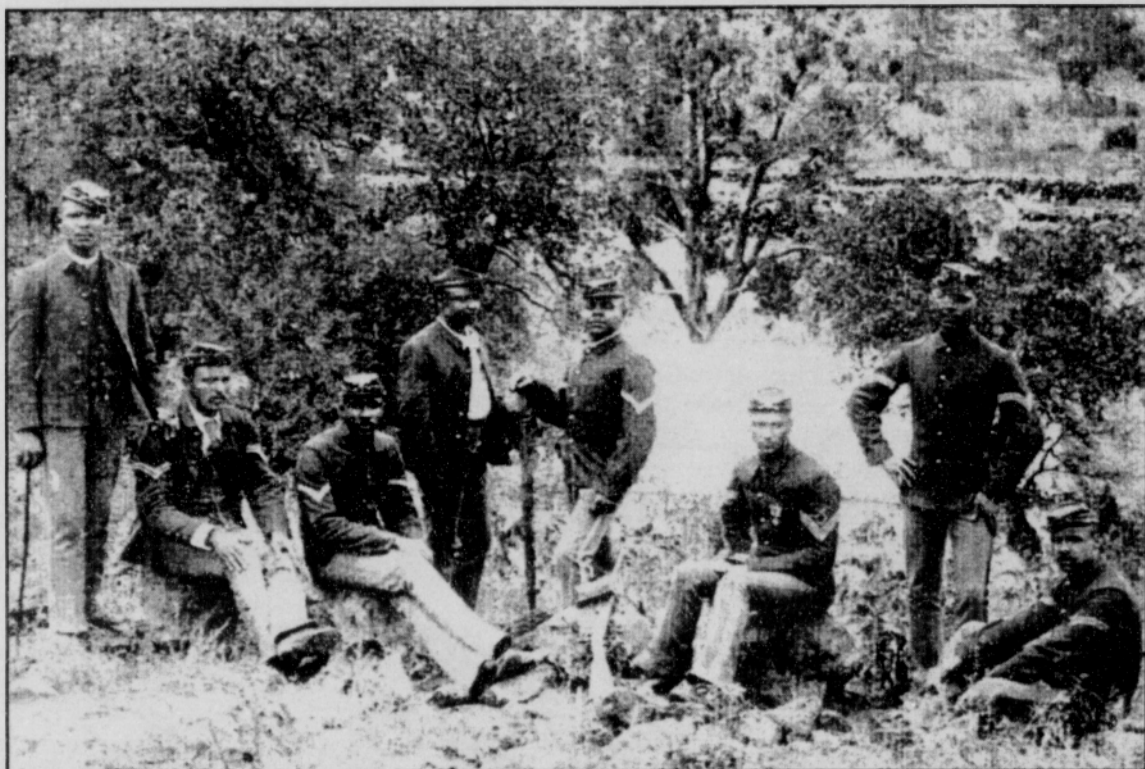


Buffalo Soldiers of the Old West

The Earth would nourish the vegetation that the animal ate. The Buffalo would feed and clothe the Native Americans, completing the circle of life.

Native Americans consider the buffalo a sacred animal. All who took part in the hunting of them would drink the animal's spirit - its blood. This was to complete the circle of life. When Native Americans died, their ashes and dust would nourish the Earth.

From 1870 to the late 1800's, Buffalo Soldiers had achieved one of the most outstanding records in military history: they patrolled and kept the peace under the conditions of racism from the citizens they protected, covering ter-



Black cavalry in the field.

By MARK LITTLE FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

I grew up watching movies of white Cavalry charging and riding to the rescue of pioneers and covered wagon trains begin attacked by Native Americans. Little

did I know at the time that those images should have included the Black Buffalo men on horseback who served this country with distinction. Most of their four regiments of the 9th, 10th, 24th and 25th were stationed in the most

demanding regions of uncharted territory of the American Southwest. It was their Indian adversaries who gave them the nickname of Buffalo Soldiers. Their black and curly hair resembled that of the buffalo. They honored the Black cavalymen for their bravery, and the troopers accepted the name as a mark of honor.



Buffalo Soldier Sargeant in uniform with his wife in 1888. Buffalo Soldiers re-enlisted several times because there weren't many job opportunities for blacks.

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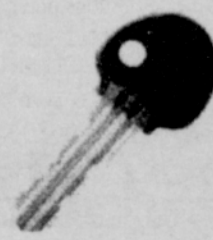

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ritories from the Mississippi to the Pacific Northwest and from the Rio Grande to the Canadian border. Buffalo Soldiers received some of the worst assignments the Army had to offer. Some of their duties included stringing telegraph lines and building or repairing outposts. They also helped to capture Great War Chiefs and criminals like Nana, Victorio, Geronimo, Sitting Bull, Lone Wolf, Pancho Villa and Billy the Kid. Their story is one of significant achievements under adverse conditions. They could not overcome prejudice and discrimination. This element in our social structure denied them the recognition for a job well done. Even through all of this, their battle cry, "We can, We will" and "Ready and Forward," could not be extinguished.

The history of the Buffalo Soldiers has special meaning and connection to Oregon history. One of the most famous Buffalo Soldiers, Moses Williams, a winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor, served in Oregon in the 1880's and is buried in Vancouver, Washington.