

Short History of John William Butler

By Mary Anne Butler Ashton

John William Butler was born 4 months after his father died. He was the last child of JLB I born to Henrietta Seaton Blythe. His mother remarried in 1864, when he was 4 years old. He seemed to "lack a consistent Father-Mother image and the lessons a family learns as his later life would indicate." When he married, he was 29 and his wife 20. Hard times forced him to go first to Idaho and then to Alberta, Canada, seeking work. After selling off first their water rights and then their land, he tried working in coal mines and then at a mine sawmill. He was working above ground at the Scofield Mine in 1900 when an explosion killed 200 miners. He was unhurt. He left the family for 2 years prospecting or seeking work. He came home briefly then left again, and soon after his departure his wife divorced him. He later homesteaded on land in Newdale, Idaho, where neighbors said he was quiet, read a lot, never spoke of his family and was very religious. He filled 3 missions and died at age 80 in Idaho. (see "My Best for the Kingdom" by William Hartley)

Taken from the journal of Bertha M. Thurber Butler:

"John William Butler, son of John Lowe Butler I and his wife, Henreitta Blythe, was born 11 Aug 1860 at Spanish Fork, Utah. According to our records, he was born about 4 months after his father's death. His mother remarried and had several other children. She had a daughter older than John William named Isabell who died in childhood. John William married Elizabeth (Betty) Bulow and they had 5 children, Mabel Henreitta, born 30 Nov 1891; William Lowe, born 9 Jan 1894; Milton Emanuel, born 23 Sep 1896; and a pair of twins Pauline Isabell and Paul Alma, born 24 Mar 1900, all born at Richfield, Sevier Co., Utah. John William and his wife separated, she kept the children and cared for them. He was quite a wanderer and spent a lot of time prospecting. The latter part of his life he lived at Newdale near St. Anthony, Idaho, where he had a little home and sold fish. He told me he was called the "Fish Man." Our family heard that John William had died about 1935 hence we had lost track of him. One day in 1938 when I was at the Logan Temple with an excursion from Shelley, Idaho, I heard the name of John W. Butler called and made inquiry as to who this person was and he was brought to me and was indeed our own Uncle John William. We were indeed happy to meet again in such a wonderful place. He was then 77 years old, very tall, gray and very hard of hearing. He said he was called to do work in the temple by the Newdale Ward and had been there several months. I corresponded with him for a few times. On Labor Day 1938, our family met in Logan Canyon for a reunion. However only Grant and the four daughters, Gladys, Edith, Etta and Agnes with their families were present. I wrote to Uncle John William to join our family which he did and was surely happy to meet us. He told us some stories of the family, also gave me some genealogy of his own family. That was the last time any of us saw him. He went back to Idaho and lived alone in his cabin where he was found dead on Nov. 12, 1939. the funeral was held at St. Anthony, Idaho, Tuesday, Nov. 14, 1939, Bishop John Schwendiman of the Newdale Ward conducting. Interment was in Riverview memorial Park under the direction of Wm M. Hansen and son, morticians. His death and circumstances connected with it were investigated by Sheriff Edwin C. Hill and Deputy Albin Rothhardt of St. Anthony, Idaho. I have wished that I had of gotten more information from him about the family when I had the opportunity. He was my husband's father's half brother and made his home with them as he was growing up. John (her husband) thought a lot of John William as he was always kind and helpful to him as a child. He was very devout in his religion, and lived as strictly as he could. His son, Milton died soon after he did leaving a large family of fine children.

– *Bertha*

Lo and behold! I found this picture of John William Butler in a file by that name. In this same file is a note from your dear grama Caroline Butler Thurber that says: "John William Butler married a girl by the name of Betty Bulow. They had 5 children, then they divorced because she turned "fast." He never married again. He just did odd jobs around most of his life."

Then a note from my grama Bertha that says: "John William Butler was my husband's father's half brother. His father died about the time he was born. John William made his home most of the time with his half brothers, especially with John L. II. John William had rather a hard life. His wife and family left him and he spent a lot of time mining, prospecting, fishing, etc."