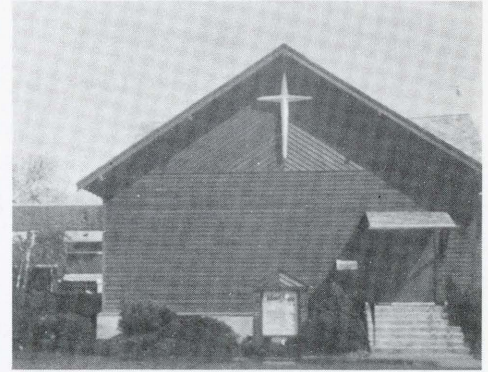


The Black Church

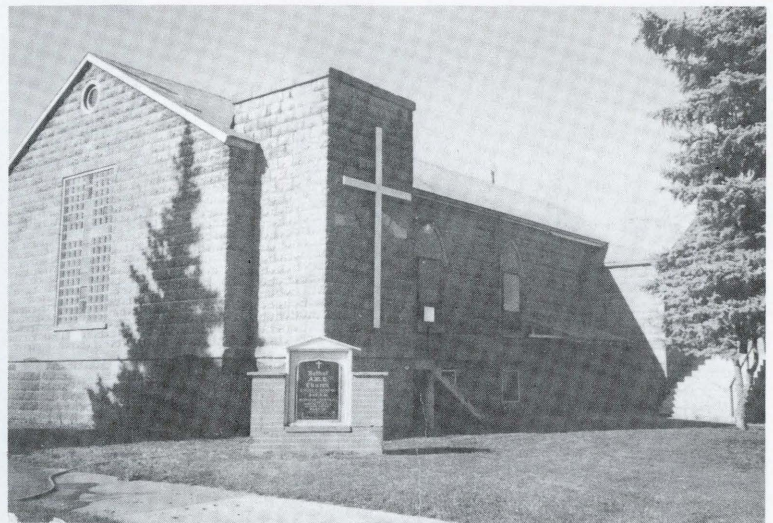
The black church became a focal point for pioneer families to gather for religious as well as social activities. Mount Hope Baptist Church, the oldest in the Yakima Valley, was established October 14, 1906. Mr. and Mrs. Ole Washington, believed to be the first blacks to settle in the Yakima Valley were Charter Members of Mount Hope and their daughter Mrs. Vivien Sears is still a member. Through the years, members of Mount Hope have started other churches, notably Moxee Avenue Missionary Baptist Church founded by "Mother" Annie Arnold; and the Greater Faith Baptist Church founded by Rev. Joe T. Denman and Mrs. Bessie Hackworth. However, Mount Hope still stands and maintains its prominent position as the "Oldest Black Church."

Just two months after Mount Hope was established, the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was established on December 6, 1906. Counted among its early members were the Jasper Evans family from which always prominent church member Della Woods came. The Burdine family and some of the Pioneer Taylor family as well as the Alex Harris family members date back to the early beginnings of Bethel. The Church has remained strong and continues to enjoy prominence in the City of Yakima.

The First Baptist Church of Toppenish was the first black church to be built in the Lower Yakima Valley at Toppenish. The land for this church, established in 1909, was donated by Black pioneers, Mr. & Mrs. Sine Record, who came to Toppenish around 1900. The Records and various members of their families, descendants of the Turners and Williams, helped build the church and were charter members.



*Mount Hope Baptist Church
Oct. 14, 1906*



*Bethel African Methodist Episcopal
Church, December 6, 1906.*



First Baptist Church