

Many black women earned money at home, taking laundry. This was an arduous task, all done by hand. A woman would boil huge vats of soapy water, soak clothes in them, scrub stains away on a washboard and put the clothes through several rinses after lifting them out of the boiling water with long sticks. The laundry would be wrung by hand and then hung out to dry on clothesline. This process would invariably take an entire day.

Washing was only one time--consuming task for a black woman of that era. All food preparation, ironing, housecleaning, etc., was done by hand with no labor-saving devices. In addition to keeping the house in order and raising the children, black women were expected to help their husbands in their professions. Women were encouraged to bring home additional income as well.

Most black women led lives of unrelenting drudgery, unappreciated for their hard work and perseverance in keeping the family together. Socially, they were at the bottom of society, regardless of their marital status.

This is one reason that Susie Cayton was truly special in her time.



*Susie Revels Cayton*

Susie Cayton received a college degree in journalism and wrote stories, one of which was published in *The Seattle P.I.* in 1900. *The Sydney B.C. Independent* described her as a "writer of force and ability." She was prominent in the upper segment of the black

social set and active in community affairs and charities. But her most unique position was that of associate publisher of *The Republican*, a black newspaper she ran with her husband Horace.