

Mr. CHARLIE CULBERTSON

1875–1919

I never knew the man you were—
You died when my father was only eight;
Leaving a wife with a houseful of children,
Wondering how to survive their fate.

They said you were clever, industrious, well-liked—
Providing for your family the best way you could;
Forty-four short years and your life was over—
You would have stayed longer, if only you could.

You died one hundred years ago—
Our world is not the same;
Expressways and cities, with too many people
Plundering, killing, and going insane.

There were wars and conflicts where millions died,
Leaving the survivors to carry on;
Pursuing our happiness—“our unalienable right,” —
Trying to protect our families and home.

Would you ever have thought that man could fly,
And dare walk on the face of the moon?
That shining globe that circles the earth,
Sending light into the darkest gloom?

Our days on earth are numbered,
But the world keeps marching on;
We miss those who came before us,
And have gone on to their heavenly home.

We honor you, Charlie Culbertson,
As we stand here at your grave,
For the days you laughed and loved and lived,
For the breath of life you gave.

Your many descendants around the world
Have known happiness, toil, and strife;
But we are here now—in this Time and Place—
Because—You gave us Life.

—Joyce Culbertson Billingsly (2019),
daughter of Lewis Biggs Culbertson, granddaughter of Charles Wesley Culbertson