

David Leyson

David Leyson was born August 1837 in Pennsylvania.¹ He was the third of eight children of John and Esther Leyson. The family was living in Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, in 1840² and West Penn, Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, in 1850. David's father was a miner in Calaveras, California, in 1850.³ David married Esther B Watkins about 1856 in Wisconsin. They had four sons.⁴ In 1860, David was a miner, living with his wife and two sons in Oregon Township, Butte, California. Esther and the boys were also recorded as living with her mother in Ridgeway, Iowa, Wisconsin, that year.⁵

By 1868, the family had moved to Nevada, where David was a quartz miner in Humboldt.⁶ They continued in Nevada through 1875⁷ but by 1880 were living and mining in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory. David's brother Joseph was also mining at Silver Reef.⁸ David was the foreman at the Buckeye mine. When engineer Charles Rolker (superintendent of the Stormont Company properties) wrote a report in 1880 that concluded that a \$3.50 wage could "easily be effected" and increase profits, miners promptly began to strike. Rolker withdrew his superintendency and David Leyson was put in temporary charge.⁹ A letter from the labor union representatives was printed in the Salt Lake Tribune newspaper.

"It is not the object of this communication to argue the merits of capital and labor for we know the former is the ungrateful offspring of the latter. Miner's trade takes longer to master than others. It takes more strength and endurance. He ends up broken when he should be in the flush of manhood. Danger is ever present ... the miners feel the same way to the superintendents as a mule to his driver. We feel that aversion to the working man is innate in Gen. Ogden (superintendent of Barbee) while we regard Col. Allen and Major Leyson as devoid of sympathetic feeling. Why didn't they come before the union and say they earn no profit and that everything had to be cut down on instead of letting the men come to work with their dinner pails and say you can't go down unless you will go for \$3.50 a day."¹⁰

In February 1881, almost all the Stormont miners and mill hands were discharged. Within days, almost one third of these left Silver Reef for employment in other mining camps. This began the decline of Silver Reef.¹¹ By 1885, David and his family had moved to Spokane, Washington, where David worked as a mining engineer and Esther was a milliner. One of the sons was an assayer and another a civil engineer.¹² In 1887, David, his son George, and George Brohman (or Bowerman) went prospecting and located the Alpha mine (which lapsed, purchased and renamed the Lily May in 1889) near Rossland, just over the Canadian border from Washington State.¹³ The family was living in Stevens, Washington, at the time.¹⁴

¹ United States Census, 1900.

² United States Census, 1840.

³ United States Census, 1850.

⁴ *Familysearch.org*

⁵ United States Census, 1860.

⁶ United States Census, 1870.

⁷ Nevada State Census, 1875.

⁸ United States Census, 1880.

⁹ *Salt Lake Herald*, 30 May 1880, p. 3.

¹⁰ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 February 1881.

¹¹ *Silver, Sinners and Saints*, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, pp. 152-153.

¹² Washington State and Territorial Censuses, 1857-1892.

¹³ *Deseret Evening News*, 26 November 1897, p. 5.

¹⁴ Washington State and Territorial Censuses, 1857-1892.

On the 1900 census, David was living with his wife, sons, and daughter-in-law in Spring Valley Precinct, Stevens, Washington.¹⁵ By 1909, Esther was a widow¹⁶, living with her son in Los Angeles, California,¹⁷ and then in Jefferson, Madison, Montana in 1920.¹⁸ By 1925, she was living in Cascade, Montana.¹⁹ It is not known when or where she died.

BROTHERS OF David Leyson

Joseph Leyson

Joseph Leyson was born about 1846 in Pennsylvania. He was the fifth of eight children of John and Esther Leyson. The family was living in West Penn, Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, in 1850. Joseph's father was a miner in Calaveras, California, in 1850.²⁰ By 1860, the family was living in Ridgeway, Iowa, Wisconsin.²¹ In 1880, Joseph was a widowed miner, living in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory. His brother David and his family also lived in Silver Reef.²²

In 1882, Allen T Garry deeded a mine to Joseph Leyson and C D Warren in Juno, Washington District, Arizona (near Chloride).²³ Joseph was also involved in the Swindle mine in Patagonia District, Arizona.²⁴ He died in 1900 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah.²⁵

Noah Leyson

Noah Leyson was born about 1852 in Pennsylvania. He was the youngest of eight children of John and Ester Leyson. The family was living in West Penn, Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, in 1850. Joseph's father was a miner in Calaveras, California, in 1850.²⁶ By 1860, the family was living in Ridgeway, Iowa, Wisconsin, and continued to live there for the 1870 census.²⁷ It is not known when or where Noah died.

Research by Elaine Young, Silver Reef Foundation historian, 2017
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¹⁵ United States Census, 1900.

¹⁶ US City Directories, 1822-1995.

¹⁷ United States Census, 1910.

¹⁸ United States Census, 1920.

¹⁹ US City Directories, 1822-1995.

²⁰ United States Census, 1850.

²¹ United States Census, 1860.

²² United States Census, 1880.

²³ *Arizona Weekly Citizen*, 5 February 1882, p. 3.

²⁴ *Arizona Weekly Citizen*, 15 January 1882, p. 3.

²⁵ *Familysearch.org*

²⁶ United States Census, 1850.

²⁷ United States Census, 1860, 1870.