Biography of Gayden W. Morrill

Gayden Wells Morrill was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts on May 10, 1886, to Frank Forrest and Mary R. Morrill. Frank F. Morrill served as treasurer of the Amesbury Carriage Co. and was also president of the Ocean Nation Bank, a Newburyport bank that provided financing to a number of Amesbury coachbuilders, including the carriage works of Lambert Hollander, the antecedent of Hollander & Morrill.

Gayden Wells Morrill was educated in the Newburyport public schools, the Hopkinson School in Boston and the University of Virginia. After graduation he entered the employ of the Gray & Davis Co., a manufacturer of carriage and auto lanterns based out of Amesbury. Gayden's forte was sales and by 1908, he had become manager of Gray & Davis' Boston sales office.

Amesbury carriage builder Lambert Hollander was quite famous across the country and with the advent of the automobile; the company began the manufacture of auto and taxicab bodies for a number of Boston's luxury car dealers and livery services. As Hollander was a director of Davis & Gray and a customer of the Ocean National Bank, he was well aware of Frank F. Morrill's son Gayden and thought the young man would be an asset to his automobile body business.

Lambert Hollander's son, George, had been working alongside his father for a number of years and the senior Hollander made the two young men an offer they couldn't refuse. He offered to set them up in their own automobile body business, with Gayden Morrill in charge of sales and George in charge of the factory.

On September 1st, 1909, an Agreement of Association was signed by George H. Hollander, Gayden W. Morrill, Lambert Hollander and Frank F. Morrill creating Hollander & Morrill Inc. and Gayden became a major shareholder as well as serving as secretary and treasurer of the firm. They made car bodies for nationwide taxicab businesses and the custom body division of Cadillac.

Unfortunately, as the years progressed, the custom-body business was being replaced by mass-production and the company sold out handsomely on August 17th, 1925, leaving the shareholders with sizeable payoffs.

Gayden W. Morrill went on to become mayor of his hometown of Newburyport, Mass., serving for two terms, 1932-1933 and 1934-1935. In 1920 and 1924 he had been an alternate delegate to the Republican National Convention and when Massachusetts congressman A. Piatt Andrew Jr. passed away in office during 1936, Morrill ran for office but was defeated by his opponent, George Bates, in the Republican primary.

Gayden W. Morrill was Newburyport's Depression-era Mayor, and he often told his son, Frank that his proudest achievement was preventing Newburyport from going into bankruptcy. Through his urging the WPA did much of the sidewalks in Newburyport, and the Mayor vigorously worked to restore the many parks in the city as well as establishing the City Forest. He was one of the most influential mayors amongst many influential mayors.

Gayden W. Morrill passed away on November 2, 1948.

Frank Forrest Morrill, his son, at his death in 2004 established the Mayor Gayden W. Morrill Charitable Foundation in loving memory of his father's deeds. This foundation dedicates monies toward city-owned projects that involve beautifying the city and preserving the lovely city parks. An ever-present tribute is the signs at each of the city parks paid for by the Foundation.