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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Celebrate Black History Month at the Museum: Publication Party for Oral History Chapbook, “Always Helping People”**

*Book features recollections by Evelyn Smith of her parents, Leo and Sarah, who were active in the Civil Rights movement and trade unionism*

**Hoboken, NJ** – Feb. 18, 2008 – On **Sunday, February 24, 2008 at 4 p.m.**, the Hoboken Historical Museum, 1301 Hudson St., will celebrate Black History Month with the release of a new oral history chapbook, *Always Helping People*, featuring **Evelyn Smith**’s recollections of the contributions of her parents, Leo and Sarah Smith, to the Civil Rights movement and trade unionism. The chapbook is studded with fascinating photographs of Leo and Sarah Smith with historical notables, including Eleanor Roosevelt and Harry Truman, and includes an early snapshot of Leo Smith when he was a young ballplayer in the Negro Leagues.

*Always Helping People* is the first of two new oral history publications, collected under the title **Making Strides**. These two chapbooks explore how former small-town residents—beginning with Leo and Sarah Smith, who were originally from rural North Carolina—made their way to densely populated, urban Hoboken, and crossed barriers of race, ethnicity and class to succeed as individuals, strengthen neighborhoods, and enrich our city. The booklets allow readers to better understand the challenges faced by Hoboken strivers.

“Making Strides” is part of the ongoing “Vanishing Hoboken” Oral History Project, coordinated by members of the Friends of the Hoboken Public Library and the Hoboken Historical Museum. The “Vanishing Hoboken” project was initiated in the

summer of 2000 in response to dramatic physical, social, and economic changes in the city of Hoboken, and to the consequent “vanishing” of certain aspects of public life – especially its disappearing identity as a working-class city and its tradition of multi-ethnic living. Since 2002, 14 chapbooks have been published. “Making Strides” is made possible through a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, with additional support from John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Evelyn Smith will be on hand at the February event to talk about her parents’ activism and dedication to our community. The event is free and open to all; we hope that community members who remember Leo and Sarah Smith will attend and offer their recollections too. All who attend will receive a copy of the chapbook. Free, validated parking (up to three hours) available in the Independence Garage located at 12<sup>th</sup> St. and Shipyard Lane.

#### **About the Hoboken Historical Museum**

Founded 1986, the Museum’s mission is to educate the public about Hoboken’s history, diverse culture, architecture and historic landmarks. In 2001, the Museum moved into one of the oldest buildings on the waterfront, in the former Bethlehem Steel shipyard, at 1301 Hudson St., Hoboken, where it maintains a series of rotating exhibits. The Museum is open six days a week, 2 – 9 pm on Tues. – Thurs., 1 – 5 pm on Fridays, and noon – 5 pm on weekends. It offers special exhibits, tours, events and lectures, as well as educational programs for adults and children on a weekly basis. An updated schedule of events and an online catalog of many items in its collections are available at [www.hobokenmuseum.org](http://www.hobokenmuseum.org). The Museum is a not-for-profit tax-exempt 501(c) entity.

*Note to Editors: An image of the chapbook cover (black and white only) is available upon request.*