

Who's in Your Neighborhood?

Meeting the Diverse Research Needs of Your Community

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Friends. Associates. Neighbors. The F.A.N. principle of genealogy is a term coined by Elizabeth Shown Mills. Genealogists apply this principle when researching their own ancestors, broadening the search to include entire communities. But what about your genealogical society F.A.N club? Is your organization inclusive? Does your membership reflect the diversity of your community? What immigrant populations have historically lived in your county? Who currently lives there? Does your genealogical society reach out to the surrounding community? What records are specific to certain ethnic groups?

Historically, genealogy in the U.S. has been focused on European ancestry. The New England Historic Genealogical Society, founded in 1845, was the first such society in the U.S. Members researched their New England and European roots. Since that time, our country has become more diverse. In order for genealogical societies to thrive, we need to examine and embrace the different cultures within our communities. Historical events, laws, and immigration patterns impact who once lived, and who currently, lives in your community.

Oregon has a long and rich history of diversity. While the first inhabitants were Native Americans, Great Britain and Spain both laid claim to the area in the 1500s. By 1848, Oregon became a U.S. territory, and in 1859, at state.

The Oregon trail provided a path for travelers from the Midwest and east for decades before and after statehood. The population of the area increased with both native-born American citizens and immigrants. Many Chinese began to immigrate to the west following the discovery of gold in California and Oregon. They provided a cheap labor pool and later were invaluable in the construction of the transcontinental railway.

The city of Portland was incorporated on 8 February 1851, Multnomah County was created 22 December 1854, and Oregon became a state on 14 February 1859. The demographics of the city, county, and changed greatly over the next 161 years.¹

Immigrants came to Oregon from many different countries. By 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was put in place to limit the numbers of Chinese immigrants. As a result, large numbers of Japanese began to arrive on the west coast. The Angel Island Quarantine Station opened in 1891, followed by the opening of the Angel Island Immigration Station in 1910. The Columbia River Quarantine Station opened in 1899. Laws were put into place prohibiting land ownership among Asians. Large numbers of Filipinos, Portuguese, Irish, and Italians immigrated in the early 20th century. For a time, the Philippines were a U.S. territory and Filipinos were not subject to the immigration restrictions of other Asians, until a quota system was put in place in 1934.²

¹ Archives and Records Management, Office of the City Auditor, Portland Oregon,
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/archives/article/284506>

² Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, 43 Stat. 153.



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Mexican immigration to California increased from about 1910-1930, with these immigrants working primarily in the agricultural industry. By 1940, all non-citizen adults living in the U.S. were required to complete Alien Registration forms.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked on 7 December 1941, Japanese and Japanese Americans living in the west were placed first in Assembly Centers and then in "Internment Camps." Those living in Multnomah County were taken to the Portland Assembly Center, located at the county fairgrounds. Most were then incarcerated in Minidoka, Idaho, though some went to Tule Lake in California or Heart Mountain in Wyoming.³

During WWII, in 1943, the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed. Chinese were able to become naturalized U.S. citizens. Following the WWII, the War Brides Act of 1945 allowed military personnel to bring wives from foreign countries, outside of the set quotas. Although many states still prohibited these marriages, thousands of mixed race children were born. From 1955-1965, approximately 40,000 mixed race "war babies" were born to Korean mothers. The numbers of mixed race babies born during the Vietnam war is not clear. While these children typically remained in the country of their birth, there has been a rise in the numbers of these children seeking their birth fathers, especially through DNA testing. Additionally, adoption of children a different race from the parents, both international and domestic, been possible for decades. However, the numbers of international adoptions have been decreasing in recent years.

It wasn't until the year 2000 that the U.S. Census Bureau allowed people to self-select more than one race. According to the Census Bureau, the numbers of biracial white-black adults doubled between the years 2000 and 2010, and biracial white-Asian adults increased by 87%.⁴

According to the Pew research center, it was estimated in 2015 that 10% of all marriages in the U.S. were interracial, that 29% of Asian newlyweds were likely to be intermarried, that 27% of Hispanic newlyweds were likely to be married to someone of a different race or ethnicity, and that 14% of U.S. infants were multi-racial or multi ethnic. Those percentages are higher in California.⁵

Same-sex marriage has been legal in all 50 states since 2015, further broadening the scope of families living in our communities.⁶

³ "Densho Encyclopedia,"

[http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Portland_\(detention_facility\)#:~:text=The%20Portland%20Assembly%20Center%20was,homes%20by%20the%20U.S.%20Government.&text=The%20Portland%20Assembly%20Center%20operated,1942%20to%20September%2010%2C%201942.](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Portland_(detention_facility)#:~:text=The%20Portland%20Assembly%20Center%20was,homes%20by%20the%20U.S.%20Government.&text=The%20Portland%20Assembly%20Center%20operated,1942%20to%20September%2010%2C%201942.)

⁴ "Race and Multi-Racial Americans in the U.S. Census," Pew Research Center, Social and Demographic Trends, 2015.

⁵ "Trends and Patterns in Intermarriage," Pew Research Center, Social and Demographic Trends, 2017.

⁶ Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. 2015.



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Today, the American Immigration Council estimates that “1 in 10 Oregon residents is an immigrant” and that “1 in 9 native born residents has at least one immigrant parent.” This same organization also estimates that the primary countries of foreign birth among the immigrants are Mexico, Vietnam, China, India, and the Philippines.⁷

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 12.6% of the population has a disability and the vast majority are over 65.⁸

As the membership of our genealogical societies ages, we need to consider ways to bring in new members, especially members outside of the traditional demographic of retired, educated Caucasians. We need to broaden our scope and look at people of differing ages, abilities, ethnicities, religions

Questions to consider:

- What does all of this mean in terms of our genealogical societies?
- Are our genealogical societies reflective of our populations?
- Who once lived in our neighborhoods?
- Who currently lives in our neighborhoods?
- Are these questions important to you? To your society?

How to take some steps forward:

- Include the topics of diversity and inclusion on the agenda at board, committee, and member meetings.
- Include the topics of diversity and inclusion in your strategic planning sessions.
- Adapt your mission statement to include diversity and inclusion.
- Partner with other organizations to host diverse educational events.
- Attend community events such as the pride festival, aloha festival
- Develop an outreach committee.
- Plan field trips to cultural locations.
- Reach out to speakers of color to present on any topics, not just their ethnicity.
- Be sure your website reflects diversity and inclusion.
- Be sure that your programs and volunteer opportunities are accessible to those with physical differences, hidden disabilities, or other challenges.

⁷ American Immigration Council, “Immigrants in Oregon,”
<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-oregon>

⁸ “United States Census Bureau, Disability Characteristics,”
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S1810%3A%20DISABILITY%20CHARACTERISTICS&hidePreview=true&tid=A1CSST1Y2018.S1810>



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Online Resources

Census Designations from Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/interactives/multiracial-timeline/>

Chinese American Contributions to the Transcontinental Railway

<http://cpr.org/Museum/Chinese.html>

Chinese immigrants and Mexican Americans in the age of westward expansion

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-history/period-6/apush-american-west/a/apush-chinese-immigrants-and-mexican-americans-westward-expansion>

Chinese Immigration and Chinese in the United States

<https://www.archives.gov/research/chinese-americans/guide.html>

Chinese Immigration to the United States, 1884-1944, A Digital Archive

<http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/chinese-immigration-to-the-united-states-1884-1944/index.html>

The City of Portland Oregon, Archives and Records Management

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/archives/article/550898>

Densho

Densho.org

Early American Immigration Policies

<https://www.uscis.gov/history-and-genealogy/our-history/agency-history/early-american-immigration-policies>

Ethnic Diversity and the Politicization of Genealogy in American

<https://genealogyadventures.wordpress.com/2016/11/05/ethnic-diversity-and-the-politicization-of-genealogy-in-america/>

Filipino Genealogy Project

<http://fil-gen-pro.blogspot.com/>

Filipino Immigration to America

<http://www.emmigration.info/filipino-immigration-to-america.htm>

Gay Parents Claim Their Place in the Modern Family Tree

<https://qparent.com/lgbt-parents-family-tree/>

Genealogy Diversity and Inclusion Discussion (private facebook group)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogydiversityinclusion>

Genealogy Philippines

<https://www.genealogy.ph/>



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Hard Knock Lives of Koreans Born to U.S. Soldiers

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20160427000713>

The Hidden - LGBT Family Members and Genealogy

<http://destinationaustinfamily.blogspot.com/2007/10/hidden-lgbt-family-members-and.html>

History of Laws Concerning Immigration and Naturalization in the United States

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_laws_concerning_immigration_and_naturalization_in_the_United_States

The Importance of LGBT Pride Month

<https://roguegenealogist.com/2017/06/lgbt-pride-month/>

Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2017/05/18/intermarriage-in-the-u-s-50-years-after-loving-v-virginia/>

Interracial Marriages Face Pushback 50 Years After Loving

http://www.npr.org/2017/06/12/532061667/interracial-marriages-face-pushback-50-years-after-loving?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=20170612

Japanese American Museum of Oregon

<http://www.oregonnikkei.org/>

Key Facts About Race and Marriage, 50 Years after Loving v. Virginia

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/12/key-facts-about-race-and-marriage-50-years-after-loving-v-virginia/>

Laws, Regulations, and Guides Immigration and Nationality Act

<https://www.uscis.gov/laws/laws-regulations-and-guides-immigration-and-nationality-act>

LGBT Genealogy

<http://www.walkingyourtree.com/lgbt-genealogy/#more-92>

Oregon Black Pioneers

<https://oregonblackpioneers.org/>

Oregon State University Multicultural Archives: African American People and Culture

<https://guides.library.oregonstate.edu/oma/african-american>

Philippine Genealogical Society Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/philippinegenealogicalsociety/>

Puerto Rican Genealogy

<https://puertoricangenealogy.weebly.com/>

The Racist City of Portland, the Whitest City in America

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/07/racist-history-portland/492035/>

Resources for Filipino Genealogy

<http://www.henkvan Kampen.com/genealogy/pinoy-roots/resources-for-genealogy-in-the-philippines/>



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Rise of Industrial America, Chinese Immigration to the United States, 1851-1900

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/riseind/chinims/>

Timeline of Oregon's Racial and Education History

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/civic/article/516558>

U.S. Census Bureau

https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkmk

What Census Call Us, A Historical Timeline

http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2015/06/ST_15.06.11_MultiRacial-Timeline.pdf

Yearbook of Immigration Statistics

<https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook>

Bibliography

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National Archives and Records Administration. *A Guide to the Records of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders at the National Archives & Records Administration Pacific Region-San Francisco*. Reference Information Paper 111, 2004.

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Ryskamp, George and Peggy. *Finding Your Mexican Ancestors: A Beginners Guide*. *Utah: The Generations Network, Inc.*, 2007.

