

# Tacoma's Buffalo Soldier Museum Honors A Proud And Historic Past

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TACOMA'S BUFFALO SOLDIER MUSEUM CONTINUES THE CELEBRATION OF ONE OF THE US MILITARY'S MOST VITAL AND RESPECTED UNITS.



When the United State's vigorously adopted the 'manifest destiny' philosophy and credo to move west in lands already occupied by indigenous Native Americans for thousands of years in the mid to late 1800s, there was a need for courageous, brave and expendable men to lead the way following some of the explorers like Lewis and Clark. The regiment sent forth to brave the weather, terrain, unknown lands and the fierce and endangered Indigenous warriors were highly regarded (by enemies and defenseless 'pioneers' alike) and came to be known as the 'Buffalo Soldiers'.



The Buffalo Soldiers were commissioned to do some of the most important and thankless work for a nation where the African-American units, of whom the members did not enjoy the privileges of full citizenship throughout the existence of the units which concluded active duty in 1948 (beginning in 1866). These fine soldiers who took part in establishing forts, communities and settlements through the mid-western to the far western United States earned their legendary name from the Indigenous warriors with whom they were pitted against. It was the bravery, courage and texture of the Buffalo Soldiers' hair which Indigenous warriors regarded so highly, as the nearly extinct buffalo of the U.S. Plains is a sacred creature - now over hunted to the brink of existence in less than 100 years.

Although this transmission is but skimming the surface of the almost-mythological heritage of the Buffalo Soldiers, when entire courses and degrees could be designed behind their many valiant, valuable and underappreciated characteristics, Tacoma's Buffalo Soldier museum, with authentic documents, issued military uniform and supplies as well as dedicated libraries serves as an invaluable institution in recognizing this indispensable unit. The Buffalo Soldiers established safe zones for newly arrived 'Americans' in Spokane and Eastern Washington as well delivering scouting and surveying services for Fort Lewis (today Joint Base Lewis McChord), Fort Vancouver and many other notable, but now unattributed settlements in the Pacific Northwest. "The Buffalo Soldiers mean a lot to the Pacific Northwest", says Executive Director of the museum, Jackie Jones, "My father (Command Sergeant and Grand Marshall and POW of The Korean War, William Jones) was a Buffalo Soldier and it meant a lot for him to keep the legacy of these elite units alive." Today, Ms. Jones continues to honor her father's legacy, by upholding the foundation of The Buffalo Soldiers Museum.



In addition to keeping the Buffalo Soldier legacy alive via the museum located in Tacoma's historic Hilltop neighborhood, the museum hosts multiple special events per year - opening opportunities for the public to not only study and learn about a great chapter of service on behalf of the United States, but to be part of supporting the legacy. The museum offers opportunities for volunteers and operates on a limited schedule, for more information and to get involved with The Buffalo Soldier Museum (1940 S. Wilkeson St., Tacoma, WA 98405, (253) 272-4257) log on