

Charles Collins van Hagan

Charles Collins van Hagan was born about 1832 in Ohio.¹ He was the youngest of five children of Isaac P van Hagan and Sarah Taylor. In 1840, the family lived in Muscatine, Iowa.² By 1850 they had moved to Dubuque, Dubuque, Iowa.³ Charles and a man named Grove operated the Nevada Market on Downieville Road, in Nevada, California, in 1856.⁴ By 1857, Charles was a jailer in Nevada, California, when a divorcing couple was involved in a gunfight that killed the husband. The other shooter gave himself up to Charles at the jail. The court could find no evidence that the dead man had shot his weapon, and the other shooter was indicted for murder. The scuttlebutt around town was that the killer was involved with the wife of the dead man.⁵

On the 1860 census, Charles was a miner, living in the home of his brother James B in Nevada Township, Nevada, California. James' family and their brother John, as well as two other mining families, were also living in the house.⁶ He was registered to vote in San Francisco, California, in 1866.⁷ On the 1870 census, he was a station engineer, living in South Pass City, Sweetwater, Wyoming Territory. There was also another engineer and his family, and a quartz miner, living in his house.⁸ By 1873, he was back in San Francisco.⁹

Charles was and engineer in Lincoln, Nevada, in 1875.¹⁰ On 8 November 1876, the stage left Pioche, Nevada, with five men. Their destination was Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory. Charles van Hagan was one of them; their objective was to "prospect and develop the region in and around Toquerville". Charles did not stay at Silver Reef at that time¹¹, but he was living there in 1880. He was an engineer, and his brother and nephew were miners in Silver Reef that same year.¹² He was selected as a grand juror for the second district (Beaver) in Utah Territory in 1888.¹³ That is the last record of him, his death date and place are unknown.

Research by Elaine Young, Silver Reef Foundation historian, 2016
Please email eyoung@youngzones.org for additions and corrections

¹ United States Census, 1850.

² United States Census, 1840.

³ United States Census, 1850.

⁴ Brown & Dallison's Nevada, Grass Valley and Rough and Ready directory for 1856, p. 98.

⁵ A Decent, Orderly Lynching: The Montana Vigilantes, by Frederick Allen, 2013, p. 46; The Life and Times of Henry Plummer, by Linda Buxbaum, 2014.

⁶ United States Census, 1860.

⁷ California Great Registers, 1866-1910.

⁸ United States Census, 1870.

⁹ California Great Registers, 1866-1910.

¹⁰ Nevada State Census, 1875.

¹¹ Silver, Saints and Sinners, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, pp. 47-48.

¹² United States Census, 1880.

¹³ Salt Lake Herald, 17 April 1888, p. 5.