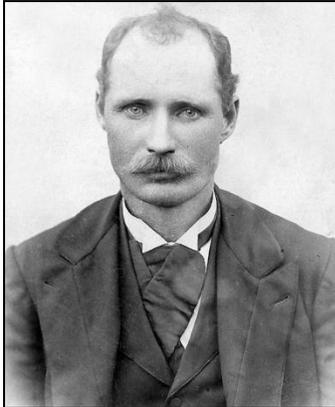


Life Sketch
of
George Drury Morrill

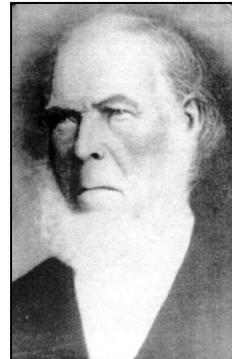
Compiled by
Sherry Mills Smith & Joy Clarke



Name Variation: George Morrell
Born: 18 Sep 1857 at Cedar City, Iron, Utah
Died: 20 Jan 1919 at Torrey, Wayne, Utah
Buried: 23 Jan 1919 at Torrey, Wayne, Utah
Father: Laban Morrill
Mother: Permelia Handmore Drury
Married: Ethalinda Jane Young, 5 Dec 1877
St. George, Washington, Utah

History

George Drury Morrill's parents, Laban Morrill and Permelia Handmore Drury, had joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the very early years of its existence. They shared in the trials and persecutions of that time as they moved from place to place with the Saints. After joining the Church at nineteen years of age, Laban's parents expelled him from their home. Permelia was afflicted from birth with a serious hip disease. Even the most famous doctors pronounced her disease as incurable. Permelia could only hobble about on crutches. March 1, 1842 was the day of her baptism. The Elders carried Permelia into an icy stream on her friend's farm. She walked out without even a limp and never used a crutch again.



Laban Morrill



Permelia Drury

Laban and Permelia were married in Nauvoo, this being a second marriage for Laban who had lost his first wife and two sons. His little daughter, Esther, died soon after he and Permelia were married.

They were still in Nauvoo at the time of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith and driven out from that city with the rest of the Saints. After spending three years at Garden Grove, Iowa and three more at Glenwood (near Council Bluffs, Iowa), they resumed their journey to Utah.

Laban and Permelia arrived in Utah in the fall of 1852, with their three children - Horatio, John, and Laban. The Morrill family settled at Springville, Utah, Utah, and another son was born and died two months later.

Laban spent about seventeen years in Iron County, Utah. George Drury Morrill, the subject of this sketch, was the third child born to Laban and Permelia in Cedar City, Iron, Utah. They were living in Cedar Fort at the time. George was their seventh child, all boys. A sister, Sarah Permelia Morrill, was born three years later in 1860. Another son, Horace Morrill, completed their family group in 1863.

Early Life of George Drury Morrill

Tiny George Drury was born just eleven days after the terrible Mountain Meadows massacre in that near vicinity. Little is known of his growing up years. George doubtless helped his father and brothers in farming, building and many other occupations incident to pioneer life. Foremost among their accomplishments was the planting of orchards and shade trees that marked each place at which they lived. It is also certain that the boys helped in caring for the cattle belonging to the settlers and in protecting them from the Indians. Raids were common then and protecting the cattle was one of Laban's foremost responsibilities along with the construction of Johnson's Fort. At one time, they lived for possibly a year at Santaquin, and a little later at Payson in Utah County. They soon returned to Johnson's Fort.

During the year of 1872, the boys took care of the family while their father filled a mission to Iowa. Following that was a call to spend a year or two at Springdale in Washington County, Utah to help in establishing the United Order. They remained there until the experiment failed. They then apparently went to City Creek in Piute County, Utah a mile north of Junction, Utah where they planted a fine orchard. Then they moved to Circleville, Utah for a year or two, and finally moved back to Junction, Utah. The orchard planted at City Creek was the only one in that part of the country for many years.

Marriage



Ethalinda Jane Young

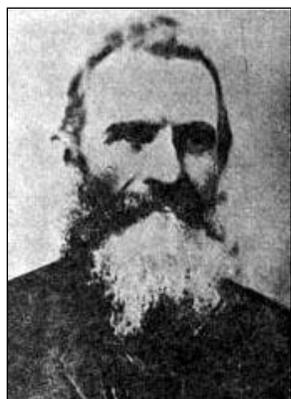
It was in the year of 1877 when they were at City Creek that young George Drury Morrill, now twenty years of age, met an attractive widow, Ethalinda Jane Young Phelps. Jane and her five-year-old daughter, Malinda, were living in Junction with her parents, John William Young and Ethalinda Margaret Young. George was strongly attracted to this young woman, and on 5 December 1877, they were married for time and eternity in the St. George Temple. George Drury Morrill adopted the little girl, Malinda. The Morrill family lived for a time at Johnson's Fort in Iron County, where their first son, George William Morrill, was born 30 August 1878. Sometime between 1878 and March 1881, they moved back to City Creek, near Junction, Utah, possibly living on his father's farm, for Laban now had two homes in town.

Hole in the Rock Mission

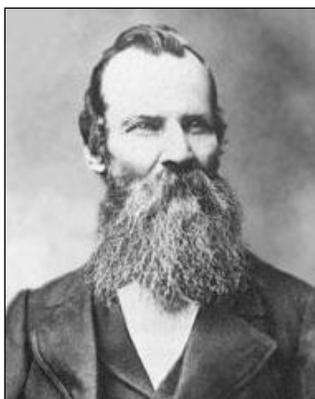
In the year of 1879, George Drury traveled from Junction, Utah to the site of the Hole in the Rock. At the San Juan mission was a blanket invitation extended to anyone who wished to join the expedition. No one knows whether George was formally called to go. At the age of twenty-two, no doubt he felt a sense of mission. George had not filled such a call as exemplified by his father, Laban Morrill. George Drury's children, Malinda who was about six-years-old, and George William, who was about 15- months-old, remained in Junction with their mother.

Four Lead Scouts

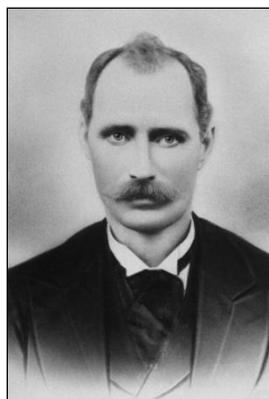
The Hole in the Rock pioneers established a camp in two locations by December 10, 1879. A passable wagon road down through the "Hole" needed construction and a ferry established to carry the wagons across the river. Nevertheless, once across the river they did not know if taking wagons any further was possible. The region lying immediately east of the Colorado River that earlier scouting parties had found impassable was their concern. The only way to obtain that vital information was to send lead scouts all the way to Montezuma. Those four scouts were George Washington Sevy, Lemuel Hardison Redd, Sr., George Drury Morrill and George B. Hobbs.



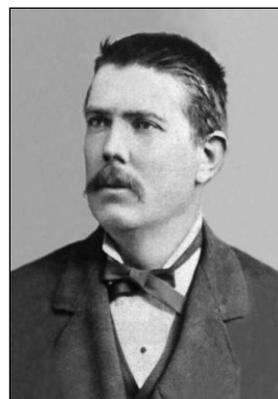
Geo W. Sevy



Lemuel H. Redd



Geo D. Morrill



Geo B. Hobbs

These scouts started December 17, 1879, carrying sufficient food to last eight days. They figured they could average about twenty miles a day. On the second day out, they camped at the Slick Rocks. After searching all day off the steep slick rock descent, the pathfinders concluded that the Hole in the Rock trek was finally over. They could not find a path. Preparing to return, George Hobbs saw a herd of mountain sheep near the campsite and tried to lasso one with his pack rope. The sheep drew George Hobbs down in the rocks. When he finally climbed to the bottom of the rocks, the animal left him. It seemed to be the only passage down these slick rocks.

The four scouts continued. They ran out of food on December 23. Feeling very discouraged, it was at Salvation Knoll that literally saved the life of these men. They had completely lost their way in the maze of canyons that followed. They were near starvation when they climbed Salvation Knoll on December 25, 1879. From the top, they could view the Abajo Mountain range

in central San Juan County. The scouts had been using the Abajo Mountains for orientation but could not find it for several days inside the maze of canyons. This was an eventful Christmas for the poor men - no food, but hopeful. For George Morrill's wife and children, it would mean they would have Christmas without their father and husband.

On the third night without food, George Hobbs cut his name in a rock at Butler Gulch with the date he was there, not knowing whether he would survive the journey. Their mode of travel was as follows – first two would ride one hour, while the other two walked, and so on.

On the fourth day without food, they encountered a camp just south of where Bluff City, San Juan, Utah is now. These settlers had supper about ready for partaking. After taking breakfast with these good people the next morning, December 29, they continued their journey up on the San Juan to Ft. Montezuma. At the fort, they found the families to have little but wheat left. What to do for supplies for their return trip they did not know, as they could buy none. The nearest market was 125 miles further east. They saw a trapper passing the fort. It was Peter Shirts. He consented to let them have 48 pounds of flour for \$20.



Peter Shirts

They started their return journey December 31, 1879. On New Year's Day, they tried to find a way out to the west but could not find one. It had been a bitter night, frost settling on their bedding about three inches deep. Going down a wash a short distance, they discovered an old trail leading to the west. This was the other end of the trail they had discovered many days before in Castle Wash. It looked like Providence had a hand in directing them.

They traveled two days due west into the Grand Gulch and found a place to get out on the west side. A snowstorm now set in and not being able to make their bearings, they crossed the backbone. They got into the canyon where they later discovered the natural bridges. The snowstorm letting up, they got their bearings. A little later, the Clay Hills loomed up about 30 miles ahead of them.

They were now back on the old trail and making good time. It was at this time that their flour porridge gave out and they were again facing starvation. The scouts had been living on one pound of flour of day.

By the time they reached Slick Rock where they had previously seen the Mountain Sheep, snow covering the rocks changed the appearance of the face of the rock. However, here nothing seemed to impede their way to reach camp that day. One horse had worn its hoofs almost to the hide, leaving a circle of blood at every step.

Upon reaching the river, they found four men on the lookout for them. These boys had prearranged a signal to look out on the opposite cliff on the other side of the river 12 miles way. They gave the signal that they had arrived. Brother Sevy was so anxious again to meet his family

that he crossed the river and climbed the cliff to the Hole in the Rock the same night. George Drury and his companions resting over night crossed the river the next day. It was surely a joyous reunion. For George Drury and Lemuel Redd, they would return home to their families, while George Hobbs and George Sevy continue their work at the Hole.

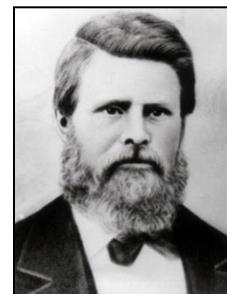
The scouting party was absent from the main body of pioneers for 24 days instead of the eight days planned. They finally returned to camp at the top of the Hole in the Rock in early January 1880, to report that a way to Montezuma was possible. The scouts had completed a difficult reconnaissance. In fulfilling their "call" they suffered many hardships. However, the first wagon left the Hole on January 26, 1880.

Home Again - Wayne County, Utah

It was at City Creek on 9 March 1881 that little Alice Jane was born. They remained there for a time but George wanted a place of his own. Therefore, when his father-in-law, John William Young, decided to move to Loa in Wayne County, Utah, they went along. Wayne County had previously been part of Piute County. They remained in Loa several years. It was during this time two more children were born to the family. Margaret Permelia was born 18 October 1883, and Alfred Laban was born 6 April 1886.

Whether they owned land in Loa we do not know, but George was a farmer and orchardist. During the summer of 1886, they kept hearing favorable accounts of a section of unclaimed country about twenty-five miles farther east. The Teasdale settlers were using this land as cattle range. John W. Young and George D. Morrill looked it over, liked what they saw, and decided it would be a pleasant place to move permanently. They proceeded to homestead a large tract of land. They purchased water rights from Peter Brown, who owned land farther north on Sand Creek, the main source of water.

The Teasdale cattlemen, alarmed at the prospect of losing their free cattle range, did their best to dissuade the new settlers. They called the place Poverty Flat, Wayne County, Utah and told the homesteaders they would starve there. Nevertheless, George Drury Morrill and John William Young had decided. Accordingly, when they could harvest crops and make other arrangements, they moved to their new location. The Morrill family was determined and was a sturdy people. They were unafraid of hardship; so is the fact that they made this move in the dead of winter on 21 December 1886.



John Young

What would Christmas be like for a family under such circumstances? They were the first settlers to take up land there. Probably the men had built the two one-room cabins before moving day, which would account for the move coming so late in the year.

The cabins were scant protection against the cold of winter. They built them of only one thickness of boards with the only studding in the corners and in the mid-section of the walls. There was a crosspiece at ceiling level, one halfway down, and another on the ground, to which they nailed the boards on the outside. Narrow strips of board were nailed over the cracks. There

was no ceiling of any kind. A large fireplace occupied nearly one wall. Into one of these tiny cabins, perhaps 14 by 16 feet, George D. Morrill moved his wife, five children, and all their household goods. Life was not easy. The cabin was cold in winter and hot in the summer, but it was home. They made the best of it, doing everything they could to make out an existence and provide for their needs.

True to his nature, George promptly broke land, planted alfalfa, corn, potatoes, and started an orchard from seeds and seedlings. A little later, he obtained some starts of trees from Fruita, Utah in return for work he did for fruit growers. However, this area was not as sheltered as Fruita, and it was ten years before the trees matured enough to bear fruit. In March 1887, the two settlers, John W. and George Drury, made ditches to convey the waters of Sand Creek upon the present Torrey town site. The settlers succeeded that year in raising a very good crop of grains, vegetables and some chickens.

They surveyed a canal to carry water from the Fremont River onto the bench. No move was made toward digging the ditch. The settlers became discouraged and most of them moved away nine months later. The settlement almost broke up. John W. Young and George Drury Morrill were the ones that remained.

The children were growing up and needed to be in school, which caused family concern. Although other settlers were moving to the area, they had not established a school. Malinda was now 16, William now 10, and Alice now 7. These children were the only family members of age to go to school and previously had done some schooling in Loa. There was only one thing to do. The Morrill family decided to move into Teasdale for the winters. They attended church there and were members of the Teasdale Ward.

The cabin in Teasdale was also just one room, but it was larger and bit more comfortable. Once the family settled, George departed for Junction to work during the winter in the store belonging to his brother, John. He kept this schedule for years to provide for the needs of his family. In return for his work, George was given clothing, seeds, household items, tools, and other necessities. This took care of them through each coming year but it was a trial to his wife. Jane never had the privilege of choosing the things she would like.

A little more than two years after they moved onto the homestead another daughter, Viva Rose Morrill, was born on 22 April 1889. That made eight members in a one-room home. In 1890, Malinda Morrill married Walter B. Lee on her eighteenth birthday. The young couple slipped away and was secretly married. It was a hard blow to Malinda's parents. In addition, more heartache was just ahead.

In October, less than three months after Malinda's marriage, diphtheria broke out in the little community. Small Margaret died of it on October 27, 1890, just nine days after her seventh birthday. Before they could bury Margaret, tiny Viva Rose died on October 30, 1890.

It was times like this that their faith in the gospel bore them up. The power of the priesthood was often used for the sick when no medical help was available. Often Jane's own life was saved in this manner for she had very poor health. Still, Margaret and Viva had completed their mission on earth, and with their knowledge of the Gospel, the family could understand and accept that.

Somehow they struggled through that winter. The following year, on 5 December 1891, another tiny daughter came to help fill the emptiness in her home and hearts. They named this little one Myrtle Violet Morrill. Although a very delicate child, Myrtle survived and was a great comfort to them.

There was little culture in their busy lives but the desire for it was present. Jane allowed herself one luxury, she subscribed to the Comfort magazine for twenty-five cents a year. That meant saving six dozen eggs to sell at four cents a dozen to pay for it. George wondered if it was worth the sacrifice and showed no interest in reading the magazine when it came. However, he must have decided it was worthwhile. After Jane had read the magazine, she would carefully paper the walls of their drafty little home with the pages to shut out some cold. George was often seen standing close to the wall reading the stories.

Myrtle was two-years-old when they built another room onto their home. They built it just like the first but without a fireplace. This was to be the kitchen and they would now have a stove to cook. A lean-to was added to the north end of the new room with one end left open. This was used as a shed in which to store things from the weather and as a summer kitchen to avoid excess heat in the house. It was later closed in and used as a "back room." This also was papered with Comfort magazines.

Southern States Mission

The year of 1897 is an eventful one. Alice Morrill was married on 28 January to David J. Teeples. Their little settlement got a post office and a name--that of Torrey replaced the title of Poverty Flat. In August, George responded to a call to fill a mission in the Southern States. That left nineteen-year-old George William Morrill as chief provider for the family.

The following year they decided that they should build a church building in Torrey, which could also be used as a schoolhouse during the week. While George taught the gospel in Kentucky, his folks at home donated the land and helped build a church house. Now there would be no further need of moving into Teasdale for the winters. They moved to Torrey, Wayne, Utah and set the Teasdale, Wayne, Utah home just across the street from the Morrill family home. This would be a home for Dave and Alice Teeples and was set on land her father had given them.

William and Dave then concentrated on making some improvements on the family home. They ripped out the old fireplace, which had become a problem, and lining the walls on the inside with lumber taken from a board fence. They then took jobs, which paid them one dollar per day. With that, they bought red building paper to cover the walls inside, and heavy, unbleached muslin to make a "factory" ceiling, which was common in those days. This made the home much more comfortable and warmer in the winter.

During this time, the fruit trees started to bear and they canned their first fruit. However, to do really well the trees needed pruning and budding, something the young men did not understand.

George returned from his mission in 1900, after being gone nearly three years. George filled more than two journals during his mission, though only 41 pages have been secured. We have the pages covering June 22, 1899 to August 27, 1899.



George Drury Morrill Back Row, 2nd from Right

During that time George served in Kentucky, he suffered periods of sickness. While he was resting, he would write in his journal and write gospel letters. Often he retired to the woods for personal prayers.

George traveled without purse or script. The missionaries would borrow from the mission office on account and when they received money from home would reimburse the office. His mission leader admonished the Elders to not take advantage of the generous offer of the leaders. George frequently taught gospel sermons. He was successful in baptizing many souls.

Letters from home were a source of much pleasure and encouragement. His sister, Sarah, and brother, Laban, would often send money and stamps. George especially enjoyed photographs of his wife and grandchildren.

One area George labored the people did not like the Mormons. George and his companion would hide their clothes at night so they would not be stolen. During his sleep on one occasion, George had his hat stolen. Not wanting to impose on the mission funds for purchasing a new one, he relied on his faith. In time his father, who was blind, sent him one dollar and his sister, Sarah, sent six dollars so he could make his purchase.

George's sickness continued for about a year though from the few journal pages we have it is not clear what the nature of his illness was. He was usually very weak and nervous, often not able to keep food down. Flu was very prevalent in Kentucky. Once when George's stomach was weak, a young boy went into the woods and killed a squirrel. The boy fried the squirrel for George, which made him feel better. George wrote, "I am still feeling bad and very weak, not able to walk. The time wears away very slow but I feel to put my trust in the Lord."

During George's journal writing time, he expressed that through his sickness, "he hoped to soon be able to continue my labor and enjoy the spirit of my calling, for I know the Gospel to be true." George would fast for spiritual strength as often as he could. He wrote in his journal, "I was feeling downhearted to see so many turning from the truth (truth) and wickedness is increased in many places." George experienced slurring remarks about the Mormons but in response he writes, "I feel thankful that I am worthy of the name Mormon." He often refreshed his memory from the scriptures.

August 22, 1899, President David A. Broadbent arrived in Postoface, Owsley, Kentucky. While visiting, he spoke with George of a notice of his release. President Broadbent wrote a letter to George's brother, Laban, asking him to lend money to take him home. President Broadbent did this as a favor to Elder Morrill as President Broadbent could write faster than George could, as he was still weak from sickness.

When George arrived home from his mission, he attended to the trees his family had planted, and they were soon yielding abundant fruit crops.

Family Life

On October 23, 1901, William George Morrill, his son, was married in the Manti Temple to a lovely young woman, Ellen May Adams. Like the other children, George Drury Morrill gave William George Morrill a tract of land. William built his home on the lot adjoining his father's on the north. The two families continued to enjoy a close association even when William purchased a farm on Fish Creek, Wayne County, Utah and moved his family there during the summers. Fish Creek was six miles out of town.

Alfred was married 5 September 1907, to Margaret Eliza Jacobs. They too gave him some land and for a few years were close. Nevertheless, of all the children, William and Myrtle were the only ones who stayed continuously in Wayne County, Utah.

George was now a counselor in the bishopric of Torrey Branch, and branch clerk. Since he had very little education, he enlisted the help of his only remaining child, Myrtle, to do the bookwork. She seemed to have a special aptitude for it and did it well until the fall of 1909. That year the newly established Snow Academy in Ephraim, Sanpete County, was in need of more students. Some professors traveled about the territory inviting young folks to attend. Myrtle was one of those so contacted and she wanted very much to go. After much thought and consultation, they decided that she should attend the fall quarter. Another person was found to act as clerk while she was gone. They borrowed the money of \$25 to send her to college. That bought materials, which she made into clothes, a hat, and paid for some books and her tuition and train fare from Richfield to Ephraim. A friend gave her a ride to Richfield, and once in Ephraim she worked for her room and board.

Myrtle had been dating for about two years a very honest, hard-working young man by the name of James Clarence Huntsman, and they became engaged. However, since he had to be away at the sheep herd most of the time, attending the Academy was a way to fill her time. Myrtle and James married a year later, November 9, 1910.

The Morrill family was now reared. The family was firmly established in the community, and the worst of their financial problems were behind George and Jane. Still, life never ceases to be a test, and thus it was for them. Irritations and problems that had been growing with the years came to a head in 1914, and Jane and George separated. Jane stayed in the home. George went to live with Dave and Alice, who were back in Torrey after having spent the past ten years in Idaho. He continued to work wherever he could get any job, be it large or small. George helped the needy and members of his own family, and occasionally his own brothers.

When Dave and Alice had an opportunity to work at King's Ranch on the Henry Mountains, George went with them. However, his health was failing and in the spring of 1918, he decided to stay with Clarence and Myrtle on the farm they had bought close to William's farm. They now had two children, and Myrtle was ill with a bad appendix. George insisted on staying to do the farm work while the family went into town to stay where, if need be, she could have help. There was no telephone service to Loa and a doctor there owned the only car in the county. It developed that surgery was necessary, and in July, the doctor took her and his own wife, who

had the same problem, to Salt Lake City for operations.

A week later Clarence hurried back to the farm, uneasy about his father-in-law. His fears were justified. He found George in a very bad condition with the disease known then as dropsy. They immediately notified Alice and she hurried back to her home in Torrey to take care of her father. After a time his health improved.

Spanish influenza epidemic – Final Years

Nevertheless, this was the year of 1918 and winter was coming--the winter of the dreaded Spanish influenza epidemic. This epidemic broke out in the fall and raged out of control for months. As November came on, people were falling ill on all sides and many were dying. On November 7, William's little son, Veral, died. Then Alice came down with it. In two months, she was expecting her seventh child, but it was not to be. Alice passed away November 23. With her last hour of life, she begged her parents to be reunited. Before her funeral was over Clarence, who had been giving his services unstintingly to others, lay in a critical condition. Jane went to help her daughter care for him and the children. Even the doctor was bedfast and not expected to live.



Junction Cemetery

A public health nurse came from Richfield to do what she could for the sick. Of William's family, who was still on the farm, she reported: "There will be four corpses there by morning." Fortunately, Bishop Ephraim P. Pectol took a different view. He called some faithful men, went out on the farm, gave blessings to the sick, and moved everyone to town. Not one of them died.

Suddenly Jane was down with it in Myrtle's home. Simultaneously another member of Dave's family, a daughter, came down with it. Fearing for George's health, they moved him home, for he had stayed there to help after Alice's death. Miraculously, he escaped it. Alfred's little daughter, Verdella, was the next to go, December 3.

When she was able, Jane returned to her home and husband. Although they did everything they could for him, his condition steadily worsened. On January 20, 1919, he died of dropsy (edema) at just sixty-two years of age, leaving his wife, four children, and twenty-four living grandchildren. Three children and eight grandchildren were waiting on the other side to welcome him.

His life of hardship, toil, and sacrifice had built a strong and valiant character. He endured many discouraging and heartbreaking experiences. Nevertheless, he was true and faithful to the end, ever mindful of the sick and the needy, and ever willing to lend a hand to help another. Truly, he must have been numbered among the great sons of earth.

In his patriarchal blessing given by Walter Ernest Hanks upon the head of George Drury Morrill on 3 November 1912, we read: “Thou hast sought to establish thyself in righteousness before God and your fellows, and the time will come when you shall see the benefit of your labors which, at the present time, is not known among thy fellows.”

In June 1997, the descendants of George Drury Morrill met on the property of William George Morrill’s homestead at Fish Creek, Wayne, Utah in commemoration of his service to the Hole in the Rock mission. We respectfully submit this biography. His descendants consider George Drury Morrill a true pioneer, “one who goes before, showing us the way to follow.”