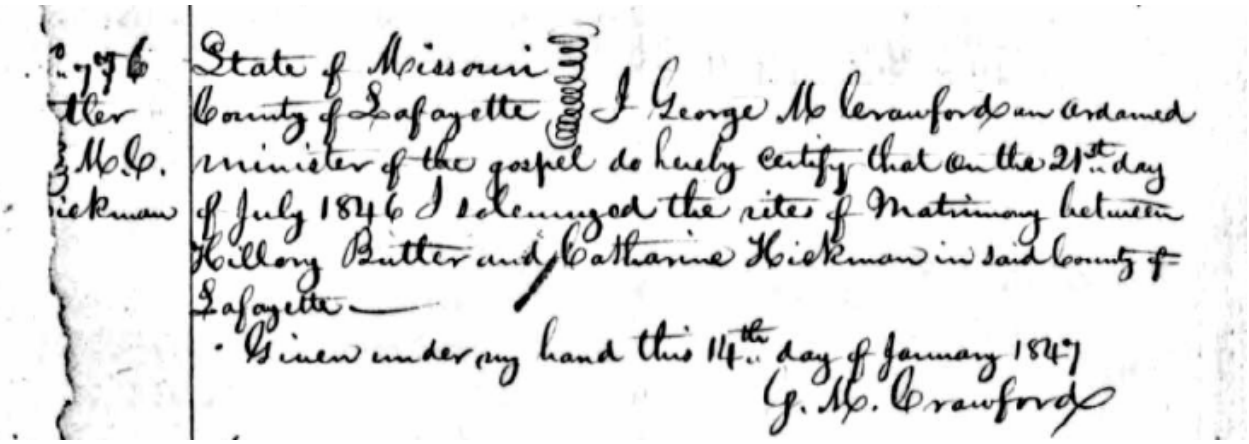
Hillory Butler

Pioneer of 1852

compiled by Stephenie Flora
oregonpioneers.com

Hillory Butler
b. 31 Mar 1819 Rappahannock County, Virginia
d. 03 Feb 1896, Seattle, King County, Washington
buried Lake View Cemetery, Seatle, King County, Washington
s/o Roley Butler and Lucinda Emery

m. 21 July 1846 Lafayette County, Missouri
Catharine Hickman
b. 19 Dec 1831 Lexington, Lafayette County, Missouri
d. 03 Jan 1870 Olympia, Thurston County, Washington
buried Lake View Cemetery, Seatle, King County, Washington
d/o William H. Hickman and Nancy Ennis


State of Missouri
County of Lafayette } I George M. Crawford an ordained
minister of the gospel do hereby certify that on the 21st day
of July 1846 I solemnized the rites of Matrimony between
Hillory Butler and Catharine Hickman in said County of
Lafayette —
Given under my hand this 14th day of January 1847
G. M. Crawford

1850: District 46, Lafayette County, Missouri, September 30, 1850; Hillory Butler, 32, farmer, $500, VA; Catharine, 19, MO; Henry Teaman, 16, laborer, Germany

1860: Seattle PO, King County, Washington, August 5, 1860; Hillory Butler, 40, wharf master, $4500 $700, VA; Cathrine, 29, MO

1880: Seattle, King County, Washington, June 4, 1880; Hillory Butler, 55, boarder, widower, teamster, VA US US

HILLORY BUTLER DEAD

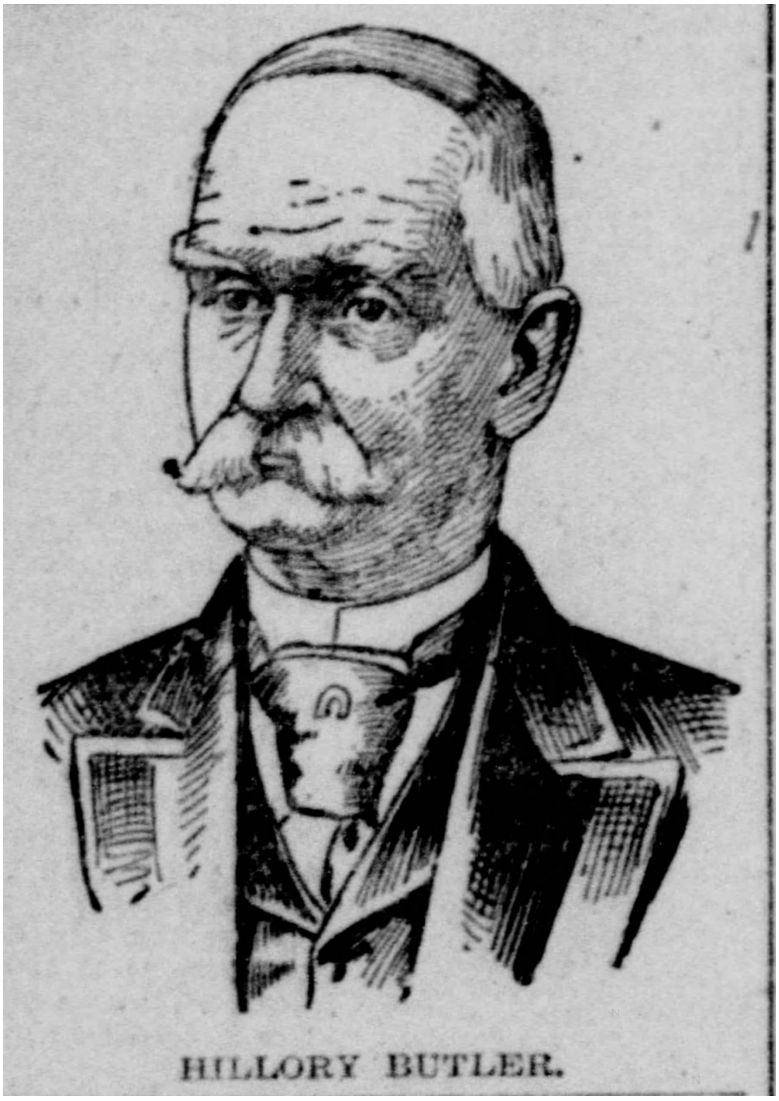
One of Seattle's Best Known Pioneer Citizens.

HIS LIFE AND HIS GOOD DEEDS.

He Was a Good Man, and in the Peace of Old Age the Light of His Life Went Out.

Hillory Butler, one of the best known of the early pioneer settlers of Puget sound, died yesterday afternoon at exactly 4:20 o'clock, at 1308 Fourth street, of infirmity and old age. Those present at the last moment were his nurse, E. T. Welbon, Miss Asenath Foster and A. C. Hanson. Mr. Butler passed away without the slightest struggle, the transition being one from natural sleep to the sleep of eternity.

His last illness dates back to January 16, when he was found in his room about 6 o'clock in the evening by Miss Foster, who keeps the boarding house, unconscious. There is hardly a person in the city who will fail to recall the day that Princess Angeline fell down on Second street and was taken to the Seattle General hospital through the kindness of several of the old pioneers. Among the number who took an interest in her welfare was Mr. Butler. It was January 10 that Princess Angeline's illness became public and about two days later Mr. Butler called up-



HILLORY BUTLER.

on A. A. Denny and told him he would like to see the poor old woman and find out how she was getting along. Mr. Denny personally accompanied Butler down the hill among the shacks near the foot of Pike street and led the way to the humble dwelling of the princess. On the Thursday following, about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Butler visited Mr. Denny again and told him that he had just made a trip to see Angeline, and was afraid she would die before morning. As a matter of fact, Mr. Denny and Mr. Butler both sent provisions to the old woman and Mr. Butler had just been to her house with some necessities of life when he dropped in to pay pioneer Denny a visit.

"Did you see any thing of a load of wood down there?" asked Mr. Denny.

"No," replied Butler; "she had a fire, but I didn't see much wood."

"That's queer," said Denny. "I sent down a load last evening."

"Well, it wouldn't last long in that community," replied Butler, in his characteristic manner. Mr. Butler was apparently in good health and appeared quite cheerful.

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When he got ready to go home he started down the front steps to First avenue, but Mr. Denny thought it would be easier for him to go out the back way and across the yard to Second avenue. Butler was not well acquainted with the route, and as he got outside the house took a look around and remarked: "Say, Denny, you've got quite a house after all." Denny laughed, and replied that he took comfort in his home. As Mr. Butler walked away to his home on Fourth avenue it was the last time his old friend ever saw him out of the shadow of death. Upon arriving at 1508 Fourth avenue Mr. Butler sat down in the sitting room by the fire for a short time and then started up to his room. About 6 o'clock Miss Foster had occasion to call him to supper, and at that time she found him lying in his room unconscious. The gas was lit and it was apparent from the condition of things that he had been in his room a short time at least before he was stricken. His overcoat had been taken off and carefully put in its place, so that he was evidently feeling well on entering his room. Dr. P. B. M. Miller was immediately called, and after an hour Mr. Butler was brought back to consciousness. It was decided that he had been the victim of an epileptiform attack. Later in the evening Mr. Butler was attacked by convulsions. During the night he had three of them, and the following day it was apparent that his condition was critical.

Then his wonderful vitality asserted itself, and after being close to death's door he rallied and grew better, but again commenced failing. The physicians came to the conclusion that it was simply a question of time when he would pass away. Sometimes he would be conscious and then again he would pass into a semi-conscious condition. At brief periods he would be rational and then again flighty. Attendants were constantly with him, but their services and the administrations of Dr. Miller could do no more than make his last days as easy as possible. The pendulum of life swayed to and fro slowly from day to day and many times threatened to stop, but still kept going. Sunday it seemed as if the fatal moment might come at any time. At 5 o'clock Mr. Butler dropped asleep and slept on quietly and peacefully until yesterday afternoon at 4:20 o'clock, when he passed away without the slightest struggle.

In the death of Mr. Butler a figure prominent in the life of Seattle passes away. He was of striking figure, and his face was one that attracted the attention of strangers. He always dressed neatly, and as he walked along the street with a neat rosebud in his buttonhole he was a true representative of the pink of old age.

Hillory Butler was born in Rappahannock county, Va., March 31, 1819. His ancestry, both paternal and maternal, were among the pioneer settlers of Virginia. Grandfather Butler was a soldier in the Revolutionary war under Washington. The parents of Hillory Butler, Roland and Lucy Emery Butler, were natives of the same state, and passed their lives in agricultural pursuits. Hillory Butler was educated in the common schools and reared upon the farm, remaining with his parents until 1842, when he struck out in life for himself. He first went to Lafayette county, Mo., and was employed as a farm hand. Subsequently he engaged as an overseer for John B. Webb, who had a plantation of 2,000 acres and fifty negroes. Young Butler held the position eighteen months, receiving a salary of $20 a month. He secured the good-will of the darkies, as well as of their master, who was a kind-hearted man, and all working in harmony they accomplished a large amount of work. Chills and fever, however, compelled Butler to give up his position, and he then started on horseback for the Platte

Purchase, traveling when able to ride. While continuing his journey he was caught on an open prairie in a heavy thunder storm, and being unprotected was drenched to the skin. Instead of producing sickness this had the effect of curing him of his chills for all time to come.

Subsequently to his trip to the Platte Purchase, Butler returned to Lafayette county, and was married to Miss Catherine Hickman, niece of George Ennis, for whom he had first worked as a farm hand. He then engaged in farming until 1849, when, with the death of his father-in-law, he turned his attention to the settlement of the estate.

On April 23, 1852, Mr. Butler started across the plains for Oregon, in the train with Judge Hayes and Andrew Cowan, paying $175 for food and transportation. The train was attacked by cholera and a number of deaths ensued. Mr. Butler and his wife, however, arrived at The Dalles, Or., without serious inconvenience, although they suffered somewhat from sickness. They proceeded by small boats down the river to Portland, and their first night there was passed in a small room of a wharf boat. The next day Mr. Butler rented a house at $33.50 a month and secured the services of Dr. Wilson, Mrs. Butler still being unwell. Butler had only $2.50 cash capital, but he assured the physician that he had plenty of money, having heard that physicians did not care to treat emigrants who were "broke." After making his wife as comfortable as circumstances would permit, Butler went out looking around for something to do in order to earn a few dollars to make good

his representations to the doctor. As chance had it, he met "Squire" Davis, who had a fine mule team. Davis was impressed with the new comer and agreed to let him have the team, profits to be divided and Davis to furnish fodder. Butler jumped at the offer and went to work at once. He averaged between $20 and $40 a day teaming, and in a short time had money enough to pay off all of his obligations. It may be said here that Butler and Dr. Wilson were lifelong friends. In the spring of 1853, with E. M. Smithers, whom he met in Portland, Butler came to Puget sound by way of the Cowlitz river. At Olympia they passed about two weeks with Calvin H. Hale and then came on to Seattle. At that time a few rough shanties comprised the town, and Mr. Butler had no trouble in purchasing a lot 120 feet square for $120. That same lot is the present site of the Butler hotel, corner of Second avenue and James street. When Henry L. Yesler started his mill Butler secured the first lumber and built a little house. He then began clearing ground for a garden and potato patch. Smithers and Butler occupied themselves a greater part of several years cutting piles and squaring timber for the San Francisco market. In 1854 Butler entered politics and was elected sheriff of King county, which office he held for two years. As the town grew and business spread Butler purchased a team and engaged in

draying. He followed this line of business for many years with good success.

In 1886 his little house was replaced by a large frame building, which afforded a profitable rental until the spring of 1889, when it was destroyed in the great fire that swept the business part of the city. After this he leased his land for building purposes and subsequently sold it for $75,000. In the fall of 1889 Butler attended the triennial conclave of Knights Templar at Washington City. He took part in the parade, but was taken suddenly ill, and was compelled to leave the ranks. During that trip he visited, after an absence of forty-seven years, his old Virginia home. The old landmarks, however, had been obliterated and his family had been scattered or exterminated by the civil war. Gladly he returned to Seattle to live and die among his pioneer friends. Mrs. Butler died in January, 1870, and so far as is known Mr. Butler does not leave a relative.

The deceased was a thirty-second degree Mason, Scottish Rite, and for many years served as treasurer of the consistory. He was also treasurer of Commandery No. 2, Knights Templar. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal church.

Hon. Frederic J. Grant, in writing his history of Seattle, made mention of Hillory Butler in connection with the founding of the University of Washington, as follows: "The first great work of this period was the location and building of the territorial university at Seattle. This was done in 1861-62. The site was then outside of the town, and the land was covered with an unbroken forest, largely of gigantic fir trees. * * * It is of interest to know the names of some of those who took contracts and with their mattocks and axes went into the woods to hew out a seat of education. Hillory Butler, L. B. Andrews, Lemuel J. Holgate, C. B. Bagley, James J. Crow and Ira Wooden, still residents of King county, were among the number, and it is safe to say that their interest in undertaking the work was at least as much to further the cause of education and to build up the town as to help themselves financially."

Characteristic Anecdotes.

A striking figure in the early history of Seattle, one who took part in all the early struggles of Seattle when it was a small town, a central figure in the stage coaching days before railroads commenced to invade the territory, it is natural that the life of Hillory Butler should be of more than ordinary interest to the people of Washington. The life of Mr. Butler was one in which the word labor played a prominent part. With the rise of Seattle he suddenly became wealthy, but even in his wealth he lived the same quiet, unassuming way that had been his wont in by-gone days. He was a man of great natural ability, but in his early life was denied nearly all of the advantages that are common to the boy of the present day. He knew what it was to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow and when the time came for the territory to lay the foundation for a university of learning he was one of the first to take his ax and strike a blow in the forest that then crowned the knoll where the old university now stands. His life was full of happenings and old timers can tell many anecdotes about him.

Samuel L. Crawford, the veteran newspaper man, said: "Hillory Butler and his wife, after coming to Portland, fell in with E. M. Smithers, now of Renton, and both being Virginians, a strong friendship sprang up between them which lasted until the day of Mr. Butler's death. They came to Seattle together and then formed a copartnership in the logging business. They brought three yoke of cattle with them, and when the Port Madison mill was first built they put in the first logs sawed by that mill. After they dissolved partnership Butler hauled wood and did a little work in the way of jobbing with his wagon. One day he remarked to some of his friends, among whom were Smithers, H. L. Yesler, Henry Adams, Joe Foster, the White river farmer, and some others, that if it was not for that rent bill his landlord was bothering him for every month he would be able to get along in Seattle pretty well.

"'Well, let's see,' said Yesler, 'if we can't help you out a little. I will give you a couple of lots up in the woods,' pointing to the corner of Second avenue and James street, where the Butler block now stands. 'It seems to me these boys will all pitch in and help you put up a house.'

"Smithers spoke up and said: 'Yesler, if you will give him the lots and trust him for the lumber, and if Henry Adams will boss the job, we'll put him up a house in double quick time.' In the meantime Franklin Mathias and one or two young mechanics had joined the little party, and before they separated it was agreed that they should start the next day and build a house for Mr. and Mrs. Butler, which they did. That house remained on its original site until destroyed by the great fire June 6, 1889.

"Now, one of the secrets of Butler's popularity was this: He had fortunately married one of the noblest and best of women, who had endeared herself by her many hospitable and generous acts to the entire population of the city, and while everybody liked Butler they loved his wife. As an evidence of her popularity it might be stated that the late C. C. Terry remembered her in his will and left her the two lots on which the Seattle theater now stands. Mrs. Butler died at Olympia in 1870, and seven years thereafter Butler sold those two lots to Judge Lewis for $1,400.

"Butler was a great man for horses, and never was as happy as when seated behind a spanking team of bays, and during the early days of the territory, when any distinguished visitor came to the Sound from Olympia to Port Townsend Butler's services were always in demand to drive the team. The more horses in the team the better he liked it. His fondness for driving eventually drifted him into the stage business between Olympia and Montesano, at the mouth of the Cowlitz river. The steamers from Portland landed passengers at Montesano, from which point the stages connecting with the steamers carried passengers to Olympia, the head of navigation on Puget sound. This, of course, was before the time of railroads, and any people who wanted to go to visit the Sound or British Columbia had to take this route. He was connected in one way and another with the stage business, generally as a driver, until the Northern Pacific railroad from Kalama to Tenino forever destroyed the staging industry in Western Washington. Butler then returned to Seattle to find that the place had grown, and that his property, which at the time he left was in the woods, was now right in town. He applied to his old friend, Cyrus Walker, of the Puget Mill Company, for a loan of $6,000 to improve this property. He got the money and erected a large two-story wooden building, which for years was known as the Butler block, and which was occupied as a printing office, insurance office, millinery store, and with rooms and offices up-stairs.

"It was in one of these rooms that Butler left the gas burning, on leaving with his old friend Henry Yesler for a trip to San Francisco. They had to leave very early in the morning, and in his haste to get the boat Butler left the gas going at full tilt, but locked the door. The first message that greeted him on his arrival in Portland was a telegram from his friend Ed Terry, who also roomed in the same building, notifying him of the fact that he left the gas burning. Butler immediately wired back: 'Turn it out.' A few hours later just as Butler was leaving the hotel to catch the steamer for San Francisco, he received a second message from his friend Terry, saying: 'I have no key to your room.'

"Yesler in telling the story declared that at this stage of the game Butler was determined to return to Seattle and put out the gas, and it was only after the most urgent entreaties on his part and the agreement to pay one-half of the gas bill that he persuaded Butler to go aboard the steamer. Just as the steamer was leaving Butler wired Terry as follows: 'Get a key of J. B. MacDougall, and turn out that gas.' On the arrival of the steamer at San Francisco Butler was surprised to hear a messenger boy yelling out his name in stentorian tones. 'Hillory Butler! Hillory Butler!' yelled the boy. 'Important message.' From the commotion the boy was making, Butler thought his best friend had died, but imagine his dispust when, on opening the message, he read: 'MacDougall has lost his key, and your gas is still burning.' The old man despaired of ever having the gas turned off, and for the next three weeks, previous to his return home, he talked of nothing but gas bills and the delight 'Old Penfield' would take in making him pay it. On his arrival home Butler found every jet in his room burning, and a few days later Penfield, who had been let into the joke, presented a bill for $103 for gas consumed during the month. Butler's friends never tired of joking him over this gas affair.

"A short time before the big fire Butler erected another building on his property, fronting on Second avenue, which was occupied by Miss Foster, as a boarding house. These buildings were insured, and after their destruction Butler had enough money to pay up all his debts and still leave him a small surplus. He soon after leased his lots to G. C. Phinney at a rental of about $500 a month, Phinney erecting thereon the building now known as "The Butler." After a time an opportunity presented itself to dispose of this property, and Butler received $78,000 for his lots. Of this money he loaned $75,000 to Dexter Horton for a term of years at 6 per cent. per annum, and the old man has been unable to spend the interest, although divers and sundry persons have by hoodwinking the old man assisted him to do so. The acquirement of so much wealth at so late a time in life proved a very unfortunate thing for the old man, as he was besieged and beset on all sides and on all sorts of pretexts, by people who had no claim on him whatever, for loans or accommodations. This led the old man to become suspicious, and after making one or two unfortunate loans of small amounts, a few hundred dollars each, he conceived the idea that everybody wanted to rob him, and that if he was not careful he would die in the poor house. This state of mind often led the old man to refuse charity where it could have been well bestowed.

"While Mrs. Butler lived, be it said to the credit of the Butler family, no stranger ever left their door hungry."

Through the courtesy of E. S. Meany, an old friend of Mr. Butler, the following reminiscences, which were told by Mr. Butler himself, only recently were obtained:

"I landed in Portland with $2.50 in my pocket. My wife was sick and the doctors of Portland had given out that they would only doctor the people who would pay them, and they had all they could do then. I put on my best togs and went up to the office of Drs. Broy & Wilson, and I lied like a scoundrel to them. I told them I had plenty of money and wanted my dying wife attended to at once. They did so and she got well. In the meantime I heard that Squire Davis had a pair of mules which a man was driving on shares. The man got drunk, and I hurried around and was lucky enough to get the mules on the same terms. I worked hard and I made money. When the doctor's bill was presented I paid it and then confessed how I had lied to save my wife. Those men were ever after that the best friends I had. In the spring I came to Seattle and E. M. Smithers drove my mules and oxen which I had bought from my winter's savings. Mr. Yesler was just starting his sawmill. I bought the two lots where the Hotel Butler now stands from him for $150, and was to pay him in sawlogs. I went down to that point and cut down the fine, big trees, and hauled enough to the mill to pay for my lots and build me a little cabin. My wife had the scurvy, and we could not get any vegetables or fruit, so I cleared off the lots and we raised fine strawberries and vegetables, and we got along all right. Not long ago, I sold those lots, and you bet I had more than that original $2.50.

"This, in brief," said Mr. Meany, "is the story of a pioneer, but what a wealth of incident he omits. All the exciting experiences of the times before the Indian war of 1855, while Mr. Butler was the first sheriff of King county, and all the trials and triumphs of the founders of this city. The first work done by Mr. Butler and Mr. Smithers after their arrival was to load a ship at Port Orchard with timbers and piles that were used to build San Francisco's wharves. The men they hired to help them were the first arrivals from the state of Maine—great, big, raw-boned men from those famous Maine forests. 'They were perfect terrors to work,' said Mr. Butler, on whom this Maine industry left a permanent impress, as he had come fresh from the fields of slave labor in the South."

Tribute From A. A. Denny.

A. A. Denny paid the following tribute to the dead:

"I knew Mr. Butler intimately from his first arrival in Seattle in 1853. In early times we traveled together, camped together and slept together, and during our long and intimate association never had the slightest difficulty or misunderstanding. No one knowing him as I did could fail to appreciate his sterling qualities as a citizen, as a neighbor, as a friend. He was with me at my house, apparently in his usual health, conversing pleasantly about old time experiences, and returned to his boarding house, and was stricken

within an hour after by his last illness. I shall miss him greatly."

Butler as a Mason.

While looking through some old papers recently, Rev. John F. Damon found the following in The North-West, under date of September 20, 1860, which is of interest in connection with the death of Mr. Butler:

"Constitution and installation of St. John's Lodge, No. 9, F. and A. M., at Seattle, September 17, 1860, by D. G. Master John F. Damon:

"John Webster, worshipful master; Daniel Manchester, senior warden; Hillory Butler, junior warden; W. P. Hart, treasurer; C. H. Garten, secretary; T. Dillon, senior deacon; Daniel C. Ross, junior deacon; William R. Cherry, tyler."

[The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Tuesday, February 4, 1896, p. 8]