



OREGON
HISTORY MUSEUM
AT THE OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Rachael Snow, 503.306.5237 or Rachael.Snow@ohs.org

Perseverance: Black Pioneers in Early Oregon Exhibit Opens January 14, 2011

At the Oregon History Museum January 14 – April 3, 2011

Portland, OR – January 5, 2011— OHS announces the opening of a unique exhibit, developed in collaboration with the Oregon Historical Society and the Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers, which highlights the environment and stories of early Oregon black pioneers who lived in the state prior to World War II. Photographs, maps and newspaper accounts are used to detail their daily lives.

According to Gwen Carr, co-curator of the exhibit, “Many will be surprised to learn that Oregon's black history began much earlier than the Portland shipyards. It began instead over 150 years earlier and reached into every corner of the state. This exhibit focuses on those Black people across the state who contributed to Oregon's earliest history.”

Throughout Oregon's early history, the presence of African Americans in all parts of the state was recorded in documents and photographs. They came to Oregon as slaves and free in spite of Black Exclusion Laws and worked and lived alongside other pioneers as farmers, blacksmiths, lumbermen, miners, bootblacks, cowboys and mid-wives. Their children went to school, they volunteered for local fire departments and they donated money and land to their communities. Though small in number, through determination and perseverance their presence added to the fabric of the community in the new territory and state called Oregon.

The identities of many of the individuals featured in the exhibit are unknown. By sharing these photographs with the public, OHS and the Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers hope people will be able to put names and stories to these anonymous pioneers from Oregon's past.

Perseverance: Black Pioneers in Early Oregon will be running at the Oregon History Museum at 1200 SW Park Avenue from January 14 – April 3, 2011. Visit OHS on Saturday, January 15 from 11 AM – 3 PM for Family Day which will feature activities highlighting the exhibit, where children are admitted free with one paid adult. Children will be able to test their knowledge of Black Pioneer history with puzzles and activities, as well as visit with costumed representatives from the Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM to 5 PM, and Sunday, Noon to 5 PM. Visit WWW.OHS.ORG for more information.

About the Oregon Historical Society

The Society has served since 1898 as Oregon's primary research collection and museum about Oregon history. OHS has an extensive collection of historical pieces, including over 85,000 artifacts and 3 million photographs and films. It safeguards and presents Oregon's history through a museum, research library, traveling exhibits, school programs and website content.