

Out of the Archives

a newsletter from the Washington State Archives

February 2018



Black History Month—several African American families lived in territorial Lewis and Thurston counties

by Dr. Jewell Lorenz Dunn, Olympia Branch Researcher

Black History Month is about recognizing African Americans who have made contributions to our local communities. After trailblazers like George Washington, founder of Centralia, and George Bush, founder of Bush Prairie (Tumwater/New Market), led the way, many other pioneers of color came to Washington Territory.

A cluster of African Americans arrived in Lewis County between 1866 and 1892. William Bryan, his wife, Jane, and their adopted son, Joseph Prescott, lived close to George Washington.

Bryan purchased nearly four acres in 1866 from the U.S. government and later donated the property for a seminary. Bryan was a veteran of the Civil War where he served the Union as a private. His wife, Jane Bryan, was listed on the 1890 veterans' schedule as a surviving widow.

Living next door to the widowed Jane Bryan in 1892 were two more families of color: A.A. [Allen] Miller and his wife Estella. Allen and Estella had one son named William. The three

1890 veterans' schedule.

Page No. 5; Inquiries numbered 7, 16, and 17 are not to be asked in respect to infants. Inquiries numbered 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20 are to be answered (if at all) merely by an affirmative mark, as /.

SCHEDULE 1.—Inhabitants in Shookum Creek Precinct in the County of Servie State of Washington, enumerated by me on the 5th day of August 1870. 158

Post Office: Shookum Creek N.S. P. D. Moore, Ass't Marshal.

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Name of every person whose place of abode on the first day of June, 1870, was in this family.		Age and sex.		Color.		Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male or female.		Value of Real Estate owned.		Value of Personal Estate.		Place of Birth, naming State or Territory of U. S.; or the Country, if of foreign birth.		Parents.		If born within the year, date of birth.		If born within the year, date of birth.		If born within the year, date of birth.		If born within the year, date of birth.		If born within the year, date of birth.		If born within the year, date of birth.		If born within the year, date of birth.		If born within the year, date of birth.		If born within the year, date of birth.		If born within the year, date of birth.		If born within the year, date of birth.			
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