

BLACK HISTORY MONTH and the American Experience

Redlining to Gentrification

continued ▲ from Front

nian ran a series of stories, titled "Blueprint for a Slum," uncovering redlining practices in north Portland. One article suggested a connection between certain real estate practices and the economic decline of the area.

By the following year the Portland Housing Center, joined with the City of Portland, was formed to offer services to low-income homebuyers.

While redlining practices were dismantled only a few years ago, years of disinvestment in north and northeast Portland neighborhoods led to a disproportionately low black home-ownership rate.

Removing the barriers of community investment signaled the beginning of gentrification, the practice where one population moves into an area and pushes out existing residents.

Gentrification began across the

United States in the 1970s and 1980s, but really gained momentum in Portland around 10 years ago.

Neglected inner-city neighborhoods were filled with relatively inexpensive homes, and storefronts along Mississippi and Alberta were quickly filled with shops and restaurants to accommodate the new faces.

1990 Census data shows that the population of north Portland's Boise neighborhood located in the Albina area was 68 percent black and 26 percent white. In 2000, 41 percent of the residents were black and 34 percent were white. The displacement of long-term residents created a new set of problems as low-income residents are being pushed into outer communities like Beaverton, Gresham and Clackamas.

Gentrification is still in the early stages of transforming Portland neighborhoods. As a social trend



A sign on a street pole at North Albina Avenue and Sumner Street is a history lesson in the racist past when people of color were excluded from buying homes in many Portland neighborhoods. Although outlawed in 1947, some people think redlining continues today.

PHOTO BY ISAIAH BOUIE/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

it's easy to define by the dictionary's standards, but hard to label when lives are affected.

There are a number of local organizations that play key roles in tackling race, housing and neighbor-

hood issues, including the Bureau of Housing and Community Development, Office of Neighborhood

Involvement, Community Alliance of Tenants and Community Development Network.

Forced Out by Urban Renewal

While Emanuel Hospital's capacity was expanded by a 1970s urban renewal project, clearing land for the hospital displaced many African Americans. In that decade, the black population in nearby neighborhoods fell from 5,000 to 3,400. Successive postwar construction projects — Memorial Coliseum in the 1950s, I-5 in the 1960s and Emanuel Hospital in the 1970s—pushed the heart of the city's African American community steadily northward.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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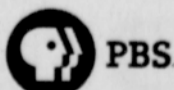
—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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