

PIONEER ASSOCIATION
OF THE STATE OF
WASHINGTON

Next Meeting

February 26, 2005

Featured Speaker:

Carver Gayton

*Director, Northwest
African-American Museum*

Family History Speaker:

Karen Gerrard

*"From Pioneer Life to the
Banker's Wife and Beyond"*

Meeting begins
at 1:00 p.m.

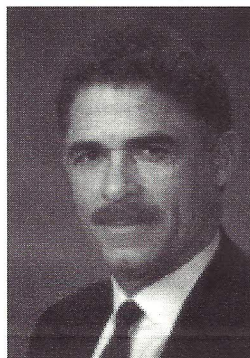
Pioneer Hall
1642 43rd Ave E
Seattle, WA

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February 26 General Meeting presentation:

African-American pioneers: In Washington State's past and present



Carver Gayton

Carver Clark Gayton has had a long and varied life and several careers. He is a descendant of one of the earliest pioneer families in Washington (and brother of one of our very own Pioneer Board members, John Gayton), as well as the newly selected Director of the Northwest African American Museum — and these are only a few of the ways to describe the man who will be our February 26 speaker.

Carver, his brother John and six siblings were raised in the Madrona area of Seattle. Carver was a student leader and athlete in both high school and at the University of Washington. He has been a teacher, FBI agent, director of a state agency and Seattle School Board member, as well as active in church and community projects. He was also a logical choice when recently selected as the first Director of the Northwest African-American Museum.

In his presentation to the Pioneers, Mr. Gayton plans to share the journey of his great-grandfather, Lewis Clarke, from former slave and abolitionist to Washington pioneer. Lewis Clarke and his family migrated across Canada to Vancouver, British Columbia, eventually settling in Washington. Carver Gayton will use that story as a backdrop for answering questions, including: What brought blacks to the Northwest? How did living in this area change blacks who came? How have blacks influenced this area? As Carver Gayton, himself, has stated: "We really do have a unique story to tell about African-American history, tradition and culture in this part of the United States."

Answering such questions will also be a central role in the new Northwest African-American Museum, which will be housed in the old Colman School just off I-90. The building, restoration of which is set to begin in early 2006, will not only include the museum, but 22,000 square feet of apartments as part of the Urban League Village.

Come to Pioneer Hall on Saturday, February 26, at 1:00 p.m. to hear Carver Gayton, get updated on Pioneer projects and hear the family history of Karen Gerrard. Door prizes, refreshments and a chance to visit with fellow pioneers will complete the afternoon. Hope to see you there.

Pioneer Association OF THE State of Washington

1642 43rd Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98112

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Pioneer Hall Hours

From October through March
Open Houses are held
on the second Sunday
of each month.
1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

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Pioneer Presences

Jeff Christensen, Editor
Barbara Krohn, Editor Emeritus

Contributors this issue:
Jeff Christensen, Carol Hawkins,
Peggy Parietti, Gary Zimmerman

Pioneer Presences (USPS 533-750) is published four times a year as part of yearly membership dues (allocated at) \$5 per person, per year, by the Pioneer Association of the State of Washington, 1642 42nd Ave E., Seattle, WA 98112. Postage paid at Seattle, WA.

Postmaster: send address changes to *Pioneer Presences*, 1642 42nd Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112.

President's comments

Happy new year to all of my fellow Pioneers. The year 2005 has really started with some weather-related problems, but in the Northwest you never can tell what it will do. Our problems are minor when we hear what the rest of the country is going through, much less the tragedy in Southeast Asia. Let's hope all will go well for everyone the rest of this winter! And I hope this will be a good year for us all.

Don't forget that Pioneer Hall is now open an extra day each month from March through October (and only once a month otherwise). The added opening has attracted more people in to see what we have on display. I invite any member who might enjoy working during Open House to come join us on the second or fourth Sunday of each month from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. - it's fun and I think you'll enjoy it. Whether you're officially volunteering or simply want to come out and give your support, everyone is welcome!

Work on Pioneer Hall sometimes seems never ending, but it needs to be done, so it goes on. It looks like the back door off the kitchen will be our next project. The door itself, original to the Hall, is not in very good shape and we need a better locking system. Our search for a replacement is about complete and we hope to have a strong, new door in place soon.

Please do come out to our meetings. We strive to present interesting programs and February's meeting will be no different. Pioneer descendant Carver Gayton, recently named as Director of the Northwest African-American Museum, will be our special presenter at this meeting.

I want to personally thank all the active members who arrange our programs, work on our newsletter and keep things running smoothly at the Hall - we all benefit from their efforts, and those efforts are appreciated.

Shirley Wright
President



Karen Gerrard presents family history at February 26 meeting

The family history speaker for the February 26 meeting will be Karen Gerrard, descendant of Washington pioneer Noyes Stone. Her presentation, "From Pioneer Life to Banker's Wife and Beyond" will tell the story of her great-grandmother, Arabella Stone Amunds, who in 1852 came as a little girl to Cowlitz County, Washington, from Hanover, Indiana (see cover for meeting details).

New plans underway for Annual Meeting

Changes are in the works for our traditional Annual Meeting and Salmon Bake, this year scheduled to be held June 25, 2005. Prompted in part by changes to city guidelines and in the fees associated with holding our annual meeting in the public park across from Pioneer Hall, the Board of Officers of the Pioneer Association has decided to move the entirety of the day's events to Pioneer Hall.

Over the past year, the City of Seattle has established new taxes and fees for group use of the public park space adjacent to Pioneer Hall in Madison Park. Based on those fees and the number of reservations being made for the picnic in recent years, it was decided to move the meal which follows our business meeting and featured speakers for the day to within the Hall. The change will help keep the meeting affordable, and allow new members and visitors a chance to spend more time among the displays and resources of our museum and library. Attendees will still be welcome to enjoy good weather (if we have it) and socializing outside the Hall and at the park.

Details about the Annual Meeting, which will feature a presentation celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Lewis & Clark Expedition's arrival in our area by noted local historian Junius Rochester, will appear in the next issue of *Pioneer Presences*.

A word on membership

Jeff Christensen, Membership Committee

One of the major drives within our organization this past year has been to closely examine the membership of the Pioneer Association. In recent years, many factors have led to our membership roster becoming out of date. Once that situation became clear, our Membership Committee began the task of identifying missing, lost and out-of-date memberships while working to update our records and re-enlist inactive members.

After two years, we finally believe we have a solid list of current "active" members. The effort to be thorough and not to lose any wayward or potential new members, however, took a little longer than anticipated. Along the way, I promised on more than one occasion that new membership cards and letters of confirmation would be forthcoming and, clearly, that hasn't happened. By the time the dust truly settled on our membership closet-cleaning, it became clear that much of the 2004-05 Membership Year has passed by.

Rather than expend the money and volunteer energy to send out the promised cards, and then repeat the process again only six months later, we have decided to wait until the May membership renewal period to get back on track. The delays, we believe, have been worth it, as we now have a clear and concise record of you, our members. As the individual responsible for issuing membership cards and confirmations, however, I personally would like to apologize for any confusion or inconvenience generated by the ongoing promise of membership card being "on their way soon" and express our appreciation for your patience.

Pioneer Activities

Want to help the Association by giving of your time, energy and expertise but now sure how?

Below is contact information for some (but certainly not all) of the people who currently help coordinate volunteer efforts on behalf of the Association:

President

Shirley Wright
425-488-6811

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206-322-7955

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Historian/Collections Coordinator

Gary Zimmerman
425-803-0938

Family History Speaker Coordinator

Peggy Parietti
206-232-8516

A city known for tolerance and opportunity

Seattle was an early home to black pioneers

Less than year after the event that local historians mark as the birth of Seattle - the landing at Alki Point of the Denny Party and the schooner *Exact* - the future city already had its first black resident: Manuel Lopes.

While his obituary mistakenly identified him as Portuguese, historians have since uncovered the fact that Lopes was born in Africa around 1812. Lopes was a New England sailor before moving to Seattle. He opened a restaurant after his arrival in the future Emerald City, later opening a barbershop, as well, using a barber chair he had shipped from the East Coast via Cape Horn. Although blacks were a relatively small percentage of an admittedly small population (in 1880 there were 19 among a population of 3,000) they played an important role in the growth and development of Seattle into a thriving city.

Pioneers made the trek westward for many reasons: new starts, opportunity, adventure and dreams of a better life. African-American pioneers were no different, except that they could add "seeking racial equality" to their list of reasons. Unfortunately, prejudice seldom respects boundaries (geographic or otherwise) and many of the early pioneers found destinations like the Oregon Territory to be little better than the places they left behind. As early as 1844, the Provisional Government of Oregon voted to exclude blacks from its territory, forcing the new arrivals (see Page 5) to seek more tolerant quarters. In many cases this meant moving north into the area which later became Washington Territory and, ultimately, our current state.

The Columbia River - geographically and socially - became its own version of a Mason-Dixon Line, as the more rural and less tolerant Oregon Territory fought against black settlement, while the more urban and merchant-oriented land of immigrants to the north, Washington Territory, welcomed them. While some racial tension and barriers clearly still existed even in Washington, it was much more a land of opportunity for blacks than the places they had left and, in the case of Oregon Territory, the one they initially headed for.

By the time it became a state in 1889, Washington already had the first black man admitted to its bar extolling its virtues. It was, said Robert O. Lee, a place where "race prejudice would not interfere with (a black man's) prosperity". Only a year after

establishing itself as a state, Washington passed the Public Accommodations Act, which decreed that black and whites would share equal access to restaurants, transportation and inns.

Black pioneers were clearly a minority in the region, but the pioneer spirit - which said that hard work, commitment and ingenuity could get you ahead in these new lands - was alive and well, and soon Seattle had black politicians, businessmen and land owners: opportunities not typically encouraged, and often not possible, in lands to the east. One of Seattle's best-known early black settlers was William Grose (aka Gross) who arrived in 1861 and joined the number of blacks starting up in the barber trade in town. By the 1880's William Grose owned not only a barbershop, but a hotel, restaurant and other properties and was, by several accounts, the wealthiest African-American in Seattle at the time.

Other black pioneers may not have been as successful, accepting more commonly available menial jobs and facing quieter, less obvious, forms of discrimination. When the first black student enrolled at the University of Washington in 1874, some white parents complained and one withdrew his children.

While minority groups like the Chinese fought to carve out a place for themselves in a new land, other groups, like the indigenous Native-Americans of the Pacific Northwest, fought to retain a place on the land they had called home for hundreds of years.

African-American society continued its steady development, however. Seattle's first black church, the Jones Street African Methodist Episcopal Church (which exists today on the Capitol Hill site of the original congregation) began meeting in 1886. The Colored Ladies Society became the first black women's organization in Seattle, in December 1889. In 1891 the church women of African Methodist Episcopal formed a branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union to work with the city's poor.

Overall, Seattle's perceived "tolerance" towards African-Americans, and the opportunity to start fresh in a part of the country not already steeped in racial prejudice proved an attractive draw to many black pioneers and both they and the city they came to call home benefitted from their settlement here.

Black pioneer George Washington Bush played important role in our state history

Jeff Christensen

When Washington State voters decided in the November 2004 election not to support George W. Bush in his bid to serve as our nation's president for a second term, those with a keen memory of our state's history were reminded of another George W. Bush - black pioneer George Washington Bush - and how politics and the search for social equality helped shape his role as one of our state's earliest pioneers.

George Washington Bush was born free near Philadelphia sometime between 1780 and 1790. Little is known about his early life before The War of 1812, when he fought under General Andrew Jackson in the Battle of New Orleans. After his service in the military, George Washington Bush worked for a French fur trader based in St. Joseph, Missouri. In 1820, while trapping and hunting fur for the company, Bush (with several companions) made his first trip to the Pacific Coast, traveling from Mexico to the Columbia River.

In July of 1831 George Washington Bush married Isabella James, the Tennessee-born daughter of a Baptist preacher, and the couple had five sons born over the next decade.

When an old military friend, Colonel Michael T. Simmons, announced his plan to form a party to travel to the Northwest along the Oregon Trail, George Bush sold his family's property in order to join and help finance the expedition. The Bush family left Missouri early in 1844 hoping to escape the racial inequality and prejudice they had suffered back in Missouri.

In late fall of 1844 the Simmons party arrived at The Dalles in Oregon Territory. Much to his dismay, however, George Bush found that the racial discrimination he thought he was leaving behind was alive and functioning in Oregon. Settlers in the territory had recently voted to exclude blacks from settling in the area. Dismayed and disappointed, the Bush family faced the prospect of attempting to head south, to Mexico, or north to the relatively unexplored and unsettled lands north of the Columbia River. Having made friends among the French Canadians and Indians during his previous fur trapping expeditions, Bush and his companions were allowed to cross the Columbia River into an area then-disputed to be both part of the Canadian and Oregon (U.S.) territories.

Bush's party reached Puget Sound in 1845, settling into an area near Olympia now known as Bush Prairie. Their presence helped pave the way for other American settlers coming to the area, lending weight to U.S. claims against Great Britain for ownership of the disputed area. In 1846, with American settlers well-ensconced in the lands north of the Columbia River, Britain finally capitulated and signed an agreement naming the 49th Parallel as the official Canadian-U.S. border, which stands today.

Far removed from the white-settled Willamette Valley to the south, Bush and his family were allowed to establish a new life in relative peace. They were not, however, allowed to legally claim the land they settled because of the black exclusion laws. Eight years after Bush and his family settled there, the land between the Columbia River and the 49th Parallel broke away from Oregon and became Washington Territory. In 1854, Michael Simmons - who led the expedition which brought the Bush family to our area - was elected a legislator in the provision government. Simmons led attempts to change the anti-black laws, driven in part by his desire to see his friend George Bush given the rights which had originally prompted the Bush family's exodus west. George Washington Bush was finally granted official title to his property by a special waiver from the U.S. Congress in 1855. He was not, however, granted citizenship or the right to vote.

The Bush family became stalwarts of their community, and well-respected in the newly formed Washington Territory. One of George and Isabella's sons, William Owen Bush became a member of the first state legislature of Washington. George Washington Bush died in 1863, but not without having left an important mark on the history of our state.

Ed. Note: To learn more about the role African-Americans played in the history of Washington State and our country, visit your local library, museum or the Internet.

Background information for the article appearing above came from articles in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *King County's HistoryLink* and the online reference web site "*Afro-American Almanac*", which can be found at <http://www.toptags.com/aama>.

A brief look at some early African-Americans settlers in our area
Black pioneers in Washington Territory: a timeline

Editor's Note: February is "Black History Month", a time to put focus on the events and achievements associated with African-Americans in our country. Black pioneers played an instrumental part in establishing and developing Washington Territory nearly from the very beginning. Below is a brief timeline detailing significant dates associated with some of the African-Americans who had a notable impact on the history of our region - from the 1852 arrival of Seattle's first black citizen, Manuel Lopes, to the year in which Washington became a state.

Not listed below is biographical information on George Washington Bush, one of the area's earliest and arguably most important black pioneers. The story of his family's settlement in Washington is detailed in length on Page 5 of this newsletter.

Manuel Lopes, Seattle's first black citizen, arrives in 1852

Manuel Lopes (1812-?), Seattle's first black citizen, arrives in 1852. Lopes is a barber and his barbershop is the village's first black-owned business. He plays the snare drum, and is known for his generosity to his customers — loggers, millhands, sailors, and miners.

Pioneer William Grose, an African American, arrives in Seattle in 1861

In 1861, William Grose (1835-1898), the son of a free African American restaurant owner, becomes the second African American to settle in Seattle. A barber and a hotel owner, he purchases 12 acres of land from Henry Yesler (1810-1892) in the East Madison district, which becomes the nucleus of one of the two African American neighborhoods during the latter part of the nineteenth century. William Grose died in 1898.

African American pioneer Matthias Monet opens a restaurant in Seattle in 1864.

In 1864, Matthias Monet, an African American pioneer and native of Oregon, arrives in Seattle and opens Monet's Seattle Restaurant and Coffee Saloon opposite the Yesler, Denny and Company's Store.

In 1866, Monet purchased 17 acres on Lake Union, which he later sold. His Railroad House and Restaurant opened in 1869 and was valued at \$8,700 in the 1870 census.

Black property owner William Hedges arrives in Seattle in 1864

In about 1864, William Hedges (d. 1871) arrives in Seattle. He becomes the African American who owns the most property during the territorial years.

Illiterate and probably a fugitive slave, he purchased and leased property in several areas of the city, including 47 acres on Green Lake, four acres on Capitol Hill, and a lot on the northwest corner of 4th Avenue S facing Washington Street.

He died in 1871, leaving his property to his children who lived in Baltimore County, Maryland.

George and Mary Jane Washington found the town of Centerville (now Centralia) on January 8, 1875.

On January 8, 1875, George Washington (1817-1905) and his wife Mary Jane file the plat that establishes the town of Centerville, soon to be renamed Centralia, in Lewis County in Southwest Washington. The initial plat consisted of four blocks platted into lots, which Washington offered for sale at \$10 per lot to anyone who would settle in the town. Washington later filed additional plats, adding to the size of the town. The Washingtons gave land to their Baptist congregation for a church and cemetery, and helped build the church. They also set aside land for a public square, which became Centralia's City Park, now named George Washington Park. George Washington, a pioneer from Virginia, is the son of an African American slave and a woman of English descent. For the next 30 years, he is a leading citizen, promoter, and benefactor of the town he founds.

African American pioneers John and Mary Conna settle in Federal Way area in 1883.

In 1883, African American pioneers John Conna (1836-1921) and Mary Conna (1840-1907) arrive in the Federal Way area and settle on their 157 acre homestead. John Conna becomes the first black political appointee in the history of Washington Territory.

John Conna was a Civil War veteran and as such received with the claim two of the five years of required residency.

Republican Party leaders appointed Conna Assistant Sergeant at Arms of the 1889 Washington Territorial House of Representatives, making him the first black political appointee in the Washington Territory. In addition, he served as Sergeant at Arms of the Extraordinary Session of the Senate and at the regular session in 1890.

Horace Cayton, the prominent newspaper publisher, credited John Conna with framing the Public Accommodations Act of 1890, and lobbying for it. The Act entitled all citizens, including persons of color, to civil and legal rights such as access to accommodations at inns, theaters, restaurants, and public conveyances.

African Americans Charles Harvey and Eva Ellis Harvey arrive in Seattle in 1886.

In 1886, Charles H. Harvey and Eva Ellis Harvey come to Seattle. By 1889, Harvey and his partner James Booker operate the Handicap Company, a contracting business with offices in the Pioneer Building in Pioneer Square. By the turn of the century Mr. Harvey was employing 15 to 20 men in his contracting business.

Charles H. Harvey becomes a charter member of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church, Seattle's first black church.

Seattle's First African Methodist Episcopal Church is founded in 1886.

In 1886, a Seattle group of African Methodist Episcopalians, served by traveling missionaries, begin meeting in each other's homes. Under the leadership of Seaborn J. Collins, they establish a Sunday School for children.

The formal organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church took place early in 1890 at the Seattle home of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Lawrence.

Black publisher Horace Cayton arrives in Seattle in 1886.

In 1886, Horace Cayton (1859-1940) comes to Seattle from Mississippi and by 1894 is publishing the *Seattle Republican* newspaper.

Horace Cayton was born a slave, the son of a slave and a slavemaster's daughter. After emancipation his father sent all his children to school. Cayton attended Alcorn College, where he studied with United States Senator Hiram Revels, for seven years.

Upon arriving in Seattle in 1886, he became a political reporter for the *Post-Intelligencer* (and was a supporter of the Republican Party).

In May 1894, he began publishing the *Republican*. He was assisted in this enterprise by his wife, the writer Susan Revels Cayton.

African American John T. Gayton arrives in Seattle in 1889.

In 1889, John T. Gayton (1868-1954) arrives in Seattle as a coachman for a Mississippi family. A founder of one of Seattle's leading African American families, he works as librarian for the Federal Court for 20 years.

Robert O. Lee becomes first African American to practice law in Washington in 1889.

In 1889, Robert O. Lee arrives in Seattle and becomes the first African American to practice law in Washington.

African American entrepreneur Robert A. Clark arrives in Seattle in 1889.

In 1889, Robert A. Clark, an African American entrepreneur, arrives in Seattle. Clark operates a drayage and delivery service out of his office at 2nd Avenue and Madison Street.

Biographical sketches included on these pages are culled in part from HistoryLink. HistoryLink (www.historylink.org) is the first online encyclopedia of local & state history created expressly for the Internet. (TM) Copyright 2005 History Ink. All rights reserved. HistoryLink is a registered U.S. Trademark of History Ink.

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Next general meeting of the Pioneers: February 26, 2005 1:00 p.m.

November 20 Pioneer Association meeting was rich in history

This past November the membership of the Pioneer Association of the State of Washington gathered for its annual fall meeting. More than 40 members gathered around the great hearth of Pioneer Hall to hear stories of local history, listen to live entertainment and mingle with their fellow Pioneers.

The afternoon began with a family history presentation by Louise Jones-Brown. Louise is a descendant of Joseph Samuel Jones, as well as the Maple family. She not only gave an interesting presentation on the local history of her family's settlement of the Duwamish, but brought with her many scenes of local life as painted by her ancestor, Beulah Maple.

That presentation was followed by a discussion about the history and current displays of Pioneer Hall, given in two parts by Gary Zimmerman and Catherine Spedden, respectively.

The afternoon concluded with a performance by local female a capella group "Harmony 24/7" - who performed holiday favorites and standards - and a social period of mingling and refreshments.



Photo: Peggy Parretti

*Door prize winners from the last General Meeting (l to r):
Don Hysons, Davie McCallum, Mignonett Wright, Ruth Rankin*