b>6,215</b>	<b>4.71</b>

**BREAKDOWN BY INDUSTRY  
March, 1945**

Lumber and Timber Basic . . . . .	4,950	4	.08
Paper and Allied Products . . . . .	4,494	7	.15
Iron and Steel Products . . . . .	1,563	188	12.00
Aircraft and Parts . . . . .	1,575	3	.19
Shipbuilding & Repair (excluding Commercial Iron) . . . . .	95,573	6,676	6.98
Aluminum Smelting and Refining . . . . .	1,417	16	1.12
Machinery (excluding Electric) . . . . .	1,612	1	.06
All other Manufacturing . . . . .	5,379	59	1.09
Transportation, Communication, other Utilities . . . . .	3,724	----	--
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>120,290</b>	<b>6,954</b>	<b>5.78</b>

Non-White employment figures include estimates in some cases.

\* No exact comparison can be made between figures for different dates as they do not represent reports from identical establishments within the industries represented. The November figures do not include one large shipyard which had a comparatively small non-white employment. Otherwise, the figures do indicate general trends in employment.

Courtesy of Portland City Club.

## SURVEY ON COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### EDUCATION

In the field of education, the school officials drew no barriers on the basis of race. In high schools in the city, you will find mixed youth working together more or less successfully. In only one high school has the situation of race betterment been overlooked, and in most high schools the subject is discussed in one or more courses of study.

Generally speaking, youth allows participation in all curricular and extra-curricular activities without restriction. Several high school clubs have mixed membership, and there is a definite trend showing that youth generally is willing to cross off racial lines.

In the P.T.A. program in the high schools, there is little participation by mixed races. However, it is worthy to note that last year the president of one high school P.T.A. was Chinese.

Also of note is the fact that Orientals are accepted more readily than Negroes. It is apparent from our survey that, with few exceptions, there is little racial problem in the high schools. Appointments this year of two Negro school teachers further substantiate a non-discrimination policy on the public school system.

### CHURCHES

The announced policy of churches of all faiths and denominations in Portland permits Negro worship. There appears to be no uniformly established policy in Portland churches concerning Negro membership. The question of receiving a Negro into church membership is most likely to run into opposition from members of governing boards. Views indicated by various Church leaders ranged from "Christian worship should be segregated. God intended it so. It is expedient since Negroes feel more at ease in their own presence. The process to make different colors feel at ease is too difficult and makes for self-consciousness rather than ease. God has cast the color line, and expects it to be respected", to the following statement, "Segregation is not the answer. All should work together. Would favor anything of that sort. Segregation, prejudice, is a refraction on the intelligence of people. Intermarriage is an objection to an interracial church, but Negroes probably aren't anxious to marry whites. Using intermarriage as an argument is just a 'bogie'."

In the general picture of race relations in churches, it is apparent that the problem is mostly an adult problem. In the few situations where you do find youth prejudice, it can generally be traced to parental influence. It is also apparent that both youth and adult leaders in most of the churches are ready at this time to enter into a program of better racial understanding.

The Portland Council of Churches has taken a forward step in becoming the first local council of the United States to establish a Race Relations Commission and a department to deal with racial relations. In the city, there are four Negro church, two of which are Methodist, one Baptist and one Episcopal. In Vanport City, Guilds Lake and East Vanport (war emergency housing areas) there are conducted both integrated and segregated services. These are held in school auditoriums and recreational halls under the auspices of the United Church Ministry.



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

There are established in Portland several organizations with programs having to do with certain phases of racial relations. While each of these groups has a constructive program in a limited field, there is need for coordination and overall direction of these several efforts. It is felt that this could be accomplished through the establishment of a city-wide committee made up of recognized civic leaders.

### ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RELATIONS PROBLEMS

American Civil Liberties Union: Gus Solomon, Attorney  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: Rev. J. James Clow,  
Chairman  
Urban League: Edwin C. Berry, Executive Secretary  
Portland Council of Churches, Commission on Race Relations: Dr. Lansing E.  
Kempton, Chairman; and George L. Thomas, Director  
Interracial Commission, Inc.: Father Thomas J. Tobin, Chairman  
National Conference of Christians and Jews: Mrs. Betty Britton Sale,  
Executive Secretary  
Anti-Defamation League: David Robinson, Director  
Council of Social Agencies: Elizabeth Goddard, Executive Secretary  
Y.W.C.A.: Miss Gertrude Eakin, General Secretary  
Y.M.C.A.: Clair Johnson, Metropolitan Program Secretary  
Federated Jewish Societies: Mrs. Issac Swett  
Neighborhood House  
Multnomah County Council of Parents and Teachers  
Oregon Mental Hygiene Society  
Oregon Baptist State Convention: Miss Isabelle Gates, Christian Friendliness  
Director  
Social Action Committee of the Congregational Conference of Oregon: Dr.  
Cyril K. Gloyn, Director  
Civil Rights Committee, Oregon Conference, Methodist Church: Dr. Ray S. Dunn,  
Chairman  
Program in Education of the Methodist Church: Miss Pearl Sherlock, Director  
of Christian Education  
Social Education and Action Committee of Portland Presbyterial: Mrs.  
William H. Gerne, Chairman  
Committee on Social Education and Action of Portland Presbytery: Dr. John M.  
Paxton, Chairman  
Fellowship of Reconciliation: Miss Mabel Downs, Secretary  
International House: Rev. Donald Baldwin, Chairman of the Board  
Portland Christian Youth Council: Franklyn W. Scott, President  
Methodist Federation for Social Service  
Vanport Interracial Committee: Rev. Ennis Whaley, Chairman  
American Council on Race Relations: Laurence E. Howes, Jr., Regional Director,  
San Francisco  
C. I. O.: Stanley Earl, State Director (program of CIO National Committee  
to Abolish Racial Discrimination through his office)  
A. F. of L.: Miss May Darling, State Educational Director



Government Agencies:

Portland Housing Authority: Project Services Advisor, Mr. Ralph Carman  
War Manpower Commission: Tom Sheridan, Minority Problems Advisor,  
Portland  
Fair Employment Practices Committee: Bernard Ross, San Francisco  
War Relocation Authority: Mr. C. W. Linville, Director

City Club of Portland

Multnomah County Bar Association Committee on Civil Rights for Japanese-  
Americans: Mr. Vern Dusenberry, Chairman  
Committee to Aid Relocation: Dr. Blair Stewart, Chairman  
League of Women Voters: Mrs. Henry L. Corbett  
A. A. U. W. Race Relations Group:  
Vancouver Civic Unity League: Rev. Helliwell, Chairman  
Portland Police Department \*\*

\*\* There are no Negroes employed as policemen in Portland, though a few Negro special police of the veterans guard and patrol are used in Negro districts. Chief Niles stated Negroes are eligible for police duty on the same basis as whites, and may take civil service examinations for police force positions. Recently made public has been a request for one hundred new policemen.

By Courtesy of the CITY CLUB

HEALTH:

There are two Negro physicians and a Negro dentist in the Portland area. It is impossible for two physicians and a dentist to carry the medical load in the Portland area. It may be fairly said that the majority of physicians render medical services regardless of race, color or creed.

The Portland hospitals attempt and do render service regardless of race or color. Each hospital has its own individual problems which, in most cases, are being worked out on as fair a basis as possible. One or two hospitals have asked Negroes to take private rooms. This unfair practice is being replaced by the adoption of a more equitable policy by the hospitals, also due to the economic loss involved in an area when a large percentage of all cases are covered by various hospital plans and pre-payment nature.

Vanport Hospital stands out as the one hospital that has adopted the plan of most complete segregation.

The policy of the convalescent homes is one of almost complete segregation at present. There are two that will admit, but do not encourage, Negro patients. The policy of these homes creates an acute problem with aged and infirm Negroes. The county health institutions, according to the superintendents make no distinction as to race or color in the treatment of their cases.



By Courtesy of the CITY CLUB

SOCIAL AGENCIES--RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

Each of the agencies contacted, having concern for social welfare, character building, child care and health, and recreational activities in Portland, as indicated in the tabulation of replies to questionnaire, has established policies accomplishing some of the most liberal integration of Negroes into program activities to be found in the city.

The Y.W.C.A. has gone further in its program of integration than any other of these agencies. It has for a period of ten to fifteen years had Negro representation on its Board of Directors and also on most of its standing committees.

The park and playground facilities of the City are available for the use of all residents of the city without discrimination as to race, color, or creed, and we believe are quite generally used by Negroes. However, we find no Negroes employed on the park staff except those employed at Vanport City.

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Additional Note: Theaters and concert halls are opened to the public generally.

RESTAURANTS:

There appears to be no established policy among restaurants of Portland governing service to Negroes. The adoption of such a policy has been discussed by the Restaurant Owners Association, which is made up of the larger downtown eating places, but no official action has been taken. The association did, however, oppose the Civil Rights Bill introduced at the last legislative session.

According to the representative of the Restaurant Owners Association, service to Negroes is up to each individual owner. However, the attitude of the majority is that Negroes will not be served. Very few specifically ask Negroes to leave or otherwise draw public attention to this policy, but such instances have occurred.

Many small lunchrooms and restaurants particularly in sections of Portland frequented by working men, display signs reading "White Trade Only". Visiting race relations authorities have pointed out that Portland is the only city on the Coast where such signs are displayed.

A survey of downtown restaurants made by the Inter-racial Fellowship Club of the Portland Council of Church women shows that some restaurants do not discriminate, others will serve Negroes when accompanied by white people, and some refuse to serve Negroes under any circumstances.

Only one hotel is known to accept Negroes without some restrictions. One other hotel will accept noted Negro guests, although it has been reported that this hotel restricts the hotel privileges of the Negro guest. Other hotels generally refuse to admit Negro guests under any circumstances.

SURVEY OF PORTLAND SOCIAL AGENCIES  
Re: TREATMENT OF NEGROES

Name of Agency	Program Policy		No Negroes	Participation		
	Integrated	Segregated		General	Limited	None
Waverly Baby Home . . . .	X	---	---	X	---	---
Boy Scouts . . . . .	X	---	---	---	X	---
Boys' & Girls' Aid Society . . . . .	---	X*	---	---	X	---
Camp Fire Girls . . . . .	X	---	---	---	X	---
Catholic Charities, Inc.	X	---	---	---	X	---
Childrens' Farm Home. . .	X	---	---	---	---	X
Federated Jewish Societies . . . . .	X	---	---	---	X	---
Girl Scouts . . . . .	X	---	---	---	X	---
Goodwill Industries . . .	X	---	---	---	X	---
Manley Center . . . . .	X	---	---	X	---	---
Oregon Protective Society . . . . .	X	---	---	X	---	---
Pisgah Home Colony . . .	Did not respond to questionnaire					
Portland Fruit & Flower Mission . . . . .	Did not respond to questionnaire.					
Portland Society for Hard of Hoaring . . . . .	X	---	---	---	---	X
Salvation Army . . . . .	X	---	---	---	X	---
Travelers' Aid . . . . .	X	---	---	---	X	---
Visiting Nurses' Assoc.	X	---	---	---	X	---
Volunteers of America . .	X	---	X**	---	---	---
Woman's Convalescent Home . . . . .	---	---	X	---	---	X
Y.M.C.A. . . . .	X	---	---	---	X	---
Y.W.C.A. . . . .	X	---	---	X	---	---
Albertina Kerr Nursery.	X	---	---	X	---	---
Louise Home . . . . .	X	---	---	X	---	---
St. Rose Industrial School . . . . .	X	---	---	---	X	---
Shriners' Hospital . . .	X	---	---	---	X	---

\* Segregated by nature of service.

\*\* Portion of program on basis of no participation.

Courtesy of Portland City Club.