

History Question of the Month

Who was the early Butler resident that was stranded along with her 5 year old daughter by an early snow storm at Brighton?

Answer

While living at their cabin in Brighton, in the fall of 1869, Philander Butler left his wife Charlotte and their 5 year old daughter to go to the valley to get supplies. While he was gone, an early snow storm swept through the canyons stranding Charlotte and her daughter. They were out of food and had burned most of their furniture to keep warm when they were finally rescued by a friend and two of Philander's brothers. They had heard of their plight while working at the lower saw mill. The three men made a makeshift hand sleigh and using snow shoes walked up the canyon. They bundled Charlotte and her daughter in blankets, put them on the sleigh and brought them down the mountain. The following year, Philander built a large two story adobe house on his homestead on the upper Butler Bench.

Charlotte Burrell Butler was the epitome of the strong pioneer women who faced adversity with courage and resolve. She was a nurse and mid-wife to those in her community. She had a beautiful voice and sang at many community events. When her husband left her about 1881, selling their home and animals to the Deseret Paper Mill and taking his second plural wife and going to Oregon, Charlotte was left with only the dry farm on the upper Butler Bench. With the help of her seven children, she ran the farm. This was no easy feat. In the winters, the ditch that brought water to their farm would freeze over. They needed to go down off the hill daily to the canal on the Butler Bench and haul water in barrels to their farm. About 1900, she finally left Butler for Idaho where she homesteaded with her son, Philander Jr., before returning to live in Salt Lake City where she died in, 1914.

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