

Memories of My Brothers & Sisters and Especially Eva

By Kenion Taylor Butler

1963

I am glad to know Eva's family is interested in wanting to know more of this very pretty and gracious one, as I, Taylor, the next one older, remembers her. As an older brother it was my privilege and pleasure to tease her and protect her and love her all at the same time.

As small children we used to sit in front of the sandstone fireplace in our big living room. Jane and Eva made a very pretty picture. They would often be in their long night gowns; Jane brushing her own extremely long hair that she could sit upon, or braiding Eva's bright and shiny hair. Jane would perhaps be sitting on a low stool with Eva, Lee and me on the rag carpet, and Eva playing with her dolls. Eva loved to play with them. She was a natural mother and cared for her dolls so very tenderly, the way she cared for her own babies later and loved them so intensely.

One of my regrets is that she didn't live to enjoy her lovely grandchildren and see them grow and to see her own sons grow to be such fine, self-reliant, and good men. I have no doubt she is a guardian angel over them.

While in front of the fireplace, mother would often be reading to us children and knitting at the same time -- her book resting on the stand table while her hands were busy. Her knitting would usually be long, black stockings as we kids always had to wear them in cold weather. Baby Lee Tom, when he came along would be in the group, too, perhaps playing with some clay horse that I had molded from the red clay and had Mr. Jeppson bake for me in the brick kiln. This was near our home and we loved to play there.

I remember when only three years old [that would be in 1893] I was taken to the Butler-Beck mine, tied on the top of a pack on a pack animal. Mother didn't go up that summer as she had baby Eva and she was too small and mother's health was too delicate. The older brothers and sisters went and took me along to relieve mother, I guess, of the work and worry of caring for her three year old "Comanche."

I have always thought I remembered that first trip away from my mother, lashed on that high pack, going over very steep trails and dugways. Looking down at the creek far below impressed me so vividly I have always thought I remembered that part of the trip.

These trips to and from the Butler-Beck mine were as regular as the seasons. At the mine we children loved to play in the white sand that had washed out of the mill after the gold was taken out of it. It made a lake of pretty white sand. Another place we liked to play was on the old Raster. This was a long pole that made a sweep around and around and was driven by horse or mule power. And of course there was always fishing and berry picking of raspberries and service berries and the cows and calves to watch and bring in at milking time and the calves to feed. After the calves had sucked a while we would drive them away and the man would finish milking the cows. The woman and girls would make the milk into butter and cheese. At an early age I took over the job of delivering these products to the Silver King mine or the Snider Town Mine. This turned out to be known later as the Annie Laurie Mine or Upper Kimberly Town. This was the summer life that Eva came to inherit by the time of her second summer. [Eva was born 9 December 1892.]

Once we had trouble with a wild critter that had followed the milk cows in. It was a Texas long horn, unbranded, and had run with a bunch that was as wild as elk. We children got up on a calf shed and this wild bull kept us up there for what seemed like a very long time. The men finally came home from their days work in the mine and Will Penn shot the animal. Will Bean was a law man who was looking for moon-shiners. He took the mammoth spread of horns and the meat was divided among the several families who stayed there permanently in the summer time. One was the family of Hans Godferson. Mr. Godferson was the assayer; he not only did the assaying, but melted the gold into bricks. I remember he told me I could have one of the bricks if I could pick it up. I

couldn't even get my fingers under the edge of one of them, and they were about the size of a house brick but a different shape.

Some of the other families that were fairly permanent were the Huntsmans and the Pugmire families; they all had children that we played with. Mr. Pugmire was a jolly man with us children. The one thing I remember about Mrs. Pugmire was the time we children were playing in the yard and the Pugmire baby was in a high chair. We were all over in the shade of Quaking Aspens and Choke Cherry trees. We heard a scream and looked up to see the mountain lion standing between us and the cabin. Mrs. Pugmire had come to the door and seeing the lions between her and the children, she screamed and fainted. The lions decided we weren't for them and went trotting off through the bushes.

I remember us children wading in the creek. There was a trick we learned from the Indian squaws so we could catch fish. There was a meadow where the creek split and one branch went on each side of the meadow. We could dam the water so it would go either side branch that we wanted it to, then we would go wading and catch the fish with our hands and we could soon throw out enough fish for a good mess.

I remember Olive, Jane, and I liked to fish with a hook and line. Our poles were always cut from the willows. There was a certain good place to fish that was easy to get to and close to the house. That good fishing hole was reserved for Olive as she was sickly and mother wanted her close where she could always keep an eye on her and she would be within calling distance. It is most amazing how she outgrew her weakness and married and raised family of two girls and seven boys. They are very handsome, beautiful and capable, and very thoughtful of their parents. Now that Olive and Jess are old and Jess so incapacitated, Olive, though she is eighty [78 in 1963], is able to take care of him.

Eva had the nesting instinct strong in her. She used to always have her doll near at hand when we were gathered around the fireplace. Sometimes I would have to play papa when she had the urge to play house. She would make mud pies and cakes and she baked them on mullen leaves and put to dry on a board all frosted with weed seeds. I could stand being a nice papa just so long, then I would have to turn into a villain and run away on my stick horse and maybe kidnap her doll. I would have to make sure it was the rag doll with the button eyes that she called Rosie. I early learned not to touch the doll with the bisque head and the kid body. She guarded this one so well, and would have hysterics if I so much as made a pass at that one.

I remember when Lee was born. One March day, the first day of spring, I was playing with Chester Christensen (probably playing marbles) and here came Jane to tell me our mother had a new baby boy. I went dashing for home anxious to see this new brother that everyone was making such a fuss about and saying he was just the cutest thing. They showed me this wrinkled, red faced bundle with tiny curls on top of his head. Even then I wanted to laugh at him -- I couldn't see anything to be so elated about as the girls were and I would just as soon have had a pup.

As time went on I came to love this important child. He did improve in his looks! His face lost its redness and would light up with smiles at the least little attention. He was 'little Lee Tom Fat,' as we called him, and he was a joy to have around. We all enjoyed him so much. He would say the funniest things and we all thought he was just the cutest thing. He always kept his things in place and knew where his cap and mittens were. He was a great joy to mother. I am sure an angel in the pre-existent life must have said 'well, here is one for laughs' and into his genes went all the fun loving traits they could crowd into one little soul and then sent him to our house to keep us cheered up in our times of great stress and strain -- for those years were really hard years both financially and in other ways. Lee has always attracted crowds to come near him to hear his funny stories. I (Taylor) have tried to emulate his genius for being funny and though I have quite a collection of humorous stories that bring laughs I never quite tell them with the same love of fun and merriment that Lee can.

Lee grew up to be a clean minded boy and though he didn't date girls much, girls liked to play with him and their mothers knew Lee would always treat them like they wanted their girls treated. I would champion his rights as though I was not only his big brother, but his father, too.

By this time our own father's health was getting very poor and he died when I was past nine years old and Lee was not yet three. I guess being left fatherless so young made us children very close to each other and to our mother. Jane and I felt so responsible for Lee and Eva's welfare. All this responsibility made us old for our years. I was a rugged adventurous boy and it early fell to my lot to help provide for the family. I worked for Uncle Jim Butler who kept Bees and ran pigs and was paid twenty cents a day.

The Christmas papa died was a very sad one. He died the 30th of December 1898 and we were so very poor and John (III.) was on a mission. There were no toys or treats in our stockings that Christmas morning when we woke up, but Zettie came later in the day bringing us some small gifts. The Relief Society brought us a basket of food with some staple groceries in it. Jane and I thought surely we would find some jelly or raisins in it but we were doomed to disappointment -- nothing sweet in that whole basket.

There was a sack of oatmeal in it and Jane and I have both had an aversion to oatmeal since. We must have been real hungry for sweets -- I never did quite get my "sweet tooth" satisfied. I wonder if it isn't a craving that came the frustration that came down through the years. I remember how I liked to scrape the cake pan and eat the sweet batter, but of course, Lee and Eva liked to lick the pans too, and they were much more appealing about it than I was. When we were grown and Jane was keeping house for us she made me a cake batter and handed me the whole pan and said "eat all the cake batter you want" -- but it wasn't as appealing as when I was the boy with the bottomless pit.

Sometimes we would put on shows. Eva would be the Prima Donna and play on her make-believe piano and sing some old songs such as "My Pretty Red Wing" and then Jane would come along and steal the show by singing in her sweet, lilting voice, 'Sweet Adeline' or 'Bill Bailey Won't You Please Come Home.' Lee and I, I am sure, made good audience until I could stand it no longer and would have to get my share of the limelight and would attempt to stand on my head on an apple limb or cut leaves off the tree with my braided whip.

Eva had an obsession to play the piano. It is surely a shame she didn't have the opportunity to take lessons. She was a very beautiful girl and looked so pretty in pink. She had a large pink bow she wore in her hair and a pink sash on her white dress. She grew even more beautiful as she grew up and older people even today, after not seeing her for so many years still remember her for her beauty and her sweet ways. The boys early started to admire her.

Hats were always the bane of my life. They had a way of hiding in the oddest places and I could never find mine when I was in a hurry. One of my most embarrassing moments was forgetting to change my old red "loppy" hat that I wore when I milked the cow. When I got to school the children started to snicker and point fingers at me and to my chagrin I found I still had on that silly little chore hat.

I remember they got up a boys chorus and I was in it. How my heart I would swell when we would sing "I am a Mormon boy."

We made our own play things in those days -- cross bows, spool wagons, willow whistles in the spring, and tick tack for Halloween, flippers and sling shots, stilts, yarn balls with a piece of rubber in the middle, and we molded horses and cows from clay.

Father had always taught us never to get into a fight unless it was forced upon us, and we were sure we were in the right, and then to never, never, take a whipping. He said 'You can always do better than you think you can.' Chester Christensen was my best friend, but even he and I had our fights. Chester could never take a dare and one time while we were playing out on the spring

ditch, he drew a line and said ‘don’t dare cross on my side,’ and then the fun began -- so I had a lot of practice with my fists.

When I was old enough to be a Deacon, I took Cora Erickson to a Deacons’ dance. I soon got all the dancing I wanted and fell asleep on a bench in the corner, and Cora had to wake me up to take her home. I was very embarrassed but Cora acted like she was glad to be my girl.

My mother and grandmother came in two different sizes. Mother was tall and very slender and her mother was very small.

(The mother of this family should have many fine things written about her. I, Thelma, her daughter-in-law, who is writing this story for Taylor, have talked to many people outside of the family about Francetta Smith Butler and they picture her as her son Taylor has said, tall, straight, and slim, neat, pretty and graceful; stylish even though she didn’t have to spend on clothes. She was calm, patient and gentle even over a hot stove, and in the face of hardships. In private family life she was prayerful and wise and taught morality and honesty should be first in her children’s lives. Her neighbors and friends that met her in Relief Society said she could look like a fashion plate in a gingham dress, always pleasant and immaculate, with her raven black hair piled on top of her head. She liked the crackle of a friendly fire.)

My mother could look at us children and make us feel important and want to be fine gentlemen even on the raw frontier. She would often say “Taylor, don’t have a double standard of morals -- one for girls and one for boys -- save your virtue for the girl you marry. When you are out with a young lady treat her like you would want your sisters treated” and then I would think of Eva and Jane so beautiful and would have murdered a man that would have defiled them. She told her girls their virtue was priceless and they would keep their virtue if they carried themselves like ladies. We are part and parcel of this marvelous mother and I might say like Abraham Lincoln “All that I am I owe to this angel mother.”

There is nothing so wonderful to belong to as a good family and though we lacked much in the good things of life that money could buy, mother tried to make it up to us in love and gentleness. So I feel we did get a fine inheritance.

Our schooling was so much broken into, trailing to father’s mining operations in the spring before school was out and then coming down in the fall after school had started. It was a wonder school had any charm at all for us, or that the teachers tolerated such errant ways. And so our childhood was brief and varied.

It was a strange time, father fired with the idea that he was going to be a rich man from his gold mining and there were good prospects. They were following a rich vein of ore, and then all of a sudden a slip in the earth had caused that vein to be lost. My father had already put his herd of horses and sheep into the mining operation. In his frantic efforts to find the lost vein his health broke and he soon died broken down physically at the age of 56. His family was left penniless.

Horace, at the age of 16, stayed at the Butler-Beck mine in the winter to guard the machinery. It seemed the belts had to be turned a little each day and he was paid a small amount. I stayed with him at the age of 9 until the snow would come in the fall, then Horace would come with me as far as he could, and then I, on our only horse, started for Richfield; and Horace sorrowfully turned back to his lonely vigil at the mine. He would stay there alone all through those winter months. He came out of this experience a kind, soft spoken man, always so appreciative of his loved ones.

He never could seem to get enough companionship with friends; he loved people and adored his wife and family – always putting their comfort before his own. To him, Ida was the finest, most capable woman in the whole world.

After John came home from his mission, times were really hard, and John and the family knew there was a new tract of land opening in Idaho. Taking me with him, we set out for Idaho in a covered wagon in 1903. The story of this trip is told in the chapter about my brother John. The family followed in 1905 – mother, Eva, and Lee Tom. This was a happy time for me. Mother was

at the dam site when word was sent to me at Dairy Creek where I was building a ditch. Not waiting for permission, I took off on my pony. The seven year old that came to meet me dazzled my eyes with his big barn shovel teeth and my dainty sister Eva, somewhat shy. Eva was already getting to be quite a grownup and would so cheerfully wash the dishes. She actually seemed to enjoy the job and when she was 14 and I was 16 and Jane a little older, we took jobs to help Lester Stott with his shearing crew. Jane and Olive did the cooking, Eva waited on tables and washed the dishes and I was the wrangler.

Harry McAdams was the first teacher in a granary on George Labrums place, and that was the first school house. This was the winter of 1905-06, then the next year they built a one room school house on John's place. This served as a church as well as a school house. George Labrum was the first Presiding Elder of the Manard Branch.

Erin and Carrie were married in 1903 and Erin came to Idaho to homestead in 1905. Carrie joined him the following July. The spring of 1906 they moved to their homestead. The work on the dam had started a little in 1904, enough to show their intentions, but they had surveyed it in 1903. Work started in earnest in 1905. They were 2 years building the dam and it was completed in 1906. Erin hauled the last load of dirt on the dam. He was so enthused when he dumped it, his hat went into the air and he tried to let out a big "Hurrah" of joy, but it came out in an undertone as he never could yell very loud. Thinking back now on his inability to shout very loud I think even at that time his lungs were effected by the Delamar dust or miners consumption that later caused his death. The enthusiasm Erin started soon spread to all the men and boys on the job. Hats went into the air and shouts went up signifying that the job on the dam was completed, but the work on the canals had to go on.

Going back to 1903: When we arrived in Hagerman the first part of May, 1903, we heard about a Mormon family on Camas Prairie by the name of Dixon. We wanted to look them up and finally did after we had gone to Bruneau but went by way of Mountain Home to Camas Prairie and on to Fir Grove to look up this Mormon family, the Dixons. I went with John to the door. In answer to our knock, a short man with a heavy black beard, and a boy about my own age, came to the door. John introduced us and after much hand shaking told him we were from a large family and were looking for land opportunities. Brother Dixon invited us in to meet his wife and stay for dinner. I found out this boy's name was Bailey and we hit up a friendship that has lasted through the years. Brother Dixon explained he had a large family of boys though they weren't at the house at this time. He asked a lot of questions and one was how many girls we had in our family. He was[n't] backward in stating he wanted his boys to marry Mormon girls. Little did I realize this friend Bailey would marry my sister Eva 10 years from this time.

In 1904 I had been on Camas Prairie and had been plowing with 2 horses and a walking plow on John's desert claim. I camped in a covered wagon, doing my own cooking on a camp fire on the ground. John and Bertha and baby Grant moved to the homestead leaving behind a baby girl, buried in the Hailey cemetery. She was born on the Gilman ranch the previous fall and had lived only a short time. When Bertha came to the delivery of this baby, she awakened John in the night and he came bringing a lantern into the back room where I slept and sent me to harness the team, Maude and Dale. I think they were the fastest team in the state of Idaho. I harnessed them and hooked them to a white top hack by the time John was dressed. He jumped in and went to Hailey for the midwife (Mrs. Stanfield). I busied myself building a fire and putting on lots of water to heat. I had a prayer in my heart for John and the midwife to hurry and get there before the baby did. Bertha said it was just one hour from the time she awakened John until he was back with Mrs. Stanfield. I remember Bertha shaking her finger at John and saying, "don't ever call Taylor slow again." And I don't believe he ever did. (I was 14 years now). It was just five minutes from the time John had awakened me until I was back at the gate with the team hooked to the buggy.

It was the fall of 1905 before Mother and the rest of the family came to Idaho. They had started to build the Mormon Reservoir dam in 1905. It was in the fall of 1906 they built a one room school house on John's place, it was used for church meetings, too. We hadn't seen very much of the Dixon's during those three years but after we started to hold church they started to come from Fir Grove to meet with us at our services. The Dixons and the Lees had held Sunday School and day school for their own families in a one room log building on Fir Grove flat and continued to do so but the young people came over for Mutual. Our social life centered around this little school and church.

At this time there were several other families settling in the neighborhood; the Adams, Jenkins, Labrums, and the Stotts had moved from Old Soldier and Soldier Creek vicinity and took up homesteads in the Manard neighborhood. So we had quite a school and a full house at Church. Then there were some other families of non LDS that sent their children to our school and would come to the young peoples Mutual. The Olsens, the Lairds, and the Wheelers all came and we had a jolly crowd at our dances and parties. The Lairds were musicians and Mrs. Laird played the piano and the Laird boys both played violins. We did many of our activities in groups without much dating or going steady but it wasn't long before some started pairing off.

It seemed like Bailey and Eva just naturally took to each other. Bailey and I did many things together, we worked on the dam at the same time and played together – sleigh riding and coasting. I didn't go with any one girl very much as I had the responsibility of supporting my mother and the family, and would not allow myself to get serious with any girl.

Coasting and skiing was a rough sport but we had lots of fun at it until Eva got hurt and never after that was it much fun. Eva's knee had gotten twisted in a toboggan upset coming down the hill where the Manard Cemetery now is. There were 11 of us on the toboggan when someone put a foot down causing the long sleigh to get off course and hit a choke cherry bush. Everyone in the party was hurt a little, such as losing skin off their nose, but Eva's was the only serious injury. It twisted her knee and always after that it gave her trouble. The next summer when I was working in the lower country a letter came from Mother saying Eva had to go to Salt Lake City to have her knee operated on and could I send some money. I had been sending all my wages to mother except just enough to keep me in work clothes, so now I sold a team and with that \$200.00 and my contract money it was enough to finance the operation. The operation helped her knee but it never got so it didn't bother her.

The dances in the school house afforded many good times for young and old alike. The families would all come and any babies would be put to sleep on benches in the corner. The Lairds made lovely music. I liked to waltz with my Mother as the music played "Over the Waves" waltz. Mother was so very light on her feet and was a very good dancer. Other tunes they played included, "The Irish Washerwoman" and "Turkey in the Straw." Bailey always danced the Home Sweet Home waltz with Eva.

When I was working in the Boise Valley in the winter of 1908-09 on the New York Ditch. I used to get nice letters from Eva, and I noticed when she would tell about the good times they were having, Bailey's name was always there. She told me about my devoted dog Shep that I had to leave at home. We had been real pals, Shep and I, and when I left home he laid out by the road watching for me and in the evenings he would trot up the road in the direction I had gone, looking for me to come home. He wouldn't eat after I left, and on one of his excursions down the road he went as far as the river and picked some poison bait that the Olsen brothers had set for coyotes and it killed him. It was quite a loss for me. I had turned down an opportunity to trade Shep for a horse of C. Robinsons. I had coveted this horse but he wanted \$100 for him and I couldn't afford it. I loaned Shep to him to move a herd of cattle to Fir Grove. He had worked for him so well that Mr. Robinson came to me and wanted to buy Shep, but I couldn't sell him, then he offered us the horse

that he knew I wanted very much but I couldn't let Shep go. It would have been like trading off one of the family.

In 1911 I took a contract building part of the railroad grade through what was to be the town of Fairfield. Eva took the job of cooking for me and my crew of 5 to 6 men. Eva and I fixed up a camp on the site of Fairfield so you might say we were the first citizens of Fairfield. Our house was a tent with a board floor and sides. That was the kitchen, dining room, and also her bedroom. They were all young fellows working 10 hours a day and it took a lot of food to fill them up, and Eva could really dish it out. At first we got our supplies from the Old Soldier store, much of the fresh meat being grouse and fish; hunting and fishing after working hours. We had no refrigeration. Before the summer was over the town really took roots and started to grow. Some houses were moved down from Old Soldier. Scotty Leeper and Ray Jones put in the first grocery store. Later they came in but the saloon run by Charlie Gridley came first. One of the first buildings was a hotel and many homes were built but our work went on just the same. We finished the first 3 miles of grade and took another 3 mile contract nearer Hill City and finished that contract in time to get the bonus for finishing on time. The day we finished it was snowing and the engineer was there and approved the work. I received the money and paid the men off. Eva had stayed with me to the last. We would go home for Sunday and Mother would have clean clothes for us and make the day pleasant as possible. The men that worked for me stayed at camp and took care of the 24 head of horses. Twenty head of these horses belonged to John and Horace and were unbroken horses when we started. They were well broken by the time they were turned over to John and Horace. Eva and Bailey's courtship was going on by this time. Bailey was always on hand when we went home the week ends, going to parties on Saturday night and to church on Sunday.

The next year I worked building railroad grades, but Eva didn't cook for me. She went to Salt Lake to stay with Sadie who had a small baby and several small children. My work took me away from home and all the letters I got from home mentioned Bailey.

We lost our Mother in April of 1913. She had spent the winter in Richfield, Utah, and was so happy to come back to Camas Prairie and I was mighty glad to have her. She was so busy spring house cleaning and then took sick suddenly with quick pneumonia. It acted fast and she was dead within a few days. Eva married soon after that. I know Bailey was a very welcome son-in-law to Mother as she had approved of the romance, and he was a welcome brother-in-law to the rest of the family.

K. T. Butler
Gooding, Idaho 1963