



# Glen Elder, KS -- Heritage & History

~ Memoir Lane ~

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The following excerpt was taken from *"Weaving the Common Threads of the Solomon Valley, Fabric"* ...a history book projected promoted by the Solomon Valley / Highway 24 Heritage Alliance and compiled by: Von Rothenberger, (Project Facilitator) -- The specific information for the following was gathered and written by Erma Luckey, Phyllis Porter, and Bernita Eberle.

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## **A History of Glen Elder Churches**

-- From: Weaving Common Threads...

In 1886 several Glen Elder pioneer families, desiring a place to worship, met, formed a charter, and purchased a tract of land to build a Church of Christ, later changed to First Christian Church. A one-room building was constructed and a minister hired. The attendance grew and by 1890, one hundred people had been baptized. Through the years, a basement was dug, stained glass windows installed, remodeling and additions were made. The educational center was added in 1966.

Only two years after the Glen Elder Christian Church was founded in 1886, the church ladies organized the Christian Church Ladies Aid. Their first project was a church bell, whose coded rings notified the community of weddings, funerals, and emergencies. Since then the ladies have shucked corn, served many banquets, wedding, and funeral dinners, fixed chicken pot pie and brown bread for their traditional "Election Dinners," and run cake stands for Glen Elder Day celebrations. They support the Cookson Hill Christian Children's Home with money and gifts with a special emphasis at Christmastime. Their most important project is the Prayer Chain, and the calling committee contacts, and baking cookies for shut-ins or those in need of help.

A Methodist class was organized in 1872 before there was a building. A cornerstone was laid about 1880 for the construction of the Pioneer stone church. After 35 years, the church was in bad repair and too small to accommodate their services, so a red-brick church was built and dedicated September 20, 1917. In 1968 the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Evangelical United Brethren joined, making the church known as the United Methodist Church. The beautiful church still stands and remains very active today.

The Ladies Aid Society was organized soon after the first old rock Methodist Church was built in 1883. They served the church for many years, and then in 1940 the name was changed to Women Society of Christian Service (WSCS). In 1973 the name changed again to United Methodist Women (UMW).

The first Mennonite families homesteaded seven miles southwest of Glen Elder in 1872. Soon other families followed from their homes in the East and a Mennonite settlement was formed. A cemetery was laid out and platted on the timber claim of Jacob Marzolf. The first meetings were held in homes, with a church building constructed in 1897 on the east edge of the cemetery. The first school was held in the basement of the Marzolf home and later the Naomi schoolhouse constructed. Membership of the church grew strong, but as some members died and others returned to their homes in the East, membership fell. The church building was torn down in the 1950s, with some of the lumber used to build the small church replica now located in the Glen Elder city park. The cemetery, also known as the "Naomi" cemetery, is well taken care of and is a reminder of the hearty pioneers who came here, forming the Mennonite settlement that existed for over 80 years.

The first family of "Friends" to come to this area was that of Andrew F. Wooten, a minister, his wife Sarah, and five of their nine children in 1870. They took a claim on a homestead two and one-half

miles southwest of Glen Elder. In 1876 three families of Friends met in a dugout for worship, two and one-half miles southwest of Glen Elder. This group grew and became Glen Elder Friends Meeting in 1878. In 1900 two groups were formed out of this Mother Meeting with South Fairview as the second meeting. These two meetings united as Glen View Friends and dedicated their new building southwest of Glen Elder in 1922. When the Glen Elder Dam went in, the Glen View Church building was sold in 1966. The people relocated the Friends Meeting in a new building, which was built in Glen Elder. Dedication services for the present Glen Elder Friends Church was held December 10, 1967.

Glen View Women's Missionary Society was organized in 1924, under the auspices of Marva Jackson who also served as the first president. Twelve members paid dues of \$1.35 and promptly went to work quilting quilts, tying comforters, cleaning the schoolhouse, and other projects to raise money for home and foreign mission projects. Friends mission work in Burundi, Africa, was for many years the primary focus with the ladies sending money and boxes of supplies, rolling bandages, sewing layettes, and hospital gowns. Today Friends Mission Fields are found around the globe which has expanded the vision and support of Friends Women. In addition to foreign mission, several Indian missions in the U S. are supported, including Rough Rock in Arizona, Kickapoo in Oklahoma, Mesquakie in Iowa, and others.

In 1993 as more members worked outside of the home, the Glen Elder Friends Women divided into two societies, one met in the day time and the other in the evening. The evening society was called the Waconda Friends Women. Total membership is much less than in previous years, but the zeal and vision for missions has not lessened. Prayer, study of missions, financial support for home and mission projects, reading books, remembering missionaries on their birthdays and anniversaries, supporting youth mission projects, tying comforters and baby blankets, caroling at the nursing homes, plates of goodies for shut-ins, serving auctions, women's night out and even a women's day retreat are activities that one or both these societies have been involved with.