

George Edmond Miles

George Edmond Miles was born 9 December 1866 in London, Essex, England.¹ He and his twin brother Arthur were the youngest of four children of Jane Mary Wyatt.² His father, John Henry William Miles, owned a pub in London near Piccadilly Circus. John had a legitimate wife and six children – and four illegitimate children by Jane Wyatt.³ Jane and her three sons were living in Lambeth, London, on the 1871 census. Jane was a dressmaker and needlewoman.⁴

It wasn't until after his father's death in 1878 that George's half-brother John (oldest son and heir) came to find their little family, which his father had confessed on his deathbed. George, his mother, and his siblings had been living in a small cottage in a ghetto in Dickens, London. During John's visit, George found out that his father had been a wealthy saloon owner. John had joined the Mormon Church in 1873 and immigrated to Utah Territory. He was completing a mission in England when his father died. John moved Jane and her family to Bishop's Grove in the heart of London, where she began keeping house for the Mormon missionaries.⁵

In September 1878, John, with Jane and her four children, left from Liverpool on the ship *Wyoming* to sail to New York City.⁶ They crossed the plains to the Great Salt Lake Valley and then traveled two weeks by wagon to reach St George, Washington, Utah Territory.⁷ Jane and her children used the name Miles from then on. Everyone in the family had to work. George worked various jobs for a year. He worked for Anthony W Ivins for a year. On the 1880 census, George was a servant, living with his mother and brother in St George.⁸ He hauled wood, hay and bullion to Milford, and supplies to Silver Reef. He was employed at the Barbee mine⁹ and then worked in the Woolley, Lund and Judd general merchandise store between 1881 and 1887. He drove the mail to Toquerville for four years. He worked in the cotton factory in Washington.¹⁰ He and his brother Henry ran a store at DeLamar, Nevada.¹¹

While employed at Silver Reef, George said he “took all the dead people to their graves. My delivery wagon was built just right for a hearse.” He described the Chinese burials: the person was carried on a litter, with one of two Chinese men in front, “throwing lots of pieces of paper about two inches square in every direction. This was done to keep the devil busy gathering up the paper so he couldn't get to the graveyard before the body arrived”. The Chinese also believed men and women needed time to eat and drink on their way to heaven, so they put roast pork and liquor on the grave and then departed. When evening came, the Indians would eat the roast pork and other food and drink the liquor.¹²

¹ Utah Missionary Department Missionary Registers, 1860-1937; US Social Security Death Index.

² *Familysearch.org*

³ “Silk Hat to Survival,” a history of John Horne Miles, at *Familysearch.org*

⁴ England and Wales Census, 1871.

⁵ “Silk Hat to Survival,” a history of John Horne Miles, at *Familysearch.org*

⁶ New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957.

⁷ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 December 1968.

⁸ United States Census, 1880.

⁹ Undated newspaper article, at *Familysearch.org*

¹⁰ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 December 1968.

¹¹ *theancestrofiles.blogspot.com*

¹² *Salt Lake Tribune*, 5 December 1966, p. 36.

George was also a witness to several episodes of Silver Reef history, such as the duel between Jack Truby and Sheriff Diamond, and the miner's strike where the jail was overflowing and a line was drawn around the Rice building and those arrested were told they would be shot if they crossed the line. He was there when the miners finally voted to accept the lowered wages, and claimed the town was never the same. He stated that the town of Santa Clara was built on funds received from farmers' produce sold at Silver Reef.¹³

George described the bad reputation of Hank Parrish and the courage of Washington County Sheriff Augustus P. Hardy, who lived twenty miles from Silver Reef but carried out his responsibilities in town anyway. He verified the story of Peter Anderson, who discovered a hidden cache of gold coin in an old dance hall building. However, George said he never heard the story of Metalliferous Murphy and did not believe him to be the original discoverer of ore at Silver Reef. He also felt that the attitude of the Mormon Church shifted after 1880, and that Mormons were welcome to associate with Silver Reef in its later period and even work at the mines.¹⁴

George earned an informal education by listening to the educated men connected with the mines in Silver Reef. The men came into the store almost every evening, spending long hours in serious discussion. In the winters, George attended school at the University of Utah on the west side of Salt Lake City. He also was schooled one winter in the basement of the St George Tabernacle with a man named Whitelock.¹⁵ He entered the St George Stake Academy in 1882 and eventually passed the teacher's examination.¹⁶

George married Victoria Josephine Jarvis in June 1895 in St George (her father was the first man to settle in St George). They had seven children.¹⁷ George taught the upper grades in Leeds during the winter of 1894-1895¹⁸ before returning to Silver Reef. He was elected as St George city treasurer in 1895.¹⁹ In August 1896, he resigned as city treasurer²⁰ and went on a mission to Kentucky, returning March 1899.²¹

In 1899, he purchased the Thomas Judd home at 269 South 200 East. The home and land covered an entire block, where they raised grapes and other fruits, vegetables, chickens, and cows. The block was surrounded by a tall green hedge.²² At George's death, the home was sold to George Q Cannon III and later put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. It is now part of the Green Gate Village and is known as the Green Hedge Manor.²³

In the fall of 1899, he went to the Rio Virgen mill as a salesman.²⁴ On the 1900 census, he was a store clerk, living with his wife, two sons, and his mother in St George. He served as justice of the

¹³ A Historical Study of Silver Reef: Southern Utah Mining Town, by Alfred Bleak Stucki, 1966, pp. 63, 65-66, 77, 97-98, 104-106.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Undated newspaper article, at *Familysearch.org*

¹⁷ Utah Marriages, 1887-1935; Utah County Marriages, 1887-1940.

¹⁸ *theancestrofiles.blogspot.com*

¹⁹ *Salt Lake Herald*, 7 December 1895, p. 5.

²⁰ *The Union*, 29 August 1896, p. 1.

²¹ Utah Missionary Department Missionary Registers, 1860-1937; *Salt Lake Herald*, 16 March 1899, p. 7.

²² *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 December 1968.

²³ *wchsutah.org*

²⁴ *Salt Lake Herald*, 28 October 1899, p. 5.

peace in 1906²⁵ (and two additional terms²⁶) and then managed the James Andrus store for two years. He taught at the Woodward School in St George from 1909-1912.²⁷ He turned to farming until he became the city recorder in 1916, a post he held for twenty years.²⁸ He then served as a juvenile judge from 1921-1930.²⁹ He then served as city clerk for eighteen years.³⁰

Victoria died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1941 in St George and was buried in the city cemetery.³¹ George died of natural causes on 7 February 1970 in St George at age 103 and was buried in the city cemetery.³² He had never owned an automobile and never ridden in an airplane. "They go too fast. You miss too much when you go too fast." He had been blessed with an unusually strong voice, and spoke without a microphone to captivated audiences. He had a longstanding knowledge of the area (he had lived in St George for 81 years) and was a popular speaker.³³



George E Miles (images from *Familysearch.org*)

²⁵ *Iron County Record*, 1 June 1906, p. 5.

²⁶ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 December 1968.

²⁷ *theancestorfiles.blogspot.com*

²⁸ United States Census, 1910, 1920; *Daily Herald*, 9 February 1970, p. 4.

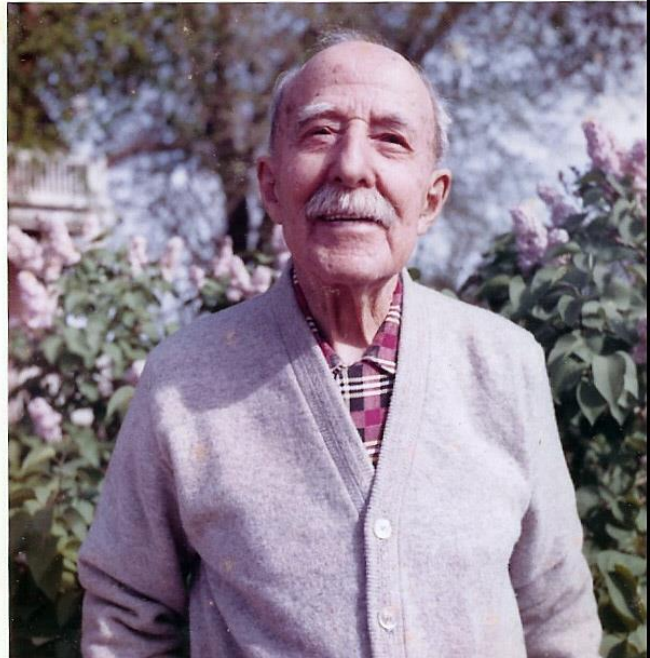
²⁹ Undated newspaper article at *Familysearch.org*

³⁰ United States Census, 1930; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 December 1968.

³¹ Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964.

³² US Social Security Death Index; *Daily Herald*, 9 February 1970, p. 4.

³³ *wchsutah.org*



George E Miles (images from *Findagrave.com*)



George E Miles (image from the *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 December 1968)



George E Miles at age 102 (image from the *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 December 1968)



The Judd-Miles home in St George (image from *Familysearch.org*)



(Image from *Findagrave.com*)

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