

HISTORY OF THE ROSLYN-NORTHWEST BLACK PIONEERS
by Ethel Craven-Sweet, President

Over 100 years ago, August 21, 1888, a group of almost 1,000 Black miners arrived in Roslyn, Washington from back East and the South, recruited by the Northern Pacific Coal Company, to unknowingly break a white coal miners' strike. When the train reached Missoula, Montana, 50 armed Pinkerton guards got on board, and the miners were informed there might be trouble ahead and were given guns for protection.

September 30, 1888, Harriet Jackson-Taylor-Williams, my grandmother, arrived with the trainload of women. Later, Dave Williams came to Roslyn where they met and married. My mother, Mrs. Ethel Williams-Craven, was born June 9, 1906, and still lives in Roslyn.

In 1983, Mrs. Craven was the first Black Upper Kittitas County (Cle Elum, Roslyn) Pioneer Days Queen. A photograph of her, taken by Barbara Witt, a neighbor, was ONE of 100 out of 130,000 entries chosen in PARADE MAGAZINE and FujiFILM, Inc.'s 1987 "WE THE PEOPLE" nationwide Bicentennial of the Constitution contest. Alex Haley was one of the judges. The photograph is on display in the National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

In 1969, a photograph of her husband, SAMUEL CRAVEN(s) (deceased) was chosen the best submitted in a Seattle Post-Intelligencer contest.

WILLIAM CRAVEN, the FIRST BLACK MAYOR IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, Mayor of Roslyn 1975-1980, is Mr. and Mrs. Craven's son, and the grandson of Dave and Harriet Jackson-Taylor-Williams.

The Roslyn-Northwest Black Pioneers, an IRS 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, was incorporated by cousins Ethel Craven-Sweet and Elaine Ophelia Hart (Dillard) (deceased March 14, 1992) to inform and educate the public about the above and other important contributions of Roslyn and the entire Northwest Black pioneers and their descendants. As one means of educating the public, we build and enter cultural, historical, and educational floats in parades in Washington, and we have received many awards for our beautiful, unique floats.

We hold an Emancipation Day Picnic annually the first Saturday in August in Roslyn. We also have a traveling educational exhibit and display of coal mining and old-time artifacts, and are available for engagements.

Members pictured on the following page are: Back row: Linda (Jimmie) Lee Craven-Cornelius, Ernest Pike, and Gertrude Craven-Hightower. Front row: Ethel Craven-Sweet, Mrs. Ethel Williams-Craven (86 years old) holding great-granddaughter, Anniqwia Cornelius-Rutledge, and Kanashibushan.

Other members and friends are: Peter Mortensen, our engineer and float driver, Harriet Joyce Craven-Greenwood, Peggy Gratton, Leola Mae McClain-Craven-Woffort, Sammy Craven, Mary Hart-Cullen, Beulah Mae Hart-Grimm, and many others.

We thank Mr. and Mrs. George of Jordan's Drug Store for their many contributions to our organization, the Prince Hall Masons, and the FACTS newspaper.