

Samuel Burch

Pioneer of 1847

compiled by Stephenie Flora  
oregonpioneers.com

Samuel (Townsend?) Burch, Sr.

b. 1794 Baltimore, MD

d. 08 Apr 1854 Oregon City, Clackamas Co, OR in explosion of ship Gazelle  
buried Burch Pioneer Cemetery, Rickreall, Polk Co, OR

m1. c1815

Unknown

b.

d. c1822

[see mention of first wife in interview of Samuel Townsend Burch, Jr and of bio of Benjamin Burch]

[ a Samuel Burch married Miss Brown 23 May 1812 Nelson Co, KY. This may be the marriage not yet documented]

m2. 24 Apr 1823 Chariton Co, MO [Chariton Co, MO Marriage Records 1821-1852]

Eleanor S. Locke

b. 08 Oct 1798 VA

d. 04 Jun 1870 Independence, Polk Co, OR

buried Burch Pioneer Cemetery, Rickreall, Polk Co, OR

1812: Midshipman in the US Navy in the War of 1812, captured by the English

1840: Chariton Co, MO, Samuel Birch, 2 males (-5), 2 males (5-9), 2 males (15-19), 1 male (40-49); 1 female (5-9), 2 females (10-14), 1 female (15-19), 1 female (40-49); 1 male slave (-10), 3 male slaves (10-23), 1 male slave (24-35), 2 female slaves (-10), 3 female slaves (10-23), 1 female slave (36-54), persons employed in agriculture (17), 1 person employed in learned profession (1), 1 colored person insane or in public charge, 10 white persons under 20, 2 white persons 20 thru 49, total free white persons (12), total slaves (11)

1847: Samuel Burch, Southern route immigrant arrives Willamette Valley [Oregon Spectator, October 14, 1847 p. 2:3]

1847: Polk Co, Land Claim, 28 Oct 1847, Provisional and Territorial Record #Vol 6 p.098

1848: Polk Co, Land Claim, 29 Feb 1848, Provisional and Territorial Record #Vol 7 p.156

1849: Polk Co, Census, Samuel Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #1079

1849: Samuel Burch representative from Polk County [Oregon Spectator, October 18, 1849 p. 2:3] Samuel Burch Resigns [Oregon Spectator, May 10, 1850 p. 2:1] Note: probably resigned to go to gold mines

1850: Polk Co, OR, October 15, 1850; Samuel Birch (sic-Burch), 57, MD; Ellener, 53, VA; John W., 30, KY; Samuel, 19, MO; Mary E., 18, MO; Thomas, 15, MO; Jacob, 13, MO; Benjn, 5, MO; Lucy A., 3, MO

1850: Polk Co, Tax Roll, Samuel Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #14172

1851: Polk Co, Tax Roll, Samuel Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #14173

1853: Polk Co, Tax Roll, Samuel Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #14176

1853: Samuel Burch's Cayuse War Claim awarded [Oregon Statesman, January 1, 1853 p. 2:7]

1853: Samuel Burch trustee of Willamette University [Oregon Statesman, February 5, 1853 p. 1:1 and Feb 12 to Feb 19, 1853 adv]

1854: Polk Co, Estate, Samuel Burch, County Record #0021

1854: Polk Co, Tax Roll, Eleanor S. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #14178

1870: Polk Co, Estate, Eleanor S. Burch, Polk County Record #0033

### Explosion of the "Gazelle."

The following authentic information is from the pen of C. P. Culver, Esq:—

Oregon City, Saturday noon,  
April 8, 1854.

Mr. Grover.—One of the most heart-rending calamities that has, perhaps, ever occurred on the coast of the Pacific, happened at Canemah, this morning, at about 7 o'clock, A. M. The new steamer *Gazelle*, belonging to the "Willamette Falls Canal, Milling, and Transportation Company," while lying alongside the wharf-boat, at Canemah, receiving freight, and but a few minutes before her intended departure for Corvallis, was blown almost completely into atoms, by the explosion of her boilers. Not a vestige of them remains on board the hull, save the head of one of them. As far as is now known, twenty lives have been lost, and about thirty persons injured, some of them severely; others but slightly. Among the killed is Mr. David Page, the Superintendent of the Company, and recently from San Francisco. Gloom and despondency rests over our community. I have only time to send you a list of the killed and wounded, as at present ascertained:—

#### Killed.

- 1 Mr. David Page, Linn City;
- 2 David Woodhull, Michigan;
- 3 Joseph Hunt, Oregon City, Surveyor;
- 4 Rev. Jas. P. Miller, Takenah;
- 5 John Clemmens, Oregon City;
- 6 David Fuller, Portland;
- 7 Cyrus Wadsworth, near Oregon City;
- 8 Samuel F. Burch, Polk county, formerly of Missoua;
- 9 James White, Salem;
- 10 J. M. Fudge, Canemah, Pilot of the *Walkamet*;
- 11 W. S. Morgan, Rickreal, Polk county;
- 12 Daniel Lowe, passenger, his residence unknown;
- 13 Antonio, a Spaniard, Dalles, on his way to the mines;
- 14 — Blanchet, St. Pauls, O.T.

*Of those attached to the boat, there were*

*Killed:—*

- 15 John Duly, cabin boy;
- 16 John K. Miller, deck-hand, of Elizabeth, Wisconsin;
- 17 John Bloomer, deck-hand, residence unknown;
- 18 — Hatch, deck-hand;
- 19 Michael McGee, fireman.

*Missing.*

- 1 — Hill, Takenah;
- 2 Charles Knaust, Portland;
- 3 David McLane, Portland.

*Injured.*

- 1 W. L. White, Casemah, knocked down by splinters while standing on the bank;
- 2 Lavinia Pell, Champoug, slightly scalded and a cut in the forehead;
- 3 Mrs. J. P. Miller, wife of Rev. Mr. Miller, of Takenah, who was killed, two ribs broken;
- 4 H. Royce, Linn City, slightly injured;
- 5 Mr. Murphy, Deputy Surveyor, severely injured;
- 6 Mr. Shortusa, Astoria, slightly bruised;
- 7 Charles T. Gardiner, Oregon City, arm broken, and slightly scalded;
- 8 Miss White, Salem, daughter of James White, killed;
- 9 J. Herald, Indiana, slightly scalded;
- 10 B. F. Newby, Oregon City, injured badly;
- 11 Robert F. Rains;
- 12 Robert Pentland, scalded slightly;
- 13 D. J. Davis, Salem, slightly cut on the head;
- 14 Crawford Dobbins, Portland, leg broken amputated;
- 15 John Trowel, Oregon City, bruised and scalded;
- 16 Henry Wilson, scalded slightly;
- 17 Mr. Hubbard, Cincinnati, O.T., badly scalded;

*Of those employed on the boat, three were injured:*

- 18 Captain R. Hereford, slightly scalded;
- 19 Pascal Piant, 2nd Engineer, severely scalded and bruised, while at his post;

- 20 James Partlow, Pilot, bruised slightly;
- 21 John Boyd, Mate, both arms broken and severely scalded;
- 22 James Stanfield, Steward, slightly hurt;
- 23 Preston Black, Assistant Steward, slightly scalded;
- 24 An Indian, leg broke;
- 25 John Craul, a boy, severely scalded;
- 26 Joseph Latslaw, slightly injured.

*Escaped uninjured.*

- 1 The little daughter of the Rev. Mr. Miller, of Takenah;
- 2 Z. Crowell, Clerk of Gazette;
- 3 Mr. Joseph Tonie, Chief Engineer;
- 4 Wm. Latham, passenger;
- 5 Mrs. Piant, wife of 2nd Engineer, and child;

The foregoing is a correct list, so far as is known, up to the present hour—Sunday

[Oregon Statesman, April 18, 1854 p2:4]

1854: Eleanor Burch, Polk County, Admx estate of Samuel Burch [Oregon Statesman, May 23 to June 27 1854 adv]

1853: Samuel Townsend Burch volunteer guard in Rogue River War munitions train [Oregon Statesman, August 30, 1853 p. 2:5]

1853: Samuel Townsend Burch, Polk County, administrator notice of Estate [Oregon Statesman May 23 to June 26, 1854, adv]

1855: Samuel Townsend Burch, Dallas, Polk County, Administrator notice of Satisfaction, [Oregon Statesman, June 30 to July 14, 1855 adv]

1860: Independence, Polk Co, OR, August 2, 1860; E.L. Burch, 62, f, \$3200 \$1666, VA; L.L. Jefferys, 7, f, OR; L.T. Jefferys, 4, m, OR

Children of Samuel Burch and wife 1:

1. George Washington Burch

b. 1816 KY

d. bef 1854

Notes from researcher, Nancy Prevost, "The petition to administer Samuel's estate, dated 15 May 1854, names among others, "heirs of Washington C. Burch dec'd" who were living in the state of Missouri"

1850: Peno, Pike Co, MO, October 5, 1850; George W. Burch, 34, farmer, KY; Mary A., 26, TN; John J., 4, MO; Benj S., 1, MO; John S. Ford, 23, laborer, TN

2. Jonathan Tyrus Burch (did not emigrate to OR)

b. 1818 KY

d. 02 Mar 1862 Chariton Co, MO

buried Old Ashby Cemetery, Chariton Twp, Chariton Co, MO

m. 14 Sep 1843 Chariton Co, MO [Chariton Co, MO Marriage Records 1821-1852]

Ruth Ann Davis

b. 1816 KY

d.

1850: Keyettesville, Chariton Co, MO, October 3 & 4, 1850; Jonathan T. Burch, 32, farmer, \$800, KY; Ruth, 34, KY; Luther, 2, MO; Robert Yancy, 13, MO

1860: Prairie, Chariton Co, MO, July 21, 1860; J.T. Burch, 43, farmer, \$2630 \$1900, KY; Elizabeth A., 33, VA; Frances, 2, MO; Ella, 1, MO; Delia L. Parks, 10, MO; Charlotte M. Parks, 8, MO

3. John Wesley Burch

b. 1820 KY

d.

m1. 08 Oct 1844 Chariton Co, MO [Chariton Co, MO Marriage Records 1821-1852]

Lucy Ann Trent

b.

d. 1847 on trail

d/o Henry Trent

m2. 1853

Huldah Finley

b.

d.

“(after passing boiling springs and coming to cooler springs) In the meantime Mrs. Birch one of our women got sick. She had consumption when we started. We had to rest a week and in the meantime she died and we buried her, and place the sod over her neatly.” [T L Davidson, Narrative, Bancroft ms. - Microfilm #P-A23 contributed by Lynn Johnson Seller]

1847: Polk Co, 28 Oct 1847 Land Claim, John W. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record Vol 6 p. 097

1850: Polk Co, OR, October 15, 1850; Samuel Birch (sic-Burch), 57, MD; Ellener, 53, VA; John W., 30, KY; Samuel, 19, MO; Mary E., 18, MO; Thomas, 15, MO; Jacob, 13, MO; Benjn, 5, MO; Lucy A., 3, MO

1850: Polk Co, Tax Roll, Provisional and Territorial Record #14172

1852: John W. Burch member of Polk County posse who captured W. Everman and J. Coe for murder of C.C. Hooker [Oregon Statesman March 9, 1852 p.2:6]

1853: John Burch petition for road through canyon presented to House of Representatives [Oregon Statesman February 5, 1853 p. 1:5]

1853: John W. Burch Cayuse War Claims warrant ready [Oregon Statesman, October 4, 1853 p. 2:3]

1853: John W. Burch's payment for Cayuse War claim arrives [Oregon Spectator October 13, 1853 p.2:5]

1853: Mrs. John Wesley Burch, immigrant, dies E of Siskiyou mountains [Oregon Spectator, October 14, 1847 p. 2:3]

1857: Douglas Co, OR, Census, John W. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #17992

1860: Canyonville, Douglas Co, OR, June 10, 1860; John Buck (sic-Burch), 39, farmer, \$1000 \$1800, KY; Huldah, 24, NY; Benjamin, 14, MO; Lucy Ann, 13, OR; Lily, 3, OR; Walter, 1, OR

Children of Samuel Burch and Eleanor Locke:

1. Benjamin Franklin Burch (Pioneer of 1845)

b. 02 May 1825 Chariton Co, MO

d. 24 Mar 1893 Independence, Polk Co, OR

buried Burch Pioneer Cemetery, Rickreall, Polk Co, OR

m. 1848

Eliza A. Davidson

b.

d.

ODLC: #319 Polk Co; Benjamin F. Burch; b. 1825 Chariton Co, MO; sc 15 Oct 1849; m'd Eliza A. 06 Sep 1848 Polk Co, OR; James S. Foster and Samuel T. Burch gave aff. 07 Feb 1853 that Benjamin F. Burch was to return from CA in time to get land and make OR his home; if claim was taken by someone else or sold to secure him another claim

1846: Twality Co, Land Claim 12 Dec 1846, Provisional and Territorial Record #Vol 4 p.115 & 116

1846: Benjamin F. Burch member of road company on the Southern immigrant route [Oregon Spectator July 9, 1846 p3:1]

1849: Polk Co, Census, B. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #1079

1849: Polk Co, Census, B.F. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #1079

1852: Polk Co, Tax Roll, B.F. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #14174

1854: Polk Co, Tax Roll, Benjamin F. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #14178

1855: Polk Co, Tax Roll, B.F. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #14179

1856: Polk Co, Census, Benjamin F. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #6912

1860: Lane, Polk Co, OR, August 7, 1860; B.F. Burch, 35, farmer, \$6000 \$3550, MO; E.A., 32, IL; S.B., 6, m, OR; E.H. Owen, 30, laborer, WI

Children of Benjamin Burch and Eliza Davidson:

i

ii.

iii. S. B. Burch (male)

b. 1854 Oregon

d.

iv.

v.

vi.

vii.

“Hon. Benjamin F. Burch, a pioneer of 1845 and the present Receiver of the Land Office at Oregon City. has a wide acquaintance and has taken an active part in the settlement and history of Oregon, and is as thoroughly informed on Oregon and her institutions as any of her citizens. he was an active participant in the Indian wars, and is the author of a chapter on that subject recently published in the History of the Northwest.

“Mr. Burch was born in Chariton county, Missouri, August 2, 1815. His father, Samuel Burch, was a soldier in the war of 1812, was a midshipman in the United States Navy, and was taken prisoner by the English. His ancestors were from England, and were early settlers of Maryland. He married Miss Eleanor S Lock, the daughter of Abraham Lock, a native of Virginia and a descendant of one of the old families of that state. He emigrated to Missouri in 1818, and Mr. Burch’s father went there in 1820. They were married in Missouri and remained there until 1847, when they came to Oregon. Mr. Burch lost his life in a steamboat explosion at Oregon City. He had been married twice, had three children by his first wife and eight by his second. Mr. Burch, the subject of this sketch, was a son by the second wife. Only five of the children are now living. A daughter, Mary Louise, is the wife of James A. Foster, and resides in Washington; two of the sons are in Polk county, this State.

In 1845, when in his twentieth year, Mr. Burch left his home, and, with a company having a train of fifty wagons, crossed plain and mountains to Oregon, the journey being a pleasant one. They arrived in Oregon City, October 16, 1845. Mr. Burch went to Folk county, and taught the first school in that county. He remained there two years. As he had, upon leaving home, promised to return in two years, he started on his way back. When he reached Bar river he met his father and his family, and he returned with them; and his father located in Polk county.

When the Cayuse Indian war broke out Mr. Burch enlisted and was made Adjutant of his regiment, in which capacity he served to the close of the war, being in several engagements and witnessing all of them. They vanquished the red savages, and it was "do or die," for if they had been beaten they would have been scalped and treated even worse than that. While Mr. Burch has much sympathy for the Indians their extermination



became a necessity, as they had commenced committing dreadful atrocities on the settlers, men, women and children.

After his marriage, in 1848, Mr. Burch settled on a donation claim in Polk county, in a small log cabin, and began raising stock, principally, and as time passed by and he prospered, he erected a large log house, with a half-story above. Still later, in 1867, he built a frame house.

In the war of 1855-'56 Mr. Burch served as Captain of Company B, First Regiment of Oregon Mounted Riflemen. He saw much service, and the Indians were again overcome and driven from the country.

In 1857 Mr. Burch was elected a member of the State Constitutional Convention, and took part in the formation of the State Constitution. As soon as the State was admitted into the Union he was elected a member of the first Legislature, and was a participant in the enactment of the first State statutes. In 1868 he was elected to the State Senate and served four years. He was appointed by Governor Chadwick to the position of Superintendent of the State Penitentiary, in which capacity he served two years. He then returned to his farm, in 1887 he received the appointment of receiver of the Land Office, in which he is still serving. His term has now nearly expired, and he intends to return to his farm in Polk county, which he took from the Government forty-four years ago, and which he has had the good sense to keep as a fitting remembrance of his pioneer days. During his service as Receiver of the Land Office he has handled \$2,000,000 for the government, and with his colleagues in the office, has wisely settled many land claims. He has been a painstaking and valuable public officer, and on his long public career there is not a single tarnish. That is glory enough for one lifetime.

Mr. Burch is past Master of the Masonic lodge, and he has been a life-long member of the Methodist Church. He is widely acquainted in Oregon, and has made many friends. He has merited the esteem and success which he has attained.

September 10, 1848, is the date of his marriage to Miss Eliza Davidson, who for forty-four years has been his faithful and devoted pioneer wife, and is still in the enjoyment of good health, sharing his joys and sorrows. She was born in Kentucky, in 1828, the daughter of Hezekiah Davidson, who came to Oregon with his family in 1847. Mr. and Mrs. Burch have had seven children, only two of whom, however, were brought up to years of maturity, and only one of them is now living. Samuel W. married Miss Hill, had one son, John Ellis, and died March 12, 1882, in Washington Territory. His wife died when the son was eleven months old; the latter now lives with his grandparents, the subject of this sketch, and is as their own child. Benjamin F. Burch, Jr., resides on the farm at Independence, Polk county." [An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon by H.K. Hines p. 994-995]

“HON. BENJAMIN F. BURGH.

This gentleman's career in life is one of which he should justly feel proud. It is a well-known fact that in early days the great majority of men who came to this coast did so under the excitement which the discovery of gold had created in the Eastern States, and on arriving here all hastened to the mountains with the anticipation of making a fortune within a year or two and returning to their Eastern homes to spend the remainder of their lives in ease and luxury. Such, however, was not the case with the subject of our sketch. The pursuit of agriculture, rather than that of mining, appears to have been his ambition,

and he to-day resides near Independence, in Polk county, on the same donation claim located by him in 1848. Mr. Burch was born in Chariton county, Missouri, May 2, 1825, and obtained an ordinary common school education. On the 25th of April, 1845, he left the home of his parents and started across the plains for Oregon, reaching here in October of the same year. In 1846 he assisted Hon. Jesse Applegate and others in viewing and locating the Southern Oregon wagon road, and conducting the stragglers of immigrants over the same. During the Cayuse Indian war of 1847-8, Mr. Burch served as Adjutant in both Col. Gilliam's and Col. Waters' regiments, preparing all of their official reports. He was married September 6, 1848, to Miss Eliza A. Davidson, daughter of Hezekiah Davidson. She, too, is an honored pioneer, having come to Oregon in 1847. Mr. Burch also was captain of a volunteer company during the Yakima Indian War of 1855-6. In 1857 he represented his county in the Constitutional Convention, and was a member of the standing committees on Military Corporations and Internal Improvements, rendering valuable assistance in framing both of these important clauses in our State Constitution. He was a member of the first State Legislature and represented Polk county in the Senate of 1868 and again in 1870, serving as President during the former session. He was also a member and the Chairman of the Investigating Committee, appointed by the Legislative Assembly of 1870 to examine and report upon the condition of the executive, administrative and financial departments of the State government. During the administration of Gov. Chadwick, Mr. Burch served as Superintendent of the Penitentiary. Such was his management of that institution that the joint committee appointed by the Legislative Assembly to investigate the affairs of that institution recommended in their report his continuance in office. He is now an honored citizen in private life, taking such interest only in public affairs as every man should who is interested in the welfare of our country. Mr. Burch is a Democrat in politics and has, heretofore, taken an active interest in political matters. He is a man of strong executive ability and is generally a leader in any enterprise he may be interested in. He rarely follows, as he has a mind and will of his own, and his opinions are generally considered worthy of careful consideration. He is of ordinary height and build, plainly dressed, genial and courteous to his friends, and is honest, sincere and earnest in everything he undertakes. There is a vein of good humor in his composition, and a disposition to relish a good joke. He has always endeavored to do his duty honestly and faithfully in the discharge of his official duties, and has won and well merits the confidence and esteem of his neighbors and friends." [Pen Pictures of Representative Men of Oregon by Frank E. Hodgkin p. 106-107]

“BURCH, BENJAMIN F.

Born in Chariton County, Missouri, May 2, 1825. Crossed the plains to Oregon when twenty years old, and the next year assisted in opening the Applegate route to incoming settlers. In the Cayuse war he served as adjutant, and in the Yakima war commanded a company of volunteer troops. In 1857 he had a seat in the Constitutional Convention; was a member of the first State Legislature, and was State Senator in 1868, 1870, and 1884, being president of that body in the former year. Married Miss Eliza A. Davidson, September 6, 1848, the daughter of Hezekiah Davidson, and herself a pioneer of 1847. The pair have had two children, of whom one, Benjamin F. Burch, Jr., is now living.” [History of the Willamette Valley by Herbert O. Lang p. 633]

Oreg: Mar 25, 1893 6:3 Account of life and death of B.F. Burch, Oregon pioneer of 1845

OJ : Mar 12/13, 1922 Imp and Ob; pioneer of 1845; taught the first school in Polk Co

[Letter to Judge J.L. Collings from Benjamin F. Burch supplied by Arlie Holt, Polk County historian in correspondence of April 1998]

“  
Oregon City  
May 9, 1888

Judge J. L Collins  
Dallas, Oregon

Dear Sir,

Your letter of April 28 received several days ago. Bad health and pressure of business in the office must plead my excuse for not answering sooner. Glad to hear from you and glad that you are writing a history of the early incidents of this county. Many have and are writing about the incidents and settlements of this country and a large amount of matter that has been published is incorrect in almost every particular. I am satisfied that you can give many incidents in connection with the early settlement of this country and I am pleased that you have consented to do so. Any help that I can give you will be cheerfully given.

You ask me to give you the names of others that was with the party referred to by you. I think they were William Sportman, Goodhue. I have forgotten his given name. His widow lives at Salem & David Goff. Black Harris given name I have forgotten if I ever knew. He is only known as Black Harris.

I would like to see your account of the expedition and the one soon after that viewed out and conducted emigrants in what was known as the Sourthern emigrant route. I think that I could give you points perhaps that you have not got and many other facts personally known to me.

Your friend,  
B.F. Burch

2. Ann Elizabeth Burch

b.

d. 1844 Chariton Co, MO

m. 03 Feb 1843 Chariton Co, MO [Chariton Co, MO Marriage Records 1821-1852]

James S. Foster

b. 1818 Howard Co, MO

d.

[Note: listed as James S. Foster in marriage records and on DLC application. Some sites show it as James A. Foster.]

3. Mary Louise Burch

b.

d.

m. 08 Jan 1845 Chariton Co, MO  
James S. Foster after death of sister

b. 1818 Howard Co, MO

d.

[Note: James S. Foster per DLC, marriage record to Ann Elizabeth Burch]  
ODLC: #1243

4. Samuel Townsend Burch

b. 13 Jan 1831 MO

d. 08 Aug 1927 Rickreall, Polk Co, OR  
buried Burch Pioneer Cemetery, Rickreall, Polk Co, OR

m.

Sarah Elizabeth Ford

b. 14 Jul 1837 Howard Co, MO

d. 06 Sep 1899 Rickreall, Polk Co, OR

buried Burch Pioneer Cemetery, Rickreall, Polk Co, OR

1847: Polk Co, Land Claim 11 Nov 1847, Samuel T. Burch, , Provisional and Territorial Record #Vol 6 p. 142

1849: to the CA gold mines

1850: Polk Co, OR, October 15, 1850; Samuel Birch (sic-Burch), 57, MD; Ellener, 53, VA; John W., 30, KY; Samuel, 19, MO; Mary E., 18, MO; Thomas, 15, MO; Jacob, 13, MO; Benjn, 5, MO; Lucy A., 3, MO

1850: went to Yreka, CA for gold mining

1852: went to Jackson County and did some placer mining on Jackson Creek

1853: went to Coos and Curry Counties and mined near the mouth of the Rogue River

1853: Polk Co, Tax Roll, Samuel T. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #14176

1854: Polk Co, Tax Roll, S.T. Burch, Provisional and Territorial Record #14178

1855: Polk Co, Tax Roll, S.T. Burch, , Provisional and Territorial Record #14179

1860: Independence, Polk Co, OR, August 2, 1860; S.T. Burch, 39, farmer, \$1660 \$1160, MO; S.E., 32, MO; N.S., 3, m. OR; M.A., 2, m. OR; J.B., 5/12, m, OR

1858: Samuel Townsend Burch, nominated for surveyor by Polk County Democratic convention [Oregon Statesman, March 23, 1858 p. 1:3]

1858: Samuel Townsend Burch, receives land patent [Oregon Statesman, December 7, 1858 p. 3:1]

1858: Samuel Townsend Burch nominated county surveyor for Territory by Polk County Democratic convention [Oregon Statesman, March 23, 1858 p. 1:4]

1858: Samuel Townsend Burch receives land patent [Oregon Statesman, December 7, 1858 p. 3:1]

1859: Samuel Townsend Burch delegate from Monmouth precinct to Polk County Democratic convention [Oregon Statesman, April 19, 1859 p. 1:2]

1866: Samuel Townsend Burch is Democratic candidate for Polk County surveyor [Oregon Statesman, Jun 18, 1866 p. 2:5]

1899:

“The death of Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Burch, which occurred at her home at Rickreall on Sept. 6, has removed from our midst one of Polk county's oldest, best known and respected pioneers. Mrs. Burch was born in Howard co, Mo, July 11, 1837, and emigrated to Oregon with her parents, Col Nathaniel Ford and Lucinda Duncan Ford, and family, in 1844, arriving in the Willamette Valley late in the year. In the spring of 1845, Col Ford located a donation claim on the Rickreall about 5 miles east of Dallas, the east half of which claim has been the home of Mrs Burch and family for the past 25 years. The deceased was one of 10 children, of whom Mrs Josephine P. Boyle is the only surviving member. She received her education in the schools of Polk co., and was married to Samuel T. Burch, Jan. 15, 1856. She was the mother of 13 children, 11 of whom are living, namely: Nathaniel S. Burch and Mark A. Burch of Rickreall; Jacob B. Burch of Linn co.; Lucinda Ellen Lucas of Tillamook co; Thomas S. Burch, Frank P. Burch, Mary E. Burch, Carrie F. Burch, L. Josie Burch, Edith E. Burch and Sarah Aurelia Burch of Rickreall. The funeral was held at the beautiful home residence on last Friday, the 8th instant. Rev Peter Burnett, an old time friend of the family, preached a brief but touching discourse. The funeral and burial services were largely attended, many persons coming from a distance. The remains were laid to rest in the Thielsen (Burch) Cemetery, and the tender hands of many friends covered the grave with floral offerings.” [Dallas Observer, September 15, 1899]

1922:

*“Uncle Sammy Burch Pioneer of 1847, Rickreall, Oregon—Uncle Sammy Burch lives at Rickreall, where he has resided for the past 75 years. A day or so ago while in Dallas, I took the motor to Nesmith and walked down the highway to Rickreall and a fine old-time Southern mansion on the banks of the Rickreall. It is like stepping back into the past to visit his home with its big fireplaces and large, comfortable rooms. As we sat in front of the cheerful blaze thrown out by the logs of body fir and applewood, Mr. Burch said, in answer to my questions:*

I am 91 years old. I was born in Missouri on January 13, 1831. I am named for my father, Samuel Burch. My father was in the war of 1812. He was a midshipman in the United States Navy and was captured by the English. Father lived in Maryland. My mother’s name was Eleanor S. Locke and she was born in Virginia. Her people moved to Missouri in 1818, while my father,, with his people, went to Missouri in 1820. They met and were married there. My mother was Father’s second wife. By his first wife he had three children, all boys. Their names were George Washington, Jonathan Tyrus, and John Wesley. By his second wife, my mother, he had nine children.

Benjamin Franklin Burch was my brother. He came to Oregon two years before we did, to spy out the land and send back a report. He came in 1845. Ben was born May 2, 1825. He taught the first school in Polk County. Elizabeth, the next child, married James A. Foster. Mary Louise, my next sister, married him after the death of my sister Elizabeth. I was the next child and was christened Samuel Townsend Burch. Mary E. was the next child. She married John Jeffries. Then came the twins, Thomas and Laura. Jacob, the next child, married Angeline Nance. Eleanor was the last child, for Father was killed shortly afterwards.

I was in my seventeenth year when we crossed the plains. My job was to drive the loose cattle, and if you want to know what dust is just drive a bunch of loose cattle on a windy day. You’ll east your peck of dust, all right. On the banks of the Sweetwater we laid over to bury my brother Wesley’s wife. [Note: Newspaper article notes her death in 1853 which would mean that Wesley actually came in 1853 not 1847. Further research needed to sort out the discrepancy] We buried her by the side of the Old Oregon Trail, drove the oxen over her grave till it was well trodden, and then built a fire over it so the Indians would not discover the grave and dig her up to get the clothes she had on. My brother, Ben, who had come here in 1845, started back to meet us. He met us at Bear River.

We had divided our train into three at Ash Hollow, and after that we didn’t have any captain. Captain Levi Scott had come from the Willamette Valley the year before to find an easier way for the emigrants. My brother Ben was one of his party. They surveyed a way by the southern route. Captain Scott met us near Fort Hall. He acted as our guide by the southern route.

It was on this trip that the emigrants were attacked by Indians and some of their loose

cattle were shot. Henry Williamson, one of the men guarding the cattle was wounded. Garrison, who went with Captain Levi Scott from Polk County to Fort Hall to meet and guide the emigrants, was killed near Granite Ridge by Indians. Captain Levi Scott, though his arm was pinned to his side with an arrow, drew his revolver and killed the Indian. The Indians also attacked the train near Tule Lake, but were driven off. We settled here on the Rickreall.

In 1849, with nearly everyone else in the Willamette Valley who could possibly get away, I went to the gold mines in California. I came back home late that fall and wintered at the home place. The next spring I went to the Yreka diggings and in 1852 to the newly discovered placer mines in Jackson County, at Jacksonville. I had a pretty fair claim on Jackson Creek. The next year I went to Coos and Curry Counties and mined near the mouth of the Rogue River in the beach diggings. William H. Packwood was also there, mining. He was the last survivor among the signers of the state constitutional convention.

When I used to go to school, 75 years ago, the geographies called all the country between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains the Great American Desert. When I was going to school I never expected to cross the Great American Desert, let alone see it developed into a land of orchards, pastures and grain fields.

I did my first Indian fighting in 1853. I was with General Joe Lane when he was wounded late that summer. The Indians went on the warpath in August and burned the settlers' cabins from Cow Creek southward almost to Jacksonville. General Lane was in the Rogue River Valley at the time and was asked by the settlers to take charge of the volunteers and punish the Indians. Colonel John E. Ross of Jacksonville and Captain Alden, a regular army officer, with their men, served under General Lane.

The Indians, led by Old Joe, Sam, John, and Limpy, were burning cabins and killing settlers wherever they found them. We moved northward in pursuit and came on them in Evans Creek country, toward the latter part of August. The Indians had built a log fort on the hillside. Our men charged. General Lane was shot through the arm, Captain Alden was wounded, and Captain Pleasant Armstrong of Yamhill County was instantly killed by a bullet through the heart. When the Indians recognized General Joe Lane they called out to him to have his men stop firing and they would also stop, as they wanted to have a peace talk. General Lane ordered us to cease firing, and walked, alone, into the Indian camp, where he agreed with the Indians on an armistice for ten days, after which a peace talk should be held at Table Rock..

General Lane sent for General Joel Palmer of Dayton, who was superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon. We camped near Table Rock, waiting for the conference to be held. While we were waiting, George L. Curry, who was acting governor, sent reinforcements. Major Rains of Fort Vancouver furnished guns and ammunition. Captain Nesmith, with his volunteers and with a howitzer and the muskets and ammunition reached our camp on September 8. Captain A.J. Smith of the regular army,

with his soldiers, also joined our force on that day.

*Right here is a good place to describe briefly the outcome of that conference. General Lane suggested to Captain Nesmith that they go unarmed to the Indian camp and negotiate the treaty. Captain Nesmith, who knew the character of the Rogue River Indians, protested and said that while he was willing to obey as a soldier and lead his company of volunteer cavalrymen into the fight, he did not feel like going unarmed and giving himself into the power of the Indians.*

*General Lane said, "I have given my word to the Indians to go unarmed. If you are afraid to go as an interpreter, I will not insist."*

*Captain Nesmith said, "I haven't any more fear than you have, only I know we shall all be killed. However, if you insist on going, I will go as interpreter."*

*On the morning of September 10, 1853, General Lane, General Palmer, Indian Agent, S. P. Culver, Captain A.J. Smith of the First Dragoons, Captain L.F. Mosher, Colonel John E. Ross, Captain J.W. Nesmith, Lieutenant A.V. Kautz, R.B. Metcalf, J.D. Mason and T.T. Tierney mounted their horses and rode across the valley to the foot of Table Rock. Tying their horses there, they went afoot for nearly a mile to where the Indians were camped on the summit of Table Rock. There were about 700 warriors in the camp. Captain Smith's company of dragoons could be plainly seen, drawn up in formation in the valley below. General Lane and Superintendent Palmer made speeches to the Indians, which were translated by Captain Nesmith. When a Rogue River Indian spoke, another Indian would translate his speech into Chinook, so that Captain Nesmith could understand it, and Captain Nesmith would then translate it into English.*

*In the midst of the conference a naked Indian ran into camp, covered with sweat and dust, and said a company of white men on Applegate Creek had captured an Indian that morning, tied him to a tree, and killed him. Instantly all was commotion. The Indians seized their guns and the interpreter told Captain Nesmith that they had decided to tie the white men to trees and kill them to avenge the death of the Indian.*

*General Lane, whose arm was in a sling, said to Captain Nesmith, "Tell the Indians that I will punish the white men for murdering the Indian. They are not our soldiers. We have come into your camp in good faith, unarmed. You can kill us, but if you do the soldiers will hunt your tribe from the face of the earth and kill you all. What are you going to do about it?"*

*The Indians decided to put up their guns and to go ahead with the conference. A treaty was arranged and no more trouble occurred until the Yakima Indian War broke out in 1855." [Fred Lockley, The Journal Man, Oregon Journal, March 12 & 13, 1922]*

Children of Samuel Burch and Sarah Ford:

- i. Nathaniel Samuel Burch (1856-1928)
- ii. Marcus Aurelius Burch (1858-1950)
- iii. Thomas Sharp Burch (1863-1925)
- iv. Franklin Porter Burch (1866-1956)



- v. Mary Elizabeth Burch (1869-1963)
- vi. Caroline Ford Burch (1871-1952)
- vii. John C. Burch (1872-1874)
- viii. Louisa Josephine Burch (1875-1911)
- ix. Edith Ethel Burch (1877-1971)
- x. Bertha J. Burch (1881-1883)
- xi. Lucinda Ellen Burch
- xii.
- xiii.

5. Mary E. Burch

b. 1833 Chariton Co, MO

d. 24 Nov 1856

m'd 11 Sep 1851 Polk Co, OR

John Thomas Jeffries

b. 07 Apr 1830 Independence, Jackson Co, MO

d. 24 Feb 1867 The Dalles, Wasco Co, OR

buried St. Peters Cemetery, The Dalles, Wasco Co, OR

ODLC: #2400 Yamhill; John T. Jeffreys b. 1830 Jackson Co, MO; sc 20 Jul 1852; m'd Mary E. 11 Sep 1851 Polk Co, OR; abs about 9 mo to states on business 1853 and 2 mos in 1852; stock and family remained on claim

1850: Polk Co, OR, October 15, 1850; Samuel Birch (sic-Burch), 57, MD; Ellener, 53, VA; John W., 30, KY; Samuel, 19, MO; Mary E., 18, MO; Thomas, 15, MO; Jacob, 13, MO; Benjn, 5, MO; Lucy A., 3, MO

1860: The Dalles, Wasco Co, OR, July 3, 1860; John T. Jeffreys, 33, lawyer, \$2000 \$6000, IN

Children of John Jeffries and Mary Burch:

i. L.L. Jeffries

b. 1853 OR

d.

1860: Independence, Polk Co, OR, August 2, 1860; E.L. Burch, 62, f, \$3200 \$1666, VA; L.L. Jefferys, 7, f, OR; L.T. Jefferys, 4, m, OR

ii. L.T. Jeffries

b. 1856 OR

d.

1860: Independence, Polk Co, OR, August 2, 1860; E.L. Burch, 62, f, \$3200  
\$1666, VA; L.L. Jefferys, 7, f, OR; L.T. Jefferys, 4, m, OR

OJ : Mar 12/13, 1922 Imp and Ob

6. Thomas Sharp Burch (twin of Laura)

b. 1835 MO

d.

1850: Polk Co, OR, October 15, 1850; Samuel Birch (sic-Burch), 57, MD; Ellener, 53,  
VA; John W., 30, KY; Samuel, 19, MO; Mary E., 18, MO; Thomas, 15, MO; Jacob, 13,  
MO; Benjn, 5, MO; Lucy A., 3, MO

1860: Independence, Polk Co, OR, August 2, 1860, T.S. Burch, 24, farmer, \$1060 \$1160,  
MO

7. Laura Burch

b.

d. bef 1847

(twin of Thomas) died in east prior to emigration

8. Jacob Jefferson Burch

b. Jan 1838 MO

d. 1913

buried Burch Pioneer Cemetery, Rickreall, Polk Co, OR

m. c 1873 Polk Co, OR

Angeline Drusilla Nance

b. 28 Feb 1853 MO

d. 11 Apr 1919 Rickreall, Polk Co, OR

buried Burch Pioneer Cemetery, Rickreall, Polk Co, OR

1850: Polk Co, OR, October 15, 1850; Samuel Birch (sic-Burch), 57, MD; Ellener, 53,  
VA; John W., 30, KY; Samuel, 19, MO; Mary E., 18, MO; Thomas, 15, MO; Jacob, 13,  
MO; Benjn, 5, MO; Lucy A., 3, MO

1856: Jacob Jefferson Burch, Polk County Volunteer [Oregon Statesman February 12,  
1856 p.3:2]

1860: Independence, Polk Co, OR, August 2, 1860, J.J. Burch, 22, farmer, \$1060 \$1060,  
MO

9. Eleanor Burch

b.

d.