

SERIES: Black Pioneers

A leader along the trail

The following is the last of a series of profiles of blacks who helped shape the Northwest. The information is used with permission from *Northwest Black Pioneers, A Centennial Tribute*, by Ralph Hayes and Joe Franklin. The book was sponsored by The Bon Marche and is in schools and libraries in Oregon and Washington.

The Northwest Black Pioneer exhibit will be on display Jan. 24 to Feb. 4 at Historic Mission Mill, 1313 Mill St. SE in Salem.

The Marion County Historical Society has *Black Pioneers in the Oregon County* on display from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, through Feb. 28. The museum is at 260 12th St. SE in Salem. The society provided the illustration with this story.

A change of careers

Moses Harris had a mid-life



BLACK PIONEER: Moses Harris guided many settlers to Oregon.

career change from mountain man to wagon train guide.

He was born in South Carolina and had traveled as far west as Yellowstone by 1822. As the fur trading industry declined, he started leading pioneers along the Oregon Trail.

He was the leader of one of the largest immigrant groups to travel Oregon in 1844. The next year, he

helped rescue the Blue Bucket wagon train that became stranded on the east side of the Cascade Mountains.

Harris settled for a time in Yamhill County, where he was listed on the tax rolls. He also signed a petition urging the Provisional Government to finance a public road in Oregon City.

He later returned to St. Joseph, Mo., and was in the process of guiding another train to Oregon when he contracted cholera and died in Independence in 1849.