

for several months, and then traveled back to Missouri. The expeditions were considered a tremendous success and York was given his freedom in 1806. He



York of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

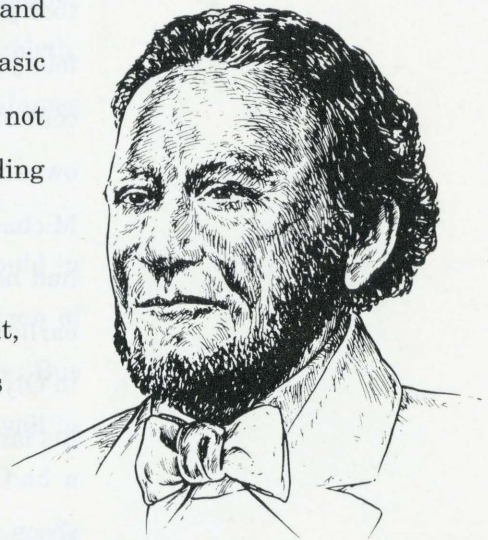
soon left Missouri for parts unknown, but rumors from native Americans at the time indicate that York went back west and lived with the various tribes he had met during the expedition.

Marcus Lopez and York are the only black explorers we know about during this time. It is safe to assume that others probably existed, as the area was popular with fur traders, sailors and other adventurers.

The Settlers

In the early to middle 1800s, the United States did not offer much opportunity for black people. Slavery was still in existence in the South and blacks were not considered citizens, even if they were born free. The basic rights to own land, travel freely and pursue a chosen profession were not widely available to blacks. In fact, Missouri had a law on the books forbidding blacks to settle in the state for more than six months.

The West, with its wide open spaces and lack of structured government, held great appeal for many pioneers. From the early 1800s on, caravans of settlers made the long, perilous journey across the country, seeking land and opportunity. Many followed the Oregon Trail, ending up at the Columbia River.



*George Bush,
Early Settler*

Among the steady stream of immigrants to the area were a number of black men and their families, including George Bush. Born in Pennsylvania a free man, Bush moved to Missouri and married Isabell, a white woman. In 1844, at the age of fifty, Bush, his wife and five children left Missouri with 800 others.