



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

This image from a 1923 Ku Klux Klan parade in Albany is featured in "Discrimination and Resistance, An Oregon Primer." Oregon claimed the largest KKK membership of any Western state, with branches in every part of the state by 1925.

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love with Doris Burgess, who was white, the couple had to marry in Washington because interracial marriage was illegal in Oregon until 1951.

But Unthank Jr. was also the first black graduate from the University of Oregon's School of Architecture and Allied Arts and was a lifelong advocate for the black community.

Recently, there was a black student-initiated effort to rename UO dorm Dunn Hall, which was named for Frederick Dunn, a high-ranking member of the KKK.

On June 2, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the new name: Unthank Hall in honor of Unthank Jr.

Dilg's exhibit also takes aim at the collective tendency of dismissiveness toward the racist actions of white America's ancestry.

She hopes when visitors learn how the NAACP introduced the first public accommodation law into Oregon legislature in 1919, it will make it harder to chalk the oppression up to ignorance. Oregon didn't adopt the Civil Rights Bill until 1953.

"There were black people in Oregon, who were very enlightened, who knew in 1919 – and I'm sure much earlier – this is not OK," she said. "Native Americans knew, this is our land, you are taking it from us. This is not OK."

She said knowing this history "makes it less possible for people to say, 'Oh that's just the way it was.'"

Dilg designed her exhibit not chronologically, but thematically around the tools used for both resistance and discrimination throughout history.

"It doesn't matter what period, or what group," Dilg said. "They are often the same tools implemented in similar ways that have the end result of excluding a group, dehumanizing a group, scapegoating a group, and all of this is very effective in creating a broad result of discrimination."

She said she wants people to question how this happens "over and over and over" so they might learn how to recognize discrimination when they see it and how to intervene and break the cycle.

"Both the discrimination and the Holocaust exhibits are very emotional," museum director Judy Margles said. "We're not just spewing out facts. We're really giving context and doing what I think my institution does very well, which is telling stories."

Docents and museum staff will be on hand to offer tissues and shoulders to guests, who will also have an opportunity to reflect on how discrimination has played a role in their own lives as an interactive part of the exhibit.

"I am anticipating that our visitors are going to have a wide range of emotions, and if tears are part of that emotional outpouring, I think that we want to make sure that our visitors know they are in a safe space," Margles said.

# In Portland, an uptick in hate

*Southern Poverty Law Center's Lecia Brooks explains how racists have become emboldened*

BY JARED PABEN  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Since the presidential election, "In Our America" signs have proliferated in front yards and windows across Portland, spreading messages of love and tolerance to passers-by. But to the casual observer, the messaging may obscure a newly energized underbelly of intolerance in this majority-white city.

On May 26, an extremist's heinous crimes on a MAX train shocked the community. But the City of Roses has actually had one of the country's highest rates of hate- or bias-related incidents since the Nov. 8 election. That's according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which recorded 50 hate and bias incidents statewide in the three months after Election Day. Taking into account population, it was a disproportionately high number compared to all our neighbors: California (154 incidents), Washington (65 incidents), Nevada (seven incidents) and Idaho (five incidents).

Street Roots recently spoke with Lecia Brooks, outreach director for the Southern Poverty Law Center, a Montgomery, Ala.-based group that tracks extremists, sues on behalf of their victims and works to counter their messaging.

**"Portland is 70 percent white population. So what you find in those instances is that, oftentimes, white supremacists can hide in plain sight."**

LECIA BROOKS,  
OUTREACH DIRECTOR FOR  
THE SOUTHERN POVERTY  
LAW CENTER

wondering, was Jeremy Joseph Christian on Southern Poverty Law Center's radar before this happened?

**Lecia Brooks:** No, Jeremy Christian wasn't on the radar, though it was really easy to find information related to his white supremacist and extremist-right ties. It was all over his Facebook page, all over his social media. As you know, April 29 he showed up at a free speech rally in Portland and had a little incident with police, so it was real easy to find intelligence on him.

**J.P.:** What can you tell us about his views? And since the SPLC has a nationwide perspective, are they common views?

**L.B.:** Well, they are more common these days. As you know, post-election, we saw an extreme uptick in the number of hate- and bias-related incidents across the United States. And, of course, Portland, sadly, has one of the highest rates of hate crimes or hate incidents of a metropolitan area since the election.

**J.P.:** Wow, I hadn't realized that. Do you have any data on just how bad it's been in Portland?

**L.B.:** I don't have the figures in front of me, but what we did at the Southern Poverty Law Center was we had a Web portal that we invited folks to report incidents that they either witnessed or were victim to, and we gathered close to 1,500 reports (nationwide). We continue to gather reports. There have been a number of flyerings of white nationalist flyers on college campuses across the United States. And the Pacific Northwest has a history of racist violence and racist hate groups, so we weren't too terribly surprised that this incident would happen there.



Lecia Brooks is the outreach director for the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala.

**J.P.:** I get the feeling that Portland kind of thinks of itself as a liberal, tolerant bulwark against a rising tide of hate. That image that you just painted contrasts with that. Should we be justified in being surprised that something like what happened last week could happen here?

**L.B.:** Well, I think so. I mean, Portland has made great strides in moving toward a more progressive side. I think that, generationally, you do have a large majority of progressive liberals in the area who are definitely against hate and bias. But, as I mentioned, the history goes pretty deep. The Southern Poverty Law Center had a case in 1988. There was an attack on an Ethiopian graduate student, a Mr. Seraw, who was attacked by a group called White Aryan Resistance. They were a California-based hate group. But white supremacists beat him to death in front of his apartment building. Portland is also home to a group called Volksfront, which is now defunct but was a very violent neo-Nazi group. A number of adherents of the ideology moved from the South to the Pacific Northwest. As you know, the Pacific Northwest is very mono-racial. Portland is 70 percent white population. So what you find in those instances is that, oftentimes, white supremacists can hide in plain sight.

**J.P.:** Have you guys identified Christian as a member of any organized group at all?

**L.B.:** No. We don't see that he's tied to a group. But I will say that he seems to have picked up on the rhetoric that began during the presidential election with Donald Trump and his anti-immigrant, Islamophobic rhetoric. One of his posts talks about purging the country of immigrants. He says if Donald Trump is the next Hitler, then he's joining the SS to put an end to the monotheist question. Portland police are on record as saying that they thought he had some kind of a mental condition. What we're seeing at the Southern Poverty Law Center is people just kind of parroting and echoing this message of being anti-anyone out, anti-people of color, anti-immigrant, anti-anything that's not white nationalist.

**J.P.:** That kind of gets at one of my questions, which is maybe a psychology question: How does someone get such a warped lens through which to view the world?

**L.B.:** Well, what we're seeing is the shifting demographics that are taking place across the country, and that started about a decade ago, where demographers showed that whites would no longer hold the numeric majority in the country by about 2040 or 2050. We began

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