Epilogue

by Eliza E. Canty-Jones

THANK YOU for reading this special issue of the Oregon Historical Quarterly. The work of preparing this issue for publication has been both professionally satisfying and emotionally wrenching. Since we began this project in summer 2017, the news has been filled with reports of White supremacist organizing and violence. White supremacists have repeatedly and proudly marched in Portland, Oregon. Men deploying White supremacist rhetoric have attacked Muslims praying in Christchurch, New Zealand, Jewish people gathering in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and families perceived to be Mexican shopping in El Paso, Texas.

These events are tied to both the history we have been exploring through this special issue and to one another. After the massacre in El Paso, historian of radical right movements Kathleen Belew wrote:

*The white power movement imagines race war, incited by mass violence among other strategies. The core texts of this movement . . . provide a road map to how such violence could succeed. To call them manuals is too simplistic: They provide the collective ideas and vision by which a fringe movement can attempt a violent confrontation that could lead to a race war.*

As we undertook the labor of creating this investigation of White supremacy and resistance in Oregon history, it was impossible to ignore the contemporary violence that is linked to the legacy of that history. Our sincere hope, as Carmen Thompson wrote in the introduction, is that the work we have produced offers readers a “freshness of thought” that can itself be a tool for resisting White supremacy.

While we believe this issue provides a substantial framework for understanding the history of White supremacy and resistance in Oregon, we know it is by no means comprehensive. The work of perceiving the structures of White supremacy, and the attendant expectations of Whiteness, is the work of a lifetime. For 120 years, the Oregon Historical Society has published this journal every three months. We expect that investigations of White supremacy will continue to fill its pages for years to come.


Special Issue Background & Timeline

THE WINTER 2019 ISSUE of the Oregon Historical Quarterly (OHQ) presents authoritative scholarship on the subject of White supremacy and resistance in Oregon history. OHQ staff, in consultation with two guest editors and many additional advisors, have undertaken the work of creating this issue with extreme care and commitment. Focusing on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the special issue includes new and newly considered scholarship, primary sources, and unique framing of a complex aspect of Oregon’s history. Twelve authors, supported by over twenty peer reviewers, explore themes such as settler colonialism, labor organizing, and the global color line.

This project is not neutral on the subject of White supremacy. Its creators believe that organizations, leaders, and public policies that advance and institutionalize the idea that people categorized as White are superior to other people are harmful and always have been. It therefore is important to learn both about how White supremacy has been woven into many of our policies and social norms and about the many, diverse people who have resisted that institutionalization.

The creation of this special issue reflects many of the Oregon Historical Society’s core values, as articulated in its 2019–2023 Strategic Plan, including: “address[ing] historical exclusion”; “exploring and embracing multiple ways of knowing”; and “welcom[ing] challenging conversations.” The process of creating the special issue continues OHS’s “work with diverse community partners whose advice guides many aspects of our work.”

All issues of OHQ are the result of extensive research, peer review, revision, developmental editing and copy-editing, fact checking, and meticulous layout and proofreading. Because of the collaborative process we have used for this issue, that work has been even more extensive than usual. This timeline outlines that process.

Through a brave, evidence-based, and scholarly investigation of some of the most uncomfortable parts of our state’s history, this special issue of OHQ offers significant fulfillment of OHS’ commitment to a vision of an Oregon Story that is meaningful to all Oregonians.
TIMELINE

June 2017
OHQ Editorial Advisory Board asked staff to consider creating a special issue on the history of White supremacy in Oregon. The discussion was prompted, in part, by then-recent, racially motivated attacks and murders on the MAX (light-rail) in Portland. OHQ’s advisors recognized that — as a scholarly journal that embraces complexity and context — OHQ could bring to the public valuable perspective and knowledge on this subject.

October 2017
OHQ staff hosted two dozen scholars for a discussion of how the journal might approach the project. They discussed: What question(s) should be addressed by the special issue? Who should be involved in the work as authors? What major themes should provide parameters for the work? In response to this meeting and discussions with individual advisors, the OHQ Editor recruited a “design team” to hone the project’s direction. The team included: Natalia Fernández, Curator and Archivist of the Oregon Multicultural Archives and OSU Queer Archives; James Stanley Harrison, Portland Community College; Dr. David Lewis, NDN History Research; Dr. Darrell Millner, Portland State University; Scot Nakagawa, ChangeLab; Dr. Carmen Thompson, Portland State University and Portland Community College; and Eric Ward, Western States Center.

Winter and Spring 2018
Through two in-person meetings and remote communications, the design team created a proposed table of contents. OHQ staff, design team members, and advisors began soliciting proposals, which were due in mid June 2018. Historians and design team members Dr. Darrell Millner and Dr. Carmen Thompson agreed to serve as guest editors.

Summer and Fall 2018
Guest editors and OHQ editorial staff reviewed and made decisions about proposals, editorial staff communicated responses to prospective authors, and all solicited additional submissions.

January and February 2019
Guest editors and OHQ editorial staff reviewed submitted manuscripts, and editorial staff recruited peer reviewers for all submitted manuscripts.

Spring and Summer 2019
Through multiple in-person meetings as well as email communication, the guest editors and OHQ editorial staff reviewed peer-reviewers’ reports, discussed revision requests, reviewed and discussed revised manuscripts and associated peer review reports, and made final decisions on editing and publication. OHQ staff communicated with authors about (often multiple) revision requests. Guest editors and OHQ editorial staff discussed additional material to include in the issue as well as how to make it as inviting as possible to a broad readership. Dr. Thompson began writing an introductory essay.

Summer and Fall 2019
In consultation with guest editors, OHQ editorial staff copy-edited all manuscripts, sourced images, created pages, fact-checked all articles, conducted research for additional features (timeline, pop culture interludes, and bibliography), oversaw proofreading, and incorporated final changes. Dr. Thompson completed the essay.