

Overview

What was life like for African Americans living in Oregon in the 1960s and 1970s? What obstacles did they experience? What are we still working on today? Through a guided tour, hands-on activity, and discussions, students will learn about the civil rights years in Oregon and specifically Eugene.

“The Civil Rights Movement is one of the defining events in American history, during which Americans fought to make real the ideals of justice and equality embedded in our founding documents. When students learn about the movement, they learn what it means to be active American citizens. They learn how to recognize injustice. They learn about the transformative role played by thousands of ordinary individuals, as well as the importance of organization for collective change. They see that people can come together to stand against oppression.” – from *Teaching the Movement*

Objectives

After completing the pre- and post-visit activities and visiting the *Racing to Change* exhibit at the museum, students will be able to:

- Define civil rights, racism, segregation, and white privilege
- Identify obstacles Blacks experienced in Oregon in the 1960s and the early 1970s
- Describe actions Blacks and their supporters/allies took to overcome the obstacles they faced in Oregon in the 1960s and the early 1970s
- Have resources to take their own action

Pre-Visit Materials

Complete one or more of these activities prior to your visit to the *Racing to Change* exhibit to better understand the tour.

Activity 1:

Know key Black history and civil rights dates in the United States. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines civil rights as “those rights guaranteed to the individual by the 13th, 14th, 15th and 19th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States and by other acts of Congress; especially the right to vote, exemption from involuntary servitude, and equal treatment of all people with respect to the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property and to the protection of the law.”

The Civil Rights Amendments:

- **13th Amendment** (1865): Slavery is made illegal throughout the United States of America.
- **14th Amendment** (1868): All people born in the U.S are citizens. No state may take away the rights of citizens, i.e. equal treatment of all people with respect to the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property and to the protection of the law.

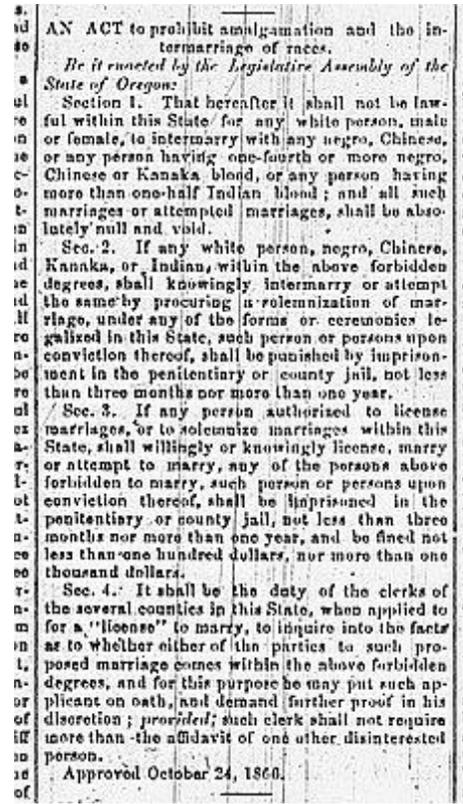
- **15th Amendment** (1870): The right to vote cannot be denied to citizens because of their race or color because they were once enslaved.
- **19th Amendment** (1920): guaranteed women the right to vote in national elections.
- **26th Amendment** (1971): any citizen aged 18 years or older is allowed to vote.

Working individually, or in groups of two, create a one-page exhibit text panel that provides the date, name of the event or action, and description of the event or action. Possibly add historic images or create borders. Arrange the one-page documents in chronological order to make a timeline for the class to read. Leave space to add more items to the timeline after your museum visit.

Activity 2:

Learn how to “read” historic photographs and documents to understand laws and activism affecting Black Oregonians.

1) [Act Forbidding Racial Intermarriage \(Miscegenation\) in Oregon, 1866](#)



First, use the image online and zoom in on the document so you can see it well enough to rewrite the heading and sections 1 and 2 (the first two paragraphs) for easy reading.

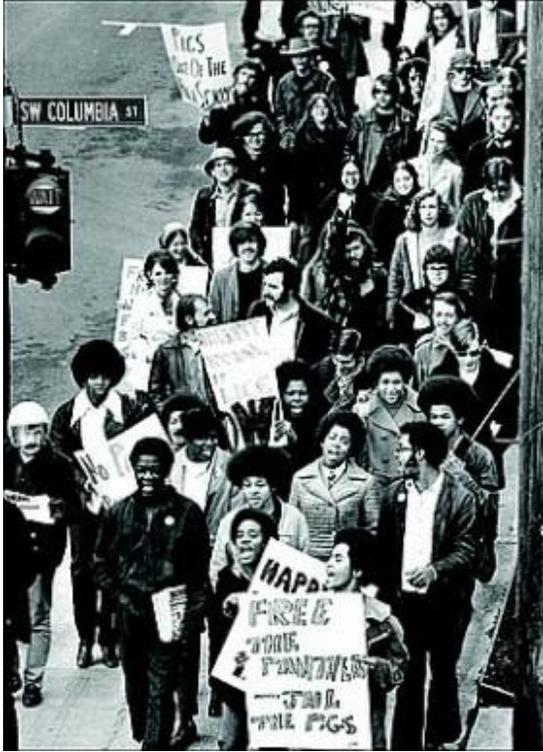
Second, read the document to answer the following question: in 1866, could a white man legally marry a fully Black woman in Oregon? If they did marry, what punishment might they experience in Oregon?

Third, research when Blacks and whites could legally marry in Oregon. What was this date? Are you surprised?

2) “Read” the image: [Demonstration Calling for Police Reform, Portland, 1970](#)

Pre- and Post-Visit Materials, Grades 6-12

Racing to Change: Oregon's Civil Rights Years – The Eugene Story



First, use the online image and zoom in on the photograph so you can study it closely. Begin with a basic description of only what you see. (For example, I see Black and white people in a group outdoors). What are the expressions on their faces? Are they moving? What do the signs say?

Second, who are the Panthers? What did they do? Why should they be free? Who are the Pigs? Why should they be jailed? Once you have looked at all the details in the photograph, share what type of event you think it is, what the people want, and why. For more details, look at the following two sources:

a. The online article in the Oregon Encyclopedia titled "[Black Panthers in Portland](#)".

b. The Panther's 10-Point Platform:

#1 We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.

#2 We want full employment for our people.

#3 We want an end to the robbery by the CAPITALIST of our Black Community.

#4 We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.

#5 We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.

#6 We want all Black men to be exempt from military service.

#7 We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of Black people.

#8 We want freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.

#9 We want all Black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their Black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.

#10 We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the Black colony in which only Black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of Black people as to their national destiny.

Pre- and Post-Visit Materials, Grades 6-12

Racing to Change: Oregon's Civil Rights Years – The Eugene Story

Activity 3:

Read “On Racism and White Privilege” article from Teaching Tolerance at www.tolerance.org/professional-development/on-racism-and-white-privilege and explain in writing or in a presentation format, such as PowerPoint, how the author defines “racism” and “white privilege”.

Activity 4:

List or research ways in which racism and white privilege continue to negatively impact Blacks today (think about at school, in the neighborhoods, in jobs, by law enforcement, in the media, shopping, hanging out, sports, in entertainment, etc.). Share examples from your life.

Activity 5:

As a class, brainstorm actions you, your classmates, and your teachers can take to reduce or eliminate racism and white privilege in your school.

Activity 6:

Watch one or more of the “Racing to Change” videos on the museum’s YouTube page at www.youtube.com/user/uomnch/videos. Discuss what life was like for community members and/or University of Oregon students during the 1960s and 1970s based on the videos.

Post-Visit Materials

Complete one or more of these activities after to your visit to the *Racing to Change* exhibit to comprehend the civil rights materials.

Activity 1:

Expand Black history and civil rights dates in Oregon – and the nation – using Dr. Darrell Millner’s article “[Blacks in Oregon](#)”.

Activity 2:

Discuss different topics to **IMAGINE** how similar but different life was for Black and white youth your age in the 1960s and 1970s in Oregon.

Topics could include, but not limited to: Schools (elementary or high school), College, Housing, Press/Media, Fashion, Music, TV, Sports, Churches/religion, etc.

Activity 3:

Pick a favorite quote found in the exhibit. Using information from the exhibit and the pre-visit and post-visit materials you studied, write in your own words what it means *AND* discuss why you picked it.

Pre- and Post-Visit Materials, Grades 6-12

Racing to Change: Oregon's Civil Rights Years – The Eugene Story

We suffered under covert racism. Nobody stood on the street corner waving banners and threatening Black people here in Eugene, but you couldn't rent or buy a house anywhere you wanted to. You couldn't find a job that paid a living wage. The doors to the University of Oregon weren't thrown open to local Blacks. Though we weren't feeling physical violence, we suffered the emotional and mental violence of not being treated equally.

—Lyllie Reynolds-Parker

I came into adulthood at a time when "black is beautiful" was the expression and it set a tone for my generation in terms of those of us who were politically active, in terms of how we view ourselves and how we view each other. Using the terms brother and sister is still something I do.

—Charlotte Rutherford, community organizer and civil rights lawyer

There was not a bank in this whole city that would lend a Black man money for a business. I decided I was not going to allow this city to run me out of town. I was going to stick and I was going to make a living someway or another.

—Willie C. Mims

The one single factor that causes social change is people being determined that they are going to make it happen and not getting discouraged.

—Herman Brame

**CHANGE WILL NOT COME
IF WE WAIT FOR
SOME OTHER PERSON
OR SOME OTHER TIME.**

**WE ARE THE ONES WE'VE
BEEN WAITING FOR.**

**WE ARE THE
CHANGE THAT
WE SEEK.**

—President Barack Obama

Pre- and Post-Visit Materials, Grades 6-12

Racing to Change: Oregon’s Civil Rights Years – The Eugene Story

Activity 4:

Research the nine organizations from the museum exhibit. Will you take action through any of these organizations? How? Why?

- Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs, oaba.us
- The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), naacplanecounty.org
- The Community Alliance of Lane County, calclane.org
- The Oregon League of Minority Voters, minorityvoters.org
- The City of Eugene Office of Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement, eugene-or.gov/526/Human-Rights-Commission
- Momentum Alliance, momentumalliance.org
- The Oregon Affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, aclu-or.org
- Black Lives Matter Global Network, blacklivesmatter.com
- The University of Oregon Black Strategies Group, inclusion.uoregon.edu/bsg



Activity 5:

The image below is from a 2016 Black Lives Matter protest in Portland, Oregon. Read the words on the sign. Think about what you know about racism, white privilege, Black history, segregation, justice, and equality in Oregon and the U.S. What do you think this means?



Activity 6:

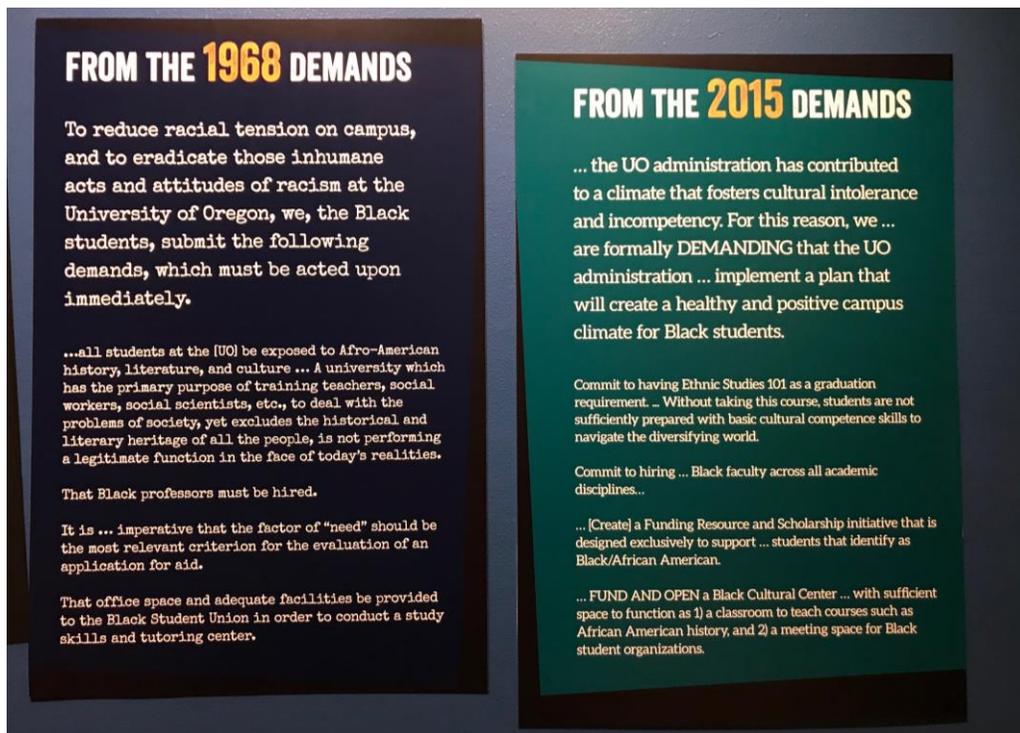
Look at the “Are You Involved?” image below. Answer the question in the image, “How will we advance the goals of justice and equality in the 21st century?”.



- 1) Discuss with your classmates what action (**speak out**, **vote**, or **protest**) has the greatest impact in overcoming racism and achieving equality in Oregon and the nation.
- 2) Brainstorm an action **YOU** will take to accomplish the goals of justice and equality for Blacks and all people in Oregon (and the nation). You may want to incorporate some of the ideas from the activists and strategies in the museum exhibit.

Activity 7:

Look at the University of Oregon's Black student demands from 1968 and compare them to the demands in 2015. Full copies are on the museum's Educator Resources page. What items are similar? How much has changed? What still needs to be done?



Activity 8:

Read the poem, *Harlem*, written in 1951 by Langston Hughes. Write what you think it means, based on what you learned in the pre-visit and post-visit materials and in the exhibit, *Racing to Change: Oregon's Civil Rights Years – The Eugene Story*.

Harlem

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Additional Resources

- “[A Hidden History](#)” by Walidah Imarisha
- [Blacks in Oregon \(essay\)](#) by Darrell Millner, the Oregon Encyclopedia
- Teaching Tolerance website: tolerance.org
- [Teaching the Civil Rights Movement](#) from the Oregon Department of Education
- Oregon Black Pioneers website: oregonblackpioneers.org