

# The Myth of Liberal Oregon

A History of Discriminatory Legislation

**1843 Oregon's Black Exclusion Laws** were the first pieces of discriminatory legislation passed in the state, predating racial restrictive covenants and redlining by almost 100 years. In 1843, the Oregon Territory banned both slavery as well as the presence of all black people, requiring all black residents to leave the territory within three years.

**1844 The "Lash Law"**, ordered that any black person attempting to live in Oregon would publicly receive thirty-nine lashes with a whip every six-months until they left. The law targeted African American seamen who might be tempted to jump ship or any runaway or previously enslaved people from being able to settle in the west. Voters repealed the lash law in 1845.

**1850 Donation Land Act** is passed. The DLA entitled white males to 320-acres of land in the Oregon Territory and, if they were married, their wives were entitled to an additional 320-acres. By entitling land to white settlers only, the Donation Land Act excluded blacks from staking a claim in Oregon.

**1851 Judge Thomas Nelson orders Jacob Vanderpool**, a sailor from the West Indies, to leave the Oregon Territory. He is the only person on record who was expelled because he was black.

**1859 Oregon becomes the 33<sup>rd</sup> state in the Union.** The state constitution bans slavery, but also has an exclusion clause that declares it illegal for black people to live within the state.

**1918 The first zoning plans** are presented to City Hall which divided industry into two broad categories: "ordinary," which included warehouses and non-odor producing factories, and "obnoxious," which were odor, waste or noise producing (many of the industries in the industrial part of the Albina neighborhood, and in north Portland near where Vanport would soon be were considered "obnoxious" zones).

**1919 The Portland Realty Board** establishes a 'code of ethics' that forbid realtors and bankers from both selling property and granting mortgage loans to people of color for the purchase of properties in white neighborhoods.

**1922 Walter M. Pierce** becomes governor of Oregon. He is supported by members of the Ku Klux Klan who were estimated to have had between 14,000 – 20,000 members throughout the state during the mid-nineteen twenties. Pierce remains Oregon's Governor until 1926.

**1923 The KKK** claims 35,000 members in Oregon.

**OREGON IS INVADED BY KU KLUX KLAN**  
Portland and Other Cities Are Being Organized.  
"WHITE SUPREMACY" AIMS  
Klanettes Appear in Every Part of the State.

**Hearing Skips Negro Issue**  
Examiner Demands 'Direct Proof'  
The question of whether the A. P. of L. union ever discriminated against Negroes was not heard in the hearing held at the Albina Hotel last night. The hearing was held in the hearing room of the Albina Hotel last night. The hearing was held in the hearing room of the Albina Hotel last night.



**ANTI-CHINESE MEETING.**  
Klanettes Appearing in a Committee of Fifteen to Rally the Chinese to "Get up and Get."

**NEGRO LAW OF OREGON**  
KANSAS BRITANNIC QUOTES IT FOR CAMPAIGN PURPOSES.  
Designated as Worse Than Disfranchisement or 'Poll Tax' - Der., owner says on the subject.

**ANOTHER KKK RAID**  
A Battalion of Chinese Residents and Soldiers  
Batteries Guild's Lake  
All of which yesterday morning, not long after the light from the flames of Jim Taylor's burning house, fired by an incendiary, had led on the eastern horizon, and while an Oregonian reporter was hurrying into the building and shooting of Col. J. H. Phillips, at that Portland, he saw the light of a burning building north of the city, in the vicinity of Guild's Lake, which is proved to be the house of one of the Chinese gardeners there, several of whom were last night driven away from their homes.

**1873 Portland City Council** had passed the **Cubic Air Ordinance**, which barred any residences from housing more than one person per 550 cubic feet and required fine or arrest of all people living in such conditions. This was mainly enforced in the shanties near Guild's Lake in Northwest Portland, and in Chinatown, where there was the highest population of Chinese residents.

**1883 Thirty Ku Klux Klan members** raided a half dozen Chinese farming settlements on the banks of Guild's Lake, burning houses and tearing up gardens and farming equipment. The attack sparked outrage and multiple Oregonian articles condemned the Klan's attack, but whether or not the farmers received any assistance after their farms were destroyed is unclear.

**1886 A mob of white men** force fifty Chinese laborers residing in Oregon City onto a boat headed to Portland. The same year, similar violence and expulsions happened in the shanty town near Guild's Lake, in Mount Tabor, and in Albina, as well as in Seattle, Tacoma, and various cities in California.

**1937 Kathryn Hall Bogle** publishes "A Negro Speaks of Color" in the Oregonian, which described the realities of being black in Portland. It was the first time the newspaper paid an African American for a story, and Bogle would contribute many more articles to the Oregonian over the years.

**1942 The WWII housing project Vanport** is built. The Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) managed Vanport and made the decision to make private living quarters segregated, with blacks living in one area and whites living in another. City Council member J.C. Bennett discouraged the attraction of black workers into the city, particularly before the creation of Vanport (on the outskirts of town).

**1942 The Oregon Plan** followed the internment of Japanese-Americans by Executive Order 9066, and forced those interned to do manual and farm labor during their captivity to supplement the labor force lost due to the draft.

**1947 The Urban League of Portland** charges the Housing Authority of Portland with not upholding the federal policy of nondiscrimination in housing. It wasn't until 1950 that the Housing Authority of Portland integrated its housing, but by 1957 was still not offering housing to most black people.

**1948 Vanport is destroyed** by a flood, displacing over 18,000 people. The Albina district in North Portland was the only option for displaced African Americans, prompting a massive population influx into the neighborhood.

**Beds Still Needed**  
Colored Spikes said among pressing needs of the moment are beds, laundry clothes and other clothing, baby cribs and mattresses, dishes and cooking utensils of all kinds. Extra beds were immediately installed at the Mother's and Children's home, 118 & E. Ash streets. Some room still remains at the home for mothers and their children, she said.  
Furniture has been found for Negro residents of Vanport, both in private homes and at Hughes Memorial church, 108 N. Knott street, she said.