



Home Sweet Home



Portland homes, 1970
Courtesy Portland City Archives

What is Home?

What does "home" suggest to you? To many of us, it conjures up a feeling of security, comfort and a place to call your own.

Home ownership symbolizes a family's social status and reflects economic security. Neighborhoods reflect cultural diversity and richness in our immigrant nation.

Not everyone has had the chance to participate in the American dream. Some Oregonians, even those who can afford to buy their own homes, have been prevented from freely choosing where they live. Renters have also faced similar obstacles when deciding where they want to live.



Enjoying family life
OHS21944

Housing discrimination, unfortunately, can be directed at any



Assembling a jigsaw puzzle in a retirement home, 1970
Courtesy Portland City Archives



Proud citizens!
OHS4790

one of us. Housing providers may make negative assumptions about groups of people because they are unfamiliar with them. Any Oregonian could be denied housing due to his or her ethnic origin, a sudden disability or the makeup of their family.

*"No Apes (is) wanted
in Hood River"*
Hood River County San.
March 23, 1945

Oregon's Long Shadow

Imagine how Oregon looked to newly arrived pioneers who undertook the arduous journey over the Oregon Trail.



A series of treaties and armed conflicts between 1850-1878 forced American Indians off traditional lands, destroying the remnants of tribal society and culture. The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs confined Indians in Oregon to 12 reservations, segregating them from white communities.

Chilo Falls Indian Housing, ca. 1930
OHS57628



The 1850 Oregon Donation Land Act was yet another way to exclude African Americans. The government provided 200 acres of land to white males and married white females.
Settlers in Tillamook County
OHS33302



Freight wagons, Shaniko Flats, Oregon
OHS25617



The first African American found their way into the Oregon Territory as crewmen on ships, or part of teams of mountain men and explorers. Later, they joined teams of missionaries.
OHS85402



American Indians were also excluded from the Oregon Donation Land Act. Despite prior legal assurances supposed to protect Indian land, white settlers seized 2.6 million acres.

Umatilla Indians
OHS2CM08762

Rugged mountains, fertile green valleys, dense forests, abundant rivers, streams and lakes made it appear like a paradise. In their zeal to make a new home for themselves, most of the early white settlers were not prepared to share their lives with the American Indians who had been living here for centuries. For the most part, they did not have to, since they carried unfamiliar diseases that quickly reduced the native population.

It's Your Right

The concept of "fair housing" recognizes that people have the right to choose where they live. Good tenants or homeowners are responsible, care about where they live and are good neighbors. Where they were born, their place of worship, or the makeup of their family has nothing to do with it.

The unfolding of housing discrimination in Oregon parallels events and circumstances in American society. People perceived to be different have historically been subject to bias in housing in the state and in the country. Discrimination in Oregon has been more than personal prejudice. Both state and federal laws provided institutional sanction.



Buying a home
OHS2446

Children playing, Portland, 1970
Courtesy Portland City Archives

Clash of Values

While most immigrants to the Oregon Territory shared a white Protestant heritage, they held conflicting values regarding African Americans. Immigrants from Northern free soil states generally opposed slavery. Immigrants from Southern and Border slave states often had strong prejudices. Small farmers from these areas viewed African Americans as a threat to their livelihood, fearing the same competition with slave-holding farmers they had faced back home.

As a result of opposing perspectives between settlers, a series of exclusion laws passed between 1844-1857 declared

it "unlawful for any Negro or mulatto to come in or reside" in Oregon.

... if any free negro or mulatto shall fail to quit the country, he or she may be arrested upon a warrant . . . and if guilty . . . shall receive upon his or her back not less than twenty nor more than thirty-nine stripes, to be inflicted by the constable of the proper county."

"I'm going to Oregon where they'll be no slaves and we'll all start even."

1844 Amendment to the Organic Law



Shaping Racial Attitudes



The only African American in Brownsville, Oregon raises the flag, ca. 1940.
OHS29516

A "Free" State

Ultimately Oregon joined the Union as a free state, banning slavery. Even so, the first Constitution, passed in 1857, denied African Americans the opportunity to live here.

No free Negro, or mulatto, not residing in this State at the time of the adoption of the constitution, shall come, reside or be within this State, or hold any real estate.

"Aliens Ineligible to Citizenship"

Chinese immigrants also were singled out. After the Manchu dynasty collapsed in 1853, Chinese men ventured to Oregon to work in the mining communities of Douglas, Jackson, and Josephine counties, on the railroads, and later in Astoria's fish canneries. The state's Constitution prohibited Chinese from owning land or holding a mining claim, unless they were already residents at the time the Constitution was adopted. In 1882, the federal Chinese Exclusion Act



Chinese laborer, ca. 1885
OHS1497

was adopted. In 1882, the federal Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited Chinese immigration to the United States.

No chinaman (sic), not a resident of the state at the adoption of this constitution, shall ever hold any real estate or mining claim. (repealed in 1946)

"... the unanimous sentiment was that the Chinese must go."
Daily Center, *Geason Post*,
May 5, 1904

America's First Civil Rights Act

Federal, state and local efforts to counter housing discrimination began after the Civil War. The 1866 Civil Rights Act, passed by Congress, marked the birth of the legal battle to end discrimination. Oregon's exclusion laws became unconstitutional. Citizenship and civil liberties were extended to all persons, with the exception of American Indians.

All persons born in the United States . . . are declared to be citizens . . . and such citizens without regard to race . . . shall have the right in every state and territory . . . to purchase, lease, sell, hold and convey real and personal property.



Outside a laundry in Salem, c.1890
OxH 0185G260



Mr. Lung Ch after his arrival in Baker, Oregon, ca. 1880
OHS3840



Indian encampment near the Dalles, Oregon, ca. 1885
OHS1497

"All persons born in the United States . . . are declared to be citizens . . . and such citizens without regard to race . . . shall have the right, in every state and territory . . . to make and enforce contracts . . . to purchase, lease, sell, hold and convey real and personal property."

1866 Civil Rights Act



Portland's Chinatown, ca. 1880's
OHS28159



"We Cater to White Trade Only" signs greeted African Americans laborers and newswomen during World War II and in the years that followed.
OHS0334A072

Separate But Not Equal

In 1896 the U.S. Supreme Court effectively overturned the 14th Amendment in the landmark case, *Plessy vs. Ferguson*. The court ruled that separate but equal accommodations for whites and African Americans did not conflict with the 14th Amendment, which granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States. This permitted Americans to build an exclusionary, unequal society.

"No Obstacles Remained"
Democratic Times,
Josephine County
1904



Proposed legislation in Oregon included prohibiting carrying bundles by suspending them from or attaching them to poles slung over the shoulders. That was exactly the way Chinese workers carried loads of clothes for Portland laundry.
OHS13127

In 1926, Oregon voters repealed the constitutional provisions relating to the exclusion of African Americans. The language relating to race was finally removed in a ballot measure approved in November 2002, 145 years after it was first enacted.

The late 1870s forced Indians into the reservation system as a way to isolate them from the new inhabitants. The Dawes Act of 1887 abolished the American Indians' communal ownership of their reservations. The act gave each eligible Indian up to 160 acres of reservation land and American citizenship in an attempt to advance their assimilation into white society. Any land left over was sold to white homesteaders.

African Americans in Jacksonville were subjected to various humiliating exercises, including informal "sundown" laws in some areas, where people of color were banned in public places after dark.

The Issei, first-generation Japanese immigrants, arrived in Oregon in 1880. Although able to own property, Japanese were classified as "aliens ineligible to citizenship" under American naturalization law.



Japanese workers labeling cans at Bumblebee Seafood, Astoria, Oregon, ca. 1920
OHS23144



Forces of Prejudice



North Albina Avenue, Portland, Oregon, March 13, 1937
OHSOC00199

Oregon's Segregated Housing Patterns

A revision to the Portland Realty Board's Code of Ethics in 1919 included a section that barred members from selling houses to African Americans or Asians on the presumption that it would lower property values in desirable neighborhoods.

Oregon, by the 1920s and 1930s, had clearly segregated housing patterns. Asian Americans and African Americans seeking homes or apartments in white neighborhoods were repeatedly turned away.

Oregon's racial climate became so uninviting by the 1930s that many African Americans left the state. Eugene's few dozen black families lived near the Ferry Street Bridge and in west Eugene. By 1936, Salem had almost no African American population. In 1945, the Social Work Journal declared Portland the most discriminatory city north of the Mason-Dixon line.



Dr. DeNorval Unshank, one of Portland's first African American doctors, moved into the all-white neighborhood of Portland's Ladd's Addition in the 1930s. There he was greeted with a petition signed by 75 people who objected to his residency. After his house was repeatedly vandalized, he moved to 60551.

"Grassh Past has always been a white man's town... the attitude of the people of this powerful law abiding community toward the encroachment of the black, brown or red faces of the land is sly; you don't want you here - you had better roll up your bed and rick..." Southern Oregon Spectator, May 1914



Ku Klux Klan parade in Albany, Oregon, 1923
OHS02782

"Property Definitely Restricted to the White Race"

Real estate agents, looking to protect their investments, wrote restrictive covenants into property deeds. The covenants prevented ethnic, racial and religious minorities from living in certain residential areas. They proved an effective tool to deprive minorities free choice in housing. Civil rights laws overrode the restrictive clauses in these covenants, but in some the exclusionary language remains in the record as a reminder of the era in which the houses were built.



Alice Chin teaches a mixed class of Chinese and Japanese students, 1950
OHS79048

All the colored people who did live here (Salem) have moved to Los Angeles.

"If a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes."
Underwriting Manual of the Federal Housing Administration, 1938



Members of the Ku Klux Klan with Portland dignitaries, including Portland Mayor George Baker, Lester Humphrey, the U.S. Attorney and Leon Jenkins, Portland's Chief of Police, 1921
OHS154338

The Invisible Empire

Oregonians' fears of non-whites and foreigners gave rise to the growth of the Ku Klux Klan, a racist organization that cloaked bigotry in patriotic rhetoric. By the 1920s, the Klan in Oregon was the largest of its kind west of the Rocky Mountains. Its political influence extended to Oregon's state and local governments. African Americans and Jews experienced the Klan's prejudice, but Catholic Oregonians were its specific target.

- The Real Estate Appraiser published in 1935 ranked races and nationalities in ascending order of their impact on property values:*
1. English, Germans, Scotch, Irish, Scandinavians
 2. North Indians
 3. Bohemians or Czech
 4. Poles
 5. Lithuanians
 6. Greeks
 7. Russians, Slav (lower class)
 8. South Indians
 9. Negroes
 10. Mexicans
- Notes that neither Asian Americans nor American Indians made the list.*

We all know what residential segregation means... poor housing, dark streets, poorly kept and dimmed lighting... if we could convince ourselves that there will be no such thing as world peace, then we would not fill our vote against the segregation of the races.

Zoning

The "separate but equal" doctrine supported the basic principle that the separation of the races was lawful. "Zoning" was an indirect result of this ruling. Zoning regulations were designed to exclude "undesirable" people from middle-class and higher priced neighborhoods. Real estate agents refused to handle sales that involved race mixing. By the 1930s residential segregation was fully institutionalized in Portland. While Portland's housing was increasingly segregated, other areas of the state actively fought to keep minorities from moving there at all.



Site of New Odessa Colony near Glendale, Oregon. New Odessa became the home for Russian Jews at the turn of the century
Courtesy Oregon Jewish Museum

"Doily Men Intent to Ship Sale to Negroes, Orientals"
The Oregon Journal, March 6, 1919

Asian Exclusion

In 1923, the Oregon Alien Land Law barred anyone who was not an American citizen from owning real property. The Ku Klux Klan actively supported the passage of the law. It viewed the non-white appearances and non-American ways of foreign-born immigrants as a threat to American culture.



Japanese work camp near Hood River, ca. 1920
OHS448821

Sometimes, anti-Japanese prejudice erupted into violence. On July 12, 1925, a mob of about 500 in the coastal town of Blyden rounded 35 Japanese who had just arrived to work in the culture.
Pacific Spruce Corp. call.

Americans felt the impact of the Alien Land Law. By 1919, a white citizens group in Hood River pledged not to sell or lease land to the Japanese Americans. Since the community had a sizeable Japanese American farming population, many felt this decision had broad impact.

Although the law restricted most Japanese-Americans to renting, some who already owned land were able to deed their property to their American-born children or buy their homes through a third, white party.



Segregation Continues



Street scene, Portland's Chinatown
OAH 8067-A

Chinese Americans

There were times when Oregon's cities and state legislature attempted to limit opportunities for the Chinese. As early as 1873, Portland targeted the inhabitants of its overcrowded Chinatown by levying a fine on any person found sleeping in a room containing less

than 500 cubic feet of space per person.

Until the 1920s, most Chinese Americans lived in "Chinatowns" throughout Oregon, where they spoke

their own language and practiced their cultural traditions. By the late 1920s, prosperous second- and third-generation Chinese began to move to the suburbs.

Chinese Americans were granted American citizenship rights in 1943. But they continued to face discrimination in Oregon. In part because they were confused with Japanese Americans. For the first time, Chinese Americans discovered that real estate agents did not want to sell to "Orientals."

Real estate agents refused sales outright or required Chinese Americans to petition the entire neighborhood to obtain permission to move in.

"Hood River, Golden Valley to the hills. Who is to possess its acres and its hills? A horde of aliens from across the sea? Or shall it be a Paradise for you and me?"

The Hood River Inn, February 2, 1962



Owner of a grocery store in Gresham posts a sign that reads "No Jap trade solicited for the duration." 1945
OHS CN01187

Japanese Internment

Executive Order 9066, issued in 1942 by President Roosevelt, authorized the U.S. Army to remove Japanese-Americans from their homes without any legal review. For three years Oregon's Japanese American men, women and children lived in internment camps in Idaho, California and Wyoming.

Resettlement in Oregon after the war brought mixed results for Japanese Americans. While many returned to their communities with little incident, others were less fortunate. Some found their businesses had been looted and encountered hostile neighbors and difficulty in obtaining mortgage loans.

One conciliatory gesture towards restoring civil liberties to the Japanese came in 1949, when the Oregon Supreme Court struck down the Alien Land Law. Three years later, the federal Walter McCarran Act ended citizenship

rights to the Issei, granting a long history of legal discrimination. But it took another 40 years for the United States to pay reparations to those who had been confined to internment camps during World War II.



Soldier posting Civilian Exclusion Order #1, ordering the removal of Japanese from their homes, March 1942.
OHS CN021104



Jack Adams farming near Gresham, April 1956
OAH CN 018270



When Betty Jean Lee was a girl, local real estate agents refused to show her family homes in Portland's Grant Park neighborhood because the Lees were Chinese-American. Betty Jean's father knocked on every door in the neighborhood to get approval from all the families living there before the Lees were allowed to move in.
Courtesy Betty Jean Lee

Vanport

Vanport, Oregon's second largest city during World War II, was built on a flood plain along the Columbia River just outside of Portland's north edge.

We used to chide the Mayor about the segregated housing in Vanport. Where are you going to put them... there's no place for them? Well here they are, when the tide broke, they found a place for them, they emigrated right down on Albina.



Vanport flood refugees, May 1948
OAH 81519

Housing reformers declared Vanport to be the first integrated and publicly

subsidized housing development in the United States. Integration was evident in schools, shops and friendships. Nonetheless, segregated housing existed, with better units reserved for white workers and their families.



Vanport flood, May 1948
Courtesy Portland City Archives

When a major flood in 1948 turned Vanport into a lake, Portland city officials faced a huge housing crisis. While many of the stranded white families were able to leave town,

African American families, many subsisting on welfare and unemployment, did not have the money to move and were left homeless.

Despite efforts by civil rights organizations such as the Urban League to promote acceptance and understanding, many whites remained suspicious and hostile towards African Americans. Real estate agents intensified their pre-war practice of segregating African Americans in Albina district, where rents and home prices were low.

Segregation of African Americans continued after World War II. "Better" neighborhoods still enforced restrictive covenants. African Americans could not swim in public pools, eat or drink in restaurants or bars or roller skate in Portland's Oaks Park. Those traveling outside Portland were not permitted to stay overnight unless they knew people who were willing to put them up.



In Portland, real estate agents reached an unwritten agreement to keep the African American population within the Albina neighborhood in Northeast Portland, where real estate was cheap and houses were often sub-standard.

North Williams and Russell Street, Portland 1962
OAH 825443



Turbulent Times



Migrant worker housing near Grants Pass, 1939
OHS CN 021111

Migrant Workers

Oregon's population changed after World War II. In addition to the influx of African Americans, increasing numbers of Latinos came as farm workers under the 1951 federal Bracero program. Mexican contract workers were steered into overcrowded and squalid mobile labor camps rather than local neighborhoods. Unscrupulous labor

contractors and farmers sometimes cheated workers of their pay, and made false promises about living and working conditions. By the 1970s, Hispanics had become Oregon's largest minority group. Today, Oregon's Latino community is much more diverse, and includes people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds who engage in a wide range of jobs. Latino migrant farmworkers, nevertheless, continue to live in crowded and substandard housing.



Children of migrant worker gather at a water pump at the Ferry Street Bridge settlement outside Eugene, OHS CN 014440



Mexican American girl selling cascarones at Fiesta in Bend, Oregon, 1993
Oregon Folklife Program of the Oregon Historical Society



Urban renewal in southwest Portland, 1962
Courtesy Portland City Archives

Urban Renewal

Portland's national recognition as a livable city began in the late 1960's. In an effort to revitalize the downtown core, city planners and business leaders launched a major urban renewal project. South Portland, once the heart of the city's Jewish life, became an urban business center – displacing low-income Jews.

It was a lovely neighborhood. We had everything... so what did urban renewal do for the average person who only wanted to exist? Nothing.



The gentrification of Portland's Old Town district forced the Roman population into East Multnomah County.
OHS CN 025422

Oregon's First Civil Rights Legislation

In 1953 the state Legislature passed a Public Accommodations Bill that

prohibited discrimination in hotels, motels, restaurants and amusement parks on the basis of race, religion or national origin. Mark Hatfield, then a young state representative, worked with the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to sponsor the law, which marked the beginning of Oregon's civil rights legislation.



Mark Hatfield signing the Public Accommodations Law with Ohio Bullockford, a key figure in African American civil rights efforts
OHS 444002



Sign above a Portland restaurant, 1952
OHS 00346071

Despite the new law, the real estate industry employed a number of strategies to preserve segregation.

passage of the state's first fair housing law in 1957 that made it illegal for anyone in the business of selling property to refuse to sell, lease or rent to a purchaser solely because of race, color, religion or national origin.



Redlining. Real estate agents drew red lines around districts where they would sell homes to African Americans, further enforcing segregation. Banks usually refused to give home mortgages in "redlined" areas.

Blockbusting. Real estate agents spread the word in white neighborhoods that African Americans were moving in and that their presence would sharply reduce property values. Panicking, whites sold their houses for low prices to real estate agents. Real estate agents then resold the same houses for much higher prices to African Americans. Confined to redlined areas, African Americans had no other options if they wanted to buy a home. Real estate agents reaped the benefits of the fluctuating market.

While a student last at

Willamette University to the

Emmons sisters Marian Anderson and Paul Robinson, Senator Mark Hatfield was appalled to learn that Salem banks refused to issue to African Americans. He had to drive them to a Portland bank for the night.

The Urban American Indian

During the 1960s and 1970s, many American Indians in Oregon, left their reservations to seek better job opportunities. Rural communities were inhospitable, so the majority came to Portland.



Mayor Terry Doyle Schanck with American Indians, City Hall conference room, 1965
Courtesy City of Portland Archives

There they confronted a variety of discriminatory practices, from outright refusal to rent or sell to Indians, to less direct discrimination against single men and large families.

On April 4, 1968, the assassination of the civil rights leader, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., stunned the world. One week later, Congress, fearing the spread of urban violence, enacted the Federal Fair Housing Act. The act prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing based on race, color, religion, or national origin. For the first time, it added civil penalties for violators. Housing discrimination based on gender was prohibited in 1974.

With the passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act, real estate agents and landlords could no longer discriminate openly – but discriminatory practices persisted. A housing provider might employ evasive statements or actions, or an uncooperative or indifferent attitude. Redlining of certain areas continued, reinforcing segregation and preventing many minority families from buying.

Although the 1968 act committed the government to the goals of fair housing, enforcement was difficult. Often it was the word of the homebuyer or renter against the real estate agent or landlord. Lenient penalties and low damage awards rendered incentives for prosecution.



African American family, ca. 1970
Courtesy Portland City Archives

Federal Progress

Between 1950 and 1970 the struggle to end discrimination gained momentum, aided by two U.S.

Supreme Court decisions and a national fair housing law.

The 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* in Topeka, Kansas, overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine. This landmark case opened the door for other courts to begin to dismantle segregation in American life. *Jones vs. Mayer*, a 1968 Supreme Court decision, held that the refusal of a private residential contractor to sell a home to an interracial couple violated the 1866 Civil Rights Act.

"The Bachelor shall not be guilty to any plan or agreement to discriminate against a person or persons on the basis of race, creed, sex or country of origin."
1950 Code of Ethics, National Association of Realtors®



Heading in the Right Direction



Chess in the Park, summer 2002
Courtesy Southeast Uplift Foster Target Area Project

Housing Amendments Act

The 1988 Fair Housing Amendments Act extended legal protections to families with children and people with disabilities (both physical and mental). The act increased risks and costs for would-be discriminators by boosting fines and punitive damages and allowing for recovery of attorney fees. In Oregon, fair housing laws began to be vigorously enforced.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing because of race or color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and handicap.



Mt. Scott summer celebration, 1998
Courtesy Southeast Uplift Foster Target Area Project

People with Disabilities

The Independent Living Movement of the 1970s and 1980s empowered people with disabilities to fight openly for their rights. Innovations in medicine and technology enabled people with disabilities to move from institutions or family settings to independent living, but barriers still remained. Most housing was inaccessible by wheelchair. Many landlords were reluctant to rent to disabled tenants because they feared misuse of the rental, or a lack of acceptance by other tenants.



Arwin Bied in his Portland home renovated for use by a person who uses a wheelchair.
Courtesy Arwin Bied

A provision in the 1988 Fair Housing Amendments Act gave disabled tenants the right to make structural modifications to their dwellings to make them accessible.



Children playing in north Portland
Courtesy Portland City Archives



Parade in Portland, 1973
OHSR-146



People of perceived Middle Eastern descent, many of whom were born in the United States or moved here as children, have been subjected to increased discrimination after the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001.
Courtesy Modern Educational Trust

Families with Children

Before the 1988 Fair Housing Amendments Act, more than 60 percent of rental units in Oregon were off limits to families with children. Landlords preferred to rent to single adults instead of families because they feared potential liability issues and increased wear and tear on their units. Developers built apartments without considering the recreational and safety needs of children.

Occupancy Standards

Oregon's occupancy standards, that limit the number of people allowed to live in a dwelling, hit many ethnic groups hard. Many have large families and may live in extended family situations. Landlords, worried about deterioration of their rental units, often prefer to rent to small households.

Three and four bedroom rentals are still scarce, making it difficult for large or extended families to find housing. At times landlords have refused to rent to families from certain minority groups simply because they assumed more relatives would show up later.



Deepa Kathkade working on rangoli design at the Asian Art Exhibit, Contemporary Crafts Gallery August, 1997
Courtesy Oregon Folklife Program of the Oregon Historical Society

Challenges Today

Progress has been made in reducing overt discrimination and promoting integrated neighborhoods. Yet the goal of equal opportunity in housing remains unfulfilled. Some landlords, real estate agents and mortgage lenders continue to discriminate. It may be subtler: the blunt language of "we don't want your kind here" has generally disappeared, but it has been replaced by a polite lie that an apartment or home has been taken off the market or already rented, or by having a different set of qualifications for "undesirable" applicants.

Some times a landlord has policies that indirectly discriminate:

- No one who works in farm labor can live here (Latinos)
- No one under four feet tall can live here (families with children)
- No one can run anywhere in the complex (children)
- We won't rent to victims of domestic violence (gender)

The housing providers may not realize the effect of their policies – or they may be trying to skirt the fair housing laws.

Home buyers and renters may not necessarily understand their fair housing rights. Many who have experienced discrimination are reluctant to come forward, believing that nothing can be done. Some, having acquired housing, are denied the right to feel safe in their homes because of hate and violence. In recent years, Oregon residents have been victims of neighbor-on-neighbor harassment that has included vandalism, cross burnings and fire-bombings.



Man plays drum for Matchline dancers at the Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe Medford, OR December, 1999
Courtesy Oregon Folklife Program of the Oregon Historical Society

Creating a More Tolerant Society

Today the federal government protects us from discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status and disability. The State of Oregon protects persons based upon marital status and protects households where the income comes from public assistance programs. Some cities and counties also prohibit discrimination based on profession, age, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Fair Housing laws guarantee our right to live where we choose, but legal protection has not yet been enough to ensure that the doors to equal housing opportunity are kept open. Housing discrimination could still affect any one of us, whether the reason is ethnic background, religious or political beliefs, single parenthood, or a disability.

Our challenge now is to work together to confront discrimination – and guarantee that all Oregonians are truly able to find a place to call home.



Winner, Children's Fair Housing Poster Contest,
Fair Housing Council of Oregon



Winner, Children's Fair Housing Poster Contest,
Fair Housing Council of Oregon