

Michael H Quirk

Michael H Quirk was born about 1850 in Ireland. He immigrated to America and may have been naturalized in Santa Cruz, California, in 1867.¹ He was a waiter in Storey, Nevada, in 1875.² He married Catherine M “Katie” Ahern about 1879, probably in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory. They had eight children (five of them born in Silver Reef).³ On the 1880 census, he was a saloon keeper, living with his wife, daughter, and brother in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory.⁴

He and his brother Bartholomew ran the Pioneer Saloon, located on Main Street in Silver Reef.⁵ It offered billiards, a pool table, liquors, cigars, and a fine club room in the rear.⁶ The Quirk brothers advertised that their choice cigars were “not rolled by Mongolian hands”, meaning they were not manufactured by cheaper Chinese laborers.⁷

In 1884, the Salt Lake Tribune reported a “mass convention” of Republican voters of Washington County, held at Silver Reef. Michael immediately corrected the record in the Salt Lake Herald. He stated 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, George W Arnold and Judge J Jordan. He 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”.⁸

In 1885, Michael and Bartholomew sent for their younger brother Timothy from Ireland. He worked as the janitor in their saloon. He amused customers by his queer ways and rich Irish brogue.⁹ In June 1886, a fire broke out at Mrs. Hays’ house on Main Street, started by a drunken fellow named Causelett. Michael’s stable caught fire, but he was able to save his race mare. His loss was valued at \$700.¹⁰

In 1887, Michael witnessed the attack and death of Abner M Polley. Erb¹¹ Stewart and a friend were on a drunken spree, terrorizing citizens and destroying property. Abner Polley attempted to recover some stolen furniture from them.¹² Polley and Stewart argued about a chair in front of George Miller’s saloon. They exchanged hard and abusive words; Polley sat down on a bench and Stewart struck him a powerful blow, knocking him backward onto some projecting rocks. The force of the blow carried Stewart over on top of Polley, whom he pummeled frightfully. When released, Polley was insensible and died three hours later.¹³ Stewart continued his spree but was finally arrested by an officer and locked up. A coroner’s inquest stated the “deceased came to his death from injuries done

¹ *Santa Cruz Weekly Sentinel*, 17 August 1867, p. 2.

² Nevada State Census, 1875.

³ *Familysearch.org*

⁴ United States Census, 1880.

⁵ Utah Directory, 1883-4, p. 276; Utah Gazetteer and Directory, 1884, p. 312; Silver Reef Miner, 5 November 1881; 28 October 1882.

⁶ *Silver Reef Miner*, 5 November 1881; 28 October 1882.

⁷ *Silver Reef Miner*, 10 June 1882, p. 3.

⁸ *Salt Lake Herald*, 2 May 1884, p. 3.

⁹ Utah State Division of State History, Digital Collections; Memories of Silver Reef, by Mark A. Pendleton, in Utah Historical Quarterly, 1930, p. 114.

¹⁰ Silver, Sinners and Saints, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, p. 131; corrected by account in *Salt Lake Herald*, 3 July 1888, p. 8.

¹¹ His name was Urban Stewart according to the *Salt Lake Herald*, 6 December 1887, p. 8.

¹² Silver, Sinners and Saints, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, p. 144.

¹³ *Deseret News*, 7 December 1887, p. 751.

at the hands of Erb Stewart, with malicious intent.” Stewart waived examination and was bound over in \$1,000 bond to await the action of the grand jury.¹⁴ He denied any malice in the killing,¹⁵ but was indicted for manslaughter, re-arrested and placed under \$2,000 bonds to await trial.¹⁶ Michael was so upset by this tragedy that he rented out his saloon and left the area with his family.¹⁷

The family moved to Park City, Summit, Utah Territory. Michael was a delegate to the Liberal convention in 1888.¹⁸ He was an incorporator of Park City Light, Heat and Power Company in Park City, and served as president, vice president, and director over the years.¹⁹ He served in the volunteer fire department in Park City and presented a petition for a rebate on liquor license used at the race track for the Fourth of July 1890. He received a rebate of \$125.²⁰ The family moved to Montana after 1893.

On the 1900 census, Michael was living with his wife and their eight children in Butte, Silver Bow, Montana.²¹ The next year, his daughter Annie, age fourteen, didn't come home one night. When she returned in the morning, she explained that she had been kidnapped by two men who had just let her go free. The police were called and began looking for the men. Annie then confided to her sister that she had spent the night with a friend, lying about having parental permission. The sister promptly told her parents and the police were contacted. They interviewed the friend's family and found that at the time she said she had been abducted, she was actually eating bread at their house.²²

In 1902, Michael was one of several businesses who were cited by the county treasurer for not having a business license. He ran a lodging house at 340 South Main.²³ He was a charter member and commander of the Knights of the Modern Maccabees.²⁴ He served as the treasurer, state manager, and state president of the Modern National Reserve, a beneficial and social society.²⁵

Katie died in 1917 in Inyo, California. In 1918, Michael was living in Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.²⁶ On the 1920 census, he was working as a farm manager with his son in Los Angeles.²⁷ In 1930, he was living with his daughter in Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.²⁸ It is not known when or where he died.

¹⁴ *Deseret News*, 7 December 1887, p. 751.

¹⁵ *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 December 1887, p. 1.

¹⁶ *Deseret News*, 14 December 1887, p. 761.

¹⁷ *Silver, Sinners and Saints*, by Proctor and Shirts, 1991, p. 144.

¹⁸ *Salt Lake Herald*, 18 October 1888, p. 8.

¹⁹ *Salt Lake Herald*, 9 January 1889, p. 8; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 April. 1890, p. 6; *Anaconda Standard* [Montana], 8 January 1901, p. 6.

²⁰ *Salt Lake Herald*, 10 August 1890, p. 7; 21 September 1890, p. 7.

²¹ United States Census, 1910.

²² *Anaconda Standard* [Montana], 8 January 1901, p. 6.

²³ *Anaconda Standard* [Montana], 20 April 1902, p. 7.

²⁴ *Anaconda Standard* [Montana], 17 April 1903, p. 9.

²⁵ *Anaconda Standard* [Montana], 17 June 1906, p. 28; 18 January 1908, p. 7; 5 March 1908, p. 7.

²⁶ US WWI Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918 for son.

²⁷ United States Census, 1920.

²⁸ United States Census, 1930.



M. H. QUIRK. BARTHOLOMEW J. QUIRK
QUIRK BROTHERS



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(Images from *Silver Reef Miner*, 5 November 1881)