

Racism in Oregon History

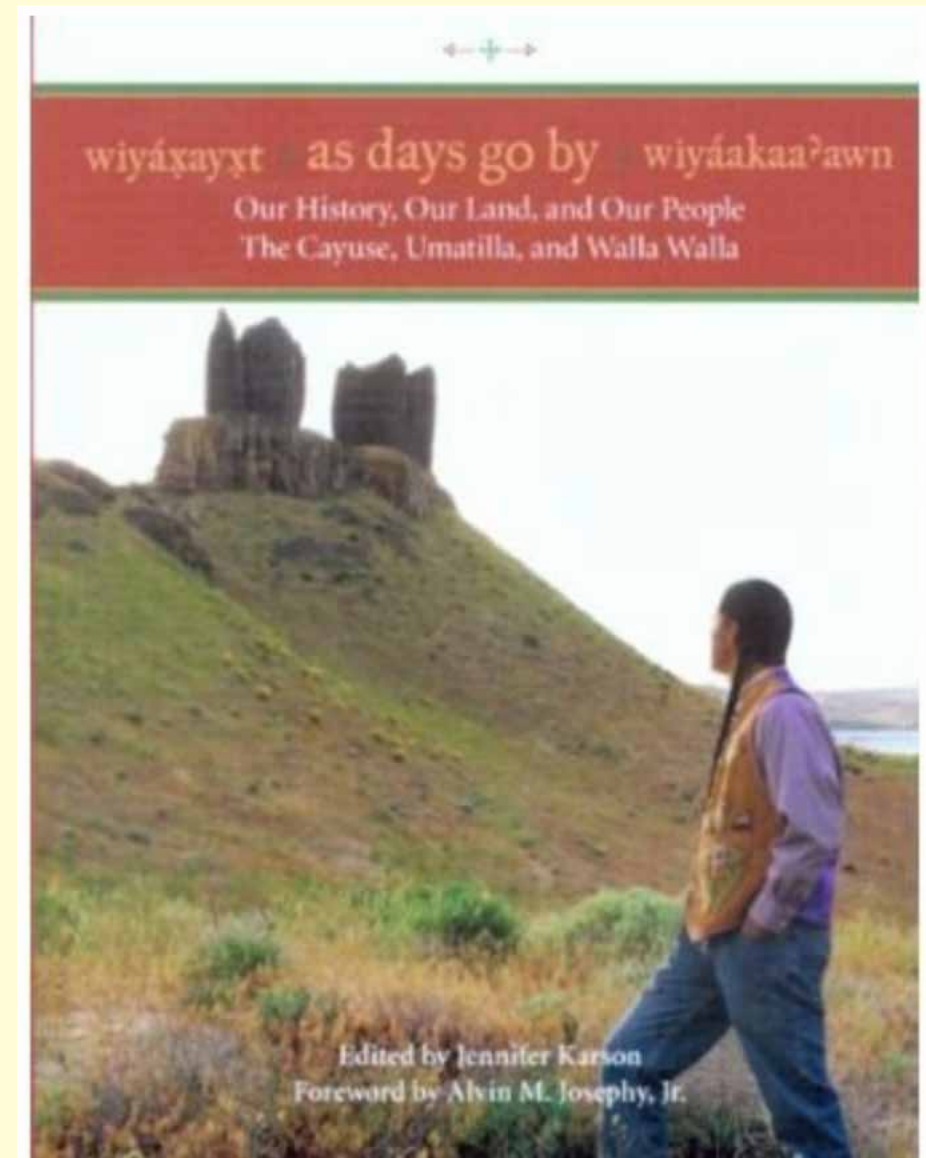
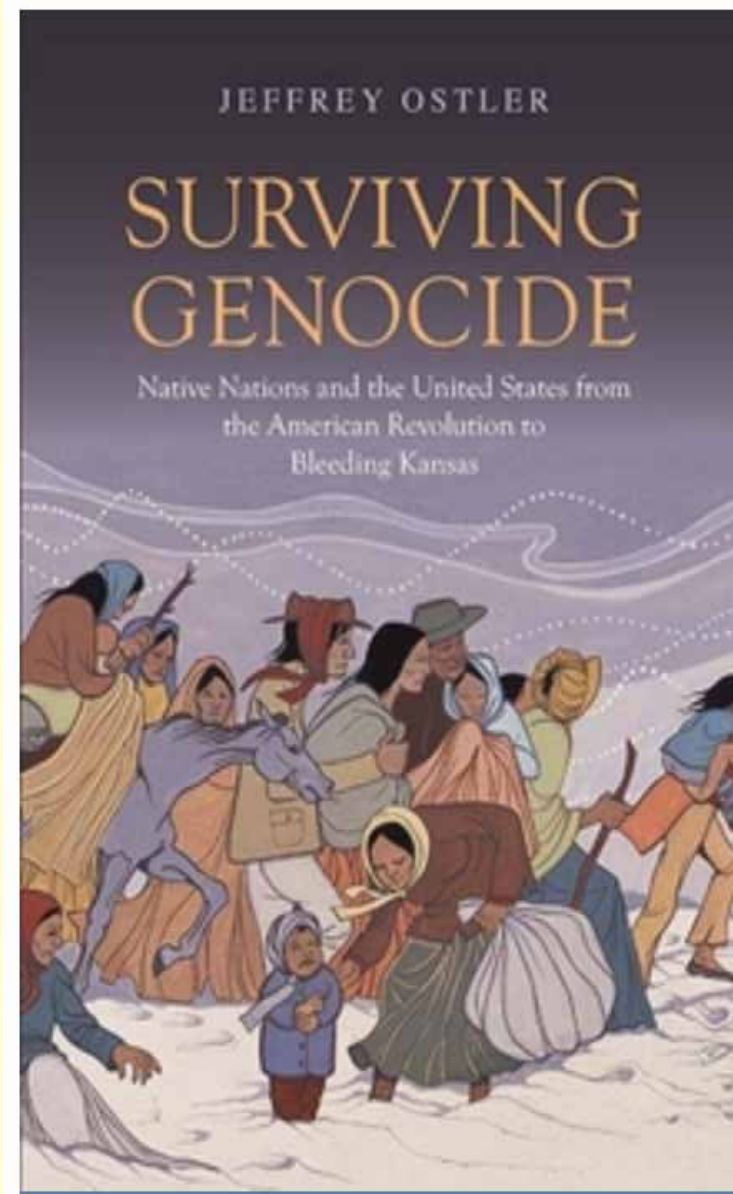
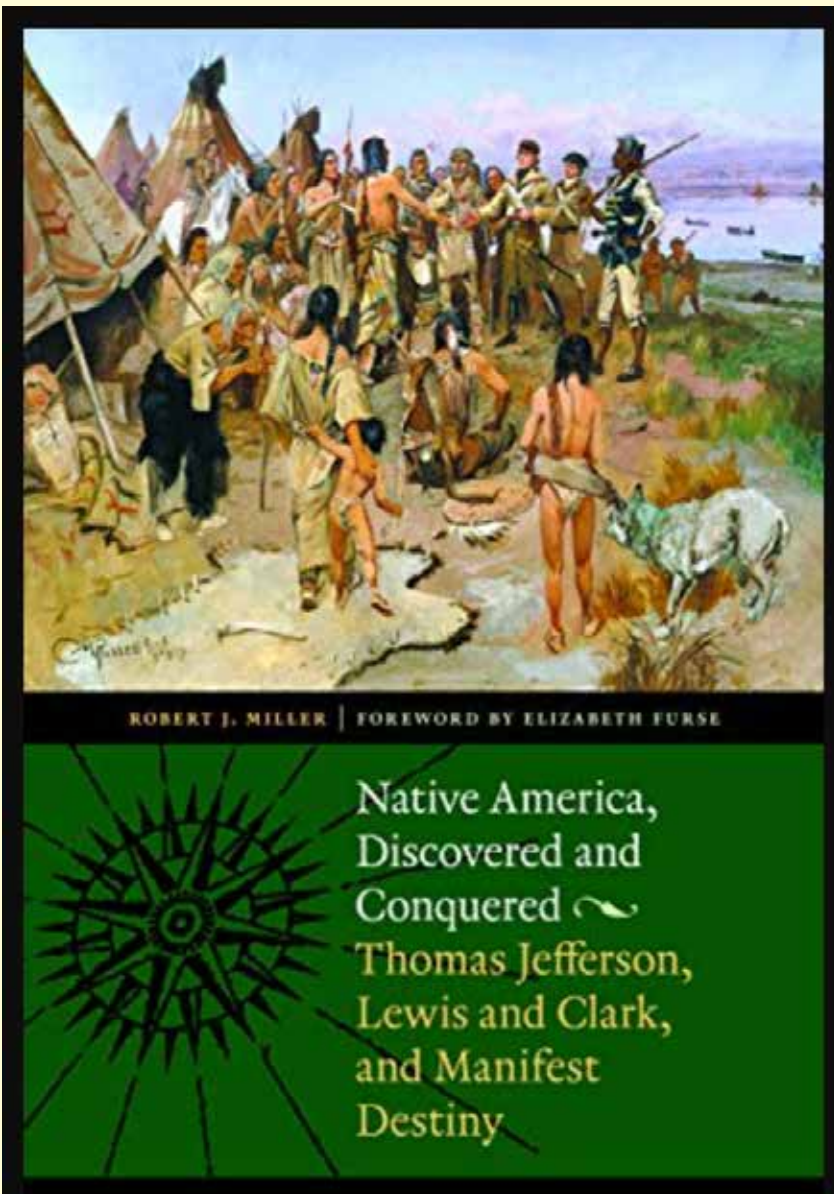
A Brief Overview

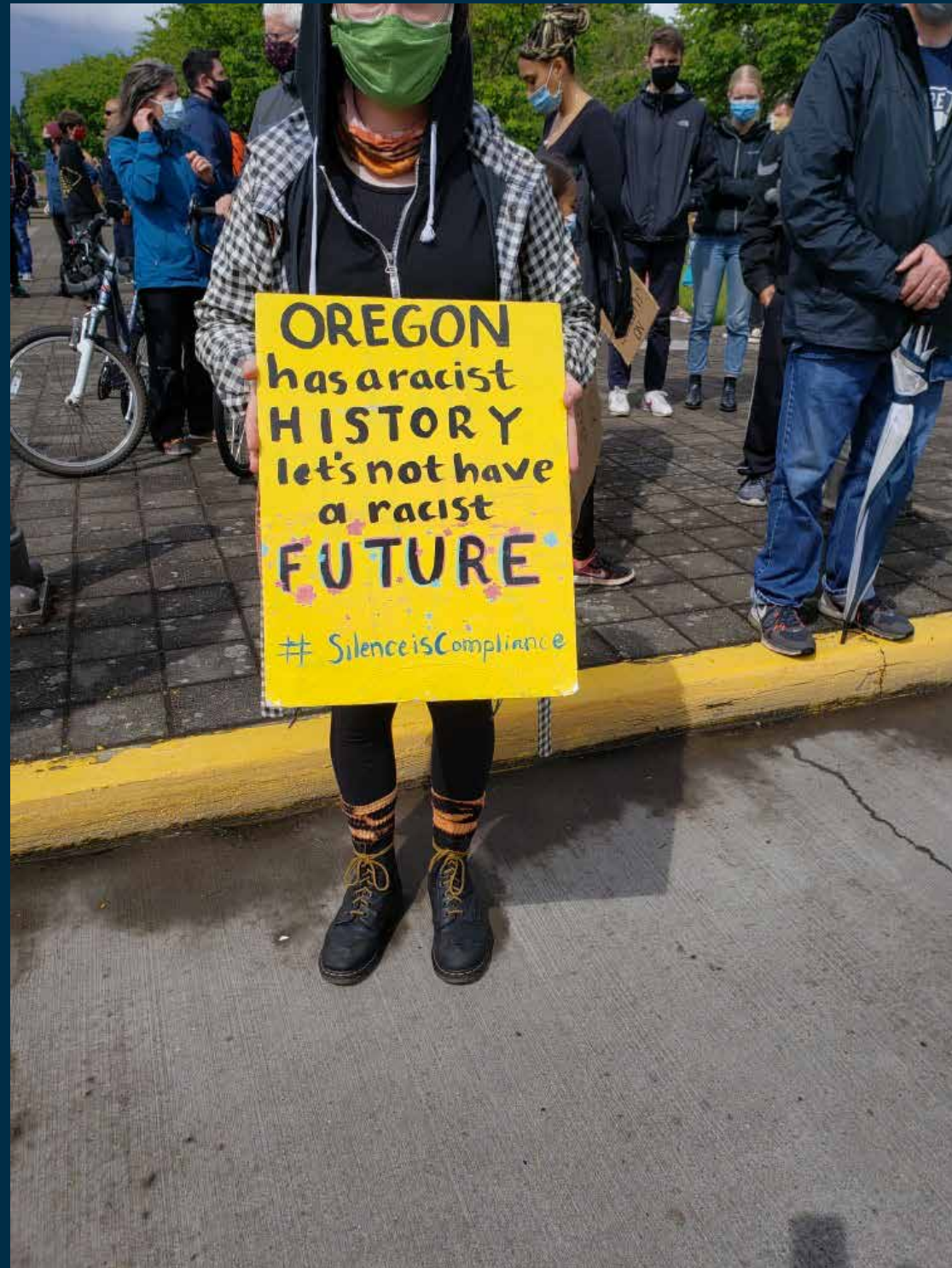
Kerry Tymchuk & Eliza E. Canty-Jones



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We are on stolen land.





Saturday, June 6, 2020, Salem, Oregon
photo by Jo Ogden

Recognize & Respect



Harriet "Hattie" Redmond, woman suffrage activist, 1912

OHS Research Library, bb009628



Oregon Civil Rights Bill signing, 1953. Seated, from left: Philip S. Hitchcock and Mark O. Hatfield. Standing, from left: Edgar Williams, Marie Smith, Ulysses Plummer, Rev. J. Harold Jones, Lorna J. Marple, Verdell Rutherford, and Otto G. Rutherford.

Whiteness & White Supremacy

“Whiteness is an expectation (sometimes an unconscious expectation) that the government will maintain laws and policies generally benefiting White people. That system, which has been effectuated through all institutions that govern American society, is White supremacy. . . . On a day-to-day level, the system of White supremacy repeatedly has provided advantages to White people. . . . The system thereby encourages those of European ancestry to internalize their top-ranking — that is, to embody White supremacy — and that embodiment of expectation, conscious or otherwise, is Whiteness.”

— Carmen P. Thompson, “Expectation and Exclusion: An Introduction to Whiteness, White Supremacy, and Resistance in Oregon History,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 120:4 (Winter 2019): 358.

Oregon Donation Land Act, 1850

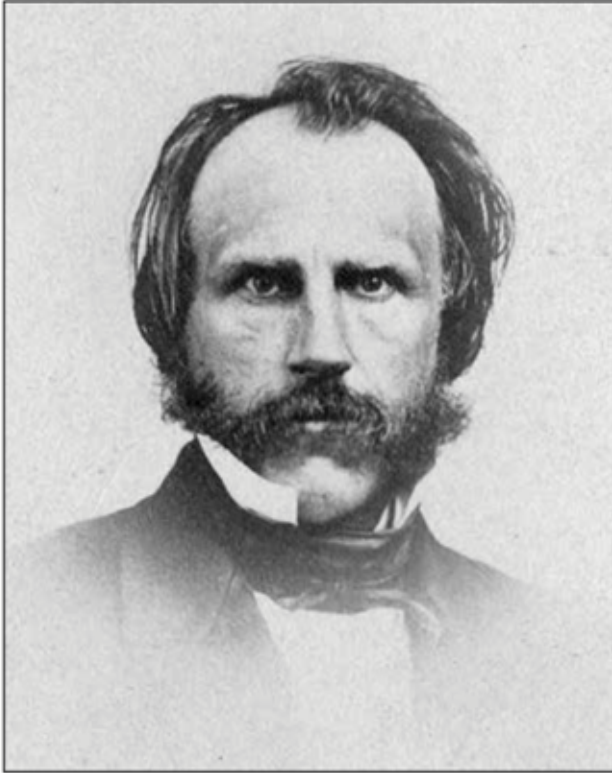
Oct the 9 1850 Yamhill Cty Oregon Territory
Richard of James Richter Pool for his land
claim in said county 240 in full of his
County tax for the year 1850
Shuck Sheriff
Clayton Richardson
deputy Sheriff

OHS Research Library, Mss 1501, box 1, land tax folder

THIS TAX RECEIPT, issued to James Richter Pool(e) for his Yamhill County land claim, is dated October 9, 1850. According to the Donation Land Claim Act, single men who arrived in Oregon prior to December 1, 1850, could claim as many as 320 acres.

George Williams's anti-slavery letter

OHS Research Library, Org. Lot 500, box 7, folder 1122-A-2



GEORGE H. WILLIAMS, pictured here in about 1863, was appointed to the Supreme Court of Oregon Territory in 1852 and served as a Marion County delegate to the Oregon Constitutional Convention in 1857.

One free white man is worth more than two negro slaves in the cultivation of the soil, or any other business which can be influenced by zeal or the exercise of discretion.

Negroes are naturally lazy and as slaves actuated by fear of the whip — are only interested in doing enough to avoid punishment.

Establish slavery here and the effect will be as it has been elsewhere. You will turn aside that tide of free white labor which has poured itself like a fertilizing flood across the great States of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, and is now murmuring up the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains.

Oregon Constitution: 1857, 1859

Article II

~~Article II~~ Suffrage
and Elections,

Sec: 1. All elections shall be free, and equal,

Sec: 2. In all elections, not otherwise provided for by this constitution, every white male citizen of the United States, of the age of twenty one years, and upwards, who shall

Sec: 3. No idiot or insane person, shall be entitled to the privileges of an elector, and the privileges of an elector shall be forfeited, by a conviction of any crime which is punishable by imprisonment in the penitentiary,

Sec: 6. No Negro, Chinaman or mulatto shall have the right of suffrage,

Preliminary draft of the Oregon State Constitution,
Article II — Suffrage and Elections

OHS Research Library, Mss1227_f02a_Article-II_SuffrageElections

Anti-Asian Advocacy & Violence



OHS Research Library #ba01872

One of the earliest photographs of Portland, Oregon, this view of Southwest First Street between Yamhill and Morrison Streets, taken in about 1857, documents the presence of Chinese in the state; next to Monnastes & Davis foundry (large center building) is Hop Wo Washing & Ironing. The resistance of Oregonians and other Westerners to Chinese citizenship helped curb proposals for broad civil rights after the Civil War.



photo by Candise Nokes

Japanese American WWII Incarceration



Soldier posting Civilian Exclusion Order #1,
1942, in Kitsap County, Washington
OHS Research Library 021104



Incarcerated Japanese Americans at Heart Mountain, Wyoming
OHS Research Library 44601

Racism & Organized Labor

ALLIANCE PLOT FAILS

**Portland Mill Owners Turn Down
Damnable Plot To Supplant
White Men.**

THE PORTLAND LABOR PRESS published this headline on July 6, 1906, for an article describing how longshoremen refused to unload “coolie-operated” boats, and mill workers refused to work alongside “Asiaties.” While Indians in North America were not “coolie” or “contract” workers, these were terms signaling non-White and, by definition, inferior workers in a system that privileged organized, White laborers.

More Negroes Lose Jobs

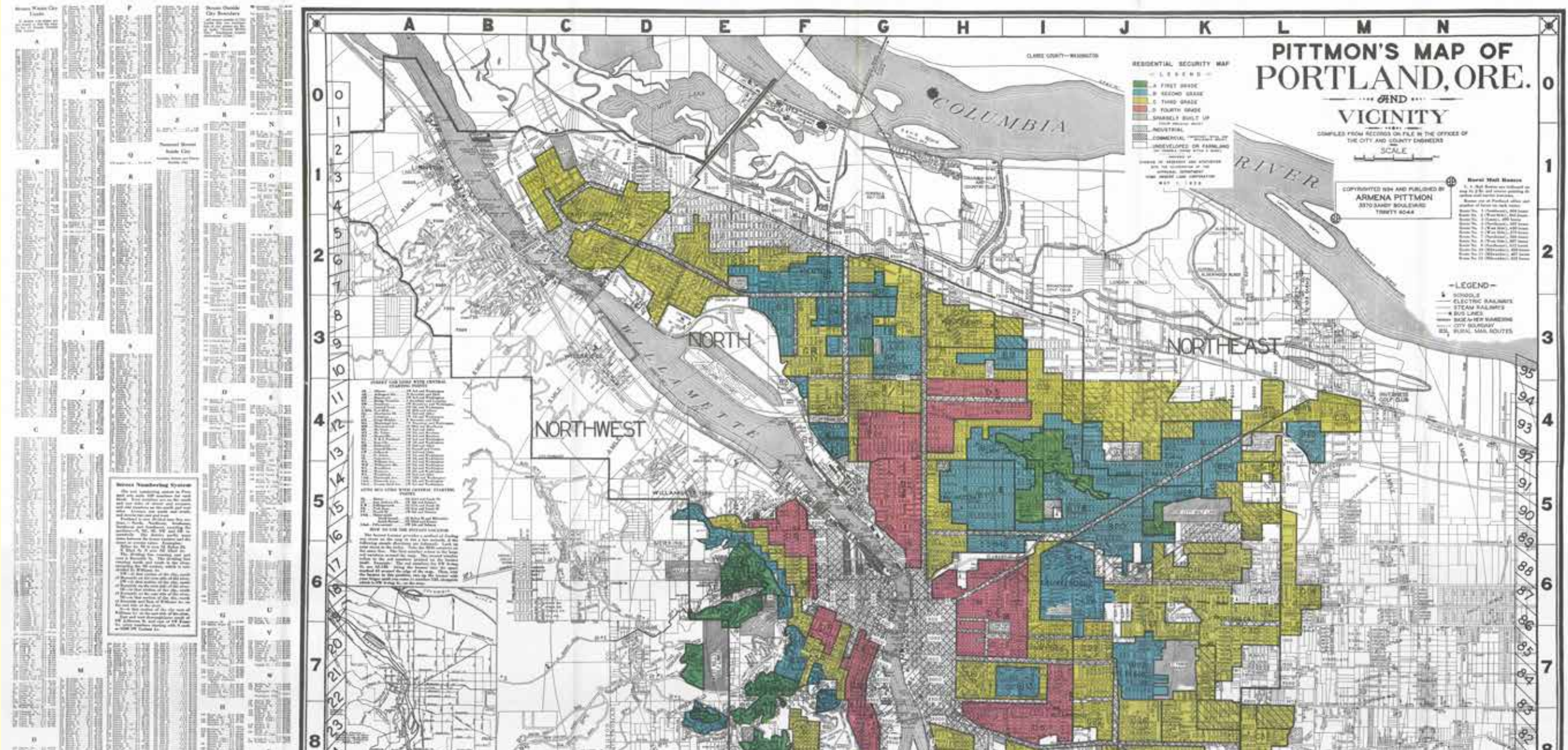
In addition to the eighty Negro workers laid off by Kaiser Company, Vancouver, two weeks ago, the number has now risen above 200. These workers have been laid off for not accepting a Jim-Crow union created for Negro workers by the officials of the Boilermakers Union, Local No. 72.

Among those fired most recently were: LeGall, Mitchell, Gee and others. These men are part of the staunch Negro rank and file movement which is demanding acceptance into the local No. 72 Boilermakers Union. In discharging these men, Mr. Ashley, personnel manager of Kaiser Company, informed them that they would not receive clearances to work anywhere in this area. This policy indicates that conspiracy evidently exists between officials of Local No. 72 and the Kaiser Company.

These workers have been offered work clearances if they will move to another area.

ON JULY 21, 1943, the *People's Observer* newspaper reported that the Kaiser Company fired over two hundred Black workers for refusing to join the segregated auxiliary union, which was subservient to the White local and would be dissolved after the war.

Housing Discrimination



Education Discrimination



Ron Herndon stands on a table (in white sweater) at this 1982 BUF school board protest. At right, behind the table, is school board member James Fenwick. Protesters are angry about the placement of Harriet Tubman Middle School.

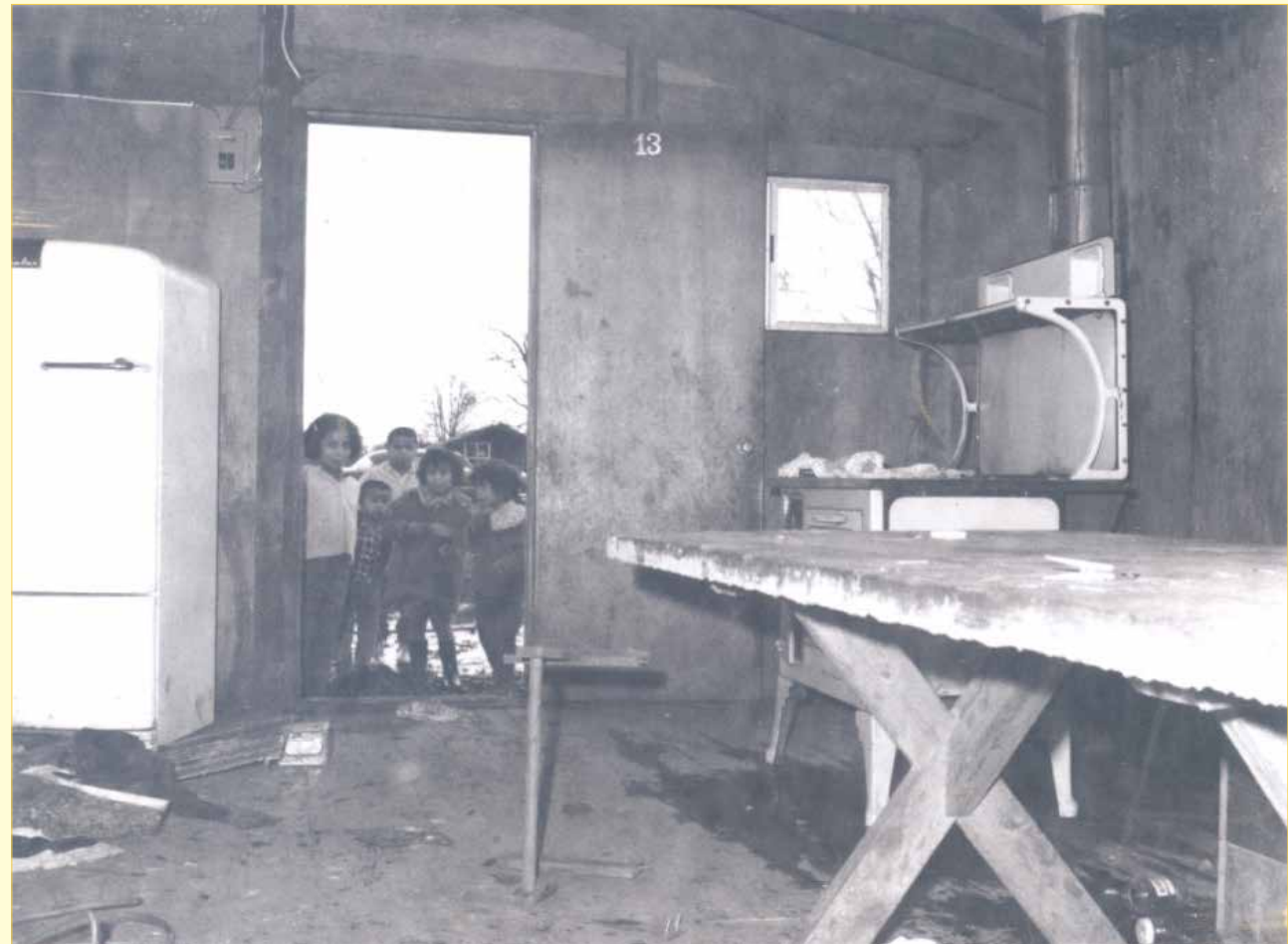
Discrimination Against Latinos



Valley Migrant League

A child is immunized at a Valley Migrant League health clinic.

Oregon Historical Society Research Library bb004074



Interior of migrant worker housing, documented by activists in order to advocate for improvement

OHS Research Library, OrHi 97841

Police Violence



OHS Research Library, 0098P214

CAPT. WALTER ODALE, pictured here in 1949, led the Portland Police subversive activities detail, or “Red Squad,” during the 1930s. Odale’s Red Squad integrated with groups such as the Silver Legion and American Defenders in its efforts to quash communist influence, especially among organized labor.

as published in OHQ, 120:4

Courtesy Cathy Cheney



Portlanders protest the killing of Lloyd “Tony” Stevenson by Portland police in 1985.

as published in OHQ, 114:1

Everyday Racism

OHS Research Library, OrHi 103513



OHS Research Library, MS 242

Everyday Racism



ABOVE: This bench is from the segregated section at the Mayfair Theatre, which allowed Black people to sit only in the upper gallery, on these wooden benches, while White people were allowed to sit in the individual seats. Photo from display in OHS' History Hub exhibit.

LEFT: Inside of the Heilig/Mayfair Theater; OHS Research Library bb00209

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