



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OREGON JEWISH MUSEUM AND CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION AND OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This image of the American Indian Movement is featured in a new exhibit on discrimination at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education. AIM members took over the Bonneville Power Administration's Portland offices in 1975 to protest federal repression of the Pine Ridge Reservation.

**BY EMILY GREEN**  
STAFF WRITER

*A new exhibit juxtaposes Oregon's long and tangled histories of discrimination and resistance*

On Sunday, June 11, the public is invited to peruse several captivating exhibits, free of charge, at the grand opening of the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education's permanent location in the Pearl District.

The museum's newly acquired building on the corner of Northwest Davis Street and Eighth Avenue is more than twice the size of its previous home in Northwest Portland.

It includes a 100-seat auditorium, a gift shop, a café featuring Jewish deli items, a children's play area and a dynamic two-story exhibition space for its core and rotating exhibits.

The inaugural exhibit features the tapestries and other works of famed Russian Jewish artist Grisha Bruskin.

But it's one of the museum's new core exhibits that couldn't come at a better time for Portland.

As guests walk through "Discrimination and Resistance, An Oregon Primer," they may notice that the horrendous Memorial Day weekend attack is not an anomaly, but merely a new chapter in Oregon's long and sordid history of deep-rooted racism.

Guest curator Janice Dilg illuminates this history from Oregon's days as a territory through the 20th century, leading up to more recent examples from the fight for marriage equality. Dilg is the principle of HistoryBuilt, a

Portland-based history consulting company.

Photographs and historical documents serve as a glimpse into an Oregon that, in the 1920s, had the highest concentration of Klansmen west of the Mississippi, with more than 60 local chapters of the KKK spread across the state.

"You can draw the line from white supremacy in the 1920s right to Friday night," said Dilg, in reference to the MAX-train attack that left two Good Samaritans dead and another seriously wounded for taking a stand against racist abuse inflicted upon two black girls.

The three-dimensional exhibit will reveal to visitors that Oregon's predominantly white demographic is no accident, but rather achieved by design through centuries of exclusionary laws and intentionally oppressive practices.

It's a history that's entered the national dialogue in recent weeks, with commentaries in *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post* and *Huffington Post* all quick to point out Oregon's racist past in connection with the attack.

But that's only one side of Oregon's story.

Dilg's exhibit gives equal weight to the parallel history of the courageous Oregonians who resisted that discrimination, who refused to leave despite efforts to push them out, and who fought to reform the state in the face of great opposition.

As she poured through newspaper archives, Dilg said, she noticed it was difficult to differentiate between time periods based on words alone.

"It might be 1850, it might be 1910, it might be 1960 – and you just could not tell the headlines then from the headlines when you looked up and it was 2017," she said.

"Yes, there's been oppressive discrimination going on for a very long time, some of it's changed, some of it's slid back, but there are always those people out there who are speaking up, who are taking action in a variety of forms, and we need to see all of that."

Often, it has been Oregon's victims of discrimination who were also its agents of change.

One example Dilg pointed out is the Unthank family.

They were a black family forced, through intimidation, from their home in an all-white Portland neighborhood in the 1930s.

But DeNorval Unthank and his wife, Thelma, were also civil rights pioneers. He was one of the first medical doctors to serve Portland's black population when hospitals were segregated.

When his son, DeNorval Unthank Jr., fell in

## IF YOU GO

**What:** Grand opening of the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education (includes gift shop; rotating and core exhibits)

**When:** Noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, June 11

**Where:** 724 NW Davis St., Portland

**Cost:** Free

**More about the museum and its exhibits on Page 11**

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A Southern Poverty Law Center official on the MAX attack and intolerance, **Page 5**

Muslims face battle over safety in public spaces, **Page 7**

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