

THE GOLDEN WEST HOTEL

1906 - 1931

When Black entrepreneur W.D. Allen launched the Golden West Hotel in 1906, Portland was booming. The completion of the transcontinental railroad, the opening of Union Station and the Lewis and Clark Centennial Fair triggered a flood of visitors and workers to the city's bustling North End. The Golden West was designed to serve the Black railway porters, cooks, barbers and waiters recruited by the major railroads. It provided "all the conveniences of home" for Black workers denied accommodation in Portland's white owned hotels, and was a center of African American social life until the hotel's closure in 1931.

Patrons could get a haircut and a shave at Waldo Bogle's Barbershop, sweets at A.G. Green's ice cream parlor and candy shop, and relax in George Moore's Golden West Athletic Club featuring a Turkish bath and gymnasium. In its heyday, the Golden West provided an overnight home for prominent black entertainers, athletes, and civic leaders such as Illinois Congressman Oscar DePriest and labor organizer A. Philip Randolph. Some even "retired" there, including *Portland Advocate* newspaper founder and famous Portland Hotel "hat check man," E.D. Cannady.



Built in the late 19th century, this building began life as the Tremont House, according to the Sanborn Insurance Maps of the city. Its features include a brick facade and Mansard roof. Architect Emil Schacht was engaged in 1912 to enlarge the hotel by one third. Schacht's addition conformed to the building's original design, an early example of sensitive renovation.

Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society



WALDO BOGLE, Prop.
Physiological Treatments, Facial Operations, Grooming Manipulations
and Country Shavings and Electricities

"I can remember that my father would sometimes try to find a place for us in a white hotel and invariably we would be turned away."

Kathryn Hall Bogle

"[My grandfather] saw there was this Black community that mainly worked for the railroad and there was no place for the Blacks to stay.... In 1905 he purchased a building and in 1906 opened up the Golden West which was the largest Black-owned hotel west of the Mississippi."

Anthony Allen



William D. Allen, a native of Nashville, Tennessee from a hotel family, arrived in Portland in 1901. His first business venture was the Climax Café. In 1905, Allen married Lillian Medley of Montreal. The partnership sparked decades of family involvement in Portland African-American business, civic and social affairs. Their three children were college graduates and son William D. Allen, Jr. was a musical prodigy who later served on the faculty of Howard University and performed at Carnegie Hall.
Courtesy of Anthony Allen Family

The Golden West Hotel Barbershop (1913-1931) was owned by Waldo Bogle, son of Richard Arthur Bogle, a prominent businessman, wheat farmer and barber from Walla Walla, father-in-law of Kathryn Hall Bogle, independent journalist and civic activist, and grandfather of Richard Bogle, Jr. former Portland city commissioner and long time music critic and TV personality. The family has a century long involvement with the civic and artistic life of the African American community and the city of Portland.
Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society

"They shipped us out of Kansas City. Another kid and myself, and the others were men. And we stayed at the Golden West Hotel; that's on the corner of Broadway and Everett...At the Golden West Hotel... they had an elevator, and an elevator operator in it; and a dining room right there. Downstairs was the biggest gambling house on the West Coast; the entire basement was a gambling house."

E. Shelton Hill



Freddie Keppard's Original Creole Orchestra, part of a touring vaudeville show, stayed at the Golden West during the band's first Portland performance in 1914. Creole trumpeter Keppard is credited with introducing "jazz" to the nation, although he refused to cut the first jazz record. It is likely that the Orchestra played their Jelly Roll Morton style New Orleans jazz at the Golden West Cabaret during the 1920s. The band's premier drummer, Dink Johnson, later moved to Portland.

Courtesy of Hogan archives, in Robert Dietsche, *Jumptown: The Golden Years of Portland Jazz, 1942-1957*. Corvallis, Oregon State University Press, 2005



The Golden West Hotel Cabaret was part of the hotel's "entertainment complex" in the 1920s. Although the photo clearly shows musicians performing, very little is known about the Golden West Cabaret or George Moore's extensive gambling operation in the hotel's basement.
Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society

The Golden West Hotel closed in 1931, a victim of the national economic Depression. The "New Golden West Hotel" opened in 1933 but closed in 1935. Other closures plagued the hotel until 1943, when it reopened as the Broadmoor Hotel, surviving until 1984 as low cost housing. Through the efforts of the building's present owner, Central City Concern, and with the assistance of the Portland Development Commission, the building has been rehabilitated and the name restored to recognize the Golden West Hotel's significant role in the history of Portland.