

# The West Side

Newsletter and Journal of the Yamhill County Historical Society

April 2005

## The 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland

At our March general meeting we were thrilled to welcome Richard Engelman, with the Oregon Historical Society, giving a comprehensive multimedia presentation on the 1905 Expo in Portland.



Richard presented a large color poster of the above photo to our society, and discussed the history of many aspects of this grand show. The photos he displayed on the wall of the Amity High School at this meeting were unique and told an in-depth story in and of themselves.

On June 1, 1905 the first world's fair to be held in the Pacific Northwest opened, technically referred to as the Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair. The Oregon State Historical Society is hosting "A Fair to Remember: The 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition" through September 18th of this year. This showing tells the story of the effort by the organizers of the expo to promote Portland as the center of commerce in the northwest.

Many of the buildings at the fair were hastily erected, and only a few survive to this day. The NCR building is now a part of the St. Johns Pub, and the American Inn, the only hotel on the Expo property, is now located at 21st and Belmont streets. The huge Forestry Building, built completely from 32 ton logs, and sporting a 70 foot vaulted ceiling, was destroyed by fire in 1964. Flying dirigibles and displays of the newest in electric lighting greeted attendees, who numbered over one million.

Between 1905 and 1912, the population of Portland increased by more than 100,000 people, due in large part to the Fair and Expo. Lasting 137 days, this fair touched people from around the world, and was considered a huge success by the promoters, the press, as well as those who enjoyed the beautiful promenades, displays and attractions that boasted the best and latest in design, technology and fashion. Portland would never be the same.

The Oaks Amusement Park opened a couple of days before the Expo., and the Park purchased some of the décor, buildings and light fixtures after the Expo was over. One of these lights is on display at the Oaks Museum, and it still works.

Our northwest weather, together with the ravages of time and apathy resulted in the dismantling of most of the buildings erected for the show.

We thank Richard and the Oregon Historical Society for their effort in preparing and putting on this unique and colorful trip to our past.

## Samuel and Civilla Weirich

My grandfather Samuel Weirich was born March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1871 in Indiana. He was an only son with seven sisters. He died January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1948 on the home place on Old Station Road in the Whiteson area. This is where he had his Blacksmith shop. We never knew the cause of his death. It was a sudden illness. The doctor from Amity came to his house and gave him a shot. Within a few days he passed away. Later dad found out this doctor was giving elderly people shots and they passed away in a few days. Dad was quite upset about it

Grandmother Civilla (Miller) Weirich was born June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1879, and passed away July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1954. She had a struggle with stomach cancer and had a few surgeries for that. Both their burial is at Tayler Cemetery East of Whiteson.

Samuel came to Oregon in early 1892. At that time the Amish settled in the Hubbard area. The first Amish came to Oregon in 1876. By 1895 there were 23 families. In 1896 they started moving to Yamhill County. The reason for moving was people wanting cars and attend the Mennonite church stayed in Hubbard. Those wanting to be Amish moved to Yamhill County.

Samuel and Civilla were married on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1896. It was said they walked to the town of Needy, Oregon and were married by W.H. Byland, the justice of the Peace, which was not that unusual at that time.

They later moved to Yamhill County. They also moved to Wisconsin and Kansas and back to Oregon. They built a house on Hook and Eye Lane west of Amity. Hook and Eye Lane got its name because so many Amish lived on that road. The Hook and Eye reference was because they didn't use zippers or buttons on their cloths. Thus they closed with hook and eyes.

Grandpa's next and last move was to Old Station Road close to Whiteson. That is where grandpa had his blacksmiths shop. Grandmother always had flowers and a small patch of green grass in her back yard. Dad said they always had a patch of green grass because no water went to waste. Grandmother carried it all out on her patch of grass.

The Weirich family would like to donate grandfather's Blacksmith tools and forge to the Yamhill County Historical Society. To this day his tools and shop are just like he left them on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1948.

Edna Troyer (Note: the editor apologizes for misspelling Ednas last name in the last newsletter)

## Newsletter—Feast or Famine

It seems to this editor that there is never an 'average' month for submittals for inclusion in this newsletter, resulting in either additional filler material or on occasions such as this month, adding an insert.

Due to the abundance and size of submissions this month, the minutes of the most recent Board minutes are not included, and a summary of that meeting will be added to next months Board highlights. The full minutes have been posted on the bulletin board in the Log Building.

*The Yamhill County Historical Society is a nonprofit tax exempt educational and public service corporation established to protect, preserve and share the history and heritage of Yamhill County*

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**MUSEUM HOURS**

**November 13 - May 31:**

Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
or

By Appointment  
(Friday openings after  
May 31st depend on  
finding volunteers)  
605 Market Street  
Lafayette Oregon  
Phone: 864-2308  
Email: yamhillhistory@  
onlinemac.com

Thirty seven-year-old Glen Owen Burnett was part of the first wave of Gospel preachers coming over the Oregon Trail, arriving in 1846 with the McBride-Burnett train. Both Dr. James McBride and Glen Burnett were experienced preachers in Missouri and looked forward to continuing their work in Oregon.

Glen Burnett's brother, Peter Burnett, had been the organizer and leader of the 1843 migration and encouraged the Burnetts and McBrides to make the trip to Oregon. The '86 wagon train made good progress until they reached the Boise river where they realized their oxen were showing signs of exhaustion. They sent a letter ahead by two men on horseback to the Hembree families in the "Yam Hill" area. Son, John McBride, reported: "They had received the letter, and with a promptness which none but pioneers could emulate, and a generosity that makes gratitude a pleasing burden, they had answered the call, and three yoke of fresh oxen and two horses laden with provisions and supplies came to our assistance."

Glen Owen Burnett married Sarah Rogers in 1830. They had seven children when they crossed the Oregon Trail, the oldest being 11. Eventually, there were 11 Burnett children. They were settling land at the northern edge of present-day Polk County. Like other married settlers, they were able to claim 640 acres or one square mile of grass and timber. Looking on a map, the land was about two miles east of present-day McCoy close to Highway 99W.

Upon arriving in Oregon, the Glen Burnett's traveled first to the Tualatin Plains to find their brother, Peter. He had been a strong convert to the gospel in Missouri and Glen was stunned to find that his brother had embraced Catholicism three months earlier. This was almost more than the conservative Campbellite Glen Burnett could stand. Peter moved on to California where he became the first governor of the state. Dr. John McLoughlin became his god-father and Peter enjoyed a good and productive life.

The Burnetts settled on the north side of Amos Harvey's property. There was a tiny cabin on the land where they camped for the winter.

Years later, Glen Burnett 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." From "Christians on the Oregon Trail," by Jerry Rushford. Page 70, second edition.

Burnett set about getting shelter and food for his family. However, he was a preacher and starting a church was high on his list. Very little time slipped by before had organized some nearby settlers to help with this task. He chose the name "Bethel" because it was the name of the last church he had served in Missouri, a town north of Jefferson City, Missouri. The Bethel Church flourished due to his strong, reverent and tender appeal and his scathing denunciation of sin. It must have been a pleasant ministry. He gave the name "Bethel Hills" to the heights north and east of Bethel, Oregon.

Burnett then turned to circuit-riding. At first, he was a "circuit-walking" preacher. then Absalom Hembree, hero during the Indian Wars and a "Yam Hill" area farmer, gave him a horse to ride. He preached in a school house at Rickreall and many other developing villages. He joined Dr. James McBride on a preaching tour that gave them a much larger area of influence and support.

Burnett's neighbors, the Amos Harveys, 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.

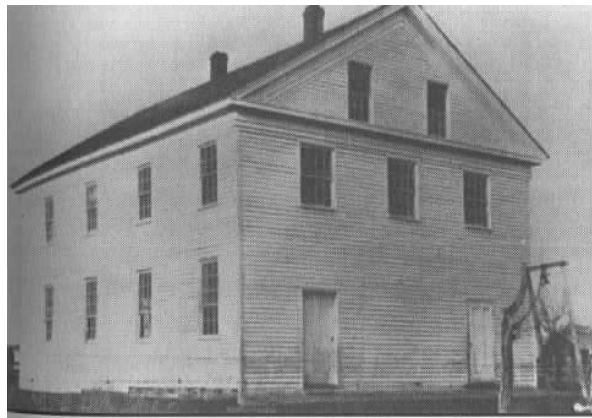
Bethel College, Bethel, Oregon

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 the valley.

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YCHS

William 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 a Christian College - all at Bethel.

Two dormitories and a two-story school building were built. The structure was 36 feet by 44 feet with 29 large glass windows. The lower floor had a 12 foot ceiling while the upper floor was ten foot.



Material was purchased and hauled by volunteers to the construction site. Then, on July 4, 1855, volunteers came from far and wide to celebrate Independence Day, to have dinner on the grounds, listen to some invigorating speeches and to raise the framework of the building.

Historian John Smith writes: "By the close of the afternoon the framework of the building together with its covering structure were well advanced toward completion, and the happy people turned homeward with a deep feeling of thankfulness for the great accomplishment of the historic occasion, a feeling of buoyant exhilaration - the cumulative product of unified cooperation."

The school calendar for 1860-61 includes the following: "Students applying for admission will be required to have a thorough knowledge of the English branches, Elementary Algebra, Caesar, Virgil Aenid, Cicero's Orations, the Greek Reader and the four Gospels." Sports were not included. However, it has been reported that the school provided one of the best science laboratories in the state and was recognized as an accredited school.

In 1855 the first store at Bethel was constructed. The town flourished with a blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, wagon shop and a general store. One of the stores was opened by John D. Kelty after he married Sarah, daughter of Amos and Jane Harvey.

Tuition was \$32 per year. For those who could not afford the tuition and living expenses, the College Board provided assistance after careful examination of a request. Because of a change in the local economy, the school closed after a few years of operation and merged with the new college at Monmouth.

The dirt wagon road from Amity was replaced by the narrow gauge railroad going from Portland through McMinnville and south to Corvallis, missing Bethel by one mile. This eventually proved to be the death-blow to the once-flourishing town. Both merchants and the post office moved west to McCoy in 1880. By 1886, only 34 registered voters remained.

Today the town of Bethel is gone; replaced by tilled fields. A marker on the only building left in Bethel reads: "THIS PLaque MARKS THE SITE OF BETHEL COLLEGE FOUNDED IN 1855 AND DISCONTINUED AS A COLLEGE IN 1862." The Elementary school continued to be taught at this location for some time.



Glen O. Holman, a native of Yamhill County, attended Bethel Institute and Bethel Academy in his early years. Later a practicing attorney, he wrote these words when he saw the *Bethel College* building had been taken down: "Several years ago, when I came over the hills to Bethel from Spring Valley and saw that the old college building had been torn down, I just stopped and let the tears flow. To me it was a sacred edifice. I was glad that the old hills still stood. Whenever I passed along the road in sight of those hills, I looked at them with worshipful eyes."

Glen Owen Burnett is a name inseparably linked with the opening days of Gospel preaching and Education in Oregon. His faith, vision and hard work in addition to the sacrifices of Sarah and the children, contributed greatly to the progress churches and schools in the Polk-Yamhill area.

The family lived and worked in California for the final 29 years of Glen Owen Burnett's earthly sojourn.

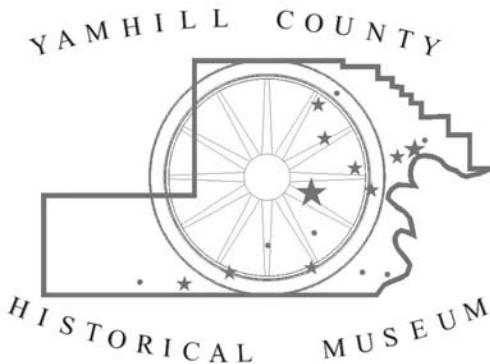
By Jim Lockett

# YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** **Effective May 31, 2002**

Individual	\$ 15
Family	\$ 25
Friend	\$ 50+
Supporter	\$100+
Community Builder	\$250+
Community Benefactor	\$500+

Please make checks payable to the Yamhill County Historical Society. Annual membership gifts are tax deductible.

Members receive the Westside newsletter and access to our research library free of charge. We are an all volunteer organization, and are constantly on the lookout for new helpers. If you can assist us in any way, financially or with your time or talents, it will be greatly appreciated. If you are not sure if you have paid your membership dues, please contact Carol Reid at 472-9631, or **check your mailing label, which should show this information also. (The month and year indicate your "paid through" period according to our records.)** If you see a colored notice inside your newsletter, you're at the end of your membership term!

## **YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **Calendar of Events**

**Board of Directors: 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 12th. Our next regular monthly meeting will be held Tuesday, April 12th at 6:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held at the Gibbs Community Center (see map inside). Our program this month will feature Donna Jo Landauer King and the 119th anniversary of the Gibbs School and the 50th anniversary of the Gibbs Community Club.**

**New Members/Renewals:** We welcome new member Austin Warner and renewing members Dina Nuxoll, Carol Reid, Nancy Mahi and Eileen Lewis. Thanks for supporting our organization. We invite you to attend our meetings, visit our museum and become more involved in our local history!