

Neighborhood History Revisited

Irvington Home Tour to highlight 'red-lined' area houses

Every year since 1967, the Irvington Community Association has honored the neighborhood's early 20th Century residential architecture by hosting the Irvington Home Tour. This year, Portland's longest running home tour will focus on homes west of Northeast 15th Avenue, highlighting an area with its own history.

Many of Irvington's notable bungalows, arts and crafts, colonials and four-squares fell victim to disrepair and even abandonment in the mid-1960s. This period of urban blight, often attributed to the middle-class flight to the suburbs, was also due to banks' racist practice of "redlining."

The phrase can be attributed to

the red lines bankers and real estate companies would draw around minority neighborhoods, deeming them unworthy of investment. Loans for restoration or purchase were therefore not often granted to Irvington's minority residents.

In 1965, African American resident and Northwest Bell executive Herbert Amerson co-founded the Irvington Community Association to fight the neighborhood's deterioration. Amerson and Rev. Robert Bonthius, then minister of

Westminster Presbyterian Church, envisioned a racially integrated Irvington.

Modeling its efforts after these leaders' vision, the Irvington Community Association distributes the proceeds from the home tour to nonprofits that enhance Irvington's quality of life.

According to Brian Schaeperkoetter, one of the home tour organizers, attendants are interested in the historical architecture of the homes, "especially since



Houses west of Northeast 15th Avenue will be the focus of the Irvington Home Tour, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 19.

Irvington was designated a national historic district a few years ago," he said. This year, as tour-goers pe-

ruse the structural restorations and interior design, they will also partake in an extra bit of history.

Fluoride

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to oral health.

The oldest of his mother's five children, Wright was the first in his family to graduate from high school. He continued his education at Columbia University with a focus on dentistry, before attending Harvard. After graduating from dental school, he entered into the Navy where he eventually would become responsible for the entire Navy dental program.

It was in the Navy, that Dr. Smith and Dr. Wright would meet. Both retired from military service in 2005, and headed to Portland to participate in Kaiser Permanente's dental program.

Smith says he is shocked at the level of untreated tooth decay in Portland.

The two men said the decades of research on fluoridation and their experience in dental health has only solidified their support of adding fluoride to the water. They claim opposition to the ballot measure, which has come from groups like Clean Water Portland and the NAACP Portland chapter, misinterpret scientific studies.

To critics who oppose the proposal based on freedom of choice, they ask people to look to the end game costs for medical care, comparing it the requirements to wear a helmet on a motorcycle, "You may not want to wear a helmet and say it's by choice, but if you get injured we could all be paying for that. If you can't take care of your family God-forbid, we're supporting your family." Smith says.

Unconcerned with possible backlash from their public support of the measure, the dentists continue to talk to both supporters and opposition in the community. When asked why they were not afraid, Dr. Wright says, "Because every child deserves a smile."

They have baggage. We have flights.

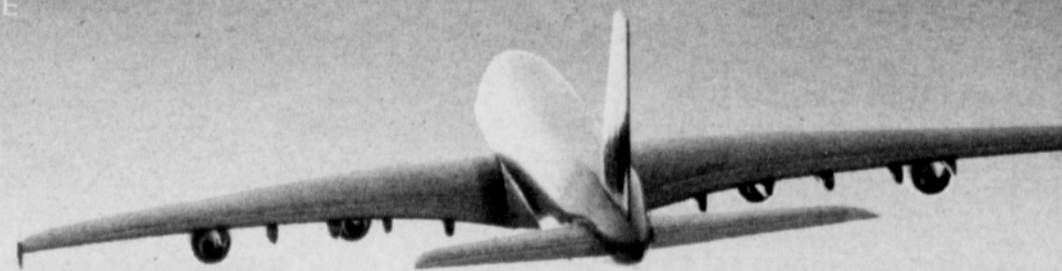
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