

History of Whiteness in Oregon

Why look at this?

Health Equity Definition

Oregon will have established a health system that creates health equity when all people can reach their full health potential and well-being and are not disadvantaged by their race, ethnicity, language, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, social class, intersections among these communities or identities, or other socially determined circumstances.

Achieving health equity requires the ongoing collaboration of all regions and sectors of the state, including tribal governments to address:

- The equitable distribution or redistributing of resources and power; and
- Recognizing, reconciling and rectifying historical and contemporary injustices.

We live in a complex state



Despite being one of the hubs of BLM protests for the last year, we still live in one of the whitest states in the nation.

Portland is known as the whitest major city in the United States, with a population that is 85% white.

Compare that to:
Seattle - 65%

San Francisco - 45%

Denver - 69%

Let's take it back to the beginning

Oregon was granted statehood in 1859. It bears the unique distinction of being the only state in the union to be admitted with Black exclusion laws.

This forbade Black people from living, working, or owning property in Oregon.

It was punishable by beat whipped "not less than twenty nor more than thirty-nine stripes" for every six months they remained.

This law was placed in 1844, which means...



Oregon history continued

It was in effect during primary usage of the Oregon Trail (1844-1860).

These exclusion laws are not repealed until 1926. They remain in our state constitution until 2001.

Additionally we as a state refused to ratify the 15th Amendment (forbidding voting discrimination due to race) until 1959 (It was federally ratified in 1870).

We also rescinded ratification of the 14th Amendment (ensuring citizenship to people born in the states and equal protection under law) and refused to ratify it until 1973.



The Klan

The Klan came to Oregon in the 1920's and found conditions perfect for recruitment. At one point they claimed 15% of white men in Oregon were enrolled.

The picture on the top right shows the Portland police chief, a DA, a US attorney, a Multnomah County sheriff and Portland mayor George Baker



Redlining

In the 1919 the Portland Real Estate Board's Code of Ethics mandated that real estate agents not sell to individuals whose race would "greatly depreciate, in the public mind, surrounding property values."

Black people were segregated into certain parts of town where they were allowed to live

In 1935, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) started putting out "Residential Security Maps" which drove bank mortgage decisions.

These were obviously racist, drawn along the same lines of the Portland Real Estate Board, and deemed people as credit risks depending which part of town they lived in.

Vanport

In 1942, construction began on Vanport.

Became 2nd largest city in Oregon.

40% Black

There were no segregation laws present in Vanport, which led to a lot of racist tensions from the white residents.

Area also had a college known as the Vanport Extension Center



The Flood

On May 30th 1948, a 200 foot dike gave away, unleashing a 10 foot wall of water that flooded Vanport.

City was a complete loss- 17,500 of its 18,500 residents were left homeless.

Most moved to Albina

The college moved to downtown and became known as Portland State University



Albina



After Vanport, a majority of those displaced settled in Albina, where they were allowed to live easily due to redlining.

By 1960, 80% of Black Portland residents lived in Albina.

As employment opportunities for Black people were limited, this became one of areas of lowest income in Portland

To make matters worse, banks still refused to give loans or mortgages to people to improve properties or buy houses, causing mass dereliction of property.

Residents there have been displaced repeatedly due to urban renewal projects such as the construction of the Rose Quarter, I-5, and Emanuel Legacy Hospital.

Some neighborhoods lost half their residential housing. Emanuel Legacy Hospital promised to build 180-300 housing units in exchange for the involuntary displacement, but never followed through.

An investigation by [The Oregonian](#) published in 1990 revealed that all the banks in Portland together had made just 10 mortgage loans in a four-census-tract area in the heart of Albina in the course of a year. That was one-tenth the average number of loans in similarly-sized census tracts in the rest of the city.

Gentrification

THIS-CITY'S-MAKIN'-A-COMEBACK BINGO

SURE TO BECOME A FAVORITE OF EVERY SOUTHERN, MID-SIZED OR RUST-BELT CITY, THIS GAME EMPLORES YOU TO EXPLORE YOUR CITY AND FIND OUT WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE...LIKE EVERY OTHER PLACE

10 BREWPUBS	RAMEN, RAMEN, RAMEN!!!	AXE-THROWING BAR	ABSURD RENT IN ONCE-AFFORDABLE PLACES	"CRAZY" DONUT CONCEPT	\$10 JUICE
MANY EMPTY LOFTS	CUPCAKE SHOP	REGIONAL BANKSY	INSTAGRAM WALL	SPINNING, CROSSFIT & YOGA	BAR WITH "WHISKEY" IN NAME
BARCADE	RESTAURANT NAMED (SOMETHING) & THE (SOMETHING)	TEA SHOPS	THOSE SCOOTERS	CHICAGO COWS, BUT IT'S A LOCAL THING	ONE GOOD FOOD TRUCK OUT OF 30
QUIRKY LOCAL T-SHIRT INDUSTRY	UNAFFORDABLE BOTIQUES	PEOPLE TELLING YOU HOW GOOD IT "USED TO BE"	DUELING FARMER'S MARKETS	EMPTY APARTMENTS USED FOR AIRBNS	VIBRANT KICKBALL SCENE
UNUSED COMMUNITY GARDEN	THAT ONE BAND/ARTIST WHO MADE IT	GUY WITH STORIES ABOUT BAND/ARTIST WHO MADE IT	SOME FUCKER ON A UNICYCLE	INDIE RADIO STATION WITH CLUT-LIKE FOLLOWING	DISPLACED MINORITIES
AIRPORT THAT REQUIRES CONNECTION TO SOMEWHERE INTERESTING	LOCAL FAT-GUY FOOD	REGIONAL INFLUENCER	ROBUST PRIVATE SCHOOLS FOR RICH WHITE TRANSPLANTS	ARTS DISTRICT	LOCAL ICE CREAM SHOP WITH "CORN BREAD" AND "EARL GRAY" FLAVORS

As properties in Albina started to reach rock bottom, and as Black residents could not get home loans to buy them, white people started snatching them up en masse.

In 2000, Portland city planners identified 4000 acres along North Interstate for an urban renewal project. In the next ten years, the Black population was reduced by over 7,000 people.

A 2011 audit found that landlords and leasing agents here discriminated against black and Latino renters 64 percent of the time, citing them higher rents or deposits and adding on additional fees.

In 2013, the city secured a Trader Joe's at the intersection of NE MLK and NE Alberta as the anchor tenant for a proposed commercial development.

In 2017 realtor.com named Portland as the 4th fastest gentrifying city in America.

Today

According to a 2014 study by PSU and the Coalition for Communities of Color- “While annual incomes for whites nationally and in Multnomah County, where Portland is located, were around \$70,000 in 2009, blacks in Multnomah County made just \$34,000, compared to \$41,000 for blacks nationally. Almost two-thirds of black single mothers in Multnomah County with kids under five lived in poverty in 2010, compared to half of black single mothers with kids under five nationally. And just 32 percent of African Americans in Multnomah County owned homes in 2010, compared to 60 percent of whites in the county and 45 percent of blacks nationally.”