

John P Quillen

John P Quillen was born 1 March 1857 in San Francisco, San Francisco, California.¹ He was the second of five children of Miles Quillen and Mary A. Cumisky. The family lived in San Francisco for two decades,² where the boys were educated at St Ignatius College in San Francisco. In 1875, John was living with his parents in Pioche, Lincoln, Nevada.³ His father died in 1880 in Washington, Utah Territory.⁴ On the 1880 census, John and his mother and brothers were living in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory, where John was a saloon keeper⁵ at the Capital Saloon.

Known as Johnny, he was involved in a shooting at the saloon. Herbert Steele had just been fired as the senior editor of the *Silver Reef Miner* newspaper.⁶ He had retired to the Capital Saloon⁷ for a night of drinking, about eleven-thirty⁸ on 4 February 1882. Johnny, working as the bar tender, refused to extend him credit for a drink.⁹ Herbert was quarrelsome and “heaped considerable abuse on him” until Johnny struck him in the face.¹⁰

Johnny’s version of the incident stated, “I called Steele back and told him we were not in the habit of keeping accounts and that we did not do a credit business. He then told me he did not owe me more than a half dollar; some words passed between us, and he said that I had acted the ... with him about that fifty cents – this was repeated three or four times. I finally told him I think I am pretty near as good a man as you are. He said, that may be, but you treated me like a I then struck him in the face, he kind of staggered back, and I was following him up when I heard the report of a pistol. I rushed in on him and tried to get the pistol from him, and several of the boys got around him.”¹¹

Another bar tender, “William Rafferty, who was nearby, told Herbert to put up his gun, and remarked that he wouldn’t shoot anybody. Steele replied, ‘The hell I wouldn’t.’ and pointing the pistol at Rafferty, fired. The ball entered in front of the right shoulder and ranged towards the heart, causing death in a few minutes. Johnny would have shot Herbert on the spot, but was prevented by one of the bystanders grasping his pistol”.¹² Rafferty died within a few minutes.¹³ Herbert was immediately seized and jailed, and strongly guarded for the dual purpose of preventing his escape and protecting him from the fury of the excited citizens.¹⁴

Excitement was high and there was talk of lynching.¹⁵ “James Lynch stood on an improvised platform on the running gears of a wagon. He called to mind the many murders that had been committed and that the courts and jurors had failed to give justice, that the time had come when the people must take

¹ Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964.

² United States Census, 1860, 1870.

³ Nevada State Census, 1875.

⁴ US Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850-1880.

⁵ United States Census, 1880.

⁶ A Historical Study of Silver Reef, by Alfred Bleak Stucki, 1966, p. 64.

⁷ *Salt Lake Herald*, 4 February 1882, p. 8.

⁸ *Deseret News*, 8 February 1882, p. 44; *The Record-Union* [Sacramento], 4 February 1882, p. 8.

⁹ *The Montana Standard*, 8 February 1882, p. 7; *Salt Lake Herald*, 4 February 1882, p. 8.

¹⁰ *Salt Lake Herald*, 4 February 1882, p. 8.

¹¹ *Silver Reef Miner*, 4 February 1882.

¹² *Deseret News*, 8 February 1882, p. 44; *The Record-Union* [Sacramento], 4 February 1882, p. 8.

¹³ *Salt Lake Herald*, 4 February 1882, p. 8

¹⁴ *Deseret News*, 8 February 1882, p. 44; *The Record-Union* [Sacramento], 4 February 1882, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

the law in their own hands if justice was to prevail. The crowd had become a mob crying, "Hang him! Hang him!" when Capt. Henry Lubbeck, general manager of the Christy Mining and Milling Co., dashed up on his pacer. The crowd parted and Capt. Lubbeck sprang from his horse to the platform and faced Lynch. Silence reigned. Capt. Lubbeck, an aristocrat of the South, faced a younger and much larger man, but Lynch blanched under the Captain's piercing gaze and sat down on the coil of rope without a word when Capt. Lubbeck shouted, "Sit down!" The captain, in a few short ringing sentences, urged the people to commit no rash act that would disgrace them and the camp, but to stand for law and order. Father Galligan then jumped to the platform. He was tall, slender, and bent. His eyes flashed as he spoke with impassioned eloquence, urging the people to do no murder. As the crowd was melting away John Fortmann led out toward the jail, calling out, "All in favor of hanging come this way!" But less than a score followed him.¹⁶

Herbert was tried for murder in the second district court in Beaver, Utah. Gibson Clark was his defending attorney. Herbert testified that he drew his pistol while staggering back from the attack by Johnny and it accidentally discharged.¹⁷ It appears he shot at Johnny and then turned and mortally wounded Rafferty.¹⁸ The jury found him guilty of voluntary manslaughter. The motion for a new trial was denied.¹⁹ He was sentenced to prison for four years by Judge Stephen P. Twiss and served his time in prison in Beaver, Utah.²⁰

In January 1883, John's mother was advertising her residence and furniture for sale in the *Silver Reef Miner*.²¹ By 1884, John, his mother and brothers had moved to Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah Territory, where he was a bartender at Hogle Brothers.²² Hogle Brothers was a saloon and business located at 174 S Main Street, and one of the landmarks of Salt Lake City and the West. It was under the management of James Hogle after his brother died.²³ In 1890, John was a bartender, bookkeeper, and secretary for Jimmy Hogle. He also worked as a bartender at The Mint Saloon and the White House Hotel in Salt Lake City.²⁴

John was on the board of directors for incorporation of the North Swansea Mining Company in the Tintic mining district in 1898.²⁵ On the 1900 census, he was working as a bartender, living with his mother in Salt Lake City Ward 2, Salt Lake, Utah.²⁶ He continued with the Hogle Brothers until the property passed into the hands of the Mahan Liquor Company in 1904. John was a member of the new company²⁷ with 125 shares²⁸ and served as the secretary and treasurer.²⁹

¹⁶ Memories of Silver Reef, in Utah Historical Quarterly, 1930, Vol 3, No 4, p. 108; see also *Salt Lake Herald*, 4 February 1882, p. 8; *Deseret News*, 8 February 1882, p. 44; *The Record-Union* [Sacramento], 4 February 1882, p. 8.

¹⁷ *Salt Lake Herald*, 4 February 1882, p. 8; *Deseret News*, 8 February 1882, p. 44; *The Record-Union* [Sacramento], 4 February 1882, p. 8.

¹⁸ Memories of Silver Reef, in Utah Historical Quarterly, 1930, Vol 3, No 4, p. 108.

¹⁹ *Deseret News*, 24 May 1882.

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

²¹ *Silver Reef Miner*, 27 January 1883, p. 2).

²² US City Directories, 1822-1995.

²³ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 7 January 1904, p. 8.

²⁴ US City Directories, 1822-1995.

²⁵ *Salt Lake Tribune*, 2 June 1898, p. 6; *Engineering and Mining Journal*, Vol 65, 1898, p. 712

²⁶ United States Census, 1900.

²⁷ US City Directories, 1822-1995; Utah Directory, 1890; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 7 January 1904, p. 8; *Salt Lake Herald*, 24 December 1895, p. 2; 6 July 1902, p. 9.

²⁸ *Salt Lake Herald*, 12 January 1904, p. 8.

²⁹ US City Directories, 1822-1995.

John's mother died in 1905 in Salt Lake City. Her obituaries made much of the care that her sons gave her in her widowhood.³⁰ John continued working at Mahan Liquor Company but began rooming at the Hercules Hotel in Salt Lake City. In 1913, the Mahan Liquor Company was bought out by C R Bates, and John was a clerk there in 1915. At that point he was rooming at the Stratford Hotel in Salt Lake City. On the 1920 census, he was listed as a metal miner, living with his brother in Salt Lake City Ward 5, Salt Lake, Utah.³¹

John died of stomach cancer that caused brain psychosis on 11 September 1926. He had been in the Provo State Mental Hospital. He was buried in Mount Calvary Cemetery, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah.³²



(Image from the *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 February 1899, p. 1)

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³⁰ *Salt Lake Herald*, 31 January 1905, p. 3; *Intermountain Catholic*, 4 February 1905, p. 8.

³¹ United States Census, 1920.

³² Utah Death Certificates, 1904-1964; Utah Salt Lake County Death Records, 1849-1949; Utah Deaths and Burials, 1888-1946.