



The Skanner mobile available now
theskannermobile.com

EMAIL



Home Bulletin Board Advertising Jobs Movies Obituaries Special Editions Breaking News Links
Sports



GET READY
Sat. Aug 4th, 10:30am-3:00, Midland Library, 805 SE 122nd

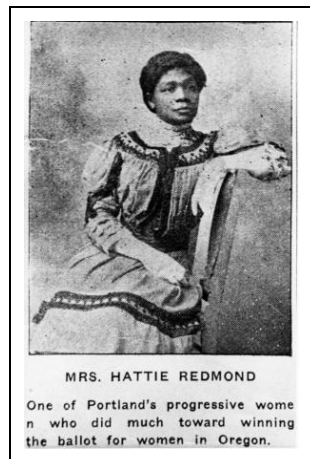
Black Suffragist Will Be Celebrated July 21 at Lone Fir Cemetery

Genealogist finds story of slavery, church, politics, miracle cures and a homicide

Like

Tweet

Helen Silvis Of The Skanner News
July 12, 2012



MRS. HATTIE REDMOND
One of Portland's progressive women who did much toward winning the ballot for women in Oregon.

Photo #ba017787 of Hattie Redmond, courtesy of Oregon Historical Society

On Saturday July 21, Portlanders are invited to Lone Fir Cemetery to celebrate the life and achievements of African American Suffragist Hattie Redmond. Along with performances and music, the event will feature Barbara Roberts, the former Oregon Governor now Metro Councilor as the keynote speaker, former State Sen. Avel Gordly dedicating Redmond's new grave marker, and historian Kimberly Jensen. Sponsored by Century of Action and Lone Fir Cemetery, the event starts at 1 p.m.

Redmond's record as an activist, rediscovered this year by the Century of Action committee, shows that Black women were at the forefront of Oregon women's battle for the right to vote. But with no living family known, Redmond's life remained mysterious.

Genealogist Connie Lenzen decided to see what she could discover. So she dug up dozens of historical records – not just in Portland, but in Missouri and nationally, searching for clues that would shed light on the sources of Redmond's strength and

Advertisements



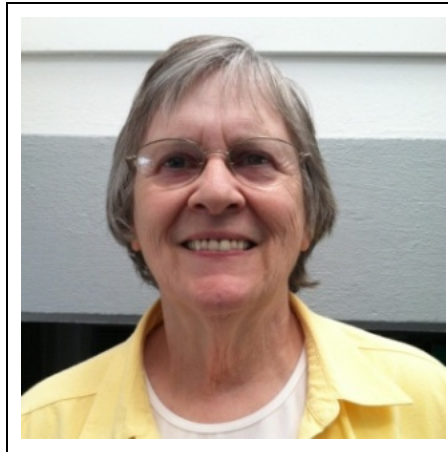
passion for politics.

"I try to put myself in the shoes of the people I'm researching," Lenzen told The Skanner News. "So with Hattie, I tried to put myself into her head. She had to have motivation, and she had to have a support system.

"So I broadened the search right away to find out, 'Who were her people?'"

Looking at voter registration cards from 1908 on, as well as city directories, U.S. Census records, death certificates, draft records, emancipation lists and newspaper articles, Lenzen found information about Redmond's parents, brother, sisters and husband.

What she discovered was a family who emerged from slavery to become prominent citizens in Portland's African American community. Their story is filled with uplift and determination, song, poetry, travel and a work ethic second to none. But the family also battled through a house fire, sickness, a homicide, a charge of corrupting a minor and, for Redmond's husband, an early death in the poor house.



Hattie's Parents Lived in St. Louis, Mo.

Lenzen discovered that Hattie's father, Reuben Crawford, was born enslaved in 1828, in either Missouri or Virginia. She believes he was the same Reuben Crawford who was emancipated in November 1862, by a banker and grocer from Mississippi, called William H. Glasgow. His wife Vina was emancipated in October 1862 by a Stephen F. Summers.

Genealogist Connie Lenzen dived into the mystery of Hattie Redmond's family and origins


Southern businessmen who wanted to work in the Northern states had to sign an oath of loyalty to the U.S. constitution, Lenzen says, which meant emancipating any slaves they held.

Reuben was probably sent to St. Louis to become a caulker, a trade that offered steady work for skilled practitioners. Caulkers sealed the seams of wooden ships, making them waterproof and seaworthy. Frederick Douglass, the writer and orator, also was trained as a caulker. Reuben registered for the Union draft in 1863, but Lenzen found no record that he actually served. According to an article Lenzen found, he had been "shifting for himself" since the age of 13. His struggles may have influenced Hattie to struggle for her own rights, Lenzen says.

"That really hits you because he was on his own from 13 years old," Lenzen says. "He was most likely sold to become a ship caulker. So why did Hattie do this? Her father must have been a big part of the reason."

The Oregonian said in 1914 that Reuben was perhaps the "best known ship caulker on the coast." He was 86 then and had been retired for only one year.

Redmond's mother was Lavinia or Vina Blue, also of St. Louis, Mo. City directories for 1864-68 list Reuben as living on Kosciusko and later Wyoming streets near the St. Louis waterfront. A William Crawford, also a caulker and possibly Reuben's brother, also lived there.



KAISER PERMANENTE

Careers

Do you have a
passion for
helping others?

Find a
rewarding
career at
Kaiser
Permanente

DIVERSITY STATEMENT:
Kaiser Permanente offers a
culture that values all
dimensions of diversity and
strives to create an inclusive
work environment for all
employees, allowing each
person to contribute to their
full potential, regardless of
background.

News Videos

[The Skanner News Online Video](#)
[The Skanner News YouTube channel](#)
[Multimedia Training Center](#)

Trending Stories

1. [Midland Library Debuts Summer...](#)
2. [East Portland Exposition](#)
3. [Film Review: United in Anger...](#)
4. [Activists Plan Rally July...](#)
5. [Black Suffragist Will Be...](#)
6. [One on One With Sticman...](#)
7. [New Movement Emerges to Beat...](#)
8. [Dante James: The 'Huey P...](#)

Breaking News

[sign-up](#)

E-Blast Advertising



Lone Fir Cemetery will host a July 21 celebration of Redmond's life and contribution to women's suffrage

The Move to Portland

Hattie was born in St. Louis around 1862, the oldest of eight children—five daughters and three sons – born to Reuben and Vina. Cupid D. Crawford and William Crawford also were born in Missouri by 1866. But then the family disappears from St. Louis, They must have traveled to Marysville, Calif., because Susan Crawford was born there in 1871. Then they moved to Hood River, where Mary Frances Crawford was born in 1873. Also born in Oregon were: Elizabeth “Lizzie”; Benjamin; and Blanche.

In the 1870 census the family is listed living in Wasco County, but by 1880, the Crawfords were living in Portland. Lenzen found that they were active in their church, Mt. Olivet, and on the social scene. Hattie is recorded in an Oregonian article, for example, reciting a poem, “I’m So Happy,” at a benefit organized by A.M.E. Zion Church.

“These were very social people, who were very active in their community, socially and politically,” Lenzen says.

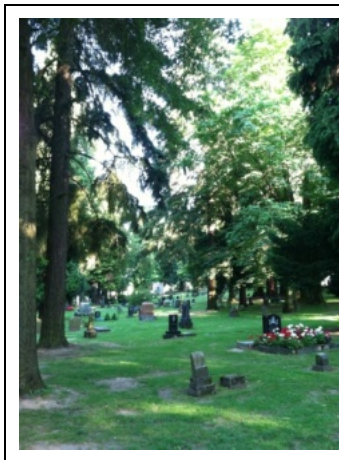
Reuben was a singer who “delighted the audience with a beautiful song, ‘Free as a Bird,’” at the Good Samaritans’ 4th anniversary celebration. He was a member of the Republican Lincoln Club, and also active in the Portland Colored Immigration Society, set up to persuade more African Americans to come to Oregon.

From the earliest Oregon records, Reuben Crawford was registered to vote. And he kept registering and voting, and working too, until he was 86 years old. His handwriting is firm, but printed, which suggests he probably did not get much education. But voting records show that all the Crawford children learned to read and write, since they all signed in beautiful handwriting.

No wonder Hattie was an activist, Lenzen says. “He was her motivation, I’m sure, because he registered early and he registered often, and here he is registering at 86. This man was incredible. I’m sure he walked to register, and he walked to vote, and he’s walking to work right into his 80s.

“This is an incredible family. It’s not just Hattie; it’s everybody,” she says.

The family moved around, living at several addresses including: 289 Grant Street and 327 S.W. Seventeenth Street in Goose Hollow. Once, the Grant Street address was robbed when the family was at church. Reuben reported the only things missing were, “a pistol and jar of preserves.”



The Story of a Marriage

In November 1893, 17 months after her mother’s death, Hattie married Emerson Redmond, a waiter who worked at some of the top venues in town: the Multorpor Club, the Portland Hotel, and later the Northern Pacific Railroad. The year before, Emerson Redmond and Thomas Jefferson had organized a “Mid-Summer Soiree and Literary Carnival at Myrtle Hall.” A Miss Hattie Crawford sang a song called, “I Love My Love.”

How did her marriage go? It’s difficult to tell, but there are clues that there may have been a rift. First, Lenzen found that in 1900 Hattie had left town to take a job in Meacham. When she came back to Portland for a few days, she was reported as visiting her father, not her husband.

“That’s not what you would expect,” Lenzen said. “You’d expect her to be with her husband.”

Later Lenzen discovered that the Crawford home on Grant Street, in what is now Goose Hollow, was damaged by fire in 1901. A newspaper article shows that Reuben Crawford accused Hattie’s

Even though the family lived mostly on the West side of the Willamette, many are buried at Lone Fir. Lenzen believes the cemetery was more welcoming to African Americans than others husband of arson. Emerson Redmond denied the charge, saying, "The action of Crawford in getting me arrested is just spite work. I married his daughter and we have not been together for three months but she sent me letters all the time I worked on the cars (he was working for the railroad) and there is no trouble between us. Last Monday I was not in the neighborhood of 289 Grant Street. I was in my own room on Ninth Street and don't know anything about the fire."

The couple never had children – in fact Lenzen could find no record that any of Hattie's siblings had children. In the case of Hattie's brother William, the records would be in Mexico, since he went there to live around 1891. He is recorded in the Portland [New Age, the city's first Black newspaper](#), as visiting Portland in 1902, and again in 1906.

"Mr. Crawford is greatly surprised at the growth of Portland in the 15 years since he resided here," the article said.

Emerson Redmond was admitted to the county hospital on March 17, 1907 and died there on March 26.

"He went [to the county poor farm at Edgefield](#)," Lenzen says. "People only went there when they were really sick, really old and couldn't take care of themselves. I think they were just so poor and he was so sick that he was shipped off to Edgefield."

Yet Reuben had a good job, while Hattie and her sisters seem to have been employed as charwomen and janitors.

"There are always some mysteries as you go through these records," Lenzen says.

The hospital record lists Emerson Redmond as a widower, aged 44. A "Mrs. Crawford" gives the information. The cause of death was recorded as "Thrombosis of Heart." But the record also says he had previously suffered from gonorrhea. At the time, medicine had no cure for gonorrhea, so it is possible that this caused his heart problems. Adding support to this theory, he was admitted to the county hospital suffering from "rheumatism," another severe complication of untreated gonorrhea.

The Ups and Downs of Cupid Crawford

More of this harsher side of life can be seen in the records that deal with Hattie's brother Cupid. A horseshoer or blacksmith, he married an Isabelle Clark of California.

In 1907, the *New Age* reported that Cupid spent a week in Good Samaritan Hospital with an infected foot.

"Mr. Cubit Crawford, our popular horseshoer is able to get around again although his foot is still very painful caused by blood poisoning."

In 1910, when his sister was infuriating many in the establishment with her fight for women's voting rights, Cupid was accused of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. He was released on \$1,000 bail, while a grand jury investigated the allegation that he, "enticed a 12-year-old white girl into the rear room of his shop last Saturday, on the pretext of showing her Easter eggs."

Did Cupid behave badly, or was the accusation an attack on an outspoken Black man or his activist sister? All we know is that the case was dropped, Lenzen says, because it disappears from the news.

A year later, Cupid brought a complaint against a bath house that refused him entry, citing racial prejudice. Cupid said he'd been buying bottles of Lang's Rocky Mountain Mineral Wonder, because "he said it was good for colored people and now he won't let me into his baths because he says they are bad for colored people." The *Oregonian* reported the story under the headline, "Negro Demands Baths."

"Crawford went to the bathhouse yesterday to plunge in the healing fluid, but was met with the statement that the 'wonder' in its natural state would have an untoward effect on the complaints of an Ethiopian."

What effect his complaint had, if any, we don't know.

Cupid had another brush with the law in 1914. During a quarrel, he shot and killed a man called Charles Broadnax, who had recently arrived in Portland. A grand jury ruled it was self-defense, as Broadnax had been first to draw a gun. The *Oregonian* reports Cupid saying, "I did it. I admit I did it, and I'm glad I did it. He abused me, he ran me down my own stairs, he told me he would kill me."

Drug abuse was a problem then too. In 1919, Hattie was an officer of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, responsible for, “Sabbath observance and anti-narcotics.”

What Motivates a Genealogist?

Finding out about Hattie Redmond and her family means researching dozens of records. Some seem to contradict one another. Old records are handwritten and contain a vast variety of spellings, as well as outright mistakes. For example, a news report in 1911, says that Reuben had enlisted with the Confederate navy and helped build a ship called the Merrimac. Lenzen says that’s doubtful, because records show he registered for the union draft, and the iron-clad vessel was built in New Orleans.

Certified genealogists have to know where to look, and a lot about history. It takes many hours to find the right documents and figure out what they mean. So what motivated Lenzen? Turns out, she has a story of her own.

Lenzen’s great, great grandmother, born in Massachusetts in 1820, was a suffragist and an abolitionist. She moved several times, to Michigan and then Portland, but found little tolerance for her ahead-of-her-time views. People were not kind to her, Lenzen says.

“They believed that women should be seen and not heard. It might be OK for a man to say something, but not a woman. So I feel a kinship toward women like Hattie.”

Leave your comments here:



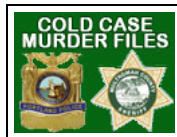
Add a comment...

Comment using...



Susan LeBlanc · Gladstone, Oregon

Having worked with Connie in various genealogy work I can vouch for her professional research. Connie also volunteers many hours in support of the genealogy community in Portland and the US. I very much enjoyed reading this article.



African American News

International, National, and Local News serving Portland, OR and Seattle, WA

The Scanner Newsgroup • Copyright © 2012, The Scanner

Sitemap