

records such as diaries and journals that are not indexed or listed anywhere. If you cannot travel to the area, check with a local genealogy society or library to see if someone in the area will do your research for a nominal fee or even free. These institutions also may have an index to the local newspaper or histories. Often there are free or inexpensive workshops on how to find material in the local area sponsored by genealogical societies, libraries, museums, or historical groups.

Do not let the fact that you do not have a computer or are inexperienced at using one prevent you from using the online resources. Libraries everywhere have Internet access and may even subscribe to specialized databases such as Ancestry.com and Heritage Quest online. Many have staff that are very knowledgeable and can provide you with expert guidance.

Joining a local genealogical or historical society in the area where you live or one where your ancestor resided may also lead you to other resources and paths for locating information. You may discover a wealth of material that will make your ancestor “come alive” or even develop an interest in the history of the region where your ancestor lived or in genealogy. This could lead to a hobby that you enjoy or a volunteer activity to preserve and share materials.

To obtain an application and the instructions for completing it, you can print it from the website:

1. Go to <http://www.rootsweb.com/~wasgs/>
2. Click on *projects*
3. Click on *instructions*, after reading them click on *application*

Or you can request them by sending in this form:

Name _____
Address: _____
City _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail to: Frank McLean, 3811 McLean Dr, Yakima, WA 98902



Washington State
Genealogical Society

HONOR YOUR EARLY WASHINGTON ANCESTORS WITH A CERTIFICATE



Sarah Yesler
(1822-1887), age 46, 1868
Courtesy UW Special Collections
(Neg No. UW2439)

Washington State Genealogical Society
1901 S 12th Ave
Union Gap, WA 98903-1256

Description of the Project

The Pioneer Certificate project was begun to celebrate the centennial of Washington statehood in 1989. The initial certificates were issued to applicants who could prove their ancestors were in Washington Territory prior to its admission to the Union. These descendants' names, almost 18,000, are printed in a two volume set of books entitled *Washington Pioneers*. Two more volumes have since been added.

Pioneer Certificates are still being issued to descendants if they can prove that their an-



cestor was in Washington by 11 November 1889. *First Citizens* certificates are available to descendants of those that arrived before 31 December 1900.



To obtain either of these certificates, an applicant must prove that their ancestor was within the borders of present-day Washington State before the specified date. Some suggestions for how you can proceed follow.

Proving Your Ancestor in Washington

After you have searched home sources for deeds, Bibles, marriage certificates, letters, etc. that will show your ancestor's presence and your own line of descent, you can begin to look at other resources in county records or in libraries.

A good place to begin with Washington research is the website maintained by the Washington State Genealogical Society (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~wasgs/>). Click on Projects and you will find the instructions and an application for the certificates. Another project listed is the *Washington State Genealogical Resource Guide*. The latter will provide a brief background on each county along with a listing of sources and resources for that county. Most Washington counties are included. Also listed on this website are local genealogical societies throughout the state. Many societies have their own websites with more resources (such as cemetery, marriage, census records) for that county. Click on *Research in Washington for a list* libraries, societies, etc. where you can find info. Most of these are linked to the named source.

A particularly useful site is the Digital Archives (<http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/default.aspx>), a project of the Secretary of State. Here you can search the digital archives by name or by county. Included in this collection are over 27 million records: census (territorial census are especially useful to prove residence



prior to statehood), land, and other early records such as the *Election Returns from Washington Territory's First Election in 1854* (left) and *Frontier Justice*. A section entitled genealogy links is also useful to the researcher. There are other ongoing and new projects of the Secretary of State so you should check their website.

Early local newspapers are a place to look when your ancestors do not show up in county records. The Washington State Library has the most complete collection of state newspapers but each local library will probably have the ones for their area. The *Territorial Newspaper Index* is available on microfilm in many libraries and archives branches. The State Library also has a complete collection of territorial censuses on microfilm as well as many early city directories and other microfilm.

Universities have specialized resources in their Archives and libraries that may contain information not found in any other location. So do the federal (Seattle branch) and state archives branches have unique items.

Most public libraries and historical societies maintain pamphlet files and other materials on people and events from their own local area. These may even be original