Portland, OR — October 19, 2021 — The Oregon Historical Society (OHS) is excited to announce the reopening of its research library following nearly two years of renovation. Thanks to support from individuals and foundations through the FORWARD! campaign, this critical renovation will allow library staff to better serve researchers who visit OHS in person as well as more efficiently connect the thousands of individuals that contact OHS each year to the priceless collections in the library's care.

OHS's research library preserves the largest collection of Oregon-related archival and published materials, documenting the people, places, and events that have shaped the history of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. These materials include books, manuscripts, oral histories and sound recordings, films and moving images, and photographs, some of which are accessible online through OHS Digital Collections and through the library's digital history projects. Changes in library best practices and new technologies make this renovation a long overdue enhancement to the research library.

"The research library is truly the heart of everything we do at the Oregon Historical Society," said OHS Executive Director Kerry Tymchuk. "Without these priceless collections, and the individuals who have preserved and stewarded them for over 120 years, OHS's exhibitions, scholarship, and educational programs would not be possible."

For over 50 years, the research library has occupied the fourth floor of the Oregon Historical Society's building located on SW Park Avenue in downtown Portland — and
throughout that time, has been left relatively untouched. Researchers will notice many new improvements on their next visit, including:

- A refreshed reading room that highlights the library’s striking mid-century architecture and also serves as a flexible space for hosting workshops and programs;
- A tech hub that allows several researchers at a time to explore OHS’s library collections in a variety of historical and contemporary media — from VHS to digital files;
- A collaborative learning lab that serves as a creative, flexible space where small groups of students, educators, researchers, community members, and archives professionals can share knowledge, explore the library’s vast resources, and make new discoveries that expand collective knowledge about Oregon’s complex history;
- A reconfigured reference desk that gives staff a better vantage point to both serve researchers and safeguard the precious materials in OHS’s care;
- A map and architecture viewing station that creates a central access point to digitized and original materials from the library’s enormous collection of documents that have charted Oregon from past to present;
- Twenty-first-century behind-the-scenes workspaces that give OHS staff the space and technology they need to preserve and make collections available for the next 120 years; and
- The new Pietro Belluschi Resource Center, which provides a focal point to highlight the library’s architectural collections and a well-equipped meeting space for instruction.

After overseeing this renovation, which included an extensive and meticulous move of the collections (which is documented on OHS’s Dear Oregon blog), Library Director Shawna Gandy is eager to welcome visitors back downtown for in person research appointments.

"After what has been a historic and unpredictable year and a half, I am grateful that we have completed this renovation and are ready to once again open our doors to researchers," said Gandy. "The reason our staff is so passionate about preserving and making our collections accessible is because of the countless students, scholars, writers, filmmakers, historians, and others who use these materials in their work. It is thanks to their interpretation of the primary documents in our care, through school projects, documentaries, books and articles, and a variety of other illuminating projects, that we continue to grow and evolve our understanding of the past."
While admission to OHS’s research library is always free, **advance reservations are currently required** to allow for physical distancing of researchers due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; researchers can contact libreference@ohs.org or leave a voicemail at 503.306.5240 to book their visit. OHS is currently unable to accommodate walk-in visitors and is limiting appointments to 25% capacity in the reading room. Press tours are available; please contact rachel.randles@ohs.org to schedule a tour.

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**About the Oregon Historical Society**

For more than a century, the Oregon Historical Society has served as the state’s collective memory, preserving a vast collection of artifacts, photographs, maps, manuscript materials, books, films, and oral histories. Our research library, museum, digital platforms, educational programming, and historical journal make Oregon’s history open and accessible to all. We exist because history is powerful, and because a history as deep and rich as Oregon’s cannot be contained within a single story or point of view.