

# Henry Clifford Clark

Henry Clifford Clark was born 13 March 1853 in Brooklyn, Kings, New York. He was the youngest of three children of John Richard Clark and Esther Clifford. In Ireland, his father had worked as a coachman and fell in love with Hester, known as Lady Day. They left Ireland because they were of different social classes and different religions.<sup>1</sup>

His father caught gold fever and sailed from New York City to California by boat around the horn of South America. They were shipwrecked and he came in by raft to Grass Valley, Nevada, California.<sup>2</sup> Hester and the children were living in Brooklyn, Kings, New York, in 1860.<sup>3</sup> After seven years, John sent for his family. He had to write his father-in-law in Ireland to get his wife's address in New York as she had moved.<sup>4</sup>

By 1870, Henry was living with his parents and brother James in Grass Valley, Nevada, California. His father was a carman, James was a quartz miner and Henry worked in the quartz mill. His sister and her family lived next door, his brother-in-law was also a quartz miner.<sup>5</sup> The Clark family followed the rough mining districts east to Pioche, Nevada, then to Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory.<sup>6</sup>

Henry became a very well-known gambler. He was shot in a card game in Cassidy's Saloon in Silver Reef on 1 December 1878. The story is told by Alex Veitch, who was there at the time: "It appears that there has been a grudge betwixt the two for some time past, which culminated last Sunday morning by the shooting and killing of [both]. Clark was shot twice – once in the heart and abdomen – and fell dead almost immediately, Sykes falling on top of him, and Jimmy Clark [Henry's brother] on Sykes. While the parties were down Sykes was shot in the ankle and hip and his skull fractured by blows from some kind of weapon. He lived during Sunday and was to have been buried on Monday. He was not sensible from the time of the occurrence until his death."<sup>7</sup>

Continuing from Veitch's report, "Several parties were present during the fracas, but they declined to say anything about it, claiming that there was so much powder-smoke in the room that they could not see who inflicted the injuries on Sykes, although the supposition is that, as both of the Clark boys were unarmed, Jimmy took away Sykes pistol and did the business. The affair occurred in the faro<sup>8</sup> room of Cassidy's saloon, no arrests were made. [Later report:] Jimmy Clark was arrested and held under \$1,500 bail. Henry Clark was only shot once. The trouble was caused by the faro dealer refusing to receive 'jawbone' bets from Clark."<sup>9</sup>

Henry was buried in the Catholic Cemetery at Silver Reef.<sup>10</sup> Henry's father enclosed his son's grave in a beautiful iron filigree rectangle, shipped from Russia, and erected a handsome monument.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Familysearch.org*, by Raenee Haymond.

<sup>2</sup> *Familysearch.org*, by swalston.

<sup>3</sup> United States Census, 1860.

<sup>4</sup> *Familysearch.org*, by Raenee Haymond.

<sup>5</sup> United States Census, 1870.

<sup>6</sup> *Familysearch.org*, by Raenee Haymond.

<sup>7</sup> *Reno Gazette-Journal*, 11 December 1878, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Faro is a 17<sup>th</sup> century French gambling card game played with one deck of cards and any number of players (*Wikipedia: Faro*).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Utah Cemetery Inventory.

<sup>11</sup> *Desert Magazine*, May 1966, p. 7.



Henry Clifford Clark (image from *familysearch.org*)



Grave of Henry Clifford Clark (image from *Wikipedia: Silver Reef, Utah*)