

Understanding Context, Place and Space

Reckoning with Oregon's Past to Chart a Different Future



Group Agreements

Be mindful

Stay engaged

Step Up, Step Back

Use 'I' statements

Consider impact vs. Intent

Be honest and vulnerable

Listen to understand

Avoid assuming the intent of others

Offer grace

Suspend blame, shame, guilt, fear,
and denial

Confidentiality

Accept non-closure

Reflections from the homework (small groups)

Any Aha's?

Feelings?

New things you learned?

Why am I just learning this?



Teaching Our History

[How Southern Socialites rewrote Civil War History](#)

Current Anti-Truth Movements

- War on wokeness (Baker City, OR)
- [War on Critical Race Theory](#) (Forbes)
- News as Entertainment

The words they spoke

“I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indians are the dead Indians, but I believe nine out of every 10 are,” Roosevelt said during a January 1886 speech in New York. “And I shouldn’t like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth.” ---Theodore Roosevelt said during a January 1886 speech in New York.

“I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the black and white races -- that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making VOTERS or jurors of negroes, NOR OF QUALIFYING THEM HOLD OFFICE, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any of her man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.”---Abraham Lincoln, during a [speech in 1858](#)

The words they spoke

"I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind."---Thomas Jefferson, from Notes on the State of Virginia

"{Dred Scot} had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever profit could be made by it."---Roger B. Taney, Chief Justice Supreme Court, 1857

[History of Racism in the US Presidency](#)

The History of Racism in Oregon

Native/Indigenous genocide was occurring since the “discovery of Oregon Territory)

1844: Banned slavery prohibits Blacks from residing in the Oregon Territory (punishment for violating this law was 39 lashes every six months until they left)

1849: Barred Blacks not already in the territory from entering or residing here and was included in the Original State Constitution when Oregon became a state in 1859

- This language was removed from the Oregon Constitution in 2002

1860s-1920: Bans of Chinese immigrants (“yellow horde”) were implemented across the state in various ways; Chinese Immigrants did the work of establishing rail lines but were expected to leave once their work was finished

The History of Racism in Oregon

In 1868, [the Fourteenth Amendment](#) to the U.S. Constitution was passed, granting citizenship to black people.^[2] Oregon originally ratified the Fourteenth Amendment on September 19, 1866, but rescinded that ratification on October 16, 1868. That Amendment was only re-ratified on April 25, 1973. ^[17]

In 1870 [the Fifteenth Amendment](#) which granted black men the right to vote, gained widespread ratification with Oregon being one of a couple of states to deny it. That same year the federal law superseded a clause in the Oregon State Constitution banning [black suffrage](#).^[2] It would not be until 1959 that the Fifteenth Amendment would be officially ratified.^[2]

The KKK in Oregon

- Oregon had the largest per capita Klan membership in the US throughout the 1920s
- The Klan reported their Oregon membership around 35,000, at its peak of influence
- Governor, Walter M. Pierce was an active Klan member upon his election in 1922
- Oregon KKK focus was anti-black, anti-Catholic, and Anti-Asian (Chinese & Japanese)
- By the 30s, the Klan fell out of favor and Klan activities went largely underground

Japanese Internment during WWII

Executive Order 9066:

The order was predicated on the idea that, as an alien people unable to assimilate, the Japanese remained loyal to Japan. Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt recommended that all people of Japanese ancestry be removed from the West Coast. He argued that “the Japanese race is an enemy race. The very fact that no sabotage has taken place to date is a disturbing and confirming indication that such action will be taken.” DeWitt's fears proved unfounded; no person of Japanese ancestry living in the United States was ever charged with an act of sabotage.

https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/japanese_internment/#.YJrqQhNKjlw

Reading List

Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America, Ibram X. Kendi

Superior: The Return of Race Science, Angela Saini

An Indigenous People's History of the United States, Roxanne DunbaOrtiz

[Timeline of Oregon's Racial and Education History](#)

[National Geographic: Oregon Once Legally Banned Black People](#)

On Whose Land Do You Rest? <https://native-land.ca/>

Activity

Peruse the [Timeline](#) and discuss in a team the things that stand out particularly when thinking of the impact of these histories on today's climate and culture of Oregon and by extension, our institutions.

What will you do with this information in your leadership?