

William John Hiatt

19 Sep 1887 - - 29 Dec 1948

Some facts relating to the life of William John Hiatt, as compiled by his daughter, Ruth HIATT BRYSON.

My father, William John HIATT, was born 19 Sep 1887 in Egin, Fremont County, Idaho. He was the fifth child of Reuben HIATT and Amada Jane RAWSON HIATT. His parents had moved from Utah to Idaho early in the year of 1885 and homesteaded 160 acres of land on Egin Bench. They lived in John Fisher's house while they built a big log house that was described as a beautiful home. It was in this home that William John was born.



I remember Grandma (Amanda Jane) Hiatt telling me his hair was very light in color, a real "Toe head", and his eyes were blue. As he got older, and as I remember him, he had dark hair and blue eyes. He stood 5' 10" in height, was broad shouldered and would weigh about 185 to 200 pounds. He was very handsome and I was always proud to introduce him to my friends.

He had a beautiful bass singing voice and loved to sing. Many an evening, we children gathered around to hear him sing to us, sometimes while holding us on his knee. He was adept with the harmonica as well and "The Irish Washer Women" was one of our favorites to have him play. In years past, he also played the banjo, but by the time I came along, the banjo had worn out and hung silently on the wall, as a reminder of days gone by.

He was very good natured and loved to tease us kids. We loved it as we were getting his attention. He did have a temper, though. I remember when he brought home a new car. It was a 1927 Chevrolet Touring car. He was so happy to show it off to Mother. He was so excited that he hit the gas instead of the brake and didn't make the sharp turn into the garage. He hit a tree and broke the radiator. The air was blue for awhile. Mother gathered us children into the house and out of earshot. The tree got cut down.

Another time I remember was just a few months later. The car was repaired and running good. It was sitting in the driveway, as he was preparing to take Mother to town. My little brother, Donald, unscrewed the gas cap and poured a handful of dirt into it. Wow! We heard about that for awhile!

He loved Mother dearly and was always doing things for her. We children knew of that love, though acts of love were never displayed in front of us. One morning, when he was home, Mother was making the bed. Some of us children were present and could tell he was in a teasing mood. He waltzed across the room,

put his arm around Mother, gave her a squeeze, and kissed her on the cheek. She scolded him with "Will, not in front of the children!"

Now to get back to his childhood. My grandfather (Reuben) and grandmother (Amanda Jane) HIATT were honest, law abiding folks. They loved their children and taught them to be good workers and to love the Lord, a lesson my Father learned well. My grandparents took them to Church and set a good example for them.

In May of 1886, a ward of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was organized in Egin. It was known as the Brighton Ward and grandfather HIATT was called as the first Bishop. At the same time, grandmother HIATT was called as the first counselor in the Relief Society.

William John was blessed by Robert Greenwood, a counselor to Bishop HIATT. Then when he was 8 years old, he was baptized by Hyrum J. Lucas.

When he was 14 years old, they sold their farm in Idaho and loaded all their possessions and family on the train, at St. Anthony, and moved to Nibley, Union County, Oregon, arriving there 1 Feb 1902 in a pouring down rain. They bought a place in Nibley and stayed with great-grandmother RAWSON's (*Amanda Jane's mother*) family until they got a house built. They lived there until sometime in 1907, when they moved to Union County, Oregon and lived and worked on a big ranch owned by Hyrum J. Lucas. (*Nibley was a Mormon town, settled by the pioneers. It never became much of a success.*)

My father and his younger brother, Horace, walked all the way from Nibley to Union and drove cattle (*about 15 miles*). They had a big nine room house to live in, there. They enjoyed that but there were lots of rattlesnakes on the ranch. One day, my father and Horace went hunting in the hills. They stopped at a big cherry tree and were eating cherries. My father looked down and saw a big rattlesnake coiled up and ready to strike Horace. He aimed his gun and shot it in the mouth and killed it.

Sometime during the year of 1908, my father left to serve a mission for the Church in the Eastern States Mission. He served mostly in Virginia and West Virginia. In West Virginia, he met the family of James and M. Elizabeth BOLT PHIBBS, who were converts to the Church. They were really good to him. They had beautiful twin daughters and four sons. They all became good friends.

After serving for a little over a year of his mission, my father became ill and was forced to return home in Sep of 1909. While he was gone, his parents had moved to Nampa, Idaho, and were farming 160 acres there. He stayed with them and helped with the farm. Then in the fall of 1910, they moved by team and wagon to Rupert, Minidoka County, Idaho. Again they bought property and built a house.

There was only a small branch of the Church in Rupert at that time and Church meetings were held in the homes of members. The town was small, but with the Minidoka Project opening up, there were opportunities for farming that looked good. The family settled here and enjoyed living there and watching it grow.

In February of 1911, the Phibbs family moved from West Virginia to Idaho and stayed in the Hiatt home until they found a place of their own.

My father courted one of their twin daughters, Mary Jane, and married her in the Salt Lake Temple on 25 Oct 1911. They were blessed with 10 beautiful children.

The first, a blonde, blue-eyed daughter, Grace, was born 19 Aug 1912 in Rupert, Idaho. Then they moved to Ammon, Idaho, in Bonneville for a short while and their second daughter, a dark haired, brown-eyed beauty, Eva Wanda, was born on 14 Nov 1914.

They moved back to Rupert and lived in a little house on the south side of town. My father worked for a construction company that also moved houses. While on one of these jobs, he fell and broke his ankle. He got a bad infection and became very ill, nearly to death. He later told the family of how he laid there so ill and watched his spirit leave his body. It was a though he had died. He could not move. His life was spared, however, and his spirit returned to his body, which was a very painful experience for him.

Shortly after this, their third daughter, Genevieve, another blue-eyed blond was born on 1 Mar 1917.

My grandparents, Reuben and Amada Jane HIATT purchased a farm east of Rupert. My father built a house on the farm and moved his family there and farmed with his father. It was here that their fourth child, a dark haired, brown-eyed boy was born to them on 16 May 1919. They named him Clayton Elmore. *(The "Elmore" name came from Dr. Elmore, who delivered the new baby)*

My father liked farming. He liked to see things grow and he liked the feeling of accomplishment when the harvest was in. He farmed with his father for two years, then moved southeast of town, where he farmed the L. R. Adams farm. They were here when their fifth child, a dark-eye girl, Ruth, was born on 28 May 1922. Shortly after her birth, they had a terrible storm that destroyed the crops and killed several of the farm animals. It was a hard time for them. My father had a family to care for and they had lost nearly everything they had. *(I have heard stories about this storm from my aunts and uncles. Apparently it made a big impression on all of them. It was a very severe hail storm and the hail pretty much destroyed all their crops. They lost all their money that they had invested in seed and had no income, since the crops were gone. It was pretty bad.)*

Then he had an opportunity to take over the farming on the ranch of Mr. Collins. They had a nice big house to live in. It even had indoor plumbing! They sure enjoyed living there. It was located near the little county Pioneer school, where the children attended school. He farmed the place for two years, then the place was sold and they moved to Paul, Idaho, where their sixth child, a tiny blue-eyed blonde girl, Helen Beth, was born on 9 Nov 1924.

My father worked for a warehouse owner in neighboring Burley, Idaho for awhile. Then he went to work for Wiley B. Craven as a tenant farmer. Mr. Craven had rented several farms in the Emerson district, west of Paul. My father was a good farmer, so he moved from farm to farm, as was needed to get them in shape. We children attended the Emerson school and the family attended the Emerson Ward. My parents were very active in the Church, participating in all they were called to do. Father served in the Elders Quorum Presidency while there.

While they lived on the farm that was known as the Mill ranch, their seventh child, Donald William, was born on 28 Sep 1927. He had dark hair and big brown eyes.

The winters were fierce back then and the snow piled up. The cold wind blew and drifted the snow up over the fence posts and up on the electric poles. We kids walked to school on the hard crusted snow, through the fields and over the fences, as you couldn't see where they were.

The country roads were not any more than a lane and impossible to get out in a car so we moved from that house to the Larsen place, which was up by the highway. We didn't live there very long as the house was much too small for the size of the family, so we moved to the Bowman place about a mile west. It was much closer to the school.

While living in the Bowman place, their eighth child, a blue-eyed blond boy was born on 13 Feb 1930. They named him Earl Ray. They then moved to Uscola Place where there was a much bigger and better house for the family to live in.

In 1932, my father went to work for Davis Gree, who was the Bishop of the Paul Ward. He had several farms also. The one we moved onto had a big apple orchard. This was, of course, during the Great Depression. The fruit from the orchard, as well as a large vegetable garden, helped to feed the large family. It was here, on 28 Aug 1932, that their ninth child, Mable Jean, a dark haired brown-eyed little girl was born.

The following summer, my uncle, Gottlieb Blatter, came to see us. He was married to father's younger sister, Dora May. He had a large cattle ranch in Chinook, Montana. He wanted father to move there and help him feed cattle. It sounded like a good opportunity for him, so he sold all the household furnishings, loaded up the family in the Chevrolet, and moved to Montana in August, 1933.

It was a hard and very cold winter. He worked very hard to make it work. Gottleib said he would build them a house to live in, but was only able to build a small two room house. There were still eight of their nine children living at home and it just wasn't adequate. Even when Eva got a job in town at a boarding house, they were still very crowded. *(Ten people, two rooms, no TV, no central heating, no air conditioning...)*

Eva came home to spend Christmas Day and while walking back to town to work that evening, she froze her legs. It raised blisters as big as hen's eggs on her legs. She wasn't able to work for sometime.

My father loved living near his sister, Dora. She was very good to him and all the family. In spite of this, it just wasn't working out for him and in the spring of 1934, he moved the family bank to Rupert. It must have been meant to be, as just one month later, his dear sister died.

He went back to work for Wiley Craven on a farm north of Paul. This is where their tenth child, Vernal Blaine, was born on 20 Nov 1934, another blue-eyed blonde boy.

In 1937, father bought a piece of property in the town of Paul, close to the school and built a house on it. He moved his family there and went to work for Merrill's Egg Hatchery, just outside of town. He worked there for several years.

His beloved wife, Mary Jane, became very ill and passed away 15 May 1938, just three weeks after her identical twin sister had died. *(This is an interesting story. Mary Jane was healthy and doing fine. Her twin sister, Ardeana Ellen, was a bit of a handful. She was pretty hard to keep in line. Mary Jane seemed to be the only one that could calm her down and keep her doing what she needed to be doing. Shortly after Ardeana died, Mary Jane suddenly started getting black or gray spots all over her body. Three weeks after her twin sister's death, Mary Jane died. Some of the brothers and sisters have remarked, somewhat jokingly, that apparently even the Angels were not able to handle Ardeana, so they finally gave up and sent for Mary Jane. No one seems to know exactly what caused her death. It would be interesting to get more medical history on this)*

He grieved for my mother and struggled to care for his family. His three oldest daughters were married with families of their own, but they helped where they could.

In 1943, he re-married. By then, three more of his children were married, leaving just the four younger ones at home. They moved to Southern California, where his new wife was from and he worked in the orange groves for a time.

He had some serious surgery and was unable to do the hard work any longer, so he moved to Ely, Nevada, where his daughter Genevieve and her family lived

and owned a grocery store. He managed a motel and an apartment building, there in Ely, until he became ill and died 29 Dec 1948. He was taken to Paul, Idaho, to be buried by his beloved Mary Jane.

All of his ten children, although scattered from the east coast to the west coast, gathered back in Paul, in the bitter cold of winter, to attend his funeral and to give love and support and comfort to each other.





MOTHER
MARY J. HIATT
1891 - 1938

FATHER
WM. A. HIATT
1887 - 1942