

Documenting Oregon's Black History

State awards grant to designate historical properties

Properties in Oregon related to Black history will be documented under a new program to recognize and preserve historic places throughout the state related to the African American experience.

The effort was given a recent push thanks to \$30,000 in grant funding to the State Historical Preservation Office from the Underrepresented Communities program administered by the National Park Service.

The project will research historic places throughout the state related to African American history and create materials that can be used as a resource for people preserving and sharing this important history and making it is easier to nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

The state preservation office applied for the grant in recognition that African American history is present throughout the state, but it is not well documented or recognized, officials said.

"Encouraging the representation of Oregon's diverse history within the National Register program is a major goal of the Oregon Preservation Plan," notes Christine Curran, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. "This grant will move us forward in that effort and we are excited to see the results."



PHOTO FROM PORTLAND BUREAU OF PLANNING SUSTAINABILITY

The historic Mt. Olivet Baptist Church is one of the oldest properties in Portland related to the African American experience. The church's historic black congregation moved several decades ago to a new location in north Portland, but still owns the old church site just one block from Northeast Broadway in the Albina community.

A similar project by the city of Portland and other groups garnered new information and several listings of historical black properties within the city. The new project will expand the reach outside of Portland, officials said.

The effort also is a continuation of work over the last several years in collaboration with Oregon Black Pioneers to document these places. The state historical preservation office plans to hire a consultant to complete the project which is also funded in part

by the Oregon Cultural Trust.

People who have information to share about African American history in their communities, are encouraged to submit it though an online tool by visiting MakeOregonHistory.org.

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