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THE BROTHERHOOD OF SLEEPING CAR PORTERS

History of BSCP Pacific Coast

N.D.

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HISTORY OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF SLEEPING CAR PORTERS PACIFIC COAST

In the early days, before the founding of the Brotherhood, working conditions depended upon the whims of the nearest Pullman official. The signout men picked porters for assignments without regards to how long it had been since the particular porter had made a trip, this of course refers to the extra men. In each district there were a few extra men who would make two to three times as many trips as some other extra men. There were annual "Specials", such as the Elks, Shriners, and a Chamber of Commerce special to Mexico City, and the Company used the same porters on these specials for years. Some were extra men while others were regular line men. In some of the Districts, particularly Oakland, the extra men had to form a line out of doors, rain or shine, when reporting for work, while the signout man issued assignments through a window.

When information reached the West that A. Philip Randolph was organizing the porters, an old ex-porter known as "Dad" Moore was custodian for the porters' quarters in Oakland. Dad Moore got all the information he could from the Eastern porters and then secured literature and application blanks from New York and began to preach Brotherhood in the quarters to the foreign men and in the streets to the local men. As a result of his activities, the Company retired him on \$15 per month. Dad Moore then devoted practically all of his time organizing the porters. He took the initiative in arranging meetings for Mr. Randolph's first visit to Oakland in January of 1926. As results of this visit, a local was established with Dad Moore as organizer, D. J. Jones, secretary-treasurer, Henry West, chairman, C. L. Dellums, vice chairman, of the Organizing Advisory Committee.

In 1927 Dellums became suspicious of the handling of the local office as well as the handling of the funds. By this time Dellums had become the unofficial leader

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of the Local Division and the day before the opening of the Company Union election, Dellums was discharged. The men pleaded with Dellums to straighten out the affairs of the Local, and when he secured authority from Mr. Randolph to audit the books, Jones disappeared and Dellums took charge of the Local, completed the audit of the books and collected \$780 from the Bonding Company. The discharge of Dellums was the opening shot by Superintendent Snoddy who had recently come to Oakland for the avowed purpose of breaking up the Brotherhood. Within the period of one year 125 men were discharged for union affiliations and activity. The Company centered its attack upon Oakland, because Oakland was the only District in the Pullman service that voted against the Company Union each time, beginning with 1926 when the Brotherhood first ordered the men not to participate in the Company Union. "Parler Stool Pigeons" were organized under the leadership of a prominent physician and a local real estate man. They consisted of local Negro leaders, including preachers who were to try and discourage the porters from supporting the Brotherhood by reaching them through their families. A local news paper was started by a wealthy retired army Negro and the Pullman porter instructor in Portland put out a magazine called the "Pullman Porters' Messenger" in an attempt to confuse it with Mr. Randolph's "Messenger" magazine. Dellums carried on a relentless campaign exposing these two publications until they were finally discontinued. The community as a whole accepted the Brotherhood largely because of the renown militancy of the Oakland Division which soon spread throughout the nation, and because of the fighting spirit exemplified by Dad Moore and Dellums. *Dad Moore was retired by the Brotherhood in 1929 due to poor health and passed away shortly thereafter -*

It is to be noted that there were more porters fired in Oakland because of union activities than any other district in the Pullman service, yet Oakland maintained the highest percentage of dues paying members during all these trying years. At the end of the twelve year struggle it also developed that Oakland had more men who had remained in the Brotherhood than any other District. Almost fifty per cent

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of the men who went "all the way" were on the Pacific Coast with Oakland having forty, Los Angeles seven, and Seattle two. In 1935 when the national election was held among the porters, to determine representation, again the Pacific Coast was at the top with the highest percentage of Brotherhood votes.

The Brotherhood in Oakland became one of the most outstanding organizations in the community, second only to the NAACP. The Brotherhood participates in practically all civic and labor activities. The Brotherhood developed Dellums to the point of being one of the better known labor and civic leaders on the Pacific Coast and had been president of the local NAACP for several years.

PORTLAND, OREGON

The Portland Division maintains one of the highest percentages of memberships as well as one of the highest percentages of dues paying members of any of our divisions. Throughout the years Portland was no doubt the strongest of the minor divisions. Brother Kelly Foster directed the destinies of the local for many years. He is still interested in the Brotherhood's welfare and is ever ready with advice or assistance when the men call upon him.

Brothers Anthony Smith and D. W. Schropshire have just completed two terms as President and Secretary-treasurer respectively. Officers just elected were Eddie Butler, President; E. O. Johns, Vice-President; and J. D. Leftridge, Secretary-Treasurer. The local meets the first and second and the sixteenth and seventeenth of each month at the Portland Division Headquarters 2504 North Williams Avenue.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

The Los Angeles Division was established in the early days of the Brotherhood by the appointment of Mr. George Grant, a real estate broker as the local representative. Mr. Grant carried on for several months alone before an organizing advisory committee was created by General Organizer A. Philip Randolph. After the death of Mr. Grant and the discharge of W. B. Holland, one of the oldest porters in the district, Brother Holland became Secretary-Treasurer and carried on during the depression years. Ill health finally forced Brother Holland's retirement and the Brotherhood put him on a pension until he passed away. Oscar Soares succeeded Brother Holland and remained in office until his death; he was succeeded by the present incumbent, L. B. Thompson. Los Angeles ran second only to Oakland among the larger districts in its over-all support of the Brotherhood. The so-called "good-will" committee originated in Los Angeles and W. B. Holland was the only porter to stand up in the face of Company officials and denounce the good-will scheme and the porters who participated in it. He tipped Brother Dellums off immediately which put Brother Dellums in a position to kill it before it could spread. This, no doubt, resulted in Brother Holland's dismissal. When the great election came about in 1935 only 32 men in Los Angeles voted for the protective association which was the second lowest percentage of protective association folk among the districts. The Company finally signed the contract on the Brotherhood's 12th Anniversary. The check-up showed seven men still active in the service who had never become delinquent up to that time. Four of them, Brothers A. S. Lee, William Thedford, J. Lee #1 and William Glenn are still active in the service. J. J. Coles has passed on, R. J. Murray and James Bell, Sr. have retired. James Bell is a member of the International Executive Board and R. J. Murray is a member of the local executive board.

Los Angeles has been able to maintain an office during most of these years. It is now located at 4006½ South Central Avenue. Brother James White, our President, has just been re-elected for his second term.

OAKLAND LOCAL AND ZONE HEADQUARTERS
FINANCIAL REPORT
August 1944 - July 1946

PULLMAN

COLLECTIONS

Dues	\$	8355.00
Fees		1108.00
Taxes		3645.00
Zone Report		1620.60
Total Collections	\$	14728.60
Brought Forward		687.25
Grand Total	\$	15415.85

DISBURSEMENTS

International	\$	10377.75
Rent		480.00
Lights and Gas		213.00
Telephone		562.42
Water		28.91
Janitor		411.20
Supplies		163.78
State Federation of Labor		163.00
Postage		362.06
Special Stenographic Work		438.00
Literature		206.25
Florals		88.69
Transportation and Operation		117.00
Repairs		210.84
Greetings		92.50
War Chest		40.00
Convention Expenses		238.36
Gifts		40.00
Photos		50.67
Total Disbursements	\$	14294.43
Balance in Treasury	\$	1122.41

Signed

J. J. January *J. J. Brown* *J. H. Robinson*

OAKLAND LOCAL AND ZONE HEADQUARTERS
FINANCIAL REPORT
August 1944 - July 1946

CHAIR CAR PORTERS

COLLECTIONS

Dues	\$ 5822.00
Fees	2997.50
Taxes	4859.00
Tucson Local Income	246.52
Total Collections	\$ 13925.02
Brought Forward	362.61
Grand Total	\$ 14287.63

DISBURSEMENTS

International	\$ 11776.05
Commission	340.10
Zone	426.65
El Paso Expenses	55.91
Tucson Expenses	194.21
Grievances and Organization Expenses	720.46
Total Disbursements	\$ 13513.38
Balance in Treasury	\$ 784.24

Signed J I January JE Brown.

Combined Report

Dues	14,177.00
Fees	4,105.50
Taxes	8,504.00
	\$ 26,786.50

Sent New York - - - \$ 22,153.80