

Out of the Archives

a newsletter from the Washington State Archives

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Office of the Secretary of State

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

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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

Number	Name of Surviving Soldier, Sailor, and Marine, and Widow	Rank	Temporary Rank	Date of Beginning of Term	Date of Enrollment	Date of Discharge	Length of Service		
							Yrs	Mos	Days
02226	Holiday Noel B.	Private	Private	14 May 1861	1 May 1861	1 May 1861	1	0	0
02227	Spencer George D.	Private	Private	28 Aug 1864	28 Aug 1864	28 Aug 1864	3	0	0
0	do	Private	Private	28 Aug 1864	28 Aug 1864	28 Aug 1864	3	0	0
02229	Shrigley William	Sergeant	Sergeant	16 May 1861	16 May 1861	16 May 1861	1	2	18
02230	Reagor James	Private	Private	28 Aug 1864	28 Aug 1864	28 Aug 1864	2	9	28
02231	Anderson William	Private	Private	30 Aug 1864	30 Aug 1864	30 Aug 1864	4	0	0
02232	Evans John L.	Private	Private	16 May 1861	16 May 1861	16 May 1861	0	8	0
02233	Bryan William	Private	Private	16 May 1861	16 May 1861	16 May 1861	1	3	0

1890 veterans' schedule.

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20 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 Koo Kiam Chauk (Province) in the County of Wu Lin.

Service                                                                                                                                                                                 <img alt="Circular stamp with 'U.S.' and 'Post

of Washington, enumerated by me on the
Post Office: Brooklyn Chuck W. S.

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1870 U.S. Federal census, Bryan family.

the 1892 census was conducted. According to the census, Charles was a 30-year-old cook born in New York., M.A. was 20 and was born in Canada, and their eight-month-old daughter was born in Washington Territory. It is unclear if the Alleman family stayed in the Lewis County area.

Another 1892 family enumerated as black was Stacy and M.D. Cooness of Centralia. Both were born in British Columbia, Canada, making them alien residents at the time of the census.

Lewis Carrothers (AKA Louis Kruthers, Cruthers, or Caruthers) arrived in Lewis County very early on. Born in Missouri around 1830, he lived near George Washington and William F. Bryan in 1870. He was found to be one of the first men of color to obtain a homestead in Washington Territory (We'll tell his story in detail in the next newsletter).

In Thurston County, the well-known Rebecca Howard was proprietor of the Pacific House in Olympia. Rebecca came from Massachusetts just prior to 1860 with her husband, Alex Howard.

These pioneers' stories can be supported and documented by records in our archival collection.

66	Knuthers Service	41	M	Mr Farmer	500	500	Missouri	1	38
67	Washington George	53	M	11	5000	1500	Virginia	1	39
	— Many	30	F	Ms Keeping House			Louisiana		40

1870 U.S. Federal census, George Washington and Kruthers families.

of them later moved up to Pierce County where Allen Miller had a shoeshine business. All three are buried in Tacoma, Washington.

Husband and wife
Charles and M.A.
Alleman settled in
Centralia shortly before