



TRAVELING EXHIBITS

Preserving and Presenting the
History of Black Oregonians

As Oregon's only historical society dedicated to preserving and presenting the experiences of Black Oregonians statewide, we're proud to offer exhibits that can be rented and displayed throughout the state.

**Rent one of our unique exhibits to
showcase in your community.**

Racing to Change: Oregon's Civil Rights Years

Racing to Change details the Civil Rights Movement in Oregon during the 1960s and 1970s, a time of cultural and social upheaval, conflict, and change.

The exhibit explores how racist attitudes, policies of exclusion, and the destruction of Black-owned neighborhoods shaped Oregon, and how the Black community worked to overcome these obstacles.

- Dimensions:
7' tall x 2.5' wide
- Features 8 free standing vinyl banners on metal bases
- Banners retract to fit into a carrying cases that weigh approx. 8 lbs



A CHANGE IS GONNA COME

In the 1950s, Oregon's Black population was scattered around the state. With the passage of a public accommodations law and a fair housing law, job and housing opportunities opened for Black Oregonians. Despite these legal victories, however, repression, discrimination, and racist attitudes were still built into the culture. In many all-white Portland neighborhoods, segregation was maintained by discriminatory laws, intimidation, and violence.

The Black Pioneers

The Black Pioneers shares the stories of the earliest Black settlers in Oregon, both free and enslaved.

This exhibit reveals the stories of early Black pioneers who challenged Oregon's discriminatory laws and laid the foundation for Oregon's future Black communities.

DEFYING DISCRIMINATION

LOUIS SOUTHWORTH
CA. 1830–1917

Louis was born in 1830 in Tennessee. His enslaver, James Southworth, brought Louis and his mother Pauline to Oregon in 1853. James sent Louis to Jacksonville to pan for gold. During this time, Louis volunteered to fight in the Rogue River Indian wars, making him Oregon's only known enslaved soldier. Louis played fiddle, and was able to save \$1,000 from his performances to buy his freedom in 1858. Southworth traveled extensively as a freeman. He owned a blacksmith shop and stable in Polk County, worked as a seasonal farmer in Benton County, and ran a Lincoln County ferry for thirty years. Louis' white neighbors affectionately referred to him as "Uncle Lou", and he was well known across western Oregon. Louis had been denied a military pension, but over 200 people contributed funds towards his expenses.

RACHEL BROOKS
1829–1910

Rachel was born into slavery in 1829 on the Belden plantation in Tennessee. In 1842, Daniel Delaney, Sr. bought Rachel from the Belden's for \$1000. Her job would be to provide care for the ailing Mrs. Delaney on their journey to the Oregon Territory. They arrived in Oregon in 1843 and settled near Turner, in Marion County. Rachel was kept enslaved in Oregon until the early 1860s; during that time she gave birth to two children, likely fathered by a member of the Delaney family. In 1863, Rachel married a freedman named Nathan Brooks. After Daniel Delaney died in 1865, Rachel and Nathan filed a \$10,000 lawsuit against the Delaney estate for back wages for Rachel and her children's years of uncompensated service. The court awarded just \$1000 on the claim.

Despite attempts to exclude them, Black Americans began arriving in Oregon in the 1840s. Their numbers were small; it is estimated that only 3% of Oregon Trail emigrants were Black. Oregon's 1850 census counted just 55 Black men and women.

Nearly all of the Black pioneers who traveled the Oregon Trail did so in the service of white families. Black pioneers were compensated for their labor with a place to live on a white person's land claim. Enslaved Black emigrants were granted their emancipation, but sometimes only years later.

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Letitia Carson: An Enduring Spirit of Hope and Freedom

Letitia Carson was a Black Oregon homesteader, farmer and matriarch living in the time of Oregon's exclusion laws.

This exhibit tells the story of Letitia's transition from enslaved woman to landowner, and how her persistence and grit carved pathways for Black and Indigenous Oregonians today.

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A LASTING LEGACY

“Aunt Tish,” as Letitia came to be known, remained a beloved community member until her death in 1888. She was fortunate to see many of her descendants prosper throughout the Pacific Northwest.



Letitia's two children, Martha Jane and Jack, went on to lead fruitful lives. Martha Jane married Narcisse Lavadour, a French Canadian and Walla Walla tribal member. Their family lived on the Umatilla Reservation in eastern Oregon.

Jack stayed in Douglas County, making Myrtle Creek—and later, Canyonville—his home. He never married, but was a farmer, horse trainer, and laborer in the timber industry.



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PRICING PER EXHIBIT

- 1 month: \$1000 per month
- 2 months: \$800 per month
- 3 months: \$700 per month
- 4 months or more: \$500 per month

HOW TO BOOK

To book an exhibit, submit your information using the [Hire Our Team form](#) on our website, or email us at hello@oregonblackpioneers.org. Our team will reach out to set it up!