

## Education

In most instances there were no schools for their children so, in their search for a better life, they had to appeal to the state educational authorities for permission and assistance to establish accredited public schools in their new communities. During this period, there was a state requirement that a group needed minimum of 20 students to start up a new school. In the course of this period at least two schools were started or organized by black pioneers. The Ole Washington family donated the land for the Waneta School in the Lower Valley. When the school was built in 1901, its first teacher, Mrs. Genevieve Searle, a white woman, boarded in the home of a black family, the Washington's, during the week and on weekends went to her parents' home on Old Highway 410 just north of Sunnyside. It is also interesting to note that, at that time, "the School Board of Waneta School was made up entirely of Negro patrons."



*Waneta School*

John L. Bedell, a black pioneer, petitioned the state for approval to start a school in the Squaw Creek area, up between Yakima and Ellensburg. One of the Bedell daughters, Orange, became a music teacher and taught music in the Ellensburg school district.

## Social Life

Blacks had some exciting times during the early 1900's. Black entertainers came to visit Yakima, such as Steppin Fetchit; who played at the Capital Theater in the early 1920's. While performing in Yakima he stayed at the John and Della Woods residence, primarily because of his love for home cooking and "home brew."



*Steppin Fetchit*