

Just who were the black Spokane pioneers who made all of this happen? Read on to learn more about them.

Spokane's Black Pioneers

Prior to the turn of the century, as early as the years before Washington achieved statehood, black pioneers made their mark in Spokane Falls. Among the most prominent of the early black settlers here were the following:



Daniel K. Oliver

Daniel K. Oliver The first known black settler here, arriving in November 1878, seven years after the first recorded white settlers, was identified in the 1880 census as a then 33-year-old mulatto born in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. His wife Amanda was identified as 23 years of age, white and a native of Oregon, and they had a 5-year-old son, Charles W., also identified as white.

A carpenter by trade, Daniel Oliver bought an interest in the Wiscombe, Oliver & Johnson planing mill in 1887 and became its foreman. In later years he added mining and real estate interests to his livelihood. In 1896 he began a two-year term as a city councilman and also built Oliver Hall, a two-story brick structure that was a social gathering place in the Oliver block at 334-36 Riverside.

A member of the Spokane County Pioneer Society and a Grand Army of the Republic veteran of the Civil War, Oliver died Jan. 28, 1906, and was buried at Greenwood Cemetery. His son Charles is listed in city directories as a clerk at P. Mertz Cigars and Tobacco in 1896, at Pacific Cigar Store in 1900, and as a fitter at Spokane Gas Co. in 1904.