

James Morrill Archive

This scrapbook was donated to the Archives by a descendant of James Morrill, Kevin O'Donnell. It is chiefly concerned with the exploits of James Morrill (1824-1865), who was originally a sailor and born in Essex, England. While serving as a carpenter's mate on the *Peruvian* when she left Sydney for China on 27 February 1846, the barque was wrecked on Horseshoe Reef off the Great Barrier Reef. Morrill, an active and robust young man, did all he could to preserve the surviving castaways by catching fish and even sharks. The master of the *Peruvian*, Captain Pitkethley, his wife and Morrill, were adopted into tribes of Aboriginals, to whose habits of life they soon conformed completely. Morrill lived for seventeen years with a neighbouring tribe, centred on Mount Elliot and ranging between the Black and Burdekin Rivers. He was fairly well treated and adjusted himself well. When North Queensland began to be opened up for pastoral settlement in 1861, Morrill's isolation was at an end.

Of particular note in this scrapbook are photographs taken at his tombstone, and a January 1964 letter from the Bowen Historical Society to one of Morrill's descendants, Mrs W. O'Donnell, to attend the erection of an obelisk on the site of Morrill's grave. For further information on the life of James Morrill, see entry for the online edition of Australian Dictionary of Biography, <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A020227b.htm>.

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