

# John Henry Cassidy

John Henry Cassidy was born about 1835 in Pennsylvania. He was the oldest of four children of Henry Cassidy and Grace Kane. In 1840 the family was living in Pittsburgh West Ward, Allegheny, Pennsylvania<sup>1</sup> and in 1850 they were living in Lawrenceville, Allegheny, Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup>

John was a blacksmith. He enlisted in E Company of the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry on 20 January 1857. He had deserted by 8 May 1857. He was described as five-foot six inches, with blue eyes, light hair, and a fair complexion.<sup>3</sup> He married Mary about 1859, and was living with her and working as a blacksmith in St Clair, Illinois, in 1860.<sup>4</sup> Mary probably died, since John married Maria Arabella Reteker about 1870 in California. They had two sons. She was living in San Francisco with her mother and sisters in 1870. John may have been a merchant in Arizona Territory at the time.<sup>5</sup> He was definitely running a saloon in Lincoln, Nevada, in 1875.<sup>6</sup>

By 1877, John was running a saloon in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory. His Capitol Saloon was located on Main Street and offered “the best wines, liquors and cigars obtainable in the United States”.<sup>7</sup> The first big horse race in Silver Reef was held in April and the pools were paid the same night in his saloon.<sup>8</sup> The Silver Reef Jockey Club was organized at John’s saloon in May 1877; he was elected treasurer.<sup>9</sup>

The saloon was destroyed in the great fire of 1879 and rebuilt; it was valued at \$8,000.<sup>10</sup> John served on the fire committee, but in 1881, another fire was discovered in the rear of John’s vacant business house on Main Street. His building and the nearby Miners’ Union Hall were both destroyed. The fire was blamed on the carelessness of the lodgers using the building. John had \$500 insurance on the building.<sup>11</sup>

Henry S Lubbock brought a suit to dispossess Colonel Enos A. Wall of the Kinner Mine in 1879. The court ordered the mine closed<sup>12</sup>, and Wall hired Jack Truby to guard the mine.<sup>13</sup> Deputy US Marshal John Diamond attempted to enter the mine to serve papers<sup>14</sup> and was turned about by Truby. John and others unmercifully taunted Diamond over being stopped from entering the mine by Jack Truby.<sup>15</sup> The “mutual defiance”<sup>16</sup> of Diamond and Truby came to a head and the ensuing gun fight ended with both men dead.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census, 1840.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census, 1850.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914.

<sup>4</sup> United States Census, 1860.

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

<sup>6</sup> Nevada State Census, 1875; *From the Ground Up*, by Colleen K Whitley, 2006, p. 261.

<sup>7</sup> *Silver Reef Miner*, 15 April 1882; 28 September 1882.

<sup>8</sup> *Pioche Record*, 26 April 1877.

<sup>9</sup> *Pioche Weekly Record*, 5 May 1877, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Silver Reef Miner*, 31 May 1879.

<sup>11</sup> *Silver, Saints and Sinners*, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, pp. 127-8.

<sup>12</sup> *Memories of Silver Reef*, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117.

<sup>13</sup> *Silver, Sinners and Saints*, Paul Dean Proctor and Morris A. Shirts, 1991, p. 135.

<sup>14</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> *Memories of Silver Reef*, in *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 3, No 4, p. 117; Joseph Ellis Johnson: *Pioneer*, p. 444.

<sup>16</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 24 May 1879, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Fairplay Flume* [Colorado], 24 April, 1879.

On the 1880 census, John was a banker living with his wife in Silver Reef.<sup>18</sup> He continued to own and run his saloon until 1887.<sup>19</sup> Many interesting activities were associated with the Capitol Saloon. In 1881, Colonel Enos A. Wall was taken captive by his mining employees and held under guard at the Harrison House. A friend passing by suggested they all go to Cassidy's Saloon and have a drink. Presently the friend appeared driving a span of fine horses attached to a buckboard. The friend covered the guard with a Henry rifle, while Wall seized the lines, sprang to the seat, and sped the horses to freedom.<sup>20</sup>

There is the crazy story of a live frog found in sandstone. Several miners had fired a black powder blast and while clearing the debris, broke open a pocket in the sandstone. Out jumped a fully developed, normal looking frog! It soon died but was displayed at John's saloon as well as the newspaper office.<sup>21</sup>

In 1882, Herbert Steele was at Cassidy's Saloon after a drunken debauch because he had been fired from the *Silver Reef Miner* newspaper. He argued over the payment of some drinks and ended up shooting and killing William Rafferty, an innocent bystander.<sup>22</sup> In 1887, Urban Stewart struck and killed a man in John's saloon. He was examined before a justice of the peace on the charge of willful assault, but the coroner's jury rendered a verdict of only assault. He was held on \$1000 bond to await the action of the grand jury.<sup>23</sup>

John was one of five men to reported a "mass convention: of Republican voters. A letter from M H Quirk to the newspaper claimed that there was actually no convention, just as there had been no primaries or delegates elected to the convention. He accused the five men of twisting the truth and making their own political arrangements.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, John was referred to as "Honest John" and "a fine form and a noble head and a voice that would have commanded attention in the Hall of Congress."<sup>25</sup>

John died of pneumonia on 10 November 1888 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah Territory.<sup>26</sup> He was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery.<sup>27</sup> Maria lived with their son in Salt Lake City and then with her sisters in California.<sup>28</sup> She died in 1927 in California.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> United States Census, 1880.

<sup>19</sup> Utah Directory for 1883-4, pp. 277-8; *Salt Lake Herald*, 16 November 1887, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Memories of Silver Reef, by Mark A. Pendleton, in Utah Historical Quarterly, 1930, pp. 112-3.

<sup>21</sup> *Silver Reef Miner*, 27 August 1881; Memories of Silver Reef, by Mark A. Pendleton, in Utah Historical Quarterly, 1930, p. 104.

<sup>22</sup> *Silver Reef Miner*, 4 February 1882.

<sup>23</sup> *Salt Lake Herald*, 16 November 1887, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Salt Lake Herald*, 2 May 1884, p. 3.

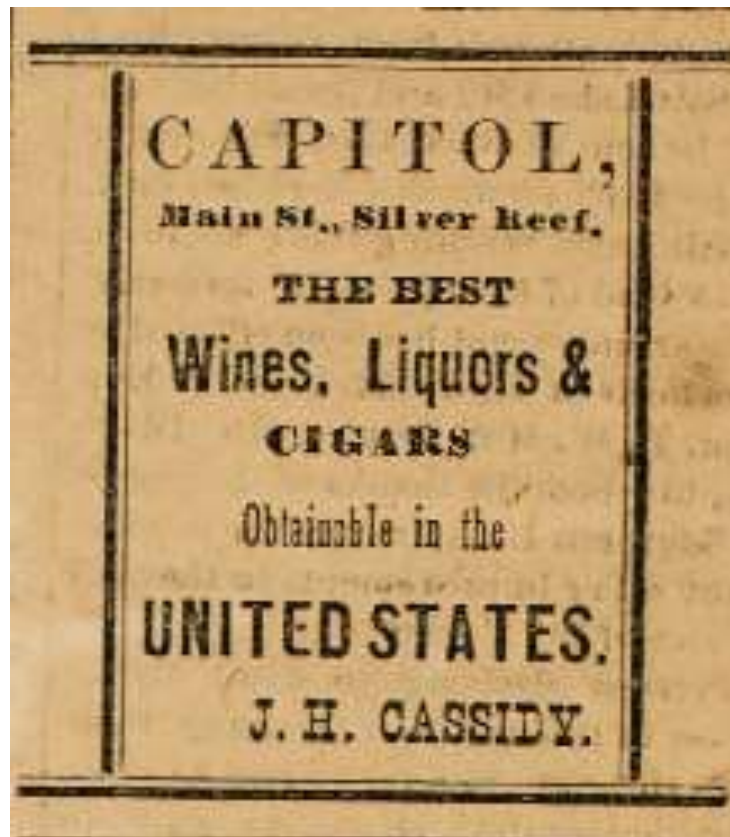
<sup>25</sup> Memories of Silver Reef, by Mark A. Pendleton, in Utah Historical Quarterly, 1930, p. 102.

<sup>26</sup> Utah Deaths and Burials, 1888-1946; Salt Lake County Utah Death Records, 1908-1949; Utah Salt Lake County Death Records, 1849-1949; Utah Death Registers, 18447-1966.

<sup>27</sup> Utah Cemetery Inventory.

<sup>28</sup> United States Census, 1900, 1910, 1920.

<sup>29</sup> California Death Index, 1905-1939.



(Image from the *Silver Reef Miner*, 28 September 1882)