

William Jewel Dolton

Frank and Ida Olive (Ford) Dolton were the parents of William Jewel Dolton, born 8 Apr 1892, near Maysville, DeKalb, Missouri. That year was just eight years prior to the start of the new millennium. The decade leading up to 1892 was a part of the Second Industrial Revolution. Due to increased availability of travel, especially due to the railroads, this was a time of economic prosperity. Following quickly on the heels of this economic boom time was a severe economic depression sparked by the Panic of 1893 and strikes among workers in industry. The Spanish American War of 1898 resulted in the US gaining temporary control of Cuba and permanent control over Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. This is the world into which Bill was born.

In 1900, William Dalton was 7 years old and lived in Spring Creek, Oklahoma with his father, mother, brother, and 2 sisters. (1900 United States Federal Census) In 1907 Oklahoma became a state and before the 1910 US Federal Census, Frank had moved the family to Mustang, Oklahoma. Bill was eighteen. (1910 United States Federal Census) In 1920, W.J. Dalton was 26 years old and lived in Washington, Missouri with his wife, Blanch, and 2 daughters. (1920 United States Federal Census) In 1930, William J. Dalton was 38 years old and lived in Kansas City, Missouri with his wife, Blanche, 2 sons, and 3 daughters. (1930 United States Federal Census) On April 1, 1940, Wm Dolton was 48 years old and lived in Blue, Missouri with his wife, Blanche, 2 sons, and 2 daughters. (1940 United States Federal Census)

A scant four years later, when Bill was twenty-two years old, he had moved to Kansas City, Missouri, and married Blanche Florence Shurrard on 16 Jun 1914 in St Joseph, Buchanan Co, Missouri. (Missouri, Marriage Records, 1805-2002; Ancestry dot com) William was from Kansas City, Wyandotte, Kansas, and Blanche was from Maysville, DeKalb, Missouri. In the years after their marriage Bill and Blanche had six children. They were: Blanche Olive Dolton (born 1915), Lydia Lola Dolton (born 1916), Betty Fern Dolton (born 1924), William Jewel Dolton, Jr. (born 1925), Donald Lee Dolton (born 1927), and Mickey Jean Dolton (born 1932).

Despite the efforts of President Woodrow Wilson to keep America out of World War I, for several reasons including the commencement of unrestricted submarine warfare by Germany, the US Congress declared war on the Axis powers on 6 Apr 1917. Congress enacted a law requiring mandatory service in the military by all men of military service age. This was called the draft and all men over the age of eighteen years had to register for the draft. On June 5, 1917, William Jewel Dolton registered for the draft. He said that he was twenty-five years of age and living at 3826 E. 10th St., Kansas City, Missouri. He was a natural born US citizen born April 8, 1892, North of Clarksdale, Missouri, USA. He was working as a "trouble man" for the Home Telephone Company. He said he was employed at Bellefontaine Avenue and Peery Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri. He had a wife and two babies who were solely dependent upon him for support. He claimed exemption from the draft based on his "occupation and wife and two children solely dependent." The registrar said that William was short, of medium build, with brown eyes, light colored hair, and had no apparent disability. (U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918)

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“After the turn of the twentieth century, a national anti-trust ruling against the Bell Telephone Company resulted in the establishment of a second telephone company in Kansas City in 1904 the Home Telephone Company. Because subscribers to one company could not call subscribers of the other company, most public areas had two sets of public phones, each with their own telephone books. Businesses usually advertised in both companies' telephone books. 5 Although the Home Telephone Company started with fewer than ten thousand subscribers, by 1915 the company boasted five thousand more customers than its rival, "the Bell." During World War I. government officials in Kansas City called for consolidation of the phone system. On an exchange-by-exchange basis, the merger began in 1920 and was completed in 1922 when Kansas City's two phone companies, along with the phone system in Independence, merged into the independent Kansas City Telephone Company. For the next five years, the company and its stockholders defended the Kansas City Telephone Company against a takeover by the conglomerate Bell Telephone Company; however, in 1927 the Bell Telephone Company succeeded in its efforts.”¹ The place where Bill said he was employed at “Bellefontaine Avenue and Peery Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri,” was one of four exchanges of the Kansas City Home Telephone Company. This was the “East Exchange.” They also had the Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company's Grand Exchange, the Linwood Exchange, and the Hiland Telephone Exchange.

Bill lived his entire adult life in Kansas City, Missouri. But, family was important to him and he and Blanche often visited family in Oklahoma and California. We have family photos of him together with different combinations of brothers, sisters, children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews in different locations. They enjoyed going to the Kansas City Zoo. It seemed they often visited during the holidays as there were often presents and large meals in evidence.

Louis Dolton Sr. remembers in 1940 that Elza & Thomas took their father to Kansas to see the William Dolton family. They took Louis and Tomaline² with them Louis remembers it was a long hot drive. He marveled at the brick facade house with indoor plumbing and that William seemed wealthy. There were, of course, elaborate lunches & dinners and the freezers of ice cream that were typical of family gatherings of the time. The same lunches, dinners, and ice cream were served in Mustang when Bill of KC, Florence of OKC, or Belle or Ines of California (Bill's sisters) visited their parents Frank & Ida Dolton.

I have an eight millimeter home movie made by Ron and Elza Dolton that includes a visit they made to William and Blanche's house in Kansas City. I believe the movie was made about 1960. It shows Bill, Blanche, Elza, Louisa, and Betty Dolton in the basement of Bill's house. They're visiting and showing off and then Bill points out a picture of Richmond Dolton hanging on the wall. Another scene shows the family

¹ National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form for the "Hiland Telephone Exchange Building" in Kansas City, Missouri; United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, on file with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office, <http://dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/05000373.pdf>

² Neosha Tomaline Dolton daughter of Thomas Franklin Dolton and Opal Leona Bales

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upstairs eating. In another scene, what can only be grandkids are shown outside the front door on the stoop. The little boy is holding a black cat (not a firecracker) and moves away when his sister comes and sits beside him.

William Jewel Dolton, Sr., died on August 13, 1965, in Kansas City, Missouri, at the age of 73. He was buried in Floral Hills Cemetery, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, USA. Blanche lived another eleven years and was buried at Bill's side.

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- 1 Isham Dalton, b 1771, Albemarle Co., VA
 - + Elizabeth Thomson Walton, b 1774, Scotland
 - 2 Richmond Dolton, b June 1815, Jefferson Co, Kentucky
 - + Pricilla Hahn, b 1825 in Indiana
 - 3 Joseph H. Dolton, b 1840 in Illinois
 - + Sarah Isabella Thornton, b 1839 in Missouri
 - 4 Frank Dolton, b February 13, 1864, Nortonville, KS
 - + Ida Olive Ford, b 1867 in Barrow Stations, IL
- William Jewel Dolton (1892-1965)
- + Blanche Florence Sherard (1894 – 1976)
- Blanche O. Dolton (1915 – 1989)
Lydia Lola Dolton (1916 – 2010)
Betty Fern Dolton (1924 –)
William Dolton (1925 – 1989)
Donald Lee Dolton (1927 – 2010)
Mickey Jean Dolton (1932 – 2007)