

AMOS HARVEY

Amos and Jane are buried in sight of the old Bethel grounds south of Amity. It was a touching experience in 1995 to gather with other saints at the *Bethel Cemetery*, stand in a circle around the graves of Amos and Jane, and sing the songs of Zion. Some who gathered there were his descendants — they had at least eight children — and this marked 150 years since the Amity congregation had been started.

We owe much to these self-sacrificing saints of 150 years ago. While at the *Bethel Cemetery*, Jerry Rushford noted that more than 1,700 congregations of the Churches of Christ and Christian Churches are on the West Coast and the work began with Amos and Jane Harvey.

Learn More —

A more extended story of Amos Harvey is on the Internet at: NCBible.org/nwh/ProHarveyA.html It includes a list of the children.

There is more information about the *Amity Church of Christ* on the Internet at: NCBible.org/nwh/orhistbb.html

The story of Amos Harvey is discussed in *Christians on the Oregon Trail* by Jerry Rushford. It is available in many libraries.

🌲 PIONEER PREACHERS 🌲

PAGES FROM OUR PAST — A SERIES

by Charles Dailey

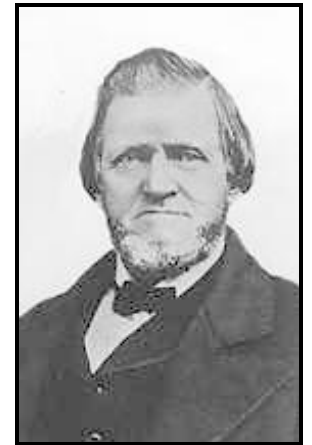
AMOS HARVEY

Amos Harvey of Bethel, Oregon is often credited with establishing the first congregation of the Churches of Christ west of the Rocky Mountains.

Amos' religious heritage was Quaker and he followed this way carefully, being a student of the Scriptures.

When Amos Harvey was 33, he came to love Miss Jane Ramage and asked her to marry him. She was 12 years his junior. The bride price he paid was being expelled from the Quaker Movement. However, Amos and Jane agreed that, when married, they would read and follow the Scriptures, wherever that exercise should lead them.

The reading raised doubts immediately about his Quaker beliefs and after completing reading he, along with Jane, were ready to be immersed into Christ. This was carried out by Dr. A. W. Campbell, uncle of Alexander Campbell.



Amos Harvey

Their pioneering spirit took them first to the Midwest. Soon the decision was made to continue on to Oregon Territory. Other Christians and Christian leaders were in the wagon train that left Missouri in 1845 for “The Land of Eden,” as it came to be called.

The overland trip took six months. Most of the wagon trains left Westport, Missouri about May 1. They had to wait until the winter floods subsided and the grass had grown enough to feed their oxen and other animals. The Harveys used two wagons for the journey. They had at least one child by then, a daughter named Sarah who later married John D. Kelty. When Sarah died early in the marriage, John married her sister Jane.

The Keltys, in turn, had a daughter named Ethel Kelty Brown who moved to Vancouver. She was a member of the *Minnehaha Church of Christ* until her death. In the 1960's this scribe conducted her funeral in Vancouver. We went with the body to the historic *Bethel Cemetery* on the old Amos Harvey Donation Land Claim (DLC) and had a graveside service.

The Harvey family came to the rich Yamhill River valley in January of 1846 and soon took up a Donation Land Claim in Plum Valley, just southeast of Bethel in Polk County. Sometimes the names were used interchangeably.

They soon found several families of “Bible only Christians” and established a congregation of believers in the vicinity of Amity, south of present day McMinnville and four miles north of their DLC. The Amity congregation not only exists today, but has a rich heritage in following the authority of Scripture.

Mr. Harvey wrote the following lines to be published in the *Millennial Harbinger*:

“I came to this country late in the fall of 1845, and learned that a few families of Disciples lived on Yam Hill, west of the Willamette river. I settled there in January, and in March we organized a congregation upon the Book alone -- and this was the first congregation built upon this foundation in the Territory. We numbered at first but thirteen members. We met, as the disciples anciently did, upon the first day of the week, to break the loaf, to implore the assistance of the heavenly Father, to seek instruction from his word, and to encourage each other in the heavenly way.”

One early writer said of Amos Harvey: “He was duly beloved for his sterling integrity and Christian piety.” His dream was to make higher education available to every young man and every young woman. This was realized in the building of one of Oregon’s first colleges on his property at Bethel.

Amos Harvey led a long and full life. He became a noted nurseryman and was the first president of the *Fruit Growers Association* of Oregon. He taught English at *Bethel Academy*. Amos was a highly responsible part of community life, serving, among other things, as treasurer of Polk County.

When he was 65, Mr. Harvey was appointed to supervise the *Grande Ronde Indian Agency*. The government badly needed his skills as a horticulturalist.

Amos Harvey was not a circuit-riding preacher like the men who followed him. His great contribution to building the Lord’s church was in a small radius of his home in Polk County, but his impact was a powerful and lasting one for the Lord.