

THE PIONEERS

The Ole Washington Family

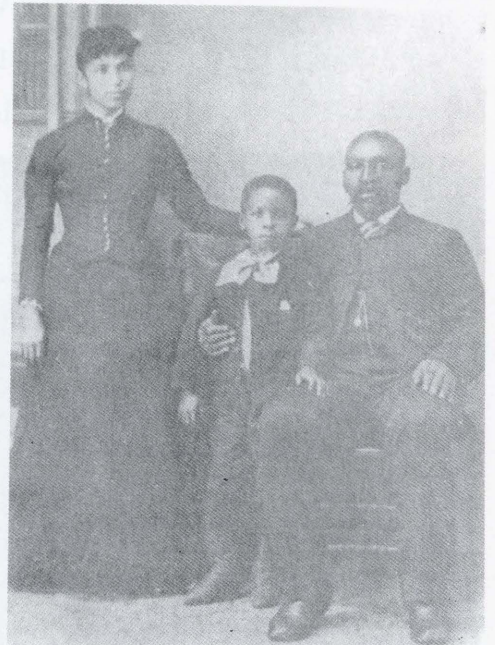
The Oldest Known Black Pioneer Family in the Valley

Ole Washington was one of the pioneer ranchers of early Yakima County. He began his farming operation in the spring of 1889, while the area was still a territory and Yakima County extended all the way to the Columbia River at Pasco.

Mr. Washington, a native of Nelson County, Virginia, and his wife Lucy Wells-Washington, also a native of Virginia, first came to Kittitas County where he was a fireman and engineer at Roslyn. On October 3rd of 1890, Mr. Washington took up a homestead of 160 acres in the lower end of the Yakima Valley, before even Sunnyside had been founded. In May 1892, he brought his family to the homestead and his descendants have remained in the area to this date. The family raised corn, hay and potatoes, and also operated a small dairy business.

The Washingtons were actively involved in their neighborhood and were stalwart champions of the cause of education; so much so that they donated the land for the Waneta School in April of 1901 and Mrs. Washington served on the school board for over 15 years. Both were members of the Baptist Church and Mr. Washington gave his political support to the Republican Party.

Born to this pioneer family were seven children; unfortunately they lost six of them. The surviving daughter, Vivien, born March 14, 1901, continued the traditions of her mother and father.



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