



## Perris Press Release

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### African-American Museum Fundraiser

A fund-raiser will be held in Perris Saturday to help repair the damaged roof at the City's Dora Nelson African-American Art and History Museum.

The fund-raiser includes a soul-food dinner and entertainment and takes place from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Perris Valley Historical Museum, 120 West Fourth Street. The museum is in the Victorian-era Depot Building, restored and reopened to the public in 2009.

Perris historian Katie Keyes said the roof on the Nelson museum was damaged during a windstorm last year.

Subsequent rains have also damaged the museum, named after a freed slave who moved to the City more than 80 years ago and established the first African-American church in Perris.

"As lovers of history, we are committed to telling the complete story of the Perris Valley, its people and culture," said Keyes, a member of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association. "African-Americans have contributed to the City's culture and development since the 1890s and the Nelson museum plays a big part in telling that story. The museum is in need of assistance and we want to help."

The public is invited to Saturday's event but food is limited. Anyone wishing to attend is asked to call Keyes at (951) 956-9081.

The Dora Nelson museum, at 316 East Seventh Street in Downtown Perris, was founded in 1997 by Charles William Kearney and Alberta Mable Kearney, who moved to the City in 1957 from Los Angeles. Charles Kearney was a World War II veteran who ended his military career at March Air Force Base. The couple had 11 children. One of them, daughter Lovella Singer, serves as executive director of the Nelson museum. Charles Kearney died last year at 91. Alberta Kearney recently turned 92 years old.

Singer said the museum's mission is to "collect, document and preserve" the history of African Americans in the Perris Valley through photographs, oral histories and artifacts. Singer said African Americans wove themselves deeply into the fabric of Perris, whether they were farm laborers, entrepreneurs, students or artisans.

"They possessed high moral standards and values and believed in working for a living," Singer said. "We need to acknowledge their accomplishments and contributions."



Katie Keyes, a member of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association, stands in front of the Dora Nelson African-American Art and History Museum, which was damaged by a windstorm last year.



Dora Nelson African-American Art and History Museum founder Alberta Mable Kearney, and her daughter, Lovella Singer, hold a picture of co-founder Charles William Kearney at last week's Black History Month community expo.