

Black History Month and the American Experience



## Coretta Scott King Funeral

A mourner holds the program for the Coretta Scott King funeral ceremony at the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga. Tuesday. Four presidents, hundreds of dignities and thousands of mourners attended. **See stories and additional photos inside.**

## Redlining to Gentrification

Homebuying roadblocks improve, but still exist

BY SARAH BLOUNT AND ISAAH BOUIE

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland's history has always been marked with correlating race and housing concerns. From the early days of the Oregon Territory to the city's evolving character of the 1990s and today, Portland has persevered, and in many cases suffered, through legal and illegal real estate practices that have served to separate and stifle home ownership for people of color.

Additional stories on Black History and the American Experience, inside

Laws excluding blacks from living in Oregon Territory and constitutional laws after statehood were in practice until 1926. Even after their eradication, racial discrimination made it difficult for African Americans to find housing.

Nearly a century ago, Portland realtors held to a code of "ethics" excluding "Negroes and Orientals" from many neighborhoods. The real estate industry began to define the meaning of a white segregated neighborhood as one that did not have a black-occupied residence within four blocks. In the 1930's the Albina neighborhood of inner north and northeast Portland, traditionally white and working class, was one of the few where blacks were permitted to live.

In 1947, the formal practice of redlining in Portland began. Redlining is the practice of denying or increasing the cost of services, such as banking or insurance, to residents of certain areas. In the United States, the practice is illegal when the criteria are based on race, religion, gender, children in a family, disability or ethnic origin.

Redlining began in the 1930s in Philadelphia under the Housing Act of 1934. The law gave the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) the ability to improve housing conditions and standards, and later led to the formation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

While it was designed to develop housing for poor residents of urban areas, that act also required cities to target specific areas and neighbor-

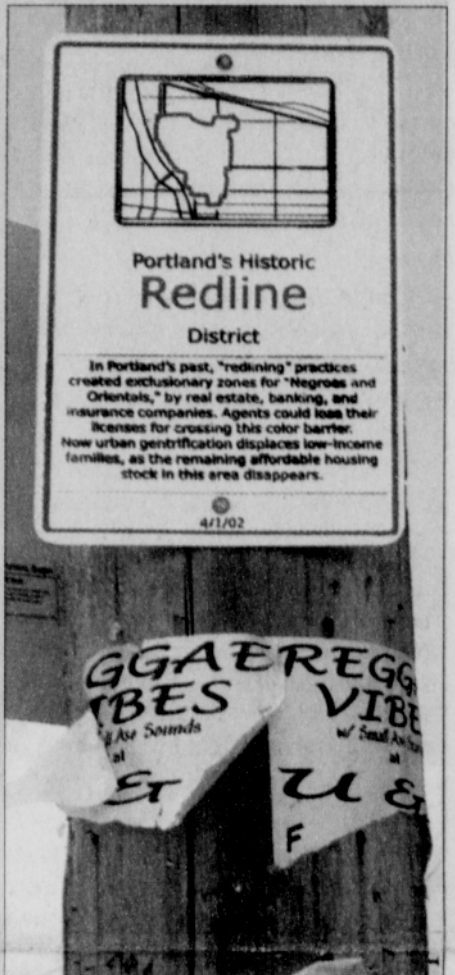


PHOTO BY ISAAH BOUIE/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER  
A sign points out historic boundaries of a redline district that once excluded people of color from buying homes in certain neighborhoods.

hoods for different racial groups, and certain areas of cities were not eligible to receive loans at all. This meant that ethnic minorities could only secure mortgages in certain areas, and it resulted in a large increase in the residential racial segregation in the United States.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Portland was affected by urban revitalization. Entire neighborhoods were leveled to allow for industrial growth, adding to an existing housing shortage. The Albina neighborhood was dealt a major blow, due to the construction of the Rose Quarter's Memorial Coliseum and Interstate 5.

The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1976 and the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 outlawed the practice of redlining. The U.S. government imposed regulations that required all banks to provide a map to anyone who asked showing the locations of home loans they had made so that individuals could ensure that redlining was not taking place.

However, racial discrimination continued to play a significant role in real estate. In 1990, The Oregon-

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## Transcending the 'Bookstore' Labels

Grass roots storefronts open on Killingsworth, Mississippi

BY SARAH BLOUNT  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Two new book shops, the Black Rose Collective and In Other Words, transcend the "bookstore" label, since both double as driving forces in the local grassroots and activism communities.

In Other Words, the latest credit to north and northeast Portland, spikes Killingsworth Street's budding literary scene with the feminist ideal.

The shop moved earlier this month from its former home in the high-rent district of Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard. Store manager and program director Sue Burns describes In Other Words as foremost by, for and about



PHOTO BY ISAAH BOUIE/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Sadie Byington browses the shelves of "In Other Words," a popular feminist bookstore that just relocated this month from Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard to the intersection of Northeast Killingsworth Street and Williams Avenue.

women. They carry books on race, gender, transgender, size, intersex (a person born with ambiguous genitalia, chromosomes or hormones) and environmental and political current events.

The shop is located at the corner of Killingsworth and North

Williams Avenue, in the center of a burgeoning set of neighborhoods quickly gaining the city's eye. Burns said staff and volunteers are eager to join the existing grassroots community that stretches from Alberta Street to North Mississippi Avenue.

Their new space is larger by nearly 2,000 extra square feet, which they used to expand their health and midwifery section and a potential computer resource center. The extra room also serves as

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## Week in The Review

### Hill Enters Governor's Race

Former Oregon Treasurer Jim Hill announced Tuesday that he will challenge Gov. Ted Kulongoski for the Democratic nomination in the May 16 primary. "Let's be honest about it. Ted has not been a good Democrat," said Hill, who made history in 1992 when he became the first African-American to win statewide office in Oregon.

### Tobacco Judgment Upheld

The Oregon Supreme Court upheld a \$79.5 million punitive damages award



Ted Kulongoski



Jim Hill

Thursday to the family of Jessie D. Williams, a Portland African American smoker who died of lung cancer in 1997, saying the amount isn't excessive given the "reprehensible" conduct of tobacco giant Phil Morris in marking cigarettes.

### Sharp Jabs on Bush Budget

Republicans joined Democrats with sharp jabs of President Bush's proposed federal budget Tuesday. Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., called cuts in education and health "scandalous" while Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, said she was "disappointed and even surprised" at the extent of the administration's proposed cuts in Medicaid and Medicare.

### Man Killed on Sidewalk

Police said they have no motive or suspect in the shooting death of a man walking on the sidewalk about 5:24 p.m. Saturday at Northeast Garfield and Failing Street. Police said the

victim, Robert Seeger, 24 had no criminal history or gang affiliations.

### Iraqis, U.S. Marines Killed

Two bombs exploded minutes apart near a central Baghdad square on Tuesday, killing at least seven people and wounding 20. Elsewhere, the U.S. military said four Marines died in separate explosions in western Iraq and masked gunmen killed a Sunni Arab cleric.

### Oregon Troops Deployed

Oregon's 41st Brigade Combat Team, comprised of 900 men and women from all over the state, were mobilized for deployment to Afghanistan Saturday. Gov. Kulongoski saluted the troops' courage and their willingness to serve.