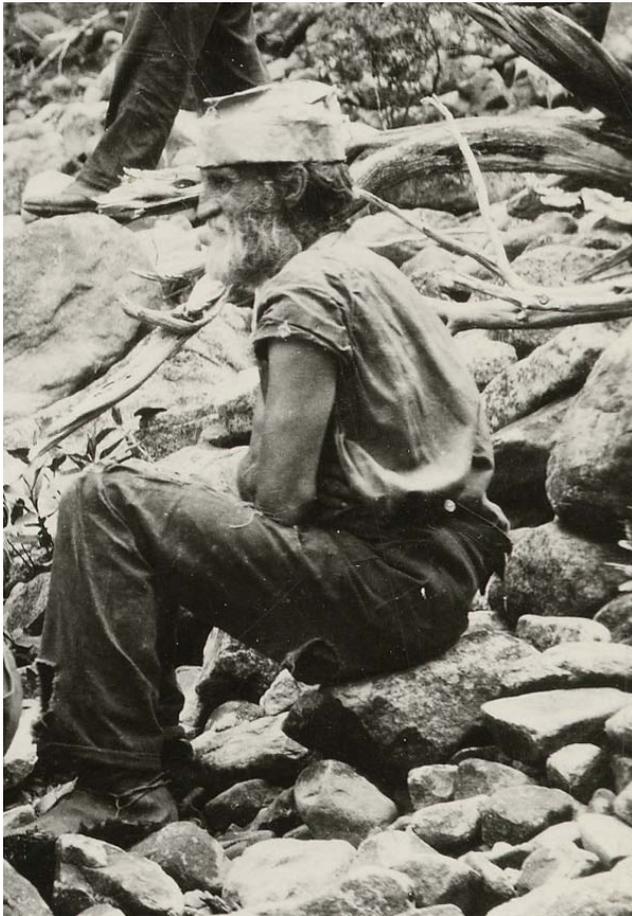


The Hermit of Red Canyon

Before Flaming Gorge Reservoir, the Green River in Red Canyon was a wild, remote place. Just below Skull Creek, about ten miles above where the dam now stands, the river made a hairpin turn around Gold Point, and passed the mouths of Trail and Allen Creeks. There, in 1922, Ralf Woolley, one of the engineers on the U.S. Geological Survey dam-site survey was surprised to find a hermit living in a hole in the ground. His name was Amos Hill:



Amos Hill

The hermit was at home, and he was as much surprised to see the visitors as they were to see him. He gave his name as Amos Hill and said that he was 71 years old and had lived in the canyon about 20 years. His house or hovel was a crude tepee of boards over a small hole in the ground. It was hardly big enough for one person but might be classed as a good-sized dog kennel. His wardrobe was as meager as the house, consisting of a piece of dirty canvas with a hole cut in the middle for his head to pass through, a ragged pair of overalls, and a unique pair of shoes with soles of large pieces of cowhide about 15 inches long with the hair on the bottom side and uppers apparently cut from old rubber boots and laced to the soles with rawhide strings. It was about noon when the party reached this place, and Mr. Hill was invited to lunch. He conversed freely. Among other things he claimed to have gone through the Green River canyons on a raft, taking a horse with him a feat which one who has been through the canyons would be justified in believing impossible.

Hill had dug ditches to divert Trail and Allen Creeks so he could grow a little alfalfa, corn, and vegetables. He'd been there since about 1900, and was apparently a "cantankerous man" who had gotten into several fights that resulted in charges. Now he was apparently hiding out from the law. Woolley was one of the last people to see his canyon hovel, for Hill wasn't there in 1926 when the Todd-Page party passed by. Perhaps the canyons had gotten too crowded for him. He later reported moved to Vernal, Utah, when he got too old to take care of himself, and died there in 1938. Amos Hill is buried in the Rock Point Cemetery in Maeser.

This story is reprinted with the permission of the author, Roy Webb and is from the forthcoming book, "I had arrived at perfection": The Lost Canyons of the Green River, to be published by the University of Utah Press in 2012. All photos are from the Special Collections Department, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.