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Family histories from the DUP (Daughters of the Utah Pioneers)

PIONEER HISTORY TITLE PAGE

18 October 1850

DATE ARRIVED AND COMPANY

NAME OF PIONEER: Sarah Marinda Smith Burnham

BIRTH DATE AND PLACE: Keosauqua, Van Buren,  
Iowa

DEATH DATE AND PLACE: 25 March 1925, Redme-  
sa, La Plata, Colorado

SPOUSES: George Franklin Burnham

PARENTS: Warren Smith (father) Amanda Barnes  
Smith (mother)

WRITTEN BY: Carol McKee

DATE: January 16, 2005

ADDRESS: 93 E. 1700 S., Bountiful, Utah 84010

CAMP NAME: Margaret Cowan Bryson

COMPANY NAME: Davis Heritage

SOURCES: History written by Lura Slade Dunn and  
other grandchildren

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Sarah Marinda Smith Burnham

It was July, 1846. The blacksmith shop was quiet

now. Friends and neighbors had been leaving since February. Thick clouds of dust, day after day, gave mute evidence that the saints were on their way. At last the Smith family was leaving Nauvoo. Deep ruts made travel slow and very difficult. Money was scarce, so great care had to be taken to ensure that supplies would last until they reached the main body of saints at Winter Quarters.

Soon they were in Iowa. It was August and the hot summer sun had given way to September showers which made travel even more difficult and slow. On September 10th they reached Keosauqua, Van Buren County, but it was impossible to go any further. Warren and Amanda made a temporary camp. A canvas was stretched from the wagon cover to the ground to make a temporary shelter for a bed. In this humble surrounding, with the patter of rain on the canvas, came the faint cry of a newborn baby—so tiny she could be placed in a quart cup and a lid put on. She weighed only two and one-half pounds. She was given the name of Sarah Marinda.

The family took turns holding pans to keep the rain off the mother and baby. A mother who had seen miracles happen before (Alma who miraculously grew a new hip after being shot by the mob at Hauns Mill, and another son who's eyesight had been restored) knew that with faith and love this little new one could and would live to fill her mission here on earth. Soon the Smith family was on their way again. They joined the saints at Council Bluff, where they were forced to remain for several years before continuing their journey west—with Warren as captain of a company. Sarah Marinda was four years old when they arrived in the Salt

Lake Valley on the 18th of October, 1850.

They started immediately to prepare a house to move into. But Amanda had a new challenge to face when her husband left the family to move to California with another woman. Amanda and her family were left to care for themselves. She taught school, and with the help of her sons, was able to make a reasonable living. But later, due to failing health, Amanda and her two young children moved to Richmond, Utah, to be with her daughter. When they arrived. Warren and Sarah were taken into the homes of kind neighbors.

In 1860, when Sarah was 14 years old, Mary Ann Huntley Burnham and her sons moved to Richmond. Two years later, on 7 November 1862, George Franklin Bumham and Sarah Marinda were married. He was 23 years old and she was 16. On 12 September 1863 they traveled to Salt Lake City to be sealed in the Endowment House. While they lived in Richmond, nine babies were bom. Then they answered a call to help build up new frontiers in the San Juan Valley of Utah. It was not easy to leave this lovely green valley, and their mothers, brothers and sisters. Because they were moving so far away, they were never to see their families again.

They gathered their few belongings and their precious family and were on their way. The journey to the San Juan was hard and slow because they had very meager means with which to travel. So they were forced to stop along the way and work. At one stop George was able to work on the railroad. After they had made a temporary camp close to a river, a terrible storm came, bringing a

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mighty flood. The raging waters took all of their belongings except their empty wagons and their teams. The children had been playing barefoot in the sand, so ALL of their shoes were washed away. Sarah had made some beautiful quilts, which were also lost in the flood. One daughter remembers

how they cried to lose the quilts because they had so few nice things.

But they journeyed on, stopping for a short time at Moab, where Alvina, the tenth child, was born. As soon as possible they were on their way to the San Juan. They settled in Fruitland, New Mexico, where James Warren was born. George and Sarah did not stay long, moving back to Moab where a baby girl, Delilah, was born—which made an even dozen. Because they moved from place to place, they had only the barest of necessities. All had to work. The children, too young to do much else, would gather Squaw, Service, and Buffalo berries to dry for food. It was said of this pioneer mother by one of her sons, "I never once heard my mother complain."

Moab did not seem to be the right place, so again the Burnham train was on its way. In 1888 they stopped at a little Mormon settlement just south of Mancos in Montezuma Coimty, Colorado. Here with the help of the brethren of the branch and his sons, George put up a two-room log house. While living in this tiny home, their son Warren recalled how five of the children had the measles and were very sick. He said, " Mother surely had a time with us, but we all got well and had a lot of fun talking about it later. I don't know how she did it. But with her faith and prayers and the help of the Lord-the greatest physician of all-we all got through all of our illnesses. She was the only doctor we ever knew."

Sarah's husband, George, had a beautiful tenor voice and loved to sing. In the modest surroundings of their home, or while moving from place to place, these stalwart parents extended themselves with their limited resources to give their family every advantage possible, both in education and religious training. But Sarah was alone much of the time because George spent most of his time in Fmitland with his second wife, Betsy, and her family. In nearby Jackson a group of men were working to build a reservoir to start up a new community. It was while working on this project that George was hauling logs and was thrown from the wagon and instantly killed. He was buried in the little Mormon cemetery not far from their home. Sarah had im-

plicit faith in the Celestial order of marriage and lived it in such a way as to bring honor to her husband and her family.

Sarah found much comfort in the Church and was very faithful in her duties. She was a good conversationalist, and even though her schooling was very limited, she was alert and very responsive to the opportunities that the Church afforded. She was an exceptional seamstress. A neighbor remembered a beautiful dress she made for her youngest daughter, Delilah (Lila). It had rows and rows of ruffles—all stitched very neatly by hand. She was very domestic by nature and loved to adorn her humble surroundings with her handiwork.

In 1905 her sons filed on land in a new community known as Redmesa. Her daughter Lila cared for her mother in a small home which they built for her near the meetinghouse. The area around her home was swept and kept very neat. To welcome all who came through her gate, Sarah kept a neat row of pinks on each side of her walk. Many times when visitors turned into the gate, there stood grandmother in her doorway, her long apron hanging to the hem of her skirt, her left arm across her waist. She always looked forward to visits because she spent many lonely hours.

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A grandson said, "I never heard anyone speak unkindly of grandmother." An acquaintance said that she was a true friend and a kind neighbor, and her home was kept immaculate. Her daughter Lila told how difficult it was to make a cake because her mother would gather up her spoons several times to wash them. Her daughter Vida recalled a time when she hurried off to a party, leaving her room in a disorderly condition. She was not gone very long when she was sent for by her mother. Not knowing why, she hurried home. Her mother met her at the door and said, "Vida, take care of your things." It was a lesson that remained with her throughout her life.

Her surroundings revealed her personality. Like her, they were orderly and clean. Her grandchildren who stayed nights with her remember how she could get up in the night and find what she needed in the dark because her home was so orderly. They loved to sit with her in the twilight and listen to her speak of her pioneer days. She would always say, "All is well if my children and grandchildren keep the faith."

Her passing on 25 March 1925 in Redmesa was quiet and peaceful. Her noble character lives on in the lives of her numerous posterity who call her blessed.

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### My Grandmother

by Irma Taylor W. Dean, a granddaughter

I remember as a child living close to Grandma Burnham. We loved to go to see her. I know she loved her home and lived there like a queen. She was kind and very neat and tidy. From her gate to her door was a board walk. She kept this walk so clean—I'm certain she scrubbed it often. And along this walk on both sides was a row of flowers, the old-fashioned pinks. Oh, the fragrance of those stately, beautiful blossoms as they welcomed all who came.

When I had a home of my own, she often came to visit and seemed to enjoy the children—especially when they were small. She would hold and love them. I remember one day when she came I had a large wash hanging on the line. She said, "Irma, either you have a lot of clothes, or you are very dirty."

Grandmother was a quiet lady—never having much to say—but we each knew we were someone special in her life. There was never any doubt in our minds that she sustained the church authorities, as well as our local leaders in the ward.