



*Susie Revels Cayton*

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 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.

Horace Cayton came to Seattle in 1886, interested in pursuing a journalism career. Shortly thereafter, he became a political reporter for the *Seattle P.I.* But his true desire was to publish a newspaper for the Black community. To that end, he leased the only Black newspaper in Seattle, *The Standard*, which had been published by Britt Oxendine. As soon as Cayton started printing *The Standard*, the barrage of attack against state and local officials began. The local Black population was so alarmed by the virulence of Cayton’s editorials that it drew up a set of resolutions to publicly disavow him and his policies. Oxendine took direct action against Cayton by pulling the



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lease out from under him and removing the printing equipment.

This just spurred Cayton on to start *The Republican* in 1894. This paper was a forum for his pro-civil rights and staunch Republican political viewpoint. In the 1800’s, the Republican party—the party of Lincoln—was the voice of liberation for Black people. As a result, Blacks almost unanimously voted Republican.

Susie Revels Cayton was also strongly committed to equality for Blacks. Some believe she was the driving force behind her husband’s political fervor. In a practical sense, Susie and Horace’s marriage was mutually beneficial. Horace provided Susie a means of escaping the South; and Susie, the daughter of a Senator, gave Horace social status. Together they formed a formidable team as publisher and associate publisher of *The Republican*.

*The Republican* was published for twenty-one years, most of the time as a weekly newspaper. Its short stint as a daily in 1896 lasted for only a few months, but its influence on the Black community was considerable. *The Republican* gave validity to the activities of the community and encouraged Black participation in ongoing issues of the day. Its influence in Republican politics was considerable, and Horace Cayton was even a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1898.