

## Joseph W Lemon

Joseph W “Joe” Lemon was born 2 September 1842 in Lick Run, Botetourt, Virginia. He was the second of nine children of Jonathan Lemon and Juliet Virginia Douglas. He also had a half-brother from his mother’s previous marriage. The family was living in Bath, Virginia in 1850<sup>1</sup> and farming in Botetourt, Virginia, in 1860.<sup>2</sup> Joe was nineteen years old when the Civil War started and he served as a private in Captain Douthat’s Company H of the Virginia Infantry (Confederate) as part of the Botetourt Light Artillery.<sup>3</sup>

After the war Joe went west to the gold fields of California. He departed for Pioche, Lincoln, Nevada, on the Wells Fargo stage in 1869.<sup>4</sup> On the 1870 census, he was a miner in Pioche.<sup>5</sup> He was a delegate to the Lincoln County convention in 1872 and registered to vote in Pioche in 1874.<sup>6</sup> In 1875, three Lemon brothers – Joe, Henry, and Polk – were under the command of Colonel Sabin as they arrived at Silver Park, Lincoln, Nevada, and had a fight with the Indians.<sup>7</sup>

Joe was part of the Pioche Stampede and went to Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory.<sup>8</sup> Investment capitalists were slow to fund the mines there because they did not believe silver could be found in sandstone. They feared to sink a shaft and find nothing of value below. Joe Lemon and others sunk a shaft to prove the mines in 1876.<sup>9</sup>

Samples from the Shepherd & Lemon mine were sent to Hyman Jacobs and Louis Sultan in Pioche. That brought Charles Hoffman and Professor Janney to Leeds to take samples to assayist A H Emanuel in Salt Lake City. These assays ran so high that Hoffman did not believe them and asked if he could personally run the samples. Emanuel left his shop and allowed the two men to check again, finding similar results.<sup>10</sup>

The Lemon & Shepherd mine turned out so big that everyone else who had claims on White Reef are followed suit and began sinking shafts. Joe’s mine produced considerable amounts of ore which was shipped to Pioche.<sup>11</sup> The Leeds Mining Company was organized and incorporated in October 1876. This company purchased the Shepherd & Lemon mine. Joe and William T Barbee returned to Pioche to get their ore worked and purchase supplies.<sup>12</sup>

In November 1876, the Lemon brothers sold their mill in Bullionville, Nevada, to Charles Hoffman for \$14,000 cash and 5,000 shares of stock. The American Flag mill was then moved to Toquerville and Hoffman became the new superintendent of the Leeds Silver Mining Company.<sup>13</sup> In 1877, Joe, with Robert Shirley and Neil Boyle, had a big strike at the Bonanza King at the foot of the hill between Silver Reef and Bonanza City, adjoining the Tecumseh Mine.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census, 1850.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census, 1860.

<sup>3</sup> *Fold3.com*

<sup>4</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 March 1869, p. 3; *Gold Hill Daily News*, 17 June 1869, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> United States Census, 1870. NOTE: birth in France of foreign parents seems to be a carryover from the previous page.

<sup>6</sup> *Pioche Record*, 28 September 1872, p. 2; 1 November 1874, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Pioche Record*, 8 September 1875, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Pioche Record*, 27 September 1879, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Pioche Record*, 15 July 1876; 11 August 1876.

<sup>10</sup> A Historical Study of Silver Reef: Southern Utah Mining Town, by Stucki, 1966, pp. 26-28; Naming Silver Reef, by Pendleton, in Utah Historical Quarterly, 5:31; *Pioche Record*, 18 July 1876.

<sup>11</sup> *Pioche Record*, 11 August 1876, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Pioche Record*, 14 October 1876, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Pioche Record*, 2 November 1876, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 August 1877, p. 4.

Read & Hammond bonded the R C McCormick mine in the Globe District in Arizona to Joe Lemmon and Joseph Price for \$5,000 in April 1878.<sup>15</sup> His half interest in the mine cost him \$2,500 and the assays ran up to \$12,000 a ton, and not more than fifteen feet deep! They took out at least 40 tons over three months, the best show of anyone in camp.<sup>16</sup> Joe returned to Utah, and soon fell ill. He thought it was simply a bronchial affliction, but in 1879 it began giving him a great deal of trouble and his health rapidly declined. An abscess broke in his lungs with a lot of discharge. Although he received every possible comfort with skillful medical attendance, he passed away with one of the Sisters of Charity at his side. It was described as consumption after his death on 23 September 1879. He was buried in the Silver Reef Protestant Cemetery.<sup>17</sup>



(Image from *Findagrave*)

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<sup>15</sup> *Arizona Weekly Citizen*, 29 March 1878, p. 3; *Weekly Republican*, 6 April 1878, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Pioche Record*, 25 May 1878, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Pioche Record*, 27 September 1879, p. 3; Letter from Christy Mill & Mining Company, at Familysearch. NOTE both brothers have death record in their hometown of Lick Run, Botetourt, Virginia – although it is clear that they were buried elsewhere. Perhaps the family filed death records locally.