
Peter Burnette's Ragged Regiment: 1848

Peter Hardeman Burnett¹

Born	November 15, 1807(1807-11-15) Nashville, Tennessee
Died	May 17, 1895 (aged 87) San Francisco, California
Political	Independent Democrat
Spouse	Harriet Rogers
Profession	Author, lawyer, politician
Religion	Roman Catholic

In 1832 he migrated to Liberty, Missouri, where he practiced law and served as prosecuting attorney from 1840 to 1842.

In 1843, Peter Burnett became part of the exodus of easterners moving westward, moving his family to the Oregon Country to take up farming. While in the Oregon Country, Burnett began his forays into politics, getting elected to the provisional legislature between 1844 to 1848.¹

He held various jobs over the years, including storekeeper, lawyer, farmer and judge. As a legislator in Oregon, Burnett proposed that all free Negroes be forced to leave the state. Any who failed to leave were to be arrested and flogged every six months until they did leave.

1848 Meanwhile news of the discovery of gold in California reached Oregon late in July 1848. Practically every able bodied men in the territory left for California by boat, or by the old Oregon-California Trappers Trail and down the Sacramento River.²

150 Men Leave Oregon City For California Gold Fields

1848 Upon news of the discovery of gold in California on January 24, 1848, Burnett and his family moved south with a large party to take part in the rush.¹ Their travels took them over the Trappers Trail in northern Josephine County, including the pass at today's Mt. Sexton, and over both Jumpoff Joe Creek and the Rogue River. The California gold discoveries changed the travel flow on the Applegate Trail as it used to be one way from south to north. Now it was from north to south.

The Burnetts were part of a group of 150 men with 46 wagons (Peter Burnett letter of December 2, 1848 from California) which left Oregon City for the gold fields. This group back tracked the Applegate Trail as far as the northeastern shores of Tule Lake, where they turned south, intending to intersect the California Trail (Truckee route) somewhere in the present Reno, Nevada vicinity. Much to their surprise, upon reaching Pitt River in northwestern Big Valley, they came upon the tracks of the recently passed Peter Lassen wagon train of emigrants. Following these tracks they crossed the Sierras south of Mount Lassen and caught up with the struggling Lassen train some 40 miles before reaching the Sacramento Valley, and helped construct the road into that place.²

Burnett moved to Oregon in 1844 and helped in the organization of a territorial government. He was a justice on the Oregon Supreme Court in 1845, and served as a member of the Oregon Territorial Legislature in 1844 and 1848.

1. Wikipedia. 2008. Peter Hardeman Burnett. Internet. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Hardeman_Burnett
2. Klamath County Historical Society. 1971. *Applegate Trail*. Klamath Echoes. Klamath Falls, OR.

First Governor Of California

After a modest success in getting gold, Burnett envisioned a career in law in San Francisco, a rapidly-growing boomtown thanks largely to the Gold Rush. On the way to the Bay Area, Burnett met John A. Sutter, Jr., son of German-born Swiss pioneer John Sutter. The younger Sutter offered Burnett a job in selling land plots for the new town of Sacramento. Over the next year, Burnett made nearly US \$50,000 in land sales in Sacramento.¹



1849 By a treaty of peace which followed the Mexican War, California was ceded to the United States for the sum of \$15,000,000 in 1848. The first American Constitution for the State became official September 3, 1849. On November third

of the same year the first election was held, with the result that Peter H. Burnett was elected Governor -- before California had even become a state.

More information Contact an officer of the *Hugo Neighborhood* on how you can become involved in your community's land use, and/or history projects.

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (*Hugo Neighborhood*). It is designed to be shared with neighbors for the purpose of helping protect our rural quality of life by promoting an informed citizenry in decision-making. The *Hugo Neighborhood* is an informal nonprofit charitable and educational organization with a land use and history mission of promoting the social welfare of its neighbors.

Land Use & History

The *Hugo Neighborhood's* land use mission is to promote Oregon Statewide Goal 1 — Citizen Involvement, and by preserving, protecting, and enhancing the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors. It will act, as requested, as a technical resource assisting neighbors to represent themselves.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Volunteer membership dues are \$10.00 annually per family and normally used for paper, ink, envelopes, publications and mailings. Make checks to the *Hugo Neighborhood* and send them to our Treasurer.

Hugo Neighborhood Association

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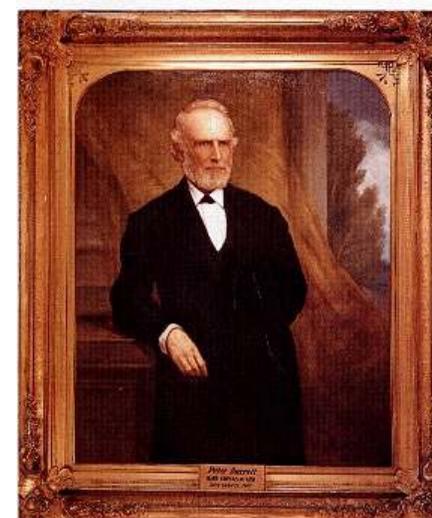
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PETER BURNETTE'S RAGGED REGIMENT: 1848



Brochure 12 in
Trapper's Trail Series



California Governor Peter Burnette

May 25, 2008

Hugo Emigrant Trails Committee

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