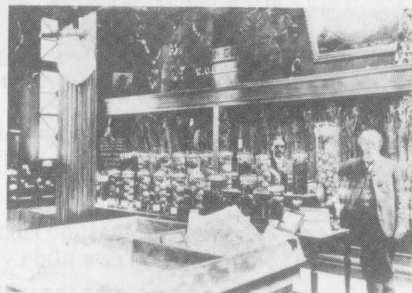


County. Bush was among many settlers trying to take advantage of the Homestead Act. The act stated that if an American citizen took possession of unsettled land and showed improvements on that land within four years, the land would legally belong to that person -- without putting out a cent of cash to purchase it. Because blacks were not American citizens, land ownership was still a dream for them. Bush's friend, a white man named Michael T. Simmons, helped Bush obtain ownership of his homestead. Bush had helped Simmons and his family immigrate to Washington several years earlier. One of the first acts of the Provisional Government in Olympia was to approve George Bush's petition to own his land.

In spite of his difficulty in obtaining ownership of land, Bush did very well in the Northwest. He was well known as an excellent farmer and was so prosperous that he purchased the first ship owned by the early settlers. This ship, "The Orbit," cost thirty-five thousand dollars and was used to ship wood products to ports in California.

George Bush's family also prospered. His eldest son, William Owen Bush, surpassed his father's farming abilities to the extent that he exhibited his produce at the Philadelphia Exposition during the Centennial Celebration. William Owen was also elected to the first State Legislature after Washington became a state in 1889. His greatest accomplishment there was to help pass legislation establishing a college for the study of agricultural science. This college later became Washington State University at Pullman.



*William Owen Bush and his produce exhibit at the Philadelphia Exposition during the Centennial Celebration.*