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LOCAL NEWS



An Oregon Historical Society photograph shows the displaced commercial district at North Russell Street and Williams Avenue that once served a large black population. An estimated 188 homes and businesses were condemned by Portland Urban Renewal in the early 1970s to accommodate the growth of nearby Legacy Emanuel Hospital.

Community Still Hurts

Emanuel looks back on displacement as it celebrates its centennial

BY LEE PERLMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Legacy Emanuel Hospital is celebrating its 100th anniversary next week by publicly acknowledging a painful community experience 40 years ago, the displacement of hundreds of African-American families from properties around its North Gantenbein Avenue campus in the Albina neighborhood.

During a breakfast with leaders from the black community on Friday, Wayne Clark, Legacy's vice president for community relations, said, "When I came aboard, it was evident to me that we had a problem in the Albina neighborhood that hadn't healed yet."

Legacy hired local contractor Jeana Woolley to research historic records from the early 1970s when the Portland Development Commission purchased and de-

molished 188 properties for an Emanuel Hospital expansion, including 171 households of which 74 percent were black.

Vacant properties from the expansion still exist as a complete build-out was never realized.

Woolley and others worked with 10 of these former residents of the neighborhood, whom they called the "story tellers," to create an oral history. Woolley released and commented on her report at the community breakfast.

The report shows the Emanuel and the PDC began to plan for the eastward expansion of their campus as early as 1960. However, it was not until 1967 that it began discussions with the community, and then only because the federal Model Cities Program, which included funding for community renewal projects, required "community approval" for such ac-

tions.

The Model Cities Program Board approved the project the following year, but an ad hoc Emanuel Displaced Persons Association, assisted by Legal Aid and the American Friends Service Committee, held out for an agreement that called not only for proper compensation for those displaced, but also the creation of 180 to 300 new housing units by "cooperation between the parties." These terms were "never fully satisfied," Woolley said.

Woolley said that the records show that the recollections of what occurred, as remembered by participants and passed down to their children, was not fully accurate.

"That bad things happened is absolutely true, she said. However, she added, some have mixed up the Emanuel expansion project up with the dislocation of residents from the construction of

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