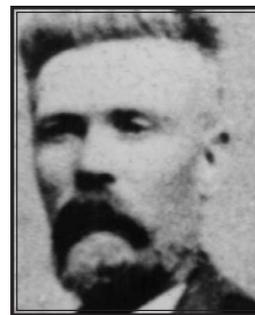


KENION TAYLOR BUTLER

Born: 7 Dec 1831 Franklin, Kentucky
 Age: 26
 Rescuer



Kenion Taylor Butler, was born in a little town in Kentucky named for Benjamin Franklin, the oldest of twelve children of noted frontiersman John Lowe Butler and Caroline Skeen. He participated in the last weeks of the rescue, the calls for which had continued to be issued by Brigham Young for at least eight weeks after the initial call on October 5, 1856. Many of these later groups were called from Utah County. Taylor's father was the Bishop in Spanish Fork, and the call came through him. Kenion left his young expectant wife and 1-year-old daughter to answer the call. The following are excerpts from Bishop John Butler's journal about the rescue:

Now the emigration across the plains was very late. They all got caught in the snow. They were strung from Weber River to Fort Bridger, and there they was starving and freezing to death. It was dreadful the accounts. Brother Brigham gave orders in all the settlements to rig up teams to go back and bring the sufferers in. Now the snow was from six to fifteen feet deep and there was no road broke across the mountains at all.

Well, the word came down to me to rig up six teams and send two men to every team for teamsters, and there were to be four mules or horses to each wagon, and the wagons were to be loaded with horse feed, provisions, clothing and every comfort of life that could be sent. Now this all was to be done by donation. So I called the people together and told them the situation of their brethren and sisters, and then we had to rig up teams and send men out for them. This was in december, and it was bitter cold. The snow in the Valley here was eighteen inches deep on the level and it was snowing in the mountains all the time.

Well, we got them all rigged up, and I never had less trouble getting up such an expedition, for the Saints were willing and on hand to do almost anything. My son, Taylor, I sent out with them to superintend the expedition. He drove a wagon as well, and he told me how he found the Saints, and how the road was. He said that there were teams reached nearly from the City to Fort Bridger. They had to have men shoveling out snow and breaking the road, and in some places the snow was up above the wagon bows on each side. And they found the Saints in an awful condition, some with their feet froze, and some with their fingers froze, and they had no food to eat, and he said that he never saw such a sight before, it was dreadful. And he said that they [the rescued] were so overjoyed they did not know what to do hardly.

Well, they were all picked up and fed and clothes given to them. When they camped at night there were a whole lot of the boys would break a road to a tree and cut it down for firewood. And when they were coming back, they never saw the sun for six days and it snowed all the time, and they had to break the road over again. And in coming down the big Mountain they never locked a wheel but gee'd off and let the hub of the off wheel drag in the snow and so they came down.

They brought some of the folks down to Spanish Fork and I never saw such objects in my life as they were. There was a young man that George Sevey [Bishop Butler's son-in-law] brought down with him that looked like a shadow. He would reel to and fro when he walked, he was so weak, and his toes were froze. George hired him for a year.

Taylor's sister, Charity, also told of some of the rescued people sent to her father's home in Spanish Fork: "One poor victim whose leg had been amputated cried all night from pain in that limb even to the end of his toes, though the limb was gone."

Taylor was baptized at the age of eight years in Nauvoo, Illinois, and came to Utah in 1852. An obituary notes that he "was on hand to respond to any call that was made upon him." While Taylor was in Alabama, serving a Southern States mission (1882-1885) he was "taken with brain fever . . . and never recovered." After serving for three years, he was released early, and died 7 months after he returned to Utah. He "sang a heavenly hymn and then said 'Lord help and forgive me' a few minutes before he died.

Source: *My Best for the Kingdom, History and Autobiography of John Lowe Butler, a Mormon Frontiersman*, by William G. Hartley, Aspen Books, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1993; obituary for Kenion Taylor Butler, *Ogden Herald*, May 21, 1886.