

# Chester Blake Boyden

Chester Blake Boyden was born 18 May 1850 in Canton, St Lawrence, New York. He was the third of six children of William Dwight Boyden and Dolly Blake Newman. When he was born, the family was living in the home of his grandparents.<sup>1</sup> Blake and his family lived in Canton for two more decades<sup>2</sup>, and he attended the St Lawrence University in his youth.<sup>3</sup> It is currently the oldest continuously coeducational institution of higher learning in New York State.

Blake went to Chicago, Illinois, and then Pioche, Lincoln, Nevada, where he spent eight years prospecting, mining and assaying. He worked in various places in Nevada and Arizona, then operated a hoisting engine for four years in Tombstone, Arizona.<sup>4</sup> He married Lelia A Gleason about 1877 in Pioche or Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory.<sup>5</sup> On the 1880 census, he was an assayer, living with his wife in Silver Reef.<sup>6</sup>

In August 1880, a man named Boyden was arrested by Sheriff Hoag and accused of stealing \$1500 in silver bullion (about 714 pounds) from the Barbee Mill. He was the mill foreman and in charge of bullion production. Speculation abounded between the accidental spilling of molten silver over time, or the purposeful pouring of silver to make his own bullion bars. A jury was called but could not agree on the verdict. A second trial was scheduled but never seemed to happen. This was the largest “theft” of silver in the history of the mines.<sup>7</sup> The missing bullion was never found.

By 1881, the family had moved to Tombstone, Cochise, Arizona, where Blake was an engineer.<sup>8</sup> He was employed at the Bradshaw Mining Company office.<sup>9</sup> In 1884, Blake traveled to Nevada, California, Colorado, Missouri, and then went east to New York. He lived in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he worked in a railroad office. He spent several years in Helena, Lewis and Clark, Montana. In 1896, he prospected in British Columbia and Alaska. He caught typhoid pneumonia and went down river to St. Michaels with four other prospectors in an open boat, dining on salmon and rice. Then he took passage on a sailing vessel for 38 days, arriving at Seattle and then came to Spokane, Washington.<sup>10</sup>

In 1897, Blake lived in the Buffalo Hump country and after prospecting that season, came to Mullan, Idaho.<sup>11</sup> He was an engineer on the Northern Pacific Railroad.<sup>12</sup> On the 1900 census, he was a prospector, living in Mullan, Shoshone, Idaho.<sup>13</sup> He was chosen as a delegate to represent the Hunter mining district at the mining congress in Boise.<sup>14</sup> He served on the coroner’s jury for the death of a

---

<sup>1</sup> United States Census, 1850.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census, 1860, 1870.

<sup>3</sup> US School Catalogs, 1765-1935.

<sup>4</sup> An Illustrated History of North Idaho, 1903, p. 107.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid; *Familysearch.org*

<sup>6</sup> United States Census, 1880; *Salt Lake Herald*, 15 February 1881, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Silver, Sinners and Saints*, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, p. 74; *A Historical Study of Silver Reef*, by Alfred Bleak Stucki, 1966, p. 60.

<sup>8</sup> *Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955; Arizona Territorial Census, Records, 1864-1882.*

<sup>9</sup> *Arizona Weekly Citizen*, 25 September 1881, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> An Illustrated History of North Idaho, 1903, p. 107.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid; *Cochise Review*, 2 March 1901, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ogdensburg Journal*, 13 May 1940, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> United States Census, 1900.

<sup>14</sup> *Idaho Statesman*, 8 June 1901, p. 8.

workman at the Morning Mining Company in Mullan.<sup>15</sup> He served as the manager of the Gettysburg Mine near Mullan in 1907.<sup>16</sup> His mother died in New York and he received \$200 from her estate that year.<sup>17</sup> He was the secretary of the Copper Queen Mining & Milling Company in Mullan.<sup>18</sup>

Blake married Augusta Ziegler in 1909 in Helena, Lewis and Clark, Montana.<sup>19</sup> [Lelia was working as a servant in New York by 1910,<sup>20</sup> she died in 1925 and was buried in the Fairview Cemetery in Canton.] In 1910, Blake was mining and living with his wife and two sons in Everett, Snohomish, Washington.<sup>21</sup> He was the secretary and treasurer of the Mullan Mining Company in the Hunter District, Shoshone, Idaho.<sup>22</sup> He worked as a bookkeeper in Everett, Washington, in 1913-1914.<sup>23</sup> On the 1920 census, he was living with his wife in Centerville, Snohomish, Washington.<sup>24</sup>

Blake died 7 August 1923 in Everett, Snohomish, Washington.<sup>25</sup> Augusta lived with her son in Milton, Snohomish, Washington.<sup>26</sup> She died in 1936 and was buried in Monroe, Snohomish, Washington.

Research by Elaine Young, Silver Reef Foundation historian, 2016  
Please email [eyoung@youngzones.org](mailto:eyoung@youngzones.org) for additions and corrections

---

<sup>15</sup> *Idaho Statesman*, 13 March 1902, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Mining Reporter*, Vol 56, 1907, p. 504.

<sup>17</sup> New York Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999.

<sup>18</sup> *Mines Register*, Vol 8, 1909, p. 592.

<sup>19</sup> Montana County Marriages, 1847-1848, 1908-1936; *Daily Missoulian*, 20 March 1909, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> United States Census, 1910, 1920; New York State Census, 1915.

<sup>21</sup> United States Census, 1910.

<sup>22</sup> *The Mines Directory*, Vol 1, 1910, p. 221; *The Copper Handbook*, Vol 10, p. 689.

<sup>23</sup> US City Directories, 1822-1995.

<sup>24</sup> United states Census, 1920.

<sup>25</sup> Washington Death Certificates, 1907-1960; Washington Select Death Certificates, 1907-1960; Washington Deaths, 1883-1960.

<sup>26</sup> United States Census, 1930.