

**Life Story of  
WILLIAM FRANKLIN BUTLER II**

William Franklin Butler II was born Dec. 5, 1856, in Spanish Fork, Utah. He was the son of William Franklin Butler I and Sarah Ann DeWitt, who had come to Utah from Nauvoo by way of Winter Quarters. The following is his personal history:

At the age of 5 years, my father was called by Pres. Brigham Young to go and help settle southern Utah. He was set apart to be in the Bishopric before leaving Spanish Fork. There were enough people sent south to make four wards. They first called the place Dixie, but later, St. George. I lived there with my parents who had a very hard time digging ditches and irrigating the land. Many times the dams would wash out on account of heavy rains. I had to pick pig weed greens from the town square which we lived on for several weeks.

When we finally got crops to growing, the grasshoppers would come and devour every spear of grain. They would appear as a great cloud and settle down on the fields. We would dig trenches and drive them in and pile brush on top of them and burn them. Many times we had nothing but corn bread and molasses to eat, but had to go hungry many times also. It was hard to raise bread stuff as it was a fruit country. We would take fruit to Salt Lake City and trade for grain. It was 400 miles one way, taking days to make the journey.

I was called as a young man, with many others, to escort Brigham Young through the mining camps on his trips south to St. George. One time I was riding a high spirited horse and it ran away with me and finally landed both feet in the back of the buggy in which the President was riding.

After the Saints landed in St. George and had got located and were quite well established they wanted a temple. Times were hard for them but after a few years the work was commenced, but they did not know how they were going to get money to build it with. A mining town sprang up and gave all the people that wanted it, employment. It also gave them money to go north to buy supplies they needed. As soon as the temple was completed, the mine played out and has never run since.

At the age of 21, I left St. George and went to live with my brother, John Thomas Butler, in Spanish Fork for about 3 years. I then went to work on the railroad. I worked in different places in Utah and Wyoming. I had several narrow escapes in train wrecks. I was in one where 4 out of 7 were killed, and I escaped uninjured. While working at this work, I met many outsiders. I was always proud to defend my religion.

I next went to Vernal, Utah, where my brother, John Thomas, was living at that time. We farmed there a few years. Then Father decided it was too cold for him. We started for the Gila Valley in Arizona, but we stopped at Taylor for a while. While in Utah on our way to Arizona, we had an encounter with the Indians. They got a horse and we had to fight to get it back. I worked at cow pinching and odd jobs during the winter. It was in Taylor that I met Mary Hancock, and even before I knew her first name, I told my friends that I was going to marry that Hancock girl. I farmed the next summer in Linden. I became engaged to Mary and on October

16, 1888 started for the St. George Temple by team and wagon, a distance of 400 miles. We arrived there Nov. 1, 1888 and were married Nov. 5, 1888. I was then 33 and she was 18 years of age. Having lived in St. George and helped to build the temple there, I had many friends, so I was anxious to meet my friends and see and go through the temple that I had helped build. It was while working here that I learned to be a pile driver, which gave me the job that I had on the railroad. I drove piles with an old cannon, which Napoleon used and was brought by boat around Cape Horn. The cannon can be seen on the temple grounds in St. George today.

When we returned from the temple, we lived in my brother Jake's home in Taylor for a few months. In the spring we moved to Shumway, 5 miles south of Taylor, and rented a farm. We stayed there one season and in the meantime, I traded for a house and lot in Taylor and ten acres of land west of Taylor. We move on the ten acre place, where our first son, William Franklin, was born. Feb. 23, 1891. I kept the land but sold the house and lot and moved into town near the Church house. While living there, we had 3 children born, John Thoms, Jan. 29, 1893; Mary Adalinda, Feb. 12, 1895, and Margaret Cleo, Feb. 21, 1897. Then we heard of the Gila Valley being a good country to live in. Father had gone down there a few years before. They had just put in a new President of the Stake by the name of Andrew Kimball. We first went to my father's place in Pima, Arizona on Feb. 1, 1899 and 10 days later went to Eden, Arizona and rented a farm from Bishop Alva S. Porter. We lived there until Oct. 1899 then went to Hubbard and homesteaded 40 acres and bought 20 more from George Mattice. I built a new 3-room house on the 40 acres out of lumber. While there, my daughters were born, Amy Valine born Feb, 14, 1900 and Sarah Jane on Feb. 25, 1902. I was then called to go on a mission to the Central States. I was in bad financial circumstances as I only had 5 acres on each place cleared up, as we had to dig the mesquite from all of it. I sold my wagon and team to put me on my mission and keep my family while I was gone. I let a man have them on credit as he owned a large ranch and was considered an honest man. I thought all I had to do was go after it and it would be there. Pres. Kimball told me to get the money in my hands. He said, "The devil will try to keep you from filling this mission." When I did go after it, the man was out of town, so Brother Charles Layton loaned me money to get into the mission field-about \$55.00 My wife had no money. She tried to collect from this man, but she never got much of it until after I got home. My son, William herded goats at the age of 11, for Oscar Webster, to help me in the mission field. He was 13 when I returned. My wife sold a cow or a calf now and then. Friends also helped her. One year after my return, my son, Joseph Hancock, was born on Sept. 6, 1905. Then another son, Lester, came Aug. 19, 1909.

The worst trial of my life was when four of my children came down with typhoid fever. The first to come down was Addie (Mary Adelinda). Then Will came down from working on the thresher at Ft. Thomas, very sick with it. Then John and Amy came down with it, all within a week's time. Will was at the point of death when John suddenly took worse and died Jul 7, 1911. We had to wait until after dark to remove John's body because he and Will were in the same room. We were afraid the shock would kill him. Then one week later, Addie died July 14., 1911. On Oct. 17, 1911 memorial services were held for the two that had passed away and Will was still so weak he couldn't walk by himself. Amy didn't have the disease so bad as the others. Brother and Sister Abner Chesley took care of the small children (Sadie, Joseph and Lester) in their home while the others were so sick.

On Nov. 5, 1911 my wife gave birth to our ninth child, Lena, and nearly lost her life in doing so. We lived in Hubbard and farmed and took an active part in the Hubbard ward. I was in the Bishopric for many years and also Sunday School Superintendent for many years. My wife was the Relief Society President for years and in the presidency of the Primary. Our children got all the schooling I could give them.

On Sept. 12, 1912 William married Mary Ann Adams of Central. In the fall of 1915 I moved all my family but Will and his wife to Taylor. Will farmed our farm in Hubbard through the summer of 1916. Will then came to Taylor but only stayed until October. Then in April 1917 I moved back to Hubbard. While in Taylor, Margaret married George Elsmore Shelley. In March 1918 I was sent on my second mission to the Central States, and returned January 1919. Sarah married Victor Christensen Sept. 3, 1919. Then on Jan. 2, 1920 Amy married Arthur Lee.

(On Amy's wedding day, the whole family went to Safford and had a family picture taken. Before they ever saw the picture, William Franklin Butler II died suddenly of a heart attack on Jan, 13, 1920. He was buried Jan 15, 1920 in the Hubbard Cemetery by the side of his son and daughter.)

His wife, Mary Hancock Butler, lived a few years on their farm. She spent a few years in California where Lena married Jack Rust. Joseph had married Julia Norton of Central, and was living there. Finally she sold her home in the Gila Valley and moved to Mesa where she worked in the Temple for a few years. Her health started failing, so she sold and moved to Phoenix so she could be near her sons, all of whom were living there. Lester had married Zola May Smith of Safford.

She passed away Oct. 2, 1943 in Phoenix. Her funeral was held in Mesa Oct 6, 1943 and she was taken to the Gila Valley where she was buried Oct 7, 1943 at the side of her husband and children.

History written by William Franklin Butler II and completed later, by his daughter, Margaret Cleo Butler Shelley.

Given at Daughters of the Utah Pioneers meeting Nov. 16, 1966 by a grand-daughter, Beulah Shelley Spencer.