



**The Willamette Heritage Center at *The Mill* Presents An Evening with Gwen Carr:
"Perseverance: A History of African Americans in Oregon's Marion and Polk Counties"**

For Immediate Release

WHAT: An Evening with Gwen Carr: "Perseverance: A History of African Americans in Oregon's Marion and Polk Counties"
WHEN: Thursday, October 6, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
WHERE: Willamette Heritage Center at The Mill, 1313 Mill Street SE, Salem, OR, 97301
COST: FREE

Many Oregonians believe that black people first came to Oregon during World War II, when the Portland shipyards were hiring workers from across the nation. "Black people have played a part in Oregon's history since the late 1700's," states Gwen Carr. "They were among the Mid-Valley's early pioneers."

The book "Perseverance: A History of African Americans in Oregon's Marion and Polk Counties" by Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers, covers personal profiles and African Americans' place in local history. The book is entitled "Perseverance" because in spite of laws that for decades barred black people from the state, at peril of lashing, some determined black people made their living and raised families here.

"When you know your history, it gives you a sense of ownership of who you are," said Carr. "My grandchildren and others need to learn that Oregon was built by people of many races."

Sheridan McCarthy of Meadowlark Publishing in Corvallis assisted the Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers, serving as coach, mentor, consultant and eventually as the writer who coaxed varied submissions into a single voice. Despite the extent of her help, McCarthy solely credits Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers for authoring the book.

The Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers has other projects in the works. They will be collaborating on a show at Bend's High Desert Museum in February 2012; and contributing an article to the Fall 2012 Oregon Historical Quarterly. Plans are ongoing for an Oregon African-American Museum in Salem.

For more information, call WHC at 503-585-7012.

The Willamette Heritage Center at The Mill, a unification between Mission Mill Museum and Marion County Historical Society, is a stroll through the history of the Willamette Valley. Its 5-acre campus is home to the 1841 Jason Lee house (arguably the oldest wooden framed house in Oregon), 1841 Willamette Mission Parsonage, 1847 John Boon home, 1858 Pleasant Grove Church and the 1896 Thomas Kay Woolen Mill, named an *American Treasure* by the National Park Service. Since its founding in 1964 as a private non-profit association, Mission Mill Museum has established a reputation as a leader in the preservation and interpretation of Oregon's history. The museum's histories are shared with visitors through daily and group tours, speakers, living history, children's programs, hands-on activities, special events, the museum store and rental facilities. For more information call 503-585-7012 or visit <http://www.missionmill.org>.

The Willamette Heritage Center is a private not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It is not managed by city, county, state or federal agencies.

Submitted by: Cheryl Clark, Aura Marketing, cclark@auramarketing.com ###