

GLEN OWEN BURNETT

In the Fall of 1861 the Burnett family moved to California, near Knights Landing, so son Peter could attend the new college that was opening at Woodland. While young Peter returned to Oregon and married, Glen Burnett stayed in California.

The family lived and worked in the Santa Rosa area of California for the final 29 years of Glen Owen Burnett's earthly sojourn. In a letter to his good friend James W. Webb, he wrote:

Some two or three years ago I made the effort to ascertain in how many places in Oregon I had preached. I ran up the number until it reached, if I remember, about 150 different school-houses, churches, barns, groves and in many places, for years.

But my preaching days are over, and I am ready, I trust, to depart and be with Christ. Blessed thought! I want you to present my Christian affection to all the true and faithful in Christ Jesus, wherever you go preaching.

And if it be God's will to turn your steps this way, I would like to see your face once more before I put off this mortal tabernacle. I would like to have you by my side when I am called to pass the deep, silent river, and to hear your cheers in the hour of triumph.

Learn More —

A more extended story of Glen Owen Burnett is on the Internet at: NCBible.org/nwh/ProBurnett.html

Glen Burnett is discussed in *Christians on the Oregon Trail* by Dr. Jerry Rushford, available in many libraries.

🌲 PIONEER PREACHERS 🌲

PAGES FROM OUR PAST — A SERIES

by Charles Dailey

GLEN OWEN BURNETT

While the McBrides, Adams and Paynes were settling in the Panther Creek area north of McMinnville, Oregon, Amos Harvey had located just south of Amity at Bethel, but over the line in Polk County. Of course, the towns weren't there yet.

The year after the arrival of Amos and Jane Harvey (1845), Glen Owen Burnett and his wife Sarah arrived from Missouri. They probably traveled in the same wagon train as their old friends, the James McBride family.

It might help the memory to be aware that Glen's brother Peter had come to Oregon as the wagon master of the 1843 train, then moved on to California where he became the first governor. He had been converted to the ancient gospel in Missouri, but embraced Catholicism while in Oregon. Dr. John McLoughlin became his god-father.



Glen Owen Burnett married Sarah Rogers while Peter had married her sister. Glen was 37 and Sarah was 28 on the trip.

Like other married settlers, he was able to claim 640 acres of grass and timber. The Burnetts settled on the north side of Amos Harvey's property. There was a tiny cabin on the land and this is where they camped for the winter.

Glen Burnett was skilled at putting feeling into words and writing them. Years later, he reminisced about their arrival:

As the wagons neared the lonely spot, the wife and mother of the seven children belonging to the family, gazed with intense interest upon all the surroundings visible at that hour of the evening. Many long months of patient toil, and hardships had marked her journey across the wide plains, in quest of a little spot on earth she could call a home.

We stopped in front of the opening, in the side of the rude hut; and for the first time, began to take what little of this earth's goods we had, from the wagons, and place those tattered fragments in our little house.

This finished, and our frugal supper partaken of, we layed our weary bodies upon the floor to rest.

Sweet was that night of sleep to us all. The morning came, and with it new responsibilities. I will never forget the sensations of that eventful period of my ministerial life.

Burnett organized the *Bethel Church* which flourished due largely to his strong, yet reverent and tender appeal and his scathing denunciation of sin. Burnett chose the name *Bethel* because it was the name of the last church he had served, a town north of Jefferson City, Missouri on State Route 15. It must have been a pleasant ministry.

Glen Burnett immediately became a circuit-riding preacher. Perhaps at first, he was a circuit-walking preacher. He preached in a school house at Rickreall,

several miles to the south of his property. He preached in many developing villages, primarily in Polk County. After arriving in the fall of 1846, he walked north into Yamhill County, fording the Yamhill River at Elbridge Edson's place. His aim was to join Dr. James McBride on a preaching tour that would take them to the home of John Foster, another preacher-farmer near present-day Carver, in Clackamas County.

The Harveys and the Burnetts shared a dream of building a Christian College in the newly opened Oregon Territory. Each donated a portion of their land to the project and the new town of Bethel was platted. They financed *Bethel College* by selling homesites at \$100 for 2.25 acres each. This was about 10 times the going price for land outside of town.

The college came into being, and most of the work of raising the structure was done in a single day by a huge crew that came from all over central Oregon. W. L. Adams had advertised the event in his *Oregon Argus* newspaper.

That was July 4, 1855. By the end of a decade, they had a school for grades one through high school and had launched a Christian College, all at Bethel.

The College closed in a few years and merged with the new - and better financed - college at Monmouth. The building was eventually dismantled.

Glen Owen Burnett is a name inseparably linked with the opening days of Gospel preaching in Oregon. God used his vision, his hard work and the sacrifices of Sarah and the children, for progress of the church in the Polk-Yamhill area.