

Gentrification:

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Tearing down memories



And history



But building for better



What about the less fortunate?



Where do they go?

To our readers:

We spent six months studying gentrification, through interviews, research and discussion. This pamphlet is our collective opinion. We keep a close and constant reminder that others have formed their own opinions around the subject of gentrification. We hope that this booklet creates an opportunity for dialogue around this difficult and controversial subject.

- Open Meadow Technology Crew

**Gentrification, discrimination, segregation,
they all sound the same**

but do they mean the same thing?

**We all hear these words used and thrown around
but do we really understand their background?**

Segregation,

**the separation of others because of their race
even though we are all brothers living in the same place.**

Discrimination,

**recognition and understanding of the difference
between one thing and another,**

so you should have good judgments towards others.

Now the Big G,

**there are so many meanings for this word and this one
I know you heard.**

Gentrification,

**to renovate and improve a house or district
so it confirms to a middle class taste,
so in other words if you're broke you're being displaced.**

**People are entitled to their own opinions
to the renter they are losing**

but to the homeowner they are winning.

**Some think it's good there are some changes being made
and others think that the changes are for owners to get
paid. They think if they put up a couple of coffee shops
that the crime rate will stop... maybe**

These are things we all see.

The one thing I know,

THE BIG G WONT DISPLACE ME!!!

Two Scenes

By: Jessica Jenkins

Awaken and alive. Fresh young souls walking the streets giving Mississippi a new vigor and swag so early in the morning. I see middle age white women walking their babies and dog at the same time drinking coffee and talking to girl friends about last night. People in coffee shops on their lap tops, people opening up their expensive clothing stores that are in the middle of every block, people standing at the 4 bus line, waiting to board the bus that's going to take them to their next destination. I hear loud noises coming from a construction site that's building new condos at the top of the block and in the middle of Mississippi Ave.

Quiet and peaceful, birds chirping, squirrels jumping from tree to tree. All colors, shapes and sizes of different homes, parked cars, some old some new. Not a soul outside because it's early in the morning and the sun is peeping over the highways and hills to awaken the back streets of Mississippi Ave. As our Tech Crew little white bus cruises the back streets, I try to envision what used to be there, years ago before re-investment and gentrification were in the picture. Who used to live here?

*"We will rise to the occasion. We did it before
and we will do it again."*

- Charles Jordan

"I think that you can't try to replace the hurt and pain, with money to try and fix up your community. Even though it would be caring to lend some money, it still wouldn't erase the troubles from the past."

- Open Meadow student

What do we do?

Why do the people in the community allow gentrification to happen? Some say that gentrification is an unstoppable process, or it's better for the community. The other claim is that there isn't enough psychological conditioning for low income people to feel like they have a right to the entrepreneurial ideas and way of life. So what can be done to stop this? Is there one answer or a combination of answers?

The main issue is that low income communities suffer from a lack of resources. Instead of gentrification, the city should encourage revitalization. Revitalization is a community effort that requires all in the community to step up to the plate, and decide for themselves where their community is heading. Funds coming into the community can go into the schools or trade school programs. The only way to start the psychological conditioning that a untied community needs is to begin with a strong solid education; something that allows the children in the community to be proud. What could be more worth spending money on than the futures of these children? More importantly, we are spending money on our future not just as a state, but to set the bar for the nation and set the example for others to follow.

Revitalization allows us this opportunity. Instead of having a restaurant for people on the outside looking in, make sure the people in the community can have a restaurant or shop they feel comfortable in because it mirrors them and their culture.

It all starts with an education. We all have heard that knowledge is power and racism stems from ignorance but most of all, not being aware is what allows this process we call gentrification to happen. To end gentrification and find another solution it requires all of us to educate ourselves and when we say all we mean everyone. Gentrification has happened world wide so we all need to be aware of the happenings not just in our communities but all communities. Gentrification doesn't have to break our neighborhoods. We can find another solution to unite us as neighbors and eliminate the problem of displacement.

What neighborhood do you live in? Have you seen a change in people or new shops emerging that don't really fit the culture of current residents, but the shops are always filled with people? What about the price in rent or property taxes? Has it gone up significantly for you or those around you? Have people already started moving because they can't afford to live in the neighborhood anymore? If you have answered yes to any of these questions, something more may be in store.



Gentrification, by definition, includes the displacement of long time residents, physical enhancement of the neighborhood, and a change in social climate. What it means is that somebody has to leave. *Will it be you?*

Why would anybody have to leave just because there is a change in people and in the look of a neighborhood? Well, see, this is when the topic of gentrification gets complicated and, for many, becomes an emotional issue.

“Who really makes the money after the changes?”

What happens in a gentrifying neighborhood is that banks and businesses decide to invest money into a low income neighborhood, typically of minorities, in hopes of bringing in desirable residents.

Once the ball has started rolling on gentrification, it seems to be an unstoppable force. One of the most visual ways to spot gentrification is to look for new and different shops. The new shops often are boutique clothing stores, antique stores, or bistros. This is a big clue that who is already there is no longer accepted.

Displacement is when new residents arrive to a neighborhood and long time residents leave for a variety of reasons. The main reason why many original residents leave is that they can't afford to live in their neighborhood. When newcomers move in, they often fix up their home, which means the value goes up for the people next door. This means a raise in either rent or property taxes. As long as all newcomers take the same road in fixing up their homes, the price for everyone in the community goes up. That is the first and typically the major reason for long time residents to leave. Some decide to sell in order to make a profit, others sell because their community is gone, and renters leave because they can no longer afford to stay in the neighborhood.

Disinvestment: disinvestment is when banks and businesses refuse to bring in or put money into a low income neighborhood.

Displacement: The removing of people out of a specific place or neighborhood.

Reinvestment: reinvestment is when banks and businesses decide to invest their money in hopes of trying to change the atmosphere of a community or attract desirable customers or residence.

Story of my life *A fictional account* *By: Jessica Jenkins*

My name is Danita Johnson and I'm 59 years old and I'm a mother of three. I lived in Albina neighborhood during an urban renewal project back in 1970-1973 when the city came in and started building Emmanuel hospital. In order for them to do that project, they had to move all the residents out of the area. They offered to buy peoples homes for less than what they were worth and some they just told them they had to leave, like Ms Penkins across the street, because they didn't own their home. Once I found out about this new project it was like I had another burden to carry around because I didn't know where me and my children were going to live.

Life used to be good once upon a time, before me and other families were forced to leave. This was only the beginning of my troubles.

Our landlord kept complaining about how bad our neighborhood and building were and that he was going to raise the rent prices around here because he wasn't making enough of a profit to keep up with his property. But that wasn't the problem, he just wanted to tear down the buildings so that he could build condos and remodel some of the houses so that they could make the neighborhood more appealing. He wanted to reel in young, white couples and charge them sky high rent because he knew that he could make more money off of them.

I've always wondered why people target low income areas and decide to take our homes and kick us out our community because they want to build a new project that they think will benefit the community to attract newcomers. They are destroying a strong community! Just because our neighborhoods aren't as appealing as people would like them to be and just because the homes aren't worth much that doesn't give them the right to take peoples homes like that. We have worked hard all our lives to get a house to support our families. I think instead of tearing down homes and moving lower-income residents to the other side of town, The city should just revitalize or re-invest in the homes. The government should just give families a loan to fix our homes up. The property values will increase and make the neighborhoods look more descent, but we won't have to move.



1844

Exclusion laws are created to exclude Blacks from living in Oregon. It is written into the state constitution and known as Article 1, Section 35.

1859

Oregon becomes a state.

1926

The Exclusion Laws, Article 1, Section 35 are taken out of the Constitution

1948

Vanport community is hit by a flood. 18,000 people are displaced. They move to the Albina neighborhood, where redlining is practiced among realtors.

1960

Memorial Coliseum is completed after 476 homes are lost.

1961-1966

Interstate 5 is built through North Portland. 125 homes are lost.

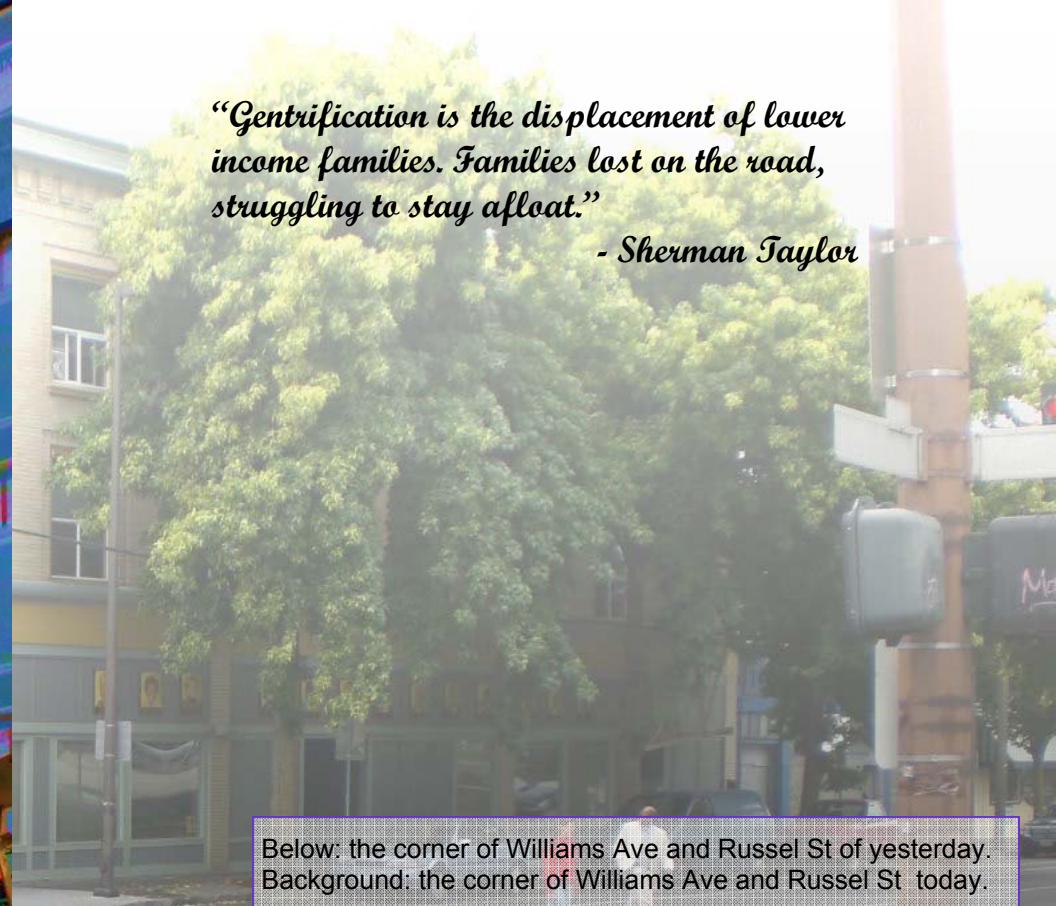
1971-1973

Emmanuel Hospital goes in on N. Williams Ave. and Russell St.

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“Gentrification is the displacement of lower income families. Families lost on the road, struggling to stay afloat.”

- Sherman Taylor



Below: the corner of Williams Ave and Russel St of yesterday.
Background: the corner of Williams Ave and Russel St today.



In Portland's history, we have watched urban renewal projects and discriminatory real estate practices, such as redlining, shape new communities.

In the 1930's, Janzen beach was the Vanport community. It used to house World War II's ship workers, but when Vanport was flooded, due to the sand levees breaking, 18,000 people had to move. The majority of residents moved to the Albina neighborhood, which was centered on Williams Ave and Russell St. in North Portland.

After the old time residents of Vanport settled into the Albina neighborhood, money coming into the community slowed to a trickle. Portland's banks and realtors decided to mark a map in red places in Portland where they would refuse to loan money. One of those areas was the Albina neighborhood. So, after money stopped coming into the community, the City of Portland soon decided to do a series of urban renewal projects in the neighborhood.

Redlining: Banks and realtors mark in red on a map neighborhoods that they will refuse to loan money to and only sell those homes to minorities or people of low income. Redlining was practiced nationally since the 1950's, and lasted into 1990's.

Urban Renewal projects left a definite impression of what displacement does to a community. The City of Portland decided to put in Memorial Coliseum in 1960. Then they built Interstate 5 between 1961 and 1966, and Emmanuel Hospital in the early 1970's. These projects displaced thousands of people and hundreds of families. It ripped the community right out of the residents' hands. I-5 was needed, but it didn't prevent people from being displaced. Today, many of those residents' have moved out of North Portland and into places like Southeast and Gresham area, where housing was more affordable because everything "back home" became astronomical.

Even though these examples of displacement are over thirty years old, this doesn't mean displacement is over. Current examples of gentrification in North Portland are Mississippi Street, the Kenton area, and St. Johns. These neighborhoods have opened high end shops and restaurants, not for those in the community, but for outsiders looking in. Mississippi Street looks and feels like a whole new community. Too bad that it cost others their homes and neighborhoods, some even their way of life. If anything, displacement is even more present today than it has ever been.

Portland's Historic Redline District

Portland's past, "redlining" practices for Negroes and