THANK YOU FOR VISITING TODAY.

In 2010, the Mission Mill Museum (est. 1964) and the Marion County Historical Society (est. 1950) merged. The new organization’s mission is to preserve and interpret the history of the Mid-Willamette Valley, especially Marion County and the greater Salem area.

The Willamette Heritage Center is a private, non-profit organization. It is not managed by city, county, state or federal agencies. Ask us about the benefits of membership!

Library and Archives:
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Tuesday – Friday
4th Floor Mill Building

Textile Learning Center:
10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Tuesday – Saturday
Mission House:

Museum Hours:
Tuesday – Saturday
10:00 am – 4:00 pm

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Willamette Heritage Center
1313 Mill St SE
Salem, OR 97301
503-585-7012
www.willametteheritage.org

In this heritage invitational exhibit we have asked museums and community organizations throughout the Mid-Willamette Valley to share an artifact and its story of what it has meant to be healthy in the past and how that has changed over time. In this heritage invitational exhibit we have asked museums and community organizations throughout the Mid-Willamette Valley to share an artifact and its story of what it has meant to be healthy in the past and how that has changed over time. In this heritage invitational exhibit we have asked museums and community organizations throughout the Mid-Willamette Valley to share an artifact and its story of what it has meant to be healthy in the past and how that has changed over time. In this heritage invitational exhibit we have asked museums and community organizations throughout the Mid-Willamette Valley to share an artifact and its story of what it has meant to be healthy in the past and how that has changed over time.

About Us:

To Your Health

This Floor Mill Building

CHANGING EXHIBIT

June 2 – October 7, 2023

Exhibit open now!

To Your Health

This Floor Mill Building

EXHIBIT MAP

Visitor’s Map

1 Warehouse Building
2 PGE Waterpower Exhibit
3 Event Rental Space Only
4 Mill Building
5 Scouring Room
6 Picker House
7 Pump House
8 Mill Complex
9 Entrance to Shops & Museum
10 Willamette Heritage Center
11 Entrance to Shops & Museum
12 Willamette Heritage Center
13 Entrance to Shops & Museum
14 Willamette Heritage Center

< 12th Street

Mill Street

Restrooms
Cafe
Picnic Tables
Shopping
ADA Accessible

PLEASE REMEMBER:
• No food or drinks are allowed in our historic structures.
• Please watch your step! Some areas have narrow, uneven and sometimes wet passageways.
• Please feel free to take photographs without a flash.

DO NOT LEAN INTO EXHIBIT SPACES, PROXIMITY ALARMS WILL SOUND

TURN PAGE TO SEE TOUR ROUTES

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Houses Tour

Missionary Enterprise (1834–1844)

In 1834, Jason Lee led a group of Methodists to form a mission to the Native American people of Oregon on the banks of the Willamette River, 13 miles north of here. Persistent flooding led to relocating the mission south to a prairie called Chemeketa. Here the missionaries constructed a grist and sawmill, two residences and a school, which would become the nucleus for the city of Salem.

1 / The Lee House (1841)

Four missionary families originally occupied this house living independently in four apartments, including the Lee, Judsons, Parrishes and Raysmonds. The house served as headquarters for Methodist Mission operations in the Oregon Country, which included satellite stations as far north as Tacoma and east as The Dalles. It also hosted meetings of the early provisional government and served as an early post office. When the mission closed it became the private residence of Judge Rubin P. Boise. In danger of being torn down, the Lee House was stripped of its Victorian additions and moved to a temporary site awaiting a permanent home. It was moved here in 1965. In this house you can learn about:

- History of the Methodist Mission to Oregon
- Missionaries and their families
- Early Education in the Oregon Country

Wheel Chair Accessible – First Floor Only

Mill Tour

A / MENTER MILL SHOP

Named for the P&H faithful and popular millwright Wayne Menter (millwright for 60 years from 1924–1984), the machine shop is where its vital work took place. The moving machinery and tools on display are original to the P&H and were used for everything from making machine parts to repairing structures.

B / TURBINE AND CROWN GEARS

This surface operated the entire mill machinery and today feeds a generator producing electricity. As you walk down the stairs and through the shelter you pass, the turbines and rotors transfer motion from the vertical turbine to the horizontal shaft that powered all of the machinery in the mill.

C / PICKER HOUSE

One of the Mill's dirtiest jobs took place this dark, damp, cold wooden structure. Here virgin wool was picked clean of burrs, grass, feces and pests. Other machines picked wool products to inspection. Imperfections are marked, then the cloth is cut and dropped off to the burlers and menders in the finishing room below.

D / DYE HOUSE

During the Mill's operation (1889–1962), dying was done in a series of interconnected sheds and buildings. Today's Dye House is a reconstruction using an original wall on the south side. This building is currently rented for special events and classes ONLY.

E / MILL BUILDING

This brick building was designed by Salem Architect Walter Diederich Pugh in 1896 after a fire destroyed the original 1889 wooden structure. In 2006, major rehabilitation of the building's exterior was completed with its designation by the National Park Service as an American Treasure. Enjoy the interpretation in the 1st floor lobby and then proceed to the center of the mill building.

F / SCOURING ROOM

The Scouring room was built above the water stations as far north as Carson and housing machines that cleaned dirty wool. The building was moved from outside Aumsville to the museum's grounds in 1984. Currently, the museum rents out the church for weddings and other special events. Inquire at the front desk for more information.

Note: Not Wheel Chair Accessible. View through left side door.

Mill Building 1st & 2nd Floor


Pleasant Grove Presbyterian Church (1858)

This little church is also known as the "Condit Church" for one of its founding families on whose land the church was constructed. Rev. Philip Condit and his family came to Oregon from Ohio in 1854. The church was built as a true community effort with community members pledging $1378.25 in cash, glass, nails, lumber, paint, bibles, stingles, lead and labor to complete the structure, which was finished by April 1858. Sadly, Rev. Condit didn't live to see its completion. The church represents a meetinghouse-style associated with early country churches. It is one of the oldest surviving Presbyterian churches in the Pacific Northwest.

7 / FULLING

The fulling rolls use hot water, soap and agitation to shrink fabric. This controlled shrinking "furls" wool fibers, drawing them up, and creating a denser, thicker fabric.

8 / SOAP MIXING

A mixture of soap, hot water and sometimes salt is mixed and piped into this tank. The newly created soap is then scopped into buckets from the vat into the fulling mills.

9 / WASHING

After fulling, fabric is washed and rinsed with soap, oil and dirt.

10 / EXTRACTING

Excess water is squeezed out of fabric by the spinning action of the extractor before the material goes to the dryers.

11 / DRYING

In early years, the fabric was stretched to dry on numerous long rods in the Commissioner room on the 4th floor. In later years, a hot air machine dryer was used in a shed attached to the 1st floor of the mill.

12 / RAISING OR NAPPING

A nap or pile on the surface of the fabric is raised using nappers with wire-covered rollers. When these nappers replaced the old tassel gys, many woolen mill hands predicted the meat teeth would destroy the wool, but that did not happen.

13 / SHEARING

The pile or nap on fabric is trimmed by the lint remover-like shears. The amount of nap removed depends on the type of finish desired.

14 / PRESSING AND FINAL INSPECTION

The steam press smooths the fabric and gives it a finished look. The inspector looks for any imperfections or damage: damaged goods are often discounted to the purchaser, and imperfections could affect the weaver's pay.

15 / THE FINAL STEPS

Blouses are bound and yardage is folded, rolled, weighed and labeled. Orders are readied for shipping.

3 / The Parsonage (1841)

The Parsonage was the 2nd frame structure built with lumber from the Mission's sawmill. Originally designed as a duplex, it housed those missionaries who oversaw the Indian Manual Training School. Among its residents were Rev. Gustavus Hines, Hamilton Campbell and their families. This was the only building retained by the Methodist Church when the mission closed and it served as the parsonage for their minister and as a base for circuit riders, or itinerant preachers in the valley. The Parsonage was originally located where the mill's water tower now stands. Today the exhibits take a look back at early valley residents with galleries focusing on:

- The Kalapuya
- Women and Children
- Families
- Historic Preservation

Note: Not Wheel Chair Accessible.

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