

GEORGE MORONI SPILSBURY AND ROSELIA J. HAIGHT
(Parents of Erwin Roswell Spilsbury)

Born: 30 October, 1852
Salt Lake City, SL, Utah
Died: 11 December 1939 (87 years)
Toquerville, Wshngtn, Utah

Parents: George Spilsbury and
Fannie Smith

Married: 1 January 1874

22 October 1854
Cedar City, Iron, Utah
10 December 1922 (68 years)
Salt Lake City, SL Utah
Isaac C. Haight and
Eliza Ann Price

George Moroni was the third of the five surviving children of his parents. His family moved several times, finally settling in Toquerville where he stayed for the rest of his life. He became a successful rancher and well-to-do through his industry and entrepreneurship. He owned many different tracts of land, one of which is still known as the Spilsbury Ranch on Kolob Mountain. He raised racing horses, and his riding horses sported the best trappings and saddles. One time his racehorse saved him by outracing some warring Indians. He often dressed in cowboy equipment, high-heeled boots, cowboy hat, and buckskin gloves. He had to use a wooden bootjack to pull off his high boots.



He liked to sing and dance and played drums in the Martial Band. On the 4th of July, he played in a fife-and-drum corps for the town celebration, riding up and down the town on a wagon, playing patriotic numbers to wake the people up early in the morning. He liked to square dance and shoddish with his wife at local dances.

He traded with the Native Americans in the region; once, to save a little orphan boy from being abandoned, he traded one of his racing horses for the boy and brought him home to his parents, who raised him. He bought goods from back East which were brought to Cedar City on the train. He met the train with horse and wagon, loaded up the goods and sold them in the Toquerville area. People in the area knew him to be fair, generous, and kind.

One great legend about him concerns some obviously haughty easterners, motoring through Toquerville. George Moroni was working at the irrigation gate when the people stopped, asking, "Tell me my good man, what is the population of this place?" George Moroni looked up and down the empty street and replied, "Hell, I'm it."

He was able to attain only a meager education, never learning to write, but saw to it that all his children attended universities and supported three of his boys and one girl on full-time missions. His wife, Roselia, also made many sacrifices to see that her children got a good education.

Roselia was born into a polygamous family. She was well-educated. My father recalls her reading to him from the classics such as Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, and Shakespeare's plays. She was one of the first telegraph operators in the state and also taught telegraphy. As a mother, she was a hard-working woman, rising early to take care of household chores, baking six loaves of bread at a time, drying fruit from their orchards, bearing and caring for her twelve children and suffering the loss of five of them before they reached maturity. My father, the twelfth child, was born when she was 47 years old.

She was Relief Society president when my father was born and still serving at the time of her death twenty-one years later. Her service was noted in the church's Relief Society Magazine. My father remembers going around the neighborhood each Sunday with a large pot of chicken and dumplings and bread and butter his mother had made to give to the indigents. During the Thursday evening fast and testimony meetings, when there was a large space between testimonies, it was her calling to start singing a hymn and the congregation would join in.

She died from complications of surgery when my father was on his mission. George Moroni lived some 18 years longer.