

James Newell Louder

James Newell Louder was born 14 June 1843 in Pennsylvania. He was the fifth of seven children of John Newell Louder and Elizabeth Schick. In 1850 and 1860, the family lived in Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne, Pennsylvania.¹ He attended Dana's Academy² and Wyoming Seminary³ there.⁴ In 1870, James was a stone mason living with his mother and siblings in his older brother's house in Wilkes-Barre.⁵ He was the assistant secretary of Neptune Engine and Hose Company No 3 there.⁶

James spent a year at White Haven (17 miles south of Wilkes-Barre) in charge of the post office. He camped with the Army of the Potomac⁷ in the early 1860s; where he suffered a severe attack of typhoid fever that "impaired my hearing leaving me almost totally deaf and ended my military usefulness". After his convalescence, he joined party of 28 at Leavenworth, Kansas, in May 1865, who were destined for the gold fields of Idaho. Their crossing was precarious including hostile Sioux and Cheyenne Indians. They reached their destination after 169 days in a very demoralized condition. James cast his first vote during the first election held in the new territory of Montana (split off from Idaho).⁸

James reminisced later in a letter to an old school friend, "The placer mining camps were 'rough houses' in those days. Gold dust was the circulating medium at \$20 per ounce. You could buy nothing for less than 50 cents. Provisions were often very scarce and consequently high. I have paid \$1,25 [sic] a pound for flour although the ordinary prices was [sic] \$25-30 a sack. Sugar and coffee usually \$1 per pound, tea \$2, but everybody had [gold] dust, wages in the diggings anywhere from \$5 to \$10 per day."⁹

After four years of fairly prosperous experience in the placer mines of Idaho and Montana, James returned home to Pennsylvania for a brief time and then went to Texas for a couple of years.¹⁰ James married Jennie Lusk in Jack, Texas in 1874. They moved to New Mexico¹¹, where he served as a US mineral surveyor for the Southern District.¹² The family was in Tooele County, Utah Territory by 1877¹³ and in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory by 1878, where James was a prospector and a correspondent for the Salt Lake Tribune.¹⁴

On the 1880 census, James was working as a store clerk and living with his wife and two children in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory.¹⁵ In 1881, he was working as a real estate and collection

¹ United States Census, 1850, 1860.

² Sylvester Dana's Academy was built in 1839 by Henry Blackman (Historical Record of Wilkes-Barre).

³ Wyoming Seminary was founded in 1844 by the Methodist Church and is still a college preparatory school near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

⁴ *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 16 March 1911, p. 5.

⁵ United States Census, 1870.

⁶ *Daily Record of the Times* [Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania], 4 January 1876, p. 3. Information taken from an old facsimile of a paper taken from the Neptune Hose Carriage which is now out of service.

⁷ The Army of the Potomac was created in 1861 and disbanded in 1865.

⁸ *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 16 March 1911, p. 5.

⁹ *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 22 January 1915, p. 7.

¹⁰ *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 16 March 1911, p. 5.

¹¹ James and Jennie had a son born in New Mexico about 1875 (US Census, 1880).

¹² *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 16 March 1911, p. 5.

¹³ James and Jennie had a daughter born in Tooele, Utah Territory, in 1877 (US Census, 1880).

¹⁴ *Memories of Silver Reef*, by Mark A. Pendleton, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 1930, p. 1180.

¹⁵ United States Census, 1880.

agent¹⁶ and ran for representative to the legislative assembly for Washington County, but lost to Erastus Snow.¹⁷ That same year, Ed Pike, the owner and editor of the *Silver Reef Miner*, sold the newspaper to James, who was one of the editors.¹⁸ The paper was anti-Mormon, anti-management, and pro-miner.¹⁹ It slowed to a weekly in 1881, and then a semi-weekly in 1882. The last known edition of the paper was February 1883.²⁰

James acquired the dance hall across from the Wells Fargo office and turned it into a grocery store and post office. He eventually sold it to Peter Anderson and moved to Beaver, Utah Territory²¹ before 1896. An interesting story happened after he sold the store. It seems one of the women at the dance hall got in an argument with the proprietor and shot him. His money was never found. However, when Peter Anderson started dismantling the building to move it north to the Anderson Ranch, he found a stash of gold coins behind a mop board.²²

In fact, all of Silver Reef was slowing down. The editors of the *Engineering and Mining Journal* asked James as editor of the *Silver Reef Miner*, to send a dispatch relating to the Stormont mine. His reply was: "Silver Reef, Utah, 18 May 1882. Sale yesterday as advertised. All judgment assigned to Charles S Hinchman, representing trustees. Property bought by lien for amount of same, fifty thousand dollars. Work uninterrupted. Mine looks well."²³

James became more involved politically; he was appointed county registrar for Washington County in 1882.²⁴ He served in this position repeatedly from 1882 to 1891.²⁵ He also headed up a liberal convention held at Citizens Hall in Silver Reef in October 1882. He called the meeting to order and briefly stated the nature of the business, and a permanent organization was chosen with a chairman and secretary. He made a stirring speech in behalf of the liberal cause. "Judge Louder" was selected as a Washington County delegate to the Territorial Convention at Salt Lake City.²⁶

James was heavily involved in the "reconstruction" era (enforcement of the Edmunds and Edmunds-Tucker laws from 1882-1890) of Utah history. As a US commissioner, his docket showed nearly 100 "prominent members of the polygamous cult" appearing in his court as defendants, most of whom served terms in the federal prison as "martyrs for their religious belief".²⁷

James was heavily involved in the public school in Silver Reef. He was appointed the assessor and collector of the special school tax in 1882. In 1884, he was appointed as a trustee for the term of three years, and re-elected every three years through 1892. He served as chairman of the Board of Trustees for most of the time, otherwise serving as vice, treasurer, and clerk.

¹⁶ *Silver Reef Miner*, 5 November 1881.

¹⁷ *Salt Lake Herald*, 9 October 1881, p. 13.

¹⁸ *Salt Lake Herald*, 14 April 1881, p. 3; *Silver Reef Miner*, 5 November 1881.

¹⁹ *Silver, Sinners and Saints*, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, p. 144.

²⁰ *Southern Utah Memories: Newspapers of Washington County, Utah, 1864-1994*.

²¹ *Silver, Sinners and Saints*, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, p. 145.

²² *Ibid*; *Memories of Silver Reef*, by Mark A. Pendleton, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 1930, p. 103.

²³ *Engineering and Mining Journal*, Vol 33, 1882, p. 232.

²⁴ *Salt Lake Herald*, 31 August 1882, p. 8; 10 September 1882, p. 11.

²⁵ *Salt Lake Herald*, 8 May 1883, p. 8; 15 April 1887, p. 8; 15 February 1884, p. 8; 8 February 1888, p. 1; 6 April 1889, p. 8; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 12 February 1891, p. 5; *Salt Lake Evening Democrat*, 17 April 1885, p. 4.

²⁶ *Silver Reef Miner*, 7 October 1882, p. 2.

²⁷ *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 16 March 1911, p. 5.

As a school trustee, he was involved in collecting money, hiring teachers, inspecting the school building and property, and finding alternate buildings to use for the school. At one point, there was a teacher who had allegedly exhibited “cruel treatment of scholars”, and “persisted in uncalled for severity towards the scholars under her care”. The trustees called on the teacher, informed her of the complaints against her, and determined that “she intended to persist in a course that would break up the school if continued”. They fired her and hired another teacher.²⁸

In 1883, James was appointed postmaster for Silver Reef and served until 1887.²⁹ It is interesting to note that his compensation for the year 1885 was \$912.47, the highest in the territory [the second highest was \$662].³⁰ He also worked as an attorney for estate probates³¹ and divorces.³² In 1886 and 1891-1892, he was involved with the prosecution of polygamy, from complaints of “unlawful cohabitation” to bail and discharge.³³

In 1884, the Salt Lake Tribune reported a “mass convention” of Republican voters of Washington County, held at Silver Reef. Immediately the Salt Lake Herald countered with the fact that no primaries had been held in the different precincts and no delegates were present at the “convention”. In fact, only five persons were present: W I Allen, J H Cassidy, J N Louder, Geo W Arnold and Judge J Jordan. The Herald reported “great indignation” expressed by the citizens “at the notorious manner by which this crowd usurped the rights of good citizens and made a farce of one of the grandest rights”. The report was signed by M H Quirk.³⁴

In 1884, James was a new subscriber to the Dollar Weekly News in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, so he could keep up with news from home.³⁵ By 1886, James was operating a store, the J N Louder & Company, one of three “first-class mercantile establishments” in Silver Reef (the others being Woolley, Lund & Judd and Peter Harrison).³⁶ His store was across the street from Wells Fargo next to the Miller Saloon and dance hall.³⁷ It was one of the buildings burnt in the 1888 fire.³⁸

In 1888, James was appointed the US commissioner for Silver Reef.³⁹ He served as commissioner again in 1898.⁴⁰ In 1889, he was made a notary public for the county⁴¹ and ran for representative in the House for the 24th District. He lost heavily to Wm T Stewart.⁴² By 1891, he was more involved with the mining in the area. He became an equal partner with John S Ferris with property in Harrisburg Canyon. A discovery of silver sandstone there was similar to that at Silver Reef and James put up an

²⁸ Silver Reef School Board Minutes.

²⁹ *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, 6 May 1883, p. 1; *Salt Lake Herald*, 21 December 1883, p. 5; *Daily Commonwealth* [Topeka, Kansas], 6 May 1883, p. 1; *St Louis Post-Dispatch*, 5 May 1883, p. 2; *Courier-Journal* [Louisville, Kentucky], 6 May 1883, p. 2; *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, 6 May 1883, p. 1; *Detroit Free Press*, 6 May 1883, p. 2; *Saint Paul Globe*, 21 December 1883, p. 1; US Appointments of US Postmasters, 1832- 1971; Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the USA, Vol 24, 1901, pp. 97, 738.

³⁰ Official Register of the US, 1885, Vol 2, p. 657.

³¹ *Salt Lake Herald*, 27 March 1884, p. 7.

³² *Salt Lake Herald*, 20 March 1885, p. 4.

³³ Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1886, p. 16; 1892, p. 428; *The Deseret Weekly*, Vol 43, 1891, p. 541.

³⁴ *Salt Lake Herald*, 2 May 1884, p. 3.

³⁵ *Dollar Weekly News*, 30 August 1884, p. 4.

³⁶ *Salt Lake Evening Democrat*, 3 December 1886, p. 4.

³⁷ *Saga of Three Towns*, by Marietta M Mariger, 1951, p. 97.

³⁸ *Silver, Sinners and Saints*, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, p. 131.

³⁹ *Salt Lake Herald*, 3 April 1888, p. 8; 24 July 1889, p. 8.

⁴⁰ *Utah Gazetteer* 1892-3

⁴¹ *Salt Lake Herald*, 17 August 1889, p. 8.

⁴² *Salt Lake Herald*, 23 August 1889, p. 5.

arrastra for working the ore.⁴³ He also traveled to Salt Lake City and Mohave, Arizona, for legal business, one of which concerned the right of persons to vote for mining recorders and the fees charged by them.⁴⁴

In 1892, James traveled with S W West and M E Paris to the White Hills, to look over the newest Eldorado. They were back two months later as principal and witnesses in litigation over mines in Weaver district.⁴⁵ In 1894, he was in Buffalo, New York, for a time, engaged in promoting Utah enterprises such as the handling of properties, selling asphaltum, onyx, lithographic stone, marbles, and irrigation systems.⁴⁶

James and his family moved to Eureka, Juab, Utah, by 1896.⁴⁷ The continued prosperity of the Mammoth mines there made it possible for the camp to support a local paper. James was founder and editor, naming it the *Eureka Democrat*. It was popular enough he enlarged it from six to seven columns.⁴⁸ James also served as county assessor,⁴⁹ recorder,⁵⁰ and deputy county clerk.⁵¹ In 1899, he incorporated the Tintic Miner Publishing company and was editor of the *Tintic Democrat*. The object of the new company was “to carry on a general publication and printing business in the town of Eureka” using the plants formerly owned by the *Tintic Miner* and the *Silver City Star*.⁵² He was also editor for the *Mercury* at Mercur.⁵³

On the 1900 census, James was an attorney living alone in Mercur, Tooele, Utah.⁵⁴ He served as a census enumerator for Tooele County that year.⁵⁵ He was granted a divorce in 1904.⁵⁶ Jennie remarried in 1906 in Colorado and died 1912 in California.⁵⁷ She was buried in Mt Olivet Cemetery in SLC.⁵⁸ James remarried in 1905 to Ida Nevada Clifton in Boise, Ada, Idaho.⁵⁹ In 1909, he acted in the capacity of adjutant and information at department headquarters of the Grand Army of the Republic encampment (a fraternal organization of veterans of the Union Army).⁶⁰

⁴³ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 February 1891, p. 5; *Salt Lake Herald*, 1 March 1891, p. 8.

⁴⁴ *Salt Lake Herald*, 3 July 1891, p. 8; 7 July 1891, p. 2; *Mohave County Miner*, 16 July 1892, p. 3; 13 January 1892, p. 6.

⁴⁵ *Mohave County Miner*, 16 July 1892, p. 3; 17 September 1892, p. 3.

⁴⁶ *Salt Lake Herald*, 4 December 1894, p. 8.

⁴⁷ *Salt Lake Herald*, 13 October 1896, p. 8.

⁴⁸ *The Union* [St George, Utah], 2 April 1896, p. 1; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 12 April 1896, p. 4; 27 August 1896, p. 6.

⁴⁹ *Broad Ax* [Salt Lake City], 13 March 1897, p. 4; *Salt Lake Herald*, 28 August 1898, p. 3; 23 September 1896, p. 7.

⁵⁰ *Salt Lake Herald*, 9 September 1896, p. 7.

⁵¹ *Salt Lake Herald*, 6 January 1899, p. 7.

⁵² *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 March 1899, p. 6; 12 November 1899, p. 7; *Salt Lake Herald*, 2 March 1899, p. 7.

⁵³ *Salt Lake Herald*, 16 July 1899, p. 14.

⁵⁴ United States Census, 1900.

⁵⁵ *Deseret Evening News*, 4 May 1900, p. 8.

⁵⁶ *Salt Lake Herald*, 3 July 1904, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Utah Deaths and Burials, 1888-1946; Utah Salt Lake County Death Records, 1849-1949.

⁵⁸ Utah Obituaries from Utah Newspapers, 1850-2005.

⁵⁹ Idaho County Marriages, 1864-1950.

⁶⁰ *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 16 March 1911, p. 5.

In 1910, they were living in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah,⁶¹ where Ida's daughter returned from two seasons as an actress in New York.⁶² By 1911, James was prominently connected with the parking department in Salt Lake City⁶³ and was chosen as a delegate in the primary election for 13th District.⁶⁴ On the 1920 census, James was living with his daughter and her husband in Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.⁶⁵ He died there on 2 January 1921⁶⁶ and was buried at Inglewood Park Cemetery. Ida died in 1942 in Idaho and was buried there.⁶⁷

James had prospected, mined and traveled in about all the states and territories in the Rocky Mountain region.⁶⁸ He was described as having a jaunty energetic stride, suave manners, and meticulous attire.⁶⁹



Elk Horn Saloon (left) and Louder General Store (right) around 1890
(image from Southern Utah University)

⁶¹ United States Census, 1910.

⁶² *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, 4 June 1910, p. 10.

⁶³ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 June 1911, p. 28.

⁶⁴ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 September 1911, p. 14.

⁶⁵ United States Census, 1920.

⁶⁶ California Death Index, 1905-1939.

⁶⁷ Idaho Death Certificates, 1938-1961.

⁶⁸ *Wilkes-Barre Record*, 16 March 1911, p. 5.

⁶⁹ *Memories of Silver Reef*, by Mark A. Pendleton, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 1930, p. 1180.

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The Silver Reef Miner.

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY

LOUDER & STEELE

HERBERT STEELE. J. N. LOUDER.

Office—MINER Building, Lower Main Street

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION:

One year.....	\$6 00
Six Months.....	3 00
Three Months.....	1 50
One Month.....	50
Single Copies.....	25

(Image from the *Silver Reef Miner*, 5 November 1881)