

John Diamond

John Diamond was born about 1853. At age 26, he was serving as deputy sheriff¹ in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah, as well as a US Deputy Marshal.² John “Jack” Truby was a miner³, mine foreman⁴, and mine guard at the Kinner Mine in Silver Reef, Utah. Jack Truby was well-known throughout the mining districts of Utah as “Big Black Truby”.⁵

Here is the sad story of their demise at each other’s hand on Thursday, 27 March 1879, in Silver Reef. The story begins at the mine, as was the case of many stories of the time. Enos Andrew Wall⁶ was the foreman and owner of the Kinner Mine at Buckeye Reef.⁷ The Kinner Mine was privately and locally owned, compared to the Christy Mine which was under San Francisco management and the Barbee & Walker Mine under New York control.⁸ The abundance of ore at the Kinner Mine was described as going “straight down to hell”.⁹

Captain Henry Schultz Lubbock¹⁰ brought suit to dispossess Wall of the Kinner Mine.¹¹ Pending a final decision in the litigation before the court in Beaver¹², the court issued an order closing the mine.¹³ Wall hired Jack Truby to guard the mine until otherwise notified.¹⁴ Deputy Diamond attempted to enter the mine to serve papers¹⁵, but was stopped by Truby who said, “We will obey the order of the court but you have no authority to enter the mine. Get off and stay off.”¹⁶

This “mutual defiance”¹⁷ embittered relations between these two men, and “Johnnie” Diamond was unmercifully taunted by a saloon owner, John H Cassidy¹⁸, and others.¹⁹ From the character of both men, it was generally supposed that serious results would follow, as both were ripe for hostility. They met several times in the course of the evening, but through the interference of friends, no shooting

¹ *The Democrat* [Oregon], 4 April 1879; *Sacramento Daily Union*, 31 March 1879; *State Rights Democrat* [Albany, Oregon], 4 April 1879, p. 2.

² *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7; *Desert Magazine*, May 1966, Vol 29, No 5, p. 7.

³ *The Democrat* [Oregon], 4 April 1879; *Sacramento Daily Union*, 31 March 1879; *State Rights Democrat* [Albany, Oregon], 4 April 1879, p. 2.

⁴ Memories of Silver Reef, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 11; *Desert Magazine*, May 1966, Vol 29, No 5, p. 7.

⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7.

⁶ Enos Andrew Wall was born 1839 in Indiana. He married in 1879 and eventually had ten children. He was known as “Colonel” Wall even though this was not his correct military rank (*Familysearch.org*).

⁷ Memories of Silver Reef, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117.

⁸ *Geology, Mining History, and Reclamation of the Silver Reef Mining District, Washington County, Utah*, by Robert F. Biek and J. Chris Rohrer, pp. 498, 501.

⁹ From an account by Pat Murphy, foreman at the Kinner mine, in G. W. Barrett, “Mines, Miners and Mormons”, *Idaho Yesterdays*, Summer 1970, p. 6.

¹⁰ Captain Henry Schultz Lubbock was born 1823 in South Carolina. He was married with four children. His family was living in California while he was mining in Silver Reef (*Familysearch.org*).

¹¹ Memories of Silver Reef, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117.

¹² *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7.

¹³ Memories of Silver Reef, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117.

¹⁴ *Silver, Sinners and Saints*, Paul Dean Proctor and Morris A. Shirts, 1991, p. 135.

¹⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7.

¹⁶ Memories of Silver Reef, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117; Joseph Ellis Johnson: *Pioneer*, p. 444.

¹⁷ *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7.

¹⁸ John H. Cassidy was a banker and owned the Capitol Saloon, the leading bar in Silver Reef. He was born about 1835 in Pennsylvania and was of Irish descent. He was known as “Honest John” and attracted attention anywhere for his fine form, noble head, and a voice that would have commanded attention in the Hall of Congress (Memories of Silver Reef, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 102).

¹⁹ Memories of Silver Reef, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117; Joseph Ellis Johnson: *Pioneer*, p. 444.

occurred until eight o'clock, when Truby, being alone, walked up the street and entered the court room in the rear of George Miller's saloon.²⁰

The case of Baron and Newell vs. Westfall and Kirk was proceeding in the justice's court.²¹ Truby entered and sat down, failing to remove his hat. Diamond, who was in the room, advanced towards Truby and authoritatively ordered him to remove his hat, which command the latter took for a declaration of war.²² Truby refused to do it, saying that Diamond might make him take it off there, but "Come outside and tell me that." Diamond replied, "All right, go outside. I will meet you soon."²³

Soon after Truby left the court room. A few minutes later a pistol shot was heard in the street and Diamond went out to see what was the matter. Finding nothing wrong he returned, but soon went out and saw Truby on the porch.²⁴ A witness stated that she was standing at an upper window in her house, looking eastward toward Main Street, when she saw flashes of gunfire.²⁵ It was about nine o'clock, in front of Justice Phillip's office on Main Street.²⁶

Diamond reportedly said, "Jack, have you got a pistol?"²⁷ Truby hesitated for a moment, and then replied, "Yes, damn you"²⁸ as he pulled out his pistol and began firing.²⁹ Diamond's pistol roared at practically the same instant.³⁰

A Colorado newspaper described what happened in detail:

"The men were then on the porch, within arm's length of each other, and the firing that followed was so rapid that it was impossible to count the discharges, which resembled the roll of a bunch of fire crackers, the whole twelve shots being fired within the space of time not exceeding five seconds, both men being armed with Colt's lightning revolvers. Truby, after emptying his revolver, turned and fell in the doorway of Miller's saloon. Diamond remained standing a few seconds longer, discharged his two last shots in Truby's back and then fell on the sidewalk. He was immediately conveyed to the Harrison House, where after asking for his brother, he expired in about five minutes after the shooting. Truby, in a dying condition, was taken to the store of J C McManus, and expired in about five hours. The excitement which immediately followed the shooting was intense, and a large crowd soon gathered around the court room, all being anxious to obtain the particulars of the fight. Diamond received three shots in the region of the heart and one in the abdomen. Truby was shot in the side, shoulder and back."³¹

²⁰ *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7; Silver, Sinners and Saints, by Paul Dean Proctor and Morris A. Shirts, 1991, p. 13; Memories of Silver Reef, in Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117.

²¹ *Fairplay Flume* [Colorado], 24 April, 1879.

²² Memories of Silver Reef, in Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117; *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7; *Fairplay Flume* [Colorado], 24 April, 1879.

²³ Memories of Silver Reef, in Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117; Joseph Ellis Johnson: Pioneer, p. 444.

²⁴ *Fairplay Flume* [Colorado], 24 April, 1879.

²⁵ Joseph Ellis Johnson: Pioneer, p. 444.

²⁶ *Fairplay Flume* [Colorado], 24 April, 1879.

²⁷ Memories of Silver Reef, in Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117; Joseph Ellis Johnson: Pioneer, p. 444.

²⁸ *Fairplay Flume* [Colorado], 24 April, 1879.

²⁹ Joseph Ellis Johnson: Pioneer, p. 444; Memories of Silver Reef, in Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117; *Fairplay Flume* [Colorado], 24 April, 1879.

³⁰ Joseph Ellis Johnson: Pioneer, p. 444.

³¹ *Fairplay Flume* [Colorado], 24 April, 1879.

A New Zealand newspaper, informed by a private letter from Silver Reef, described the gunfight as follows:

“Each man had hold of the other's coat, and in this position both revolvers were emptied. Diamond received four shots in a direct line extending upwards from the hip bone of the left side, and expired almost instantly. Truby received one ball in the arm, one in the shoulder-blade, which doubtless turned him half-way round, and two in the side and back, one coming out near the spinal bone, and inflicting a Bosh wound, and the other doubtless penetrating a vital part of the body. He died about seven hours after the shooting, having suffered intense agony with great fortitude. His last coherent words were, ‘Boys, I got my Injun.’”³²

An inquest was held in the saloon; Joseph Bush, Truby's mining partner³³, was arrested as accessory to the killing, but was acquitted. It was found that the bodies each contained bullet wounds from the .41 caliber revolvers that they carried, and powder burns caused by the proximity of the shootout.³⁴ Truby had been shot five times; two wounds in front made by bullets of .41 caliber, and three in the back made by .45 caliber bullets³⁵; indicating that somebody else had shot him during the shootout.³⁶

Both men were universally respected.³⁷ Truby was a man of considerable education, fine presence and untarnished character, and though he had some reputation as a "hard man to handle," always comported himself as a gentleman, and was respected wherever known. Deputy Sheriff Diamond was an alert and efficient officer, and a popular citizen. Like Truby, he was a brave man, and had many friends in the Reef, who deeply regret the happening of this fearful tragedy.³⁸

Jack left a widow who continued to live in their little cottage about ½ mile below Silver Reef, on the Harrisburg ditch. She was a composite of nationalities, two of which were Portuguese and Negro, giving her a dark complexion and the name “The Black Diamond.” She kept a cow, and may have sold milk to miners. Also, she may have done laundry for them. She left here in the summer of 1890.³⁹

³² *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7.

³³ *The Democrat* [Oregon], 4 April 1879; *Sacramento Daily Union*, 31 March 1879; *State Rights Democrat* [Albany, Oregon], 4 April 1879, p. 2; *Los Angeles Herald*, 29 March 1879, p. 2.

³⁴ Beckstead, James (1991). *Cowboying: A Tough Job in A Hard Land*; Silver, Sinners and Saints, Paul Dean Proctor and Morris A. Shirts, 1991, p. 135; (Joseph Ellis Johnson: Pioneer, p. 444; Memories of Silver Reef, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117; [Desert Magazine](#), May 1966, Vol 29, No 5, p. 7.

³⁵ Memories of Silver Reef, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117.

³⁶ My Story of Silver Reef, by Wilma Beal, 1987, p. 9; [Desert Magazine](#), May 1966, Vol 29, No 5, p. 7.

³⁷ *Deseret News*, 4 February 1879.

³⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7.

³⁹ *Saga of Three Towns*, by Marietta M Mariger, 1951, p. 101.

