

Roseburg Library Hosts Letitia Carson Exhibit
Kris Wiley
Roseburg Public Library

Roseburg Public Library is thrilled to host an exhibit featuring Oregon pioneer Letitia Carson.

The exhibit consists of eight banners that honor the legacy of Carson, a Black homesteader, farmer and matriarch who lived during the time of Oregon's exclusion laws.

The exhibit is free, open to the public and on display in the main area of the library during operating hours through Friday, May 30. Hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

It is made possible by the Oregon Black Pioneers and the Letitia Carson Legacy Project, a collaboration between Oregon State University, Oregon Black Pioneers, Black Oregon Land Trust and Linn-Benton Branch NAACP and Museum.

Folks may remember the exhibit debuted at the Douglas County Museum in December 2022. Since then, it made its way across the state and is returning to the area for the first time in two years.

The panels share Carson's remarkable history. Formerly enslaved, she traveled to Oregon in 1845 with a white man named David Carson and settled north of Corvallis in Benton County. Following David Carson's death in 1852, Letitia Carson successfully sued for compensation after their property was sold to a neighbor.

Letitia Carson and her children then moved to Douglas County, and it is thought they lived in upper Cow Creek Valley. In October 1869, her 160-acre land claim near Myrtle Creek was certified, making her the first Black woman in Oregon to secure a land claim. Carson died in 1888 and was buried in the historic Stephens Cemetery in Myrtle Creek.

In conjunction with the exhibit, staff from the Oregon Black Pioneers will present "Oregon's Black History: 450 Years in 45 Minutes" at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 15 at the library. The program is free and open to the public.

For more information on the Oregon Black Pioneers, visit their website at oregonblackpioneers.org. Details on the Letitia Carson Legacy Project are available at letitiacarson.oregonstate.edu.

Next week's library events

Tuesday, April 8, 10 a.m. – Grab-and-go craft kits for youth and adults while supplies last

Tuesday, April 8, 6:30 p.m. – Online Book Group (email kwiley@roseburgor.gov for the Zoom link)

Wednesday, April 9, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Thursday, April 10, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Thursday, April 10, 5:30-6:30 p.m. – Legos & Building for all ages