



**Five Year  
(2012 – 2016)  
Site Interpretation Plan**

**for the  
Willamette Heritage Center**

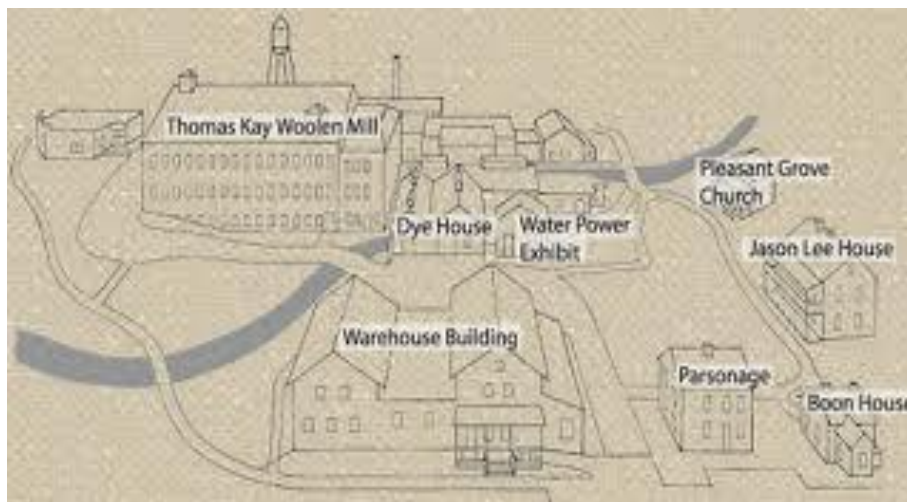
**Creating experiences that help visitors  
find personal connections to history**

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## **Introduction to the Willamette Heritage Center**

The Willamette Heritage Center (WHC) was forged from the merger of two respected organizations, the Marion County Historical Society (MCHS) and Mission Mill Museum (MMM). To explore this possibility, representatives from both Boards met throughout the summer and fall of 2009. The members determined that the organizations were quite complementary, both having strong programs, with MMM having award winning community programs and exhibits and MCHS having significant archival and research library holdings. The two were located on the same site, have partnered for many years and have cooperated towards their overlapping missions in many ways.

Independently, MCHS operated as a respected history museum for sixty years and Mission Mill Museum for forty-six years. The former collected, interpreted and exhibited Marion County history and played a significant role in preserving many historical structures, including those of the Methodist Mission to Oregon and the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill. In these historic buildings, Mission Mill Museum was created to interpret their role in early Salem for the public. Both institutions made on-going commitments to include the archival history of the Kalapuya, the Valley's first people.

After careful consideration, both Boards recommended unification, with the understanding that a combined institution, with a newly combined mission, would strengthen the community through expanded programs, exhibitions, research, collection care and operating efficiencies. The Willamette Heritage Center became official on January 1, 2010.

## **Willamette Heritage Center Mission & Purposes**

Mission: "To inspire, connect and encourage understanding, the WHC engages community to preserve and share our heritage."

Purpose: Willamette Heritage Center collects, cares for, interprets, showcases, and promotes understanding of and education about the history of the Willamette Valley region, including Marion County and the greater Salem area. The Center is anchored by the historic early settlement buildings, the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill and its archival and library holdings.

Willamette Heritage Center Values:

- Education
- Preservation
- Scholarship and integrity
- Inclusion and engagement
- Commitment and tenacity
- Enjoyment and inspiration

Willamette Heritage Center Vision: The WHC will be a strong, financially sustainable, vital and growing non-profit which will:

- Enjoy the support and hard work of a highly engaged Board, volunteer corps and staff.
- Benefit from diversified and balanced revenue streams.
- Capitalize on our unique features, promoting WHC as a place where the community gathers.
- Become a significant caretaker of local archives and collections, developing partnerships with area organizations that value this service.
- Develop programs and exhibits that enhance our mission and build revenue.

- Increase and energize our membership base, challenging them to become more committed to our mission.
- Become the place local residents want to bring their guests... first.

To achieve the Vision, the WHC will:

- Explain the past to those who are making decisions today.
- Facilitate our communities' telling, retelling and reflection on our stories.
- Be a vital part of the community's intergenerational and intercultural fabric.
- Reach out to a broadly representative cross-section of peoples across the Willamette Valley.
- Be a leader in the heritage community, energizing communities to further promote the value of heritage.
- Develop an extensive portfolio of active and fruitful partnerships that help tell our community's complete history.
- Keep history relevant, capturing history as it is "being made".
- Preserve, interpret and champion the unique and historically significant buildings and collections in our care.

In 2010, the Willamette Heritage Center set four Strategic Goals to be achieved in the coming years:

- Increased community involvement by partnering with individuals and organizations, increasing education, visitation and participation.
- More diverse funding streams and increased revenues –balance the budget annually while maintaining accountability of expenses and funding growth.
- Increased visitor enjoyment and expanded repeat visitation: Create a more visitor-centered environment in all aspects of operations.
- Continue to preserve and maintain the WHC's historic treasures, while ensuring responsible and broadened access.

This Site Interpretation Plan has been developed to help the WHC better meet these four goals.



## **Introduction to the WHC Site Interpretation Plan**

The newly formed Willamette Heritage Center (WHC) is a community-gathering place located in Salem, Oregon. Combining two well-regarded cultural institutions has created a stronger organization serving our traditional base of Salem-area residents, as well as the Willamette Valley community and heritage tourists, and allows us to involve other diverse heritage and cultural groups we previously could not reach.

Willamette Heritage Center's vision is to be a strong, financially sustainable, vital and growing non-profit which enjoys the support and hard work of a highly engaged Board, volunteer corps and staff; benefits from diversified and balanced revenue streams; capitalizes on our unique features; is considered to be a place where the community gathers; is a significant caretaker of local archives and collections; develops partnerships with area organizations that value heritage; creates exhibits and programs that enhance our mission and build revenue; increases and energizes our membership base, challenging them to become more committed to our mission; and becomes the place local residents want to bring their guests to first.

Fulfillment of this vision is of vital importance to any society that wishes to effectively preserve its heritage. A healthy community depends on a good understanding of itself and how it was formed. Our past created our present, and our present creates our future. Cultural organizations, such as the Willamette Heritage Center, have a mandate to educate the community and its visitors on our area's history and culture. Through that education comes understanding; through understanding comes appreciation; through appreciation comes affection; through affection comes love; and through love comes a desire to preserve.

Key to realizing our vision is the development and phased implementation of this centrally-themed 5-Year Site Interpretation Plan, which will:

1. Define and connect the WHC's intentions to community needs.
2. Create heritage themes that interconnect.
3. Demonstrate why history is important as it explores the growth of the mid-Willamette Valley's diverse communities and industries.
3. Focus and guide a strong new collections policy, along with the WHC's exhibits, programs and community offerings.
4. Allow the WHC's buildings to work harder by recommitting selected spaces to expand and connect themed, inter-related and augmented permanent exhibits, while at the same time encouraging the reassessing and optimizing of access, display and storage of existing collections, archives and artifacts.

Today, interpretation on the site reflects both the evolution of the furnishing of the historic houses –the 1841 Lee House, 1841 Methodist Parsonage and the 1847 Boon House; and the technology, furnishings and machinery of the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill from its founding in 1889 to closure of the Mill in 1962- and the stories told about objects, architecture, process, historical events and people. Over the years, the interpretation of the site has derived directly from Mission Mill Museum's mission statement, which was "to broaden the understanding of Oregon's missionary heritage and woolen industry through excellence in preservation, interpretation and public programs," and was based in years of research by members of MMM Board, local historians and museum staff.

Now that the Willamette Heritage Center has been established and has new energized mission, purpose, core values, vision and strategic goals, it is time that a cohesive, centrally-themed Site Interpretation Plan be developed and implemented. This 5-year plan specifically revises the institution's approaches to our changing exhibitions, our permanent exhibits in all three historic houses, the church, the mill buildings and the grounds, as well as impacting the furnishing, machinery, object and story selection. This Plan has been designed to be both useful and flexible, as we know our ideas of how best to interpret the stories presented at the Center will continue to evolve and be affected by the community and visitors who bring their unique perspectives to the site.

This Site Interpretation Plan aims to:

- Create a well-developed plan that ties history of the site to major historical themes and common human experiences.
- Provide staff and interpreters with information.
- Use visitor evaluations of newly developed interpretation to inform future programs.
- Expand public access and audience input regarding interpretation and presentation.

With these goals in mind, the staff embarked on an intensive review of existing interpretive material in order to enhance what visitors learn at this site. This included determining those overarching themes and methods that offer the best framework for telling the stories of people, families and community in ways that emphasize the unique strengths of the Center's history, collections and physical assets. The Plan focuses on those stories that can be addressed at the Willamette Heritage Center more effectively than at other historic sites in the mid-Valley region.

It must be noted that the methods in this Site Interpretation Plan were selected after careful consideration of other options. The other most viable alternative that was researched was to leave the current exhibitry as is, with minor changes, and work towards increasing the living history performed on-site; in essence, modeling our interpretation after major living history museums in the U.S., such as that found at Mount Vernon, Conner Prairie, Historic St. Mary's City and others. This approach would have the benefit of costing little in exhibit and structural costs. The downside is that such an approach would have large associated staffing costs. The Center does not have the number of volunteers needed to support such an expanded program, and it would take years to grow the number of volunteers sufficiently, which would have lead to the need to hire paid costumed interpreters. Figuring the need for a minimum of 10 full-time costumed interpreters, that would be a staffing cost increase of roughly \$200,000 annually. While this would have been a valid direction to select, it is believed that more extensive changes to current exhibitry, as laid out in this plan, are easier to plan for, predict, fund and complete.

The overall goal is to create an attractive, lively and welcoming Center that combines excellence in perseveration and scholarship with high quality exhibits and programs that serve a broad and diverse public. This Plan lays out the major themes, interpretive philosophy and phased development envisioned to help achieve this goal.

## **Major Themes**

Three major themes have developed from meetings, discussions and staff research. These themes focus the interpretation on the most important and/or most salient ideas that the Center can address in the context of the Salem area, the mid-Valley region and Oregon. These themes are the conceptual and practical framework for developing interpretation at the Willamette Heritage Center. Three primary themes of *People*, *Family* and *Community* will organize stories in ways that visitors will quickly and easily grasp. All three relate stories that tell how we have lived and worked here in the mid-Willamette Valley over time.

***People:*** The people whose lives have touched and been touched by the history that our buildings on site represent, as well as those of the Salem area and the community will be interpreted. The people will be both the well known –such as Jason Lee, John D. Boon, Susan Downing and Thomas Lister Kay- and the less than well known, like Joseph Shangretta, one of many Kalapuya who interacted with the early settlers, millwright Wayne Mentzer, and the numerous individuals who make up the fabric of early Salem.

***Families:*** The stories of the earliest days of this special area are stories of families: Kalapuya families who lived on this land for millennia; French-Canadian fur trappers and their Native wives and children who settled in the Willamette Valley; the families that migrated as a part of the various missions that came to Oregon or along the Oregon Trail; and families who have come for the last 150 years to Salem and the Valley to work in the growing industries and professions.

***Community:*** Through out our site, we explore stories of communities: From the local Native American population to the city of Salem; from the mill workers' community to the wine growers of the Valley; from small towns to urban centers; from rural life in the 1800s to the diversity of our present-day cities.

The stories are unique and universal, local but connected to the broader American experience –from large scale migration, culture contact and industry to the hopes, dreams and common experiences of hard-working everyday people. Through the Site Interpretation Plan and the major interpretive themes the opportunity exists to create a heritage center that can truly be a special place of community pride, where local people come to learn about their heritage, as well as a site of regional and national significance.

## Interpretive Philosophy

The core of the Center's site interpretation is our belief, based on observations and research (grounded most recently in a 2009 survey of 40,000 museum-going households conducted by Reach Associates), about how people prefer to learn in the free-choice learning environment that heritage museums offer. We believe that different audience segments prefer particular experiences at our site. Specifically that:

- The majority of museum-goers want to explore on their own.
- Visitors come to participate and learn in a wide-range of ways and through a variety of activities.
- At history-based museums, such as the WHC, visitors want to be on their own and to interact with staff—that is to say visitors enjoy self-guided experiences, but they want staff around with whom they can interact, but who will not direct their experience.
- Visitors of different generations have different needs and expectations, but all want to find some authentic experience with objects, and connections between history and their lives today.
- Visitors have different needs and expectations depending on if they have children at home – this specifically impacts the design of hands-on activities in exhibits, as these types of experiences are not very important to adults without children (in the 2009 survey referenced above, only 26% listed hands-on activities as important), but for families with children they are more vital (55% listed these as important in the same survey).
- Overt computer technology at museums is generally unimportant to visitors, but they do want integrated and seamless technology at specific places where they may interact with it, if they so choose.

The Willamette Heritage Center will rely on a material culture approach, treating its buildings, landscape, furnishings and collections as objects that can tell us a great deal about the experiences of people; these are evidence of how life was lived in Salem, the Willamette Valley and Oregon. Guided tours will be object-focused, linking objects with the three themes outlined in this Plan. This interpretive methodology will be supported by the extensive documentation that exists related to the lifeways of the Kalapuya, the Methodist Mission to Oregon, early settlement of the area, industrialization of the West, the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill, the textile industry, immigration, labor issues, Salem history, education in Oregon's early days, and more. The exceptionally well-preserved nature of the site is key to the visitor experience here. The site and its historic structures lend authenticity to the Center, and this helps to develop a sense of connection with the past. This authenticity can make abstract ideas concrete, and the past immediate, human and visceral.





## Historic Places and Spaces

The Willamette Heritage Center is blessed with historic and modern structures on a 5-acre campus representing the decades from the early/mid 1800s to the present. These buildings juxtapose the houses of the Willamette Mission, a church, a modern exhibition hall and an industrial mill, and create as complete a picture of early settlement and growth in Oregon that can be found on one site in the Valley.

The buildings and the open spaces between them are sites for interpretation and activity, but they need refocused purpose and direction. This plan proposes ways to reinterpret the buildings and grounds while preserving them and focusing attention on underrepresented stories.

*The Jason Lee House:* Built in the winter of 1841, with lumber from the newly constructed Willamette Mission sawmill, the Jason Lee House has the distinction of being one of the oldest frame houses still standing west of the Rocky Mountains. Between 1841 and 1844, this house served as the headquarters for the Willamette Mission, as a meeting place during the formation of the region's early Provisional Government, and as an apartment house for four families. This house was originally built for the Reverend Jason Lee, and was a place where he would carry out the work of running the Mission until he left in December of 1843. In 1844, when Rev. Gary divested the assets of the Willamette Mission, the house was sold. The Jason Lee House was moved to this site in 1965.

*The Methodist Parsonage:* Probably designed by Hamilton Campbell, the Parsonage was the second frame structure built in Salem after the arrival and installation of the Mission's sawmill and was completed in 1841. It served as living quarters for those Methodist missionaries directly involved with the Oregon Mission Manual Labor School (Indian Manual Labor School). After the Mission's demise, it became the Parsonage for the local Methodist Church. Rev. Gustavus Hines, Hamilton Campbell and their families were the first occupants of the Parsonage. Hines was the preacher in charge of the Willamette Station, as well as the director of the Indian School. Classes for the Indian School's children may have been held in this structure until the school building was complete.

*The Boon House:* The Boon House is believed to be the oldest remaining single-family dwelling in Salem. It was built in 1847 and was moved to its present site in 1972. It is called the Boon House because its first occupants were John D. Boon and his family. Boon, a Wesleyan Methodist minister not connected with the Jason Lee Mission, traveled over the Oregon Trail, arriving here in 1845. After working at the sawmill owned by Lewis Judson (formerly the Mission's sawmill), Boon jumped into Oregon politics. He served as a territorial treasurer and went on to become State Treasurer, serving nearly continuously (except for one year) from 1851-1862. At the time the Boons moved into the house, they already had four children; three more were born later.

*The Pleasant Grove Church:* Built in 1856, the Pleasant Grove (or Condit) Church is a country church moved to town. Dedicated on its new site on October 7, 1985, it adds to the story of the Missions to Oregon undertaken by the Methodists, the Catholics and by the Presbyterians under Dr. Marcus Whitman in 1836. The building is the oldest surviving church in the Pacific Northwest associated with the Presbyterian Church.

*The Thomas Kay Woolen Mill and Associated Out Buildings:* The Thomas Kay Woolen Mill Company, founded by Thomas Lister Kay, was incorporated on June 16, 1889, and the factory opened in March 1890. The original mill building was of wood construction, and was a combination of a new structure and the west end of the old Pioneer Oil Company building. The final structure reached

three stories and an attic in height. A dye house, two wool warehouses and the office completed the original factory. Seven years after opening, the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill burned to the ground. The current mill building, now brick, dates to 1896.

### **Site Interpretation**

The major themes outlined in this document can be conveyed to the visitor in a myriad of ways. This plan links our major themes, *People, Family, Community*, with exhibit spaces at the Willamette Heritage Center –the changing gallery, the Lee House, Parsonage, Boon House, Church, Mill Building and landscape/garden. It also assigns the significant topics, ideas or stories to be covered in each space, and when appropriate and known prior to the conducting of in-depth research, the people that help with their illustration.

Each of the pages following offers a new interpretive framework for spaces at the Center. The order in which spaces are presented in this document is deliberate and structured in phases, following a recommended order for making changes to the existing exhibitry. These phases are based largely on realistic ideas for making changes, taking into consideration time, resources, costs and flow.

It is important to note that this is a planning document; by its nature it is meant to serve as a framework for interpretation. At the same time, it is not meant to be immutable. The WHC's interpretation will change and grow as scholarship develops, as further research is undertaken, and as interpretive techniques change. Hopefully this Site Interpretation Plan will underpin the Center's interpretation for at least fifteen years, with the ultimate mark of its success being its ability to guide our interpretation by defining strong themes that are deftly illustrated in our exhibit spaces, while allowing for the incorporation of new material, new ideas and new ways of looking at the past.

## PHASE I: CHANGING EXHIBITION GALLERY

**Primary Goal:** to establish a 5-year changing exhibition plan (structured yet flexible) that allows for special exhibitions to be mounted four times per year, with set annual partnerships.

Reception times: Winter = 6:00-7:30 (set up @ 4:00)  
Spring, Summer & Fall = 5:30-7:30 (set up @ 3:30)

Winter: 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in Jan – 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in March: Winter Heritage Invitational

2013 = Topic: Childhood (1/18-3/9)

2014 = Topic: Work (1/17-3/8)

2015 = Topic: Made in the Valley (1/16-3/14)

2016 = Topic: Portrait of a People –focus on individuals or groups (1/16-3/12)

2017 = Topic: Nature and Community (1/20-3/11)

Spring: 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in April – Memorial Day Monday in May: Grand Ronde to curate

2013 = Topic: Termination and Restoration (4/12-5/27)

2014 = Topic: (4/11-5/26)

2015 = Topic: (4/10-5/25)

Summer: 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in June – 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in August: WHC curated history exhibition

2013 = *Lincoln: The Constitution & the Civil War* (6/21-8/17)

2014 = *Boys of Summer: Mid-Valley Baseball* (6/20-8/16)

2015 = *Mid-Valley Vice* (6/19-8/15)

2016 = *Politics as Usual: The Good (ideas), the Bad (policies) and the Ugly (scandal)*  
(6/18-8/20)

2017 = *Dirty Jobs* (6/16-8/19)

Fall: Last Friday in Sept/1<sup>st</sup> Friday in Oct – Christmas Eve: Fabric/Art related

2013: *Threads to New Worlds* (10/4 - 12/24) w/Salem Fiber Arts Guild

2014: *Pendleton Blankets* (9/26-12/24) w/Pendleton Woolen Mills

2015: *NW Native Weavings* (9/25-12/24) w/Burke? MNCH? Warm Spring?

2016: *Fiber Artist Invitational* (9/23-12/24)

2017: *WHC Quilts or Quilt Collection from other museums* (9/29-12/24)

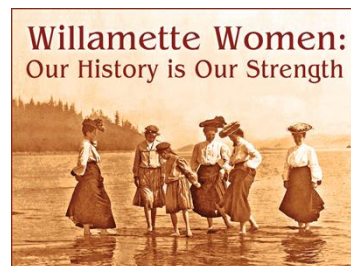
2018: *Fiber Artist Invitational* (9/28-12/24)

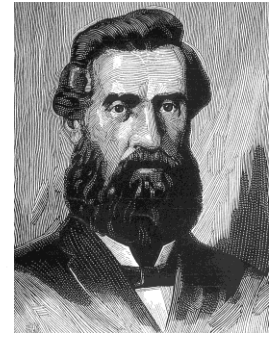
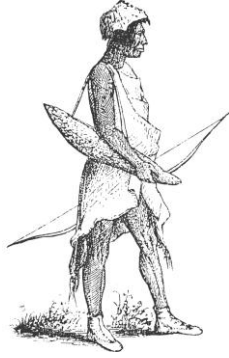
Identified Partners for Changing Exhibitions:

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Mid-Valley Heritage Organizations

Art Associations/Art Museums/Artists





## PHASE II: THE HISTORIC HOUSES THE LEE HOUSE: *CREATING COMUNITY*

Primary Goal: Increase the interpretation in the House to broaden and deepen the story of the Methodist Mission to Oregon –begin the early settlement story of Salem

- Secondary Goals:
1. Include aspects of the Kalapuya in Mission story
  2. Early migration experiences/stories and culture contact stories

<i>Topics or Stories to Discuss in each room:</i>	<i>Ideas for Illustrating Topics</i>	<i>People Related to Topic</i>
<b>1st Floor Hallway:</b> Portraits of the People	Portraits, Maps <i>Lausanne</i> Drawing HBC Ft Vancouver Drawing Mission Bottom Drawing	Kalapuya Methodist Missionaries Lay Mission people Ewing Young
<b>Lee Apartment:</b> Methodist Mission to Oregon	Historic House setup w/cases	Jason Lee, Daniel Lee Anna Maria Pittman Lucy Thompson Lucy Anna Maria
<b>Parrish Apartment:</b> Education focus: IMLS, OR Inst, and WU –also Chemawa? Little Central School?	Exhibits w/cases Objects Images Maps	Gustavus Hines Chloe Clarke Willson William Willson Joseph Shangretta
<b>Judson Apartment:</b> Growth & Expansion of the Willamette Mission and other Mission Stations	Exhibits w/cases Objects Hands-on touchables Images, Maps	Women of the Mission Lewis Judson Kalapuya/French Trappers John McLoughlin
<b>Raymond Apartment:</b> Closing, Dissolution people/property, Circuit Riders	Exhibits w/cases Objects/Images Plat of Salem? Ipad technology	Rev. Gary, Rev. Roberts Circuit Riders The Willsons

*Historical Context* – Background information that may help visitors to understand better what they are seeing in this space.

**The Methodist Mission to Oregon-** Jason Lee settled the Mission in the Willamette Valley in 1834, before major migrations came over the Oregon Trail. The missionaries brought formal education, industry, large-scale agriculture and government to the Oregon Country. Rev. Jason Lee traveled overland on horseback to the Oregon Country in the company of Nathaniel Wyeth, and accompanied by his nephew, Rev. Daniel Lee, Cyrus Shepard, and two men hired on in Independence, MO –Mr. Courtney Walker and Mr. Philip Edwards.

Potential Humanities Scholars/Consultants for Lee House Exhibits:

David Lewis -Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Director of Cultural Resources Department, Mary McKay –Willamette University Archivist, Shirley Knepp –Archivist for the Archive of the Oregon Idaho (Methodist) Conference, Melinda Jette – Ph.D. in history from the University of British Columbia, Judith Bentley –professor at South Seattle Community College.



### **METHODIST PARSONAGE: *SHAPING IDENTITY***

Primary Goal: Increase hands-on exhibitions to appeal to all ages –focus this on children/family life in the 1800s and creating access to making ties and comparisons to modern childhood and family life -current Indian Manual Labor School room and kitchen

- Secondary Goals:
1. Tell part of the story of Salem’s history
  2. Tell women and children’s lives from late 1800s – hands-on
  2. Kalapuya history and culture gallery –tribal curated
  3. Address historic preservation of WHC and older buildings in general.
  4. Increase the Center’s number of spaces for changing galleries

<i>Topics or Stories to Discuss:</i>	<i>Ideas for Illustrating Topics</i>	<i>People Related to Topic</i>
<b>Parlor:</b> Orientation room for the new interpretation	Overview to the different topics/sections	
<b>OIMLS Room:</b> Children’s Lives – hands-on space, ca. 1870s-1890s	All hands-on objects and activities	Affluent child, Chemawa student Rural child Urban working class
<b>Kitchen:</b> Women’s Work in the late 1800s – hands-on space	All hands-on objects and activities Ties to herb garden	Martha Boon Adelia Judson Bush?

<b>Dinning Room:</b> Kalapuya History and culture –bring to the present day	exhibition w/cases Some hands-on, some tech. Use panels/images/info from Facing Statehood where/if appropriate?	To be determined with CTGR
<b>Office &amp; Northwest Bedroom:</b> Salem History	exhibition w/cases Some hands-on, some tech.	Salem as Capitol City History through 8 Salem families (diversity in gender, ethnicity & time)
<b>Southeast Bedroom:</b> Communities in Salem and the Valley	Offers Changing Exhibition space of area communities to present their own history and cultures	TBD – examples: Old Believers, Woodburn’s Hispanic community, Salem’s Nikkei...
<b>Northeast Bedroom:</b> Historic Preservation – hands-on space	Images, maps, hands-on activities. Lens is the buildings on our site, plus photos of prominent mid-Valley preservation projects.	Local preservation people SHPO
<b>Herb Garden:</b> See Ethnobotany Section	Plants, signage/labels/images Hand-outs with uses/recipes Activity spaces as appropriate	Kalapuya and early settlers

*Historical Context* – Background information that may help visitors to understand better what they are seeing in this space.

This is a radical reinterpretation and re-use of this space. Currently it is used to interpret the relationship of the Methodist Mission to Oregon to the development of education in the state, the Indian Manual Labor School, the Oregon Institute, the closure of the Mission and the Circuit Riders. All will move to the Lee House. New stories will be told in these spaces – Kalapuya cultural history, children and women’s lives in the early settlement period, Salem history and historic preservation.

**Potential Humanities Scholars/Consultants for Parsonage Exhibits:**

David Lewis -Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Director of Cultural Resources Department, Hazel Patton and Virginia Green –local Salem historians and historic preservationists, Joy Sears, SHPO Restoration Specialist., Kyle Jansson -Salem History (online) Project Historian, Amy Vandegrift –former director of Marion County Historical Society, Rebecca Dobkins –Anthropology professor at Willamette University, Susan Armitage –Emeritas Professor of history and women’s studies at Washington State University, Kay F. Reinartz –author of *A Glance Through the Window: Women’s Lives in Territorial Days*, Jacqueline Williams –author of *Wagon Wheel Kitchens: Food on the Oregon Trail*, Ellen M. Eisenberg –Dwight & Margaret Lear Professor of American History.



## BOON HOUSE

**Primary Goal:** Reinterpret the House to emphasize the story of development and growth of major business in Salem/the Valley. Nearly all exhibits will be told using John Boon as the prime lens.

- Secondary Goals:**
1. Stories of OR Trail crossings
  2. Westward Expansion
  3. From Rural to Urban
  4. Increase the Center's number of spaces for changing galleries

<i>Topics or Stories to Discuss:</i>	<i>Idea for Illustrating Topics</i>	<i>People Related to Topic</i>
<b>The Living Room:</b> OR Trail Crossing tales	Hands-on activities/objects, Quotes, Music, Images/maps	John Boon
<b>Northeast Bedroom:</b> OR becomes a State	Hands-on activities and object, Recycle FS panels/info/images where possible	John Boon
<b>Dining Room:</b> Rail Roads Mercantilism	Maps/Charters Objects Images Technology	John Boon
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Bedroom:</b> The Professions (rotate to include: doctors, lawyers, newspapermen, dentists, bankers, teachers, sports, restaurateurs, etc).	Small Changing Gallery Space	Prominent people from the highlighted profession. Example: Salem photographer Kathy Gunnell
<b>Kitchen:</b> Agriculture –including beer/wine	Exhibit cases and objects 1 <sup>st</sup> person quotes Images/maps	TBD

*Historical Context* – Background information that may help visitors to understand better what they are seeing in this space.

**John D. Boon** – The Boon House is believed to be the oldest remaining single-family dwelling in Salem. It was built in 1847 and the first occupants were John D. Boon and his family. Boon, a Wesleyan Methodist minister, traveled over the Oregon Trail, arriving here in 1845. After working in the lumber mill owned by Lewis Judson, Boon jumped into Oregon politics. Boon served in the Legislature of the Oregon Provisional Government, representing Polk County. In December 1851, he was elected treasurer of the Oregon Territory by the Legislature, serving nearly continuously for the ensuing ten years except in 1856 when Nathaniel H. Lane was elected (the terms of office were only one year). Upon the organization of the state government in 1859, Boon was elected the first State Treasurer, serving for three years. John Boon was an exceptional entrepreneur. He donated land on Boon's Island for the construction of the Willamette Woolen Manufacturing Company. Completed 1857, this mill was the beginning of the manufacture of woolen goods on the Pacific Coast. He was one of 27 organizers of the first telegraph line in Oregon built by the Pacific Telegraph Company. The California Railroad Company was incorporated by an act of the territorial legislature on January 30, 1854, with Boon as one of the commissioners. John Boon was also the last territorial and first state printer in Oregon.

Potential Humanities Scholars/Consultants for Boon House Exhibits:

Hazel Paton and Virginia Green –local Salem historians and historic preservationists, William G. Robbins - Emeritus Distinguished Professor of History, Amy Vandegrift –former director of Marion County Historical Society, Carl Abbott –Professor of Urban Studies at Portland State University, Ed Austin –Pacific Northwest train historian, Erlinda Gonzales-Berry –Commissioner on the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs.



**PHASE III: RELATED OUTLAYING AREAS**  
**THE PLEASANT GROVE (CONDIT) CHURCH**

Primary Goal: To present the Methodist Mission to Oregon in the context of the missionary movements of the 1800s generally, and specifically with the other missions to Oregon.

<i>Topics or Stories to Discuss:</i>	<i>Ideas for Illustrating Topics</i>	<i>People Related to Topic</i>
<b>All Outdoor Interpretation:</b> Different missions to Oregon (Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian) Contrasts with Native religious beliefs of the area	Map interactive Religious ladders Photos Illustrations of missions	Father Blanchet Dr. Marcus Whitman French-Canadian Trappers Kalapuya Elders

*Historical Context* – Background information that may help visitors to understand better what they are seeing in this space.

**The Pleasant Grove (or Condit) Church** –This church adds to the story of the Missions to Oregon, namely those of the Methodists and the Presbyterians under Dr. Marcus Whitman in 1836. Both answered the Indians’ perceived call for help with the Whiteman’s “Book of Heaven,” and both advocated the settlement of Americans in the Willamette Valley (a “New Eden”) and Oregon. Dr. Whitman, leader of the Presbyterians’ Oregon Mission, inspired others to follow and branches of the Presbyterian Church competed for leadership. Whitman assisted the Rev. Condit at the organizational meeting and contributed his first year’s salary to the erection of this church. The building is the oldest surviving church in the Pacific Northwest associated with the Presbyterian Church, and was completed by April 1858 at a site five miles south of Stayton, towards Aumsville. The Catholic presences in Oregon will also be discussed.

Potential Humanities Scholars/Consultants for Church Outdoor Exhibits:

Jean Barman –Professor Emeritus at UBC, Robert Fisher –Wing Luke Asian Museum, Judith Bentley – professor at South Seattle Community College, Gray Whaley –2002 Ph.D. University of Oregon, Melinda Jette – Ph.D Candidate at University of British Columbia, Don Koch of the St. Paul Mission Historical Society, Shirley Knepp –Archivist for the Archive of the Oregon Idaho (Methodist) Conference.

**THE WELCOME CENTER**  
**The Valley: Our Home, Our History**

Primary Goal: Reinterpret the Welcome Center/Orientation Center to better represent the expanded history being interpreted on our site.

Secondary Goals:

1. Incorporate voices (1<sup>st</sup> person) throughout
2. Multiple voices
3. Pre-history to present people

<i>Topics or Stories to Discuss:</i>	<i>Idea for Illustrating Topics</i>	<i>People Related to Topic</i>
Entryway exhibit space	1-2 cases of a variety of objects	

	–changeable At least 1 hands-on activity	
Intro wall:	Welcome to WHC The First People –with case Map of the Valley Collage of images of people, family, community?	Text/panels from FS?
Arc to the Right	Explorers Trappers Missionaries Farmers	
Back side walls	Founding of the mid-Valley Founding of Salem Capital City Industry in the Valley Hands-on Activity	
Wall perpendicular to the exit door	Valley today: Quotes from a variety of people (present and past) about what makes their home special: Voices from the Valley	

## **ETHNOBOTANY ON THE SITE**

### **CURRENTLY ONLY MISSIONARY HERB GARDEN**

Primary Goal: Reinterpret the Herb Garden (HG) to focus more closely on work in early Oregon times, by creating better ties with the Hands-on Spaces in the Parsonage.

Secondary Goals:

1. Make the HG more interactive and hands-on for visitors –demonstrations (planting and uses), recipes, take home information, tie in for use with textile/children’s programs (ex. dyeing).
2. Expand information to include Native plants used for similar purposes: medicine, food, spices, technology.
3. Expand information to include types of plants used today for similar purposes (example willow = aspirin).

*Historical Context* – Background information that may help visitors to understand better what they are seeing in this space.

**Ethnobotany** - The study of the relationships that exist between people and plants.

Ethnobotanists aim to document, describe and explain complex relationships between cultures and (uses of) plants; focusing, primarily, on how plants are used, managed and perceived across human societies -e.g. as foods; as medicines; in divination; in cosmetics; in dyeing; as textiles; in construction; as tools; as currency; as clothing; in literature; in rituals; and in social life.

**The Herb Garden** - The missionaries and the associated lay people/families, settled fur-trappers and their families, and early pioneer families were the first to immigrate to the area. These people depended on farming and gardening. Without refrigeration, they canned, preserved and cellar-ed their crops to feed their families throughout the winter. They brought seeds and bulbs from their homelands for landscaping new territory. Many of the herbs grown by pioneers would have been included in a “kitchen garden” which was usually close at hand for easy gathering of the vegetables and cooking herbs.

By necessity, early Oregon settlers grew their own herbs. Many of the plants growing in our Herb Garden are considered herbs because whether wild plants or garden flowers, they were useful in a variety of ways in the daily lives of the earliest immigrants. Every plant that could provide a use was valued -whether it supplied an insect repelling scent or provided healing qualities or gave flavor to foods or yielded a vivid dye. Our Herb Garden helps to preserve knowledge of heritage plants to be shared with the public.

**Ideas for Herb Garden:**



Sample idea for herb garden labeling



Sample idea for herb recipe/info display



Take home herb cards –with an attached sample or seeds?  
 Could have:  
 Characteristic/how to grow  
 History of cultivation  
 Uses medicinal/household  
 Recipe or two



Take home herb cards?  
 Could have:  
 Characteristic/how to grow  
 History of cultivation  
 Uses medicinal/household  
 Recipe or two



## PHASE IV: THE MILL & ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS THE THOMAS KAY WOOLEN MILL

Primary Goal: Reinterpret the Mill and its structures to focus on the stories of the people who worked (labor, management & owners) there, while maintaining aspects of process and technology.

Secondary Goals:

1. Tell part of the larger story of industrialization in the Valley and the West
2. Tell part of the story of immigration for labor in Oregon –late 19th century through present.

<i>Topics or Stories to Discuss:</i>	<i>Ideas for Illustrating Topics</i>	<i>People Related to Topic</i>
“A Family Place”	A focus on Mill families: why they came, what they did, their experiences...	Possibilities: Kays, Ohmarts, Metzgers, Seamsters, Reids, Semkes, Herboldts, Etners
“Importance and Innovation in Mill Architecture”	Victorian vs. modern mill buildings.	W.D. Pugh
“Finding Work”	Immigration for work 1800s-today	Lehmans, Thomas L. Kay
“Process and Technology”	From Fiber to Fabric –how woolen textile production works from ‘sheep to shawl’	Workers in the Mill, OR sheep growers, The Bishops
“Labor and Labor Movements”	Include women’s labor, child labor, unionization and strike – expand to migrant labor	Ercel Kay, C.A. Page United Textile Workers Union, Helen Fox, Charles Voigt, boy spoolers.
“Industry in Oregon”	Development of industry via our mid-Valley mills –flouring, textile, lumber. Canneries. From Cottage to Industrialization	The Bishops, L. Judson, T. Kay, J. McLoughlin, cannery workers/owners, modern mills. Hi-tech and apparel?

*Historical Context* – Background information that may help visitors to understand better what they are seeing in this space.

**The Thomas Kay Woolen Mill** - Thomas Lister Kay was born in 1837, in Appleby, England, and he began his career in England’s woolen factories. At 13, Kay began a full spinning apprenticeship. This early influence of working in the English textile mills had great influence on his success with American mills. In 1857, Kay left for America looking for higher wages in the new American mills, but soon returned home, discouraged by the conditions he found in the

American mills. Soon after though, he decided to give it another go, so Kay and his wife returned to America where he worked in several New England mills.

In 1862, Thomas L. Kay was hired to work at the mill in Brownsville, Oregon, as the loom boss. In 1888, a decision to dissolve the Brownsville mill's ownership left Kay free to develop his business interests in other parts of Oregon. He selected Salem to be the location for his new woolen mill, and he purchased the old Pioneer Oil Company property and its water power. A campaign to raise a \$20,000 subsidy from Salem's citizens began. This money supplemented the \$55,000 that Kay contributed. Salem's enthusiasm for the mill is reflected in the speed in which the money was raised. The \$20,000 was pledged by 352 citizens in less than a month. The Thomas Kay Woolen Mill Company was incorporated on June 16, 1889, and the factory opened in March 1890. The operation included all processes of woolen textile manufacture from sorting wool to finishing fabric.

The original Thomas Kay Woolen Mill building was a combination of a new wooden structure and the west end of the old Pioneer Oil Company building. The final structure reached three stories and an attic in height. A dye house, two wool warehouses and the office completed the factory. The main building was equipped with a hydraulic freight elevator, window lights and a belt and pulley system to transfer power from the water turbine to the machines. Seven years after Salem raised the \$20,000 subsidy, the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill burned to the ground. The fire broke out at 5:00 a.m. and the main mill structure was destroyed in less than two hours. Inadequate insurance increased the financial loss, but the citizens of Salem again demonstrated their enthusiasm for the mill by raising an additional \$25,000 to rebuild. This money was raised in one night, and the new (current) brick mill structure was back in business in 1896.

Potential Humanities Scholars/Consultants for Mill Exhibits:

William G. Robbins -Emeritus Distinguished Professor of History, Carl Abbott –Professor of Urban Studies at Portland State University, Max Geier –Professor of History at Western Oregon University, Janice Dilg – independent scholar, Greg Hall –PhD. Washington State University, Patty McNamee –National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region –Seattle, Erlinda Gonzales-Berry –Commissioner on the Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs.



## **Timeline for Phase I: Planning and Implementation of Changing Exhibition Gallery Plan**

Summer 2010: Establish a 5-year changing exhibition plan (structured yet flexible) that allows for special exhibitions to be mounted 4 times per year, with set annual partnerships

Summer & Fall 2010: Contract for guest curators for 2011 as needed

Summer & Fall 2010: Begin exhibitions' development plan and marketing plan

Summer & Fall 2010: Identify and begin working with partners for 2011 exhibitions

Ongoing implementation of development plan and marketing plan

Spring & Summer 2011: Plan for 2015

Summer & Fall 2011: Contract for guest curators for 2012 as needed

Summer & Fall 2011: Identify and begin working with partners for 2012 exhibitions

Spring & Summer 2012: Plan for 2016

Summer & Fall 2011: Contract for guest curators for 2013 as needed

Summer & Fall 2011: Identify and begin working with partners for 2013 exhibitions

Spring & Summer 2013: Plan for 2017

Summer & Fall 2011: Contract for guest curators for 2014 as needed

Summer & Fall 2011: Identify and begin working with partners for 2014 exhibitions

Spring & Summer 2014: Plan for 2018

Summer & Fall 2011: Contract for guest curators for 2015 as needed

Summer & Fall 2011: Identify and begin working with partners for 2015 exhibitions

**Timeline for Phase II:  
Completion of Reinterpretation & New Exhibitory in the  
Three Historic Houses  
3 years**

**Lee House**

April 1 – July 15, 2011	Research for Lee House Infrastructure Assessment & Work (wiring, lighting, etc)
August 1 – Dec. 31, 2011	Design/layout/prototyping/revision
Jan. 1 – March 31, 2012	Fabrication of exhibit components
April 1 – April 30, 2012	Installation of new exhibits
May 12, 2012	Opening of new exhibits
May 1 – June 30, 2012	Summative Evaluation of exhibits

**Parsonage**

April 1 – July 15, 2012	Research for Lee House Infrastructure Assessment
August 1 – Dec. 31, 2012	Design/layout/prototyping/revision
Jan. 1 – March 31, 2013	Fabrication of exhibit components & work (wiring, lighting, etc)
April 1 – May 5, 2013	Installation of new exhibits
May 11, 2013	Opening of new exhibits
June 17 – August 1, 2013	Summative Evaluation of exhibits

**Boon House**

April 1 – July 15, 2013	Research for Lee House Infrastructure Assessment
August 1 – Dec. 31, 2013	Design/layout/prototyping/revision
Jan. 1 – March 31, 2014	Fabrication of exhibit components & work (wiring, lighting, etc)
April 1 – May 4, 2014	Installation of new exhibits
May 10, 2014	Opening of new exhibits
June 16 – August 1, 2014	Summative Evaluation of exhibits

Assessment of Goals for all three Houses: August 1, 2014 – May 1, 2015

**Timeline for Phase III:  
Completion of Outlying Areas  
To Be Determined and Set in Fall 2013**

**Timeline for Phase IV:  
Completion of Reinterpretation & New Exhibitory in the Mill  
To Be Determined and Set in Summer 2014**