

Robert Gray McQuarrie

Robert Gray McQuarrie was born 23 September 1858 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah Territory.¹ He was the oldest of five children of Hector McQuarrie and Agnes Gray. His parents had immigrated from Scotland and crossed the plains to the Great Salt Lake Valley. In 1860, the family was living in Ogden, Weber, Utah Territory.² When Robert was age three, his father, a blacksmith, was called to settle St George.³ His father was involved in the building of the St George Temple, sharpening drills, picks, and crowbars.

In 1870, the family was living in Pine Valley, Washington, Utah Territory, where Robert's father worked at the saw mill.⁴ The saw mill burned down in 1862 but was rebuilt larger.⁵ The family moved to Mt Trumbull in Arizona when the lumber mill was established to provide wood for the temple in St George. The cut timbers were transported by wagons drawn by horses and mules over the narrow, twisted, rugged and rocky 66-mile journey known as the "Temple Trail".⁶ Robert's father repaired the mill, logging cars, made chains and ox shoes, kept freight wagons in repair, and made bolts, hinges, etc. out of old iron spikes.⁷

While bringing a load of lumber from the mill at Pine Valley, he met Piochers in Diamond Canyon. They told him of the new discovery near Leeds and told him that lumber and carpenters were needed. When he reached the fork of the road home, he drove to one side, unhitched, and went to St George, returning with a younger brother in a buckboard, bringing his chest of tools and some supplies. Robert built the first cabin in Silver Reef, and began a career as a contractor and builder. He became the master mechanic at the Christy Mill.⁸

Robert was a carpenter at age of 18 and served his apprenticeship working on the St George Temple in 1876. He later worked on the Manti Temple, becoming an expert mechanical and mining engineer.⁹ He married Charlotte Ann MacFarlane in 1878 in St George.¹⁰ Charlotte was the daughter of John Menzies Macfarlane, the hymn writer, choir director and civic leader.¹¹ Robert and Charlotte had nine children. On the 1880 census, Robert was a carpenter, living with his wife and son in St George, Washington, Utah Territory.¹² In 1890, he was elected as a city councilor in St George.¹³

Robert and Albert Grant obtained a lease on the Christy mines and mill in 1892 and subleased them to chloriders. When the price of silver dropped, they lost all their profits, with 400 tons of ore only yielding \$6,000.¹⁴

¹ US Passport Applications, 1795-1925.

² United States Census, 1860.

³ *Salt Lake Telegram*, 2 June 1932.

⁴ United States Census, 1870.

⁵ Stgeorgetemplevisitorscenter.info/pv/pvhistory.html

⁶ Blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/cultural/mt-trumbull-sawmill.html

⁷ Characteristics and Accomplishments of Hector McQuarrie, by John Gray McQuarrie, at *Familysearch.org*

⁸ *Provo Herald*, 2 June 1932, p. 94.

⁹ *Ibid*; *Salt Lake Telegram*, 2 June 1932.

¹⁰ *Familysearch.org*

¹¹ John M Macfarlane wrote the beloved hymn "Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains" and volunteered his choir to learn and sing the Catholic High Mass for Father Scanlan in the St George Tabernacle.

¹² United States Census, 1880.

¹³ *Salt Lake Herald*, 13 March 1890, p. 5.

¹⁴ Memories of Silver Reef, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 1930, p. 112.

When Woolley, Lund and Judd took control of Barbee & Walker mine and mill and other properties in 1893, Robert was made general manager and placed in charge of the store. His year at the Christy mill had made him an experienced amalgamator and a good judge of ore.¹⁵ The mill was converted to a water driven plant, and most of the mill runs were made when the farmers were not using the stream for irrigation. This greatly reduced production prices, and the leasers and chloriders would take out enough ore for a run, wait for more water, and then take out more ore.¹⁶ He was associated with Bishop James Andrus in mining for silver in Silver Reef.¹⁷

Robert was appointed a Washington County judge in St George in 1898.¹⁸ He was also selling “fine samples for cabinet purposes” from the “wonderful sandstone” mines in Silver Reef.¹⁹ He tore down the old Hamson house at Silver Reef and hauled the lumber and fixtures to St George, amassing about 50,000 feet of lumber from the building.²⁰ In 1889, the LaVerkin Fruit and Nursery Company was incorporated with Robert as an officer.²¹ On the 1900 census, he was a carpenter, living with his wife and eight children, his mother-in-law and aunt, in St George, Washington, Utah.²² He served a church mission to Great Britain for two years. His passport application described him as five feet eleven inches tall, with gray eyes and dark brown hair.²³

Robert purchased reservoir lands in Washington County in 1903.²⁴ He was appointed a US postmaster at Dixie, Washington, Utah, on 22 June 1905. He resigned from his post in 1907.²⁵ He served as an officer and director of the Jessie Copper Mining Company in Salt Lake City in 1907.²⁶ On the 1910 census, he was a house carpenter, living with his wife and four children in St George.²⁷ About this time, he discovered gold croppings along a creek in the Bull Valley country. He traced the croppings to the ledges and then started to get support to work the prospect, incorporating in 1912.²⁸ His brothers and brother-in-law were investors.²⁹ He worked as the superintendent of the Bull Valley Gold Mines in 1912 and 1915.³⁰

Charlotte died in 1917 in St George and was buried in the St George Cemetery.³¹ Robert underwent a hernia operation in Cedar City in 1919.³² In 1920, he was a mine promoter and clerk, living with his sister-in-law in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah.³³ He continued living in Salt Lake City, working in

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Saga of Three Towns*, by Marietta M. Mariger, 1951, p. 93.

¹⁷ *Mohave County Miner*, 4 April 1914, p. 6; 6 July 1912, p. 4.

¹⁸ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 October 1898, p. 7.

¹⁹ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 January 1898, p. 23.

²⁰ *Salt Lake Herald*, 9 October 1898, p. 7.

²¹ *The LaVerkin Canal: A Story of Pioneer Ingenuity and Perseverance*, by Laura Hardy, 1983.

²² United States Census, 1900.

²³ *US Passport Applications, 1795-1925; Latter-Day Saints Millennial Star*, Vol 41, p. 523; Utah, Early Mormon Missionary Database.

²⁴ *Biennial Report Utah State Land Board*, 1903, p. 87.

²⁵ *Appointments of US Postmasters, 1832-1971; Salt Lake Herald*, 1 August 1907, p. 5.

²⁶ *Mining and Engineering World*, 1907, Vol 26, p. 765.

²⁷ United States Census, 1910.

²⁸ *Ogden Standard*, 23 January 1914, p. 7.

²⁹ *Iron County Record*, 16 January 1914, p. 1; *Ogden Standard*, 4 March 1915, p. 4; *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, 2 May 1910, p. 13.

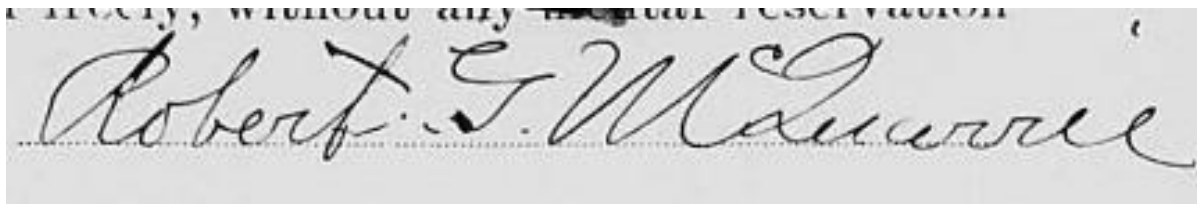
³⁰ *Mohave County Miner*, 14 December 1912, p. 4; *Ogden Standard*, 4 March 1915, p. 4; 28 October 1915, p. 10.

³¹ *Iron County Record*, 30 March 1917, p. 1.

³² *Iron County Record*, 31 January 1919, p. 3.

³³ United States Census, 1910; US City Directories, 1822-1995.

mining and as a carpenter³⁴, until he died of myocarditis on 1 June 1932 in Provo, Utah, Utah. He was buried in the St George Cemetery.³⁵

A close-up of a handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert F. McQuarrie". The signature is written on a document with some faint, illegible text visible in the background.

Signature on his passport application (image from *Familysearch.org*)



Robert Gray McQuarrie (image from *Familysearch.org*)

³⁴ US City Directories, 1822-1995; United States Census, 1930.

³⁵ Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964.



(Image from *Familysearch.org*)