

My Story of Silver Reef

by Wilma C. Beal

COVER STORY

Left to Right: Boy wearing cap, Glenn Beal. Boy wearing hat, Charley Carlow. Man sitting on rock holding reins of horse, Alex Colbath, owner of Silver Reef for 32 years. Man standing, Dan Doyle, long time caretaker and miner for Alex Colbath. Horse, New York Lady race horse (fondly called Molly by those who loved her.) She was ridden by such dignitaries as President of United States Calvin Collidge and Governor of Utah, George H. Dern while they were visiting at Silver Reef. Rocks are in same position as they were when used as platforms while loading silver bars on stage coach.

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by Wilma Beal

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Best Wishes
Wilma Beal



WILMA COX BEAL

- *Born in Alton, Utah, lived there for fifteen years*
- *Attended high school in Kanab, Utah*
- *Moved to Leeds in 1934*
- *Mother of five children*
- *Partner in Tri-State Office & Music Supply in St. George, Utah for 25 years*
- *Retired and living in Leeds, Utah*

Dedicated to
my husband
David Glenn Beal
who so dearly loves
Silver Reef

My Story of Silver Reef

by Wilma C. Beal

I came to Silver Reef as a young bride in 1934. At that time my husband, Glenn Beal, was caretaker at Silver Reef Mines for his step-father, Alex Colbath, who owned the mines. Our home, for twelve years, was in the Wells Fargo Bank building, so the history and stories of Silver Reef have become very dear to me.

One of the strangest deposits in the world was that found at Silver Reef — silver in sandstone. Geologists say there is only one other mine in the world where silver has been found in sandstone and that is in Mannheim, Germany. It has been worked for over 700 years. Few people knew about it and prospectors generally considered such a thing quite impossible.

Some historians say that Silver Reef was worked by the Spaniards many years before the Mormons came to Utah. They show as their proof of this a Spanish treasure map of Silver Reef District found by Llewellyn Harris.

The stories connected with the discovery of Silver Reef are about as numerous as the number of years the town lasted. The following is an often repeated story. During an unusual cold period, when the freezing wind was howling down through the canyons, a prospector stopped for shelter in a house in Leeds. There was a roaring fire in a fireplace made of sandstone from the white reef near by. As the man hovered close, gazing into the fire, he saw drops of shining metal ooze from the back of the fireplace. He gathered up some of the metal, had it assayed and found it was pure horn silver. Thus Silver Reef was discovered.

Another story says that a prospector found silver on a road where a freighter had locked his wagon wheels and melted the metal from the slick sandstone hillside.

The Grindstone story is the most fabled and fun to tell of all the stories. Murphy, a young assayer, had gone to Pioche, Nevada to start his career. His assays showed favorable reports of all the ore he tested. It contained either silver, gold, lead or some other metal. As a result they named him "Metaliferous Murphy." They figured he was a crooked assayer who was taking their money under false pretenses.

One night in the saloon, when some miners were in high spirits from liquor, they began talking about the assay returns they were getting. One fellow said, "It sounds phony to me. If old Metaliferous Murphy's assays are right all we have to do is dig a hole anywhere. It's all lousy rich." Another said, "I'll bet you can pick up a rock out there in the street and that bird will tell you it has silver or something in it." Another chipped in with, "That gives me an idea. Why not try him out? Let's send him a rock that we know hasn't got any thing in and see what he finds." Everyone figured that was a great idea so each contributed his share for the assay fee.

It was decided that they would take a piece of an old grindstone that had broken, as it fell off a freight wagon, so it had been left in the street. Any miner knew there was no metal to be found in sandstone. The gang was quite hilarious about Metaliferious Murphy working on old Mon Anderson's broken grindstone.

The next day they got a piece of the sandstone, pulverized it and sent the sample to Murphy. His returns showed about two hundred ounces of silver per ton. This was proof positive that he was a crooked assayer. They finally had the goods on him. It was too much for the miners.

There is more than one version to the end of this story. One is that this gang of enraged miners confronted him with being a liar and a fake and lynched him on the spot. Another version is they gave him twenty-four hours to get out of town. Still another, he was tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail. More than likely, the real end of the story is, he found where the sandstone came from and followed it's trail to Silver Reef.

It seems the most authentic story of all is the one told of John Kemple who was wintering some horses around Harrisburg. He was a prospector, understood minerals and had an assayer's outfit with him. He spent some time at the home of Elijah Fuller, who lived in Harrisburg. While there, although he knew silver did not exist in sandstone, he carried his pick with him and, as he broke off a piece of rock from the white reef, he saw black in it. Curiosity made him process it and he found it contained a small amount of silver. He did more prospecting near Harrisburg but did not find rich ore, so he went

on to Nevada and prospected for several years, without much luck. The idea of silver in sandstone kept creeping back into his mind. In 1874 he returned and set up the Harrisburg Mining District and started developing a mine.

Because of the well-known geological theory that metals could not exist in sandstone, this new find was not taken seriously. It was rumored around and argued about for several years. After quite a bit of small scale mining had been attempted, the Walker Brothers, Salt Lake City Bankers, saw some assay results of ore sent up from the Reef. They grubstaked William Tecumseh Barbee and sent him to Silver Reef to see if it was worth sinking large amounts of money in. Barbee sent back favorable reports but more influential men than Barbee talked to the bankers. The Bankers got cold feet and told Barbee to keep his claim for himself. By late 1875 he had twenty-two rich claims staked out. One claim was located in this way. Joe McCleave, of Leeds, was hauling a load of wood from the north end of the Buckeye reef when his wagon skidded, tearing up soft rock for several feet. Barbee was passing by and examined the earth, that had been torn up, and found that it was rich in silver chlorides and horn silver. He located a claim and named it Tecumseh, "Pride of the West."

Barbee, more promoter than anything else, soon had a townsite called Bonanza City, "Metropolis-to-be." He did promotional work with Charles Hoffman, superintendent of the Almaden Quicksilver Mine near San Jose, California. Hoffman inspected the Reef and took samples to Pioche to be assayed.

Now here is a story like that of Metaliferous Murphy's story. He took his Silver Reef samples to an assayer named Emmanuel who rated the Reef ore so high that Hoffman hooted. In a huff, Emmanuel said, "Here's my shop - try it yourself," and walked out. Hoffman knew assaying so he set to work. When finished, he said, "Damned if I don't get the same results." So the California group bought themselves a mine in Silver Reef.

Barbee wrote many letters to the Salt Lake Tribune describing the silver, saying he was developing and bringing to the surface rich chlorides and horn silver — all in sandstone. He spoke of how easily it was mined and of the wonderful climatic conditions. He ended one letter by saying, "About a month ago I discovered the Tecumseh mine located on a hill by the same name. The vein is small but rich and easily worked."

At first the miners shipped their ore to Salt Lake City but since lower freight rates and milling costs could be obtained by sending it to Pioche, they hauled most of it there. It was partially because of these letters and the shipping of ore to Pioche that Silver Reef grew so rapidly. Even the miners who had driven Murphy out were in the "Pioche Stampede." In no time at all Bonanza City had an assay office,

blacksmith shop, sampling works, supply store, numerous little shacks and a thrown together boarding house.

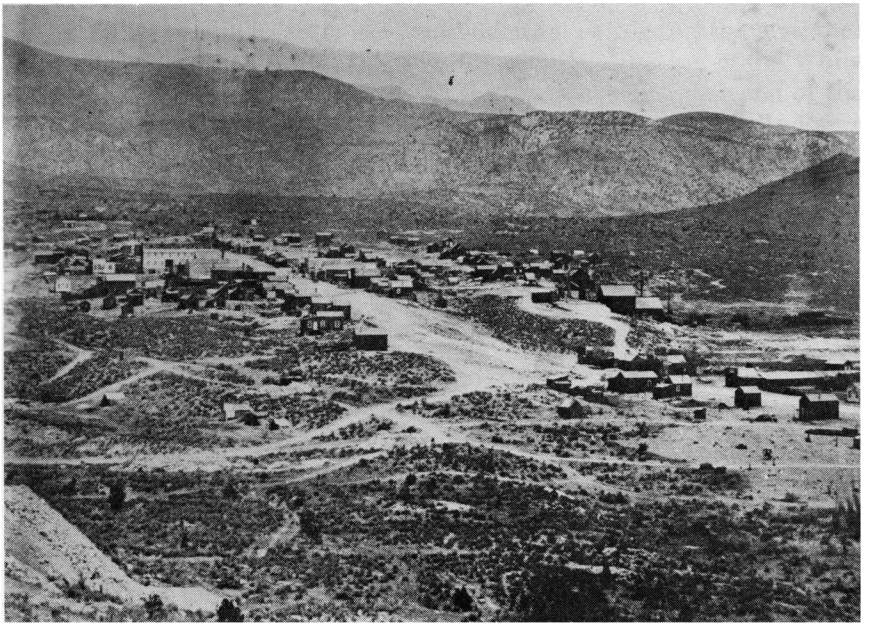


Bonanza Flats and Cemetery 1882

In November of 1876, when it became known in Pioche that the Leeds Mining Company of San Francisco was buying mines and intended to have a ten-stamp mill running by February of the next year, Pioche began to move to Silver Reef *en masse*. The men came in carriages, buckboards, heavy wagons, carts and on foot. This was all told in the November 22, 1876 Salt Lake Tribune. It was known as the famous "Pioche Stampede." Most men weren't coming to stake claims. They were coming to find locations for their businesses.

Barbee's prices for lots in Bonanza City were too high so new-comers were moving north to a boulder covered slope and were beginning to "squat" there. They were happy to be closer to the diggings anyway. This ground was owned by the Leeds Mining Company so the Company laid out a plat for a new town site and began selling lots. The lots were small, 25 x 100 feet and cost $400. Main street was 100 feet wide and all the other streets were 75 feet wide. When only four months old Silver Reef had a population of one thousand people.

People started to build more sturdy buildings, built to last since it looked like Silver Reef would be a long time deal. As the two settlements, Bonanza and Silver Reef, increased and grew closer together, a post office was established under the name of Silver Reef, so the name of Bonanza was dropped and the present name of Silver Reef took hold; however, Bonanza was called "Bonanza Flats" while



Silver Reef looking up Main Street 1880

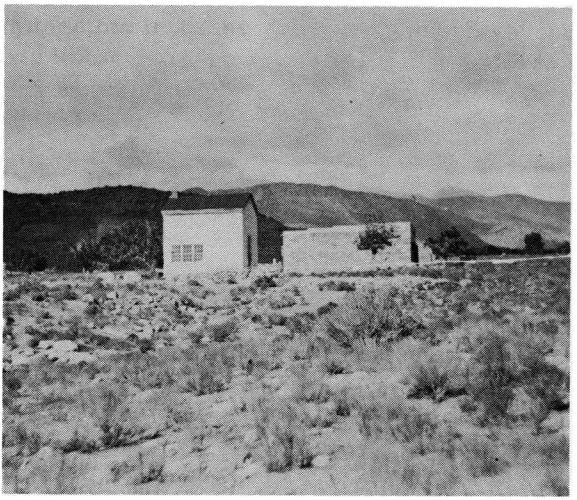
Silver Reef was called the "Rock Pile" by the people of Bonanza.

A mile long board walk was built on each side of main street and main street was paved by nature — one big boulder after another — a thorough job but a very rough surface. Stories are told about miners, after they had come home from a long days work, dressed in their finest clothes and were seen swaggering up and down the board walks with the "Airs of Kings."

Silver Reef became one of the most famous mining camps in the west. It was not only rich in silver values, but it upset all the geological theories concerning the formation of metal deposits in the earth. For this reason it was visited, studied and written about by the most famous geologists in the world and it is still talked about, studied, sampled and worked to a degree even today.

The "Silver Reef Echo" was the city's first newspaper but was later named "The Miner."

The peak years of activity, in Silver Reef, were between 1878-82. Although it lasted as a city less than fifteen years, it boasted a large variety of businesses such as; five restaurants, six saloons, two dance halls, a billard hall, nine grocery stores, eight dry goods stores, two drug stores, two meat markets, brewery, undertaker, citizens hall, jail, Masonic and Oddfellows hall, Wells Fargo Office, bank, telegraph office, barber shop, physician's office, Chinese laundries and a Catholic Church with a hospital in the basement.



Rice Bank and Wells Fargo and Co's Express

During Silver Reef's first years, while the price of silver was high and the rich ores were near the surface and easy to mine, the miners prospered. Large amounts of ore was stripped from the surface of the ground. Claims worked during this period were called "Poor Man's Mines," because they could be worked with very little capital.

The Salt Lake Tribune, March 25, 1876 reports: "More crude wealth has been developed in a shorter period of time, considering the number of men engaged than any other mining district on the continent. Nine out of ten men who have assayed their fortunes are now in possession of good properties."

The Salt Lake Tribune April 5, 1876 printed a letter written by Judge Barbee (William Tecumseh Barbee) which reads; "Some have said that I have been drawing an over-done picture of Southern Utah for the purpose of inducing an immigration to this country. Our mines do not depend on Salt Lake City, San Francisco, or Eastern capital. Our mines are our capital; our banks are sand banks; we draw on them at will, and our drafts are never dishonored. We have no board of directors to consult, nor sinecure officers to pay. We are indifferent to whether there is an immigration. Southern Utah and Arizona will be thoroughly prospected this season."

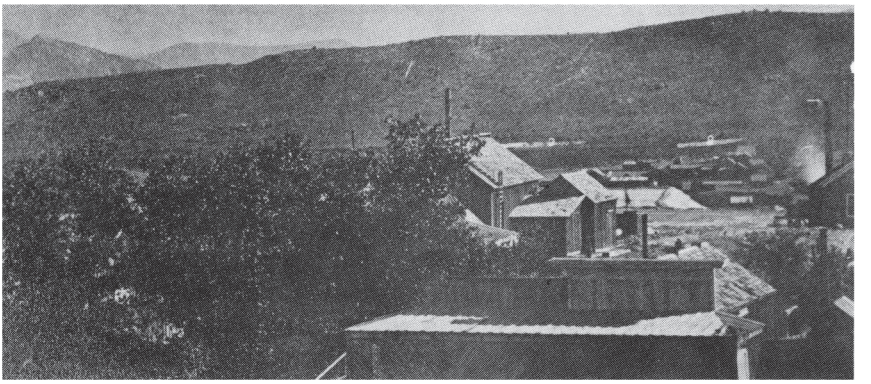
Barbee's boast was not entirely true for, in spite of the fact that the mines were easily worked and ore was very rich, the " Poor Man's mines" were beginning to need capital. Judge Barbee was the main one that was making money. The main problem was the long distance required to ship the ore. Only the very richest ore could be shipped and it was difficult to tell which was the richest ore. Most of the ore was being dumped to wait for the building of a stamp-mill, which soon

came.

In its hey-day five mills were in operation, processing the ores that were mined at Silver Reef. There was the Leeds Mill back of the White Reef, the Barbee and Walker on the east side of the upper end of the White Reef, the Christy just over the hill southeast of the Wells Fargo Building (the tailings of sand still cover a large area close by), the Pioneer below Leeds, and the Stormont, (also called the Babylon River Mill) located a short distance above Berry Springs on the Virgin River, about four miles from Leeds.



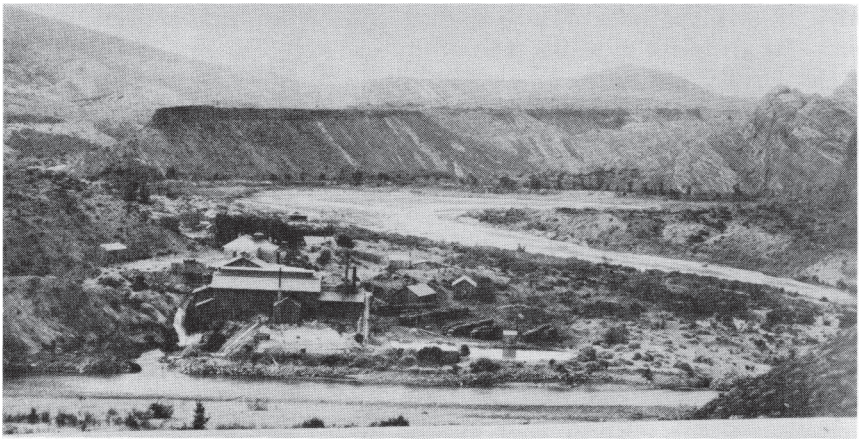
Barbee Mill 5 Stamp 1882 L to R: Blacksmith shop, Mine hositing works, Assay office



Christy Mill 5 stamp 1880



Buckeye Mill 5 stamp 1880



10 stamp Stormont or River Mill also called Babylon Mill 1880

A little town called Babylon, consisting of the homes of twenty families, was built around the mill. It was later sold to the Stormont mining Company, of New York. Babylon was the birth place of Mayme Colbath, my husband's mother.

For a number of years, Silver Reef was a glamorous place in the heart of Mormon towns. The very mention of Silver Reef, with its Chinese restaurants and Chinese stores, stired the imagination of youth who knew nothing but story book versions of life in western mining camps. They longed to see the time when they could visit the store where fire crackers and Chinese lanterns were sold. A walk at

night down the brilliantly lighted mile long board walk would be heavenly. Such were the dreams of those living close by.

During the years of mining at Silver Reef, there was no man killed in the mines, but it did have it's seamy side of life with its killings and its tragedies.

There was no "man-a-day" shootings. There was not even a man a month killed. It was said that this camp was relatively tame when compared with Pioche but it did have it's violent deaths. Probably the most sensational gun fight of all was the Diamond - Trudy duel in which both men lost their lives.

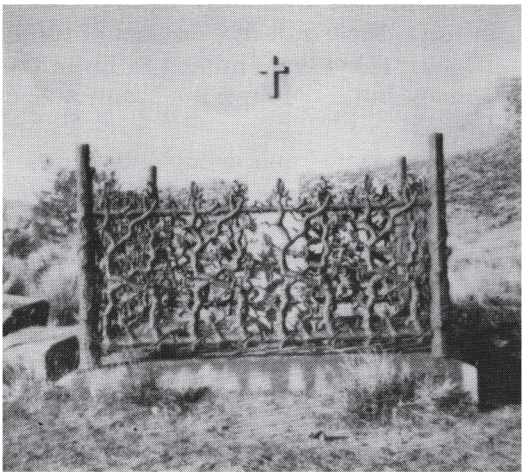
Johnnie Diamond was a popular U.S. Deputy Marshall at the Reef and Jack Trudy was Col. E.A. Wall's foreman at the Kenner Mine. A law-suit between Captain Lubbeck and Col. Wall brought an order to close the mine. As Marshall Diamond served the papers on foreman Jack Trudy, he attempted to enter the mine but Trudy stopped him. He said, "We will obey the order of the court but you have no authority to enter the mine. Get off and stay off." This caused bad feelings between the two, especially so since the other man unmercifully taunted the Marshall.

Not long after this, the Justice of the Peace was holding a night session of court in the rear of a dance hall adjoining the Miller Saloon. Trudy entered the court room with his hat on and the Marshall went over and ordered him to remove his hat in court. Trudy's answer was, "Come outside and say that to me."

Trudy led the way out and Diamond, following close behind, placed him under arrest and ordered him to give up his gun. Trudy turned quickly and shot him in the body. Diamond drew his gun and shot several times but he fell dead with a bullet through his heart. As Trudy staggered into the street and fell, he said, "I am dying but I got Diamond." He was carried to the Harrison Hotel where he died a little later. Both men were shooting 41 caliber pistols. Trudy's body had five bullet holes in it; two from the front of a 41 caliber and three in the back from a 45 caliber gun, and no one ever knew who shot them. Someone in the crowd had tried to save the Marshall.

A side tragedy to this affair was that Diamond's fiancee, who said she did not want to be a widow, would not marry as long as he held the office of Marshall. He had promised to quit when his term of office expired in a couple of months; the wedding was set to follow, on that promise. Another story says Diamond already had a wife. Which is true?

Another dramatic tragedy is the story of Henry Clark. There are two versions to this story. Here is the first one. Clark and a faro dealer, named Saxey, were playing poker and they accused each other of cheating. Each drew his gun and fatally shot the other through the heart.



Grave of Henry Clark 1878

Frank Hartley, a former resident of Leeds, said he personally knew Henry Clark and this is the story he told my husband about his death. Clark bullied and knocked some kid around. When the kid's father found out about it, he confronted Clark. Clark admitted to the deed, then laughingly asked, "What are you going to do about it?" "This," answered the father and drew his gun and shot Clark through the heart. Again, which is the true story?

A news item recorded in the Southern Utah Mission Record, dated July 4, 1880, was as follows. "As a result of a quarrel between parties at Silver Reef Mining Camp, a man was shot and killed at Grapevine Springs. The man shot was named Kilburn and that of the man who shot him, Stephens.

The most remembered and retold killing at Silver Reef was that of Michael Carbis, popular shift boss at the Buckeye Mine. Tom Forrest was employed as a miner but he was really considered a trouble-making agitator. Colonel W.I. Allen gave instructions for Carbis to discharge Tom Forrest, which he did. The morning following his firing, the resentful Forrest jumped Carbis as he was on his way to work and invited him, at the point of a gun, into a cabin to settle with him. Carbis replied that he had no settlement to make and he wanted nothing to do with him. Forrest shoved the pistol in his pocket and drew a long dagger from its sheath, rushed upon Carbis and stabbed him in the side, then ran. Forrest his in the Tecumseh Mine tunnel, where he was tracked down with the aid of an Indian. He was arrested by Deputy Sheriff Hoag and placed in the city jail. Carbis died that evening.

The foreman was liked by all his men and Silver Reef went wild with its desire for revenge. Threats of lynching were heard on every hand. The jail guards, where Forrest was confined, were alarmed and

he was rushed to the St. George Court House and placed under the custody of County Sheriff Augustus P. Hardy.

The night of the Michael Carbis funeral about forty men from Silver Reef traveled the eighteen miles to St. George. About 3:00 A.M. Sheriff Hardy was walking in front of the jail, while Frank Bentley was on guard in front of the cell where Forrest was held. Suddenly Sheriff Hardy was surrounded by masked and armed men who demanded the keys to the jail. When he refused to give them up, they pulled their guns on him, threw him to the ground and took the keys. They entered the jail, disarmed Bentley, opened the cell and put a rope around Forrest's neck. They dragged him out and tried to hang him to the arm of a telegraph pole in front of the building, but it broke. Failing to do this, they dragged him to a cottonwood tree, about a block east of the jail, on the sidewalk in front of George Cottom's home. Here they flung the rope over a strong limb and hauled him up. The loose end of the rope was secured to a young locust a few feet away. There they left him dangling.

A young son of George Cottam, who was sleeping in a shed at the barn, heard the disturbance but it frightened him so much that he covered his head and waited till all was quiet then he rushed to the house to tell his parents. Needless to say, everyone was upset. As the town wit stood looking on, he smiled then remarked, "I have watched that tree grow nigh onto twenty years, and this is the first time it has borne fruit."

One of the most difficult problems in building mills and houses at Silver Reef was the shortage of lumber. It had to be hauled from Parowan, Cedar City, Pine Valley and Mount Trumbull. The roads were long and rough; the loads small and prices high.

Young Bob Rickards had a bright idea. He constructed a chute, at the great expense, down the face of Pine Valley Mountain to carry logs to a mill at the foot of it. When the chute was completed, he provided beer and sandwiches and the leading men of the camp gathered in the canyon on Quail Creek to watch the logs shoot the chute. The event was set for Sunday so everyone could be there.

With hundreds of cheering people assembled, Bob gave the sign and the first log slid down and landed as anticipated, without a hitch. There was much shouting and cheering. Bob signaled for another log to be sent down. The second log hit a snag and jumped the chute, coming down end over end and fell with a crash on the chute. Other logs following completed the distruction. People gathered around to express their sympathy but, with characteristic wit which he possessed, Bob climbed on top of the heap of rubbish, thanked the crowd for coming and told them he had invited them out to show them one way of sending ten thousand dollars to Hades.

One man who contracted "miners' con" turned his ambitions

elsewhere. He picked up a string of pack mules and began hauling loads of cordwood from Pine Valley Mountain to the rim of a cliff, overlooking Sivler Reef, where he would throw the wood over to be picked up by men with wagons below. One donkey blundered over the edge and fell to the bottom.

The wood haulers went over to check on what they thought was a mule with a broken neck. As they unstrapped the load of wood, the mule sprang to his feet, shook himself and let out an outraged bray. He brayed loud and long. His trumpeting roused his companions on top of the rim and the echoes rang from cliff to cliff. The soft pine of the mules load must have softened the blow. He didn't lose a piece of hide.

Silver bars that weighed 25 pounds, and were worth about $500 each, were made at the Mills. These bars were tied in leather bags with straps at the top, making it easy to carry and load the silver. Often large shipments of silver bullion were made. One extremely large shipment of bullion, that left Silver Reef, was hi-jacked by two masked men before it reached the black ridge. Officers got wind of the hold-up and took out after the bandits. Both bandits were killed but no silver was ever found. Shall we go treasure hunting?

The largest robbery committed was one in which $1,500 worth of bullion was taken from the Barbee Mill. The mill foreman was accused of this deed.

Last and least, a poorly timed stage robbery occurred a few miles from Silver Reef. Stage coach driver, Andy Clothier, handed over to the bandits the Wells Fargo Company treasure box. It contained exactly fifteen dollars.

Old man Herbert Huston was a rich bachelor in Pioche. He was stricken with rheumatism and became helpless from it. He was living alone in a cabin and dependent upon the kindness of men to come in and give the help he needed. Young Sy West, out of sympathy, went every night and did what he could for the suffering old man.

This kindness opened a door of opportunity to Sy West. Huston proposed that they go to the New Silver Reef Camp in Dixie, where the weather would be more favorable for a sick man. They would go into business together, Huston supplying the capital and West would take active management.

West accepted the proposition and the firm of Huston and West became well-known over Utah and Nevada. They operated a livery stable, feed yard, and general store. They handled hay, grain, lumber, cordwood, and coal. The livery stable kept for sale or rent, teams, wagons, buggies, harnesses and saddles.

Because Silver Reef was mainly a non-Mormon town, federal officers worked from there in conducting raids on the Mormon polygamists. These raids were called "Polyg hunts," and proved very unsuccessful because of a fortunate arrangement between the

telegraph operator at Silver Reef and the one in St. George, both Mormons.

The marshalls traveled mostly at night so they could not be seen. They would send word to Mr. Huston that they would arrive at his stables at a certain hour and would like to get a fresh team quickly to take them to St. George or some other town in Dixie. A very innocent sounding message would be sent to a St. George furniture store where the telegraph office was located. The message would read "Send two chairs." This meant that officers were in Silver Reef preparing for a raid. St. George would warn neighboring towns and by the time the "Polyg hunters" reached the Mormon towns, the polygamists would be far away. This old man's friendliness to the Mormons was his way of trying to repay them for many kindnesses shown him in his troubles and it saved many polygamists from arrest.

One polygamist, Lawrence Mariger, was brought into court. They had his eleven year-old daughter on the witness stand. She was repeatedly asked if she had a half sister. A half sister was unknown to her and she maintained her sister was whole. The titters that followed filled her with alarm but her father was dismissed for lack of evidence.

Tragedy comes in many ways. They tell the story of a little two room cabin with a little porch and yard out front. It was built near the creek under large cottonwood trees. A very homey place but the cottage was abandoned. The fence was down, the doors locked and the windows boarded up. Any one peaking through the cracks could see a table covered with breakfast dishes, a baby's bib hanging on a high chair, clothing on other chairs and the stove covered with cooking utensils. That was the way Matt Wicks found his kitchen when he came home for breakfast, after working all night in the mines. His wife and baby were gone with another man. Poor Matt walked out, locked the door and never entered the house again. That baby boy came back to Leeds, a grown man, when his father was dying. He married a Leeds girl.

Fires were tragic affairs and Silver Reef had her share of them. In one fire the 'bucket brigade' saved the Christy Mill and part of the town. The bucket brigade was pails filled with water at the creek and passed by men who stood in line, to a point near the fire, where they were seized by strong, active men who dashed the water on the flames or on buildings that were in danger of burning. Another line of men passed the empty pails back to the creek.

They weren't quite so fortunate on May 30, 1879, when about one-third of the business district went up in flames. Some of the finest places in town were burned to the ground. Within three weeks the upper part of China Town disappeared in the same way. Arson was suspected. From this time, great care was taken to prevent arson and the Miner suggested that "Someone may yet test the strength of a rope

with the weight of their body if things continued.'' The town and Mill were soon rebuilt, with many improvements.

There was enough Chinese people in Silver Reef to have a China Town. The white people held the Chinese in contempt for their stinking pig-pens and slaughter houses, doing much cursing when the wind blew in the wrong direction, but most distasteful of all to the residents of Silver Reef was Chinese slavery. They were also condemned for having comfortable retreats in China Town, for the white people with the opium habit and it seemed they did a flourishing business.

In the Silver Reef Miner October 29, 1879 it reported the following: ''About 5 o'clock Sunday morning last a frame building owned by China Joe, was destroyed by fire. The house stood on the east and north side of the Centre Street, over the creek and at the time the blaze broke out the Asiatic owner was in bed with a woman, and a white woman at that, too. The loving couple had barely time to get out of the door before down came the she-bang with a crash. In fact, Joe got out with his pantaloons in his hand, while his susy anna gained the street almost as naked as she was born. Both of them were slightly burned. Under the floor of the building the Chinaman had sometime previously secreted 142 boxes of opium, worth $15 per box, and the smell arising from the burning of the drug nausiated everybody who came within sniffing distance of it. No one knows how the blaze originated, but the Chinaman thinks somebody applied the torch to smoke out him and his girl. Anyhow, his loss is $2,000 by the fire, and he is now sloshing around town the maddest Chinaman this side of Hong Kong.''



Sam Wing, Mayor of Chinatown

Chinese burials were quite interesting and colorful affairs. Sam Wing, the Mayor of China Town, would lead his people to the cemetery while a group of people behind him would scatter torn bits of paper to confuse the evil spirits and disguise the path to the grave. He would place food and wine on the grave to feed the dead person's spirit on its way to its spiritual home. The Indians would slip up after dark and steal the food.

Sam Wing, as he got older, longed to see China again but he didn't have enough money. Col. Wall, one of the big mine owners, gave him enough money to go back for a visit and return to America.

After the mines closed down, a Chinaman, Sam Gee, came from San Francisco, dug up all the dead Chinamen and shipped them back to China. He brought chests of tea to ship their remains in.



Silver Reef Theatre sign says "East Lynn showing tonight"

Chris Olsen, my husband's grandfather, told of a Stock Company that came, one Christmas time, with a play production putting on the play "East Lynn." When it came to the part where the dying heroine was pleading for forgiveness, and it seemed it would be denied, an old miner in the audience stood up and with tears streaming down his face called out, "Oh, forgive her. For God's sake forgive her."

Art Nolan, a big Irishman, who had studied to become a priest, became a miner instead. During his working days Nolan kept his beard rolled on a heavy string tied around his neck, but on Sunday he shampooed it and displayed it, covering his chest in a waving cascade,

the ends resting in his lap as he sat in his chair.

Although Mormons, in general, avoided most of the non-Mormon social activities, there were some exceptions. The Dixie climate made Silver Reef a great place to stage Christmas Holiday horse race meets. Miners and their wives and the people from neighboring towns filled the grandstands. Men from all over the west brought their fast race horses. The miners were very upset when a Mormon owned horse won the first race held at the new track.

It was at this race track that Napoleon Bonapart Roundy of Kanaraville, Utah, also a Mormon, out-shot the distinguished and popular Colonel E.A. Wall, best marksman at Silver Reef. Wall had out-shot everyone until Pole came along.

Some people call the frog story a Legend but some claim it is true. The following is the story quoted from the Silver Reef Miner August 27, 1881. "A live frog was found in the Barbee and Walker Mine at a depth of 360 feet from the surface. The miner who found him said, 'I had put off a blast and cleared away the rock and was spotting a place for another hole with a pick, but the rock appearing somewhat soft, I continued to pick and opened up a cavity about as large as my fist, and out jumped the frog. It was a well-developed, natural-looking lively frog about two inches in length. A careful inspection revealed the fact that it had no mouth. After 36 hours it expired.' The frog was on display at the Miners office."

Here is another fantastic story. The Pioche Record January 1, 1881, tells the story of the Petrified Forest Cave. It was found in the Thompson and McNally mine when some miners were putting a hole into some rock and the entire face of the drift gave way into a big black hole. They had to spring backward to keep from being pulled into the hole with the rock. When the dust settled they held their lights in the hole and saw a forest of huge trees. With ropes they were let down to the forest and discovered it was petrified trees. Many people visited the cave, including Judge A.H. Parker, Mining Engineer. The trees ran high in silver content so they were mined, thus destroying the remarkable cave.

The Hurdy House or dance hall was the setting for another violent death. One evening a woman, half-crazed by drink, shot the proprietor who died the following morning. He was reported to be a well-to-do man but none of his money could be found. James N. Louder used the building as a store until he moved to Beaver. He sold the building to Peter Anderson who was developing a ranch at the place we call Anderson's Junction, about five miles north-east of Leeds. He tore the building down to move it to his property, and as he was removing the mopboard on the south side of the hall, he found a leather sack containing a considerable amount of gold coin. He used the money to improve his ranch. Anderson never did divulge how much money the

bag contained but different amounts have been claimed, anywhere from $2,000 to $20,000. Karl Larson said he interviewed Deslie Anderson, daughter-in-law of Peter Anderson, and she told him that the amount was not nearly that much; it was just a few hundred dollars.

About the time Peter Anderson bought the dance hall, many other buildings were either torn down or moved to other locations. The old Silver Reef jail house was moved to Leeds, filled with saw dust and used for storing ice. Later it was moved to Washington. The old Washington County News building, now located on St. George Boulevard, came from Silver Reef.

Much of the lumber went to surrounding communities to be used for houses, barns, bridges and fences. The Catholic Church was moved to Leeds and became a recreation hall. The Silver Reef Public School was moved to Leeds to be used as the Leeds Public School. It still stands in Leeds but is now the Community Center and has had considerable remodeling done on it since it left Silver Reef. The old Pot-bellied stove, that stood in the office at the Wells Fargo building, was recently installed for heat in the Community Center but, when the Wells Fargo Museum opened, it was returned there as a relic. I spent many hours warming my shins by that old stove, when I lived in the Wells Fargo building.

Different figures have been given for the population of Silver Reef but it probably never reached 1500 people. The only accurate account is found in the 1880 census. This gives the population of 1146 persons. (U.S. Bureau of Census, Washington). The area of Silver Reef was not large enough to draw in a great population, as much of the population was miners and many of them were single instead of family men.

Silver Reef saw its greatest time of production between the years of 1875 and 1880, a five year total of 3,319,054 ounces valued at $3,808,890.00. The miners had used the rich ore found mostly on the surface of the ground. As the ore became less rich, they had to dig deeper for the ore and water began to seep into the mines. Costs of production skyrocketed. In an effort to partially offset the increase, in 1881, there came a cut in wages. The miners struck. Strike leaders were jailed. Merchants had extended credit on the future pay checks. With pay checks no longer coming, one business after another failed. Silver prices continued to drop. Discouraged by the outlook, original developers saved their skin by selling to new comers who did not understand mines nor mining. Everything took a nose dive.

During the ten-year period from 1880 to 1890, the camp annual out-put averaged no more than half that of the previous five years. By 1891 all big operations at Silver Reef had ceased.

In 1916 Alex Colbath raised $160,000 and organized the Silver Reef Consolidated Mining Company and acquired the properties. In 1928 American Smelting and Refining Company purchased 51% of the stock

and sank a three compartment shaft 541 feet deep. At different depths they made underground tunnels running out to meet up with other mines. They drained the Buckeye Reef mines for the first time in over 30 years. A drop in the price of silver again, coupled with the depression, put an end to work.



Mayme Beal Colbath, Alex Colbath, owner of Silver Reef for 32 years

After actual work in the mines quit, the A.S.&R. began gathering up their tools and equipment. On the last trip down the shaft with the cage, the hoistman must not have been watching very closely for he let the men right down into the water. One man yanked the rope that rang the bell to signal the hoistman to stop.

By the time the cage stopped the men were in the water up to their waist. You can guess what the hoistman got when they were back on dry ground.

As caretakers at Silver Reef, my husband and I spent many happy hours poking around investigating the old diggings and tunnels. The A.S.&R. shaft seemed to have a special attraction for Glenn. He loved to climb into the shaft and go down the ladder. Kinda dare-devil stuff. One day he had ventured down farther than usual when one of the steps on the ladder snapped. Dry rot. His heart skipped several beats then jumped into his throat. With his whole body trembling like a leaf, he retraced his steps back up the ladder as carefully as he could in his haste. He was white as a ghost when he reached safety. I never did venture down that shaft, though I did get close enough to look down.

The next day some men came down from Cedar City to pick up

machinery over by the A.S.&R. shaft. Everyone was dumb-founded to discover that the whole three compartments had gone down the hole. And Glenn, well we'll leave it to your imagination as to what his reaction was. He didn't dare say he had been down the shaft the day before because he had been constantly warned by Mr. Colbath to stay out of such dangerous places. He knows he was extremely fortunate that the compartment didn't go down the hole the day before, with him in it.



A.S.&R. Shaft L to R: Joe Kopp and wife, other man unknown

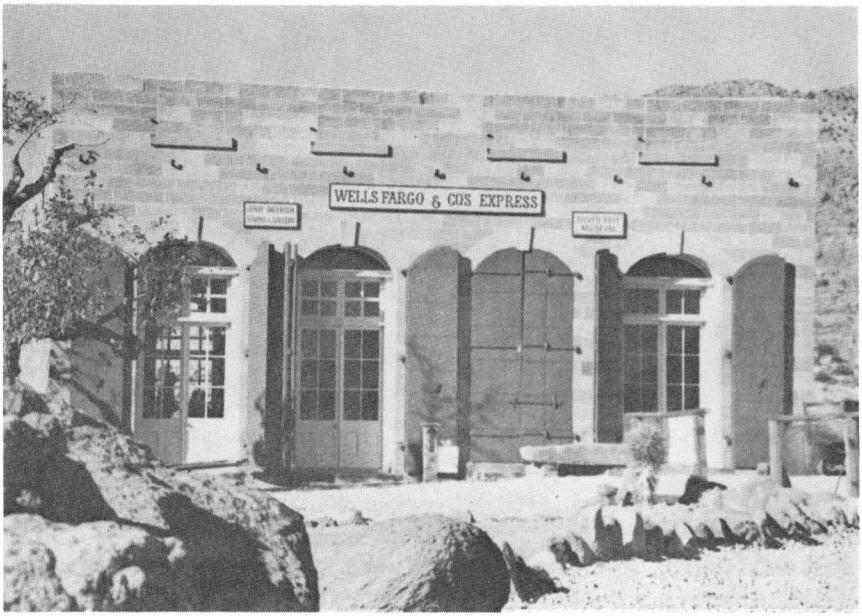
Through default of contract the property reverted back to Alex Colbath. He, being a mining engineer himself, knew there was plenty of silver left. His whole life was wrapped up in the place and he wanted desperately to see it worked again. He said the Mother Lode had never been located and he claimed that if it ever was found they would find they hadn't even scratched the surface of the silver yet.

In 1948 Alex Colbath sold Silver Reef to Western Gold & Uranium, Inc. Since that time some work has been done, mainly mining for Uranium, but only for a short time. At present Silver Reef is noted for the many beautiful new homes dotting the area. My husband and I no longer live at Silver Reef but have a home at Silver Point on Silver Reef Road.

Through the past years, as Glenn took his daily walks to Silver Reef, he watched the deterioration of the old Wells Fargo building. Many times he expressed the wish that he had the capital to restore it and keep it in good condition. He longed to go back there to live.

In February 1985 Joy Henderlider appeared on the scene. Something inside her told her she was to be the one to restore that old building. She started with the County Commissioners. Next she picked a committee, was legally incorporated, made a non-profit corporation and started to ask for donations. Between the Jerry Anderson statue, a dinner and dance and donations, they raised $5,000.

Next Joy went after a Government grant and received $75,250. As work progressed they ran into complications, which raised the price of restoration about $5,000. She went after another grant and received $4,500 more to help cover these added expenses.



Restored Wells Fargo and Co. Express

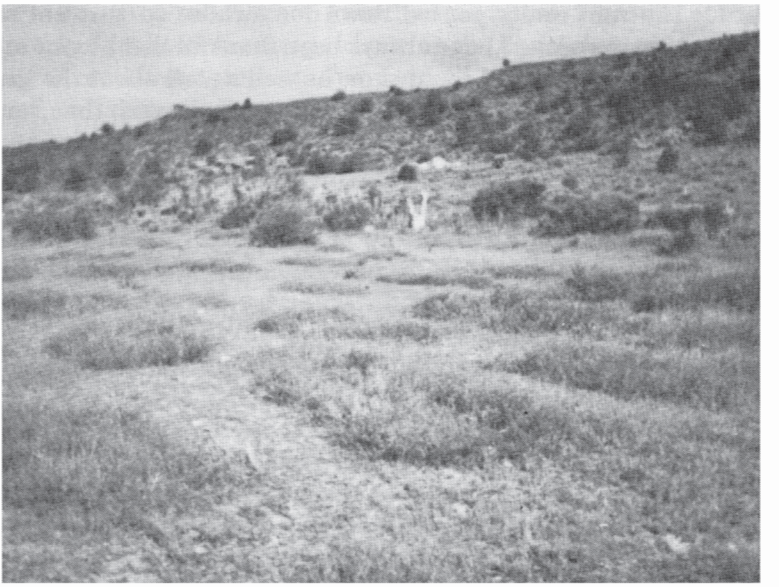
The beautiful newly restored Wells Fargo Building now stands as an added attraction to Silver Reef. One half is the longed for Silver Reef Museum and the other half is the Jerry Anderson Art Gallery.

In the spring of 1973, we had a strange thing happen in Silver Reef. After a long wet spring, Glenn came down from the field telling me that the graves in the Silver Reef Cemetery were all marked by foot high filaree and that I ought to go see them. I was busy and suggested that he take a picture of them, but he didn't. We talked about it during the next few days and still procrastinated because of the inconvenience.

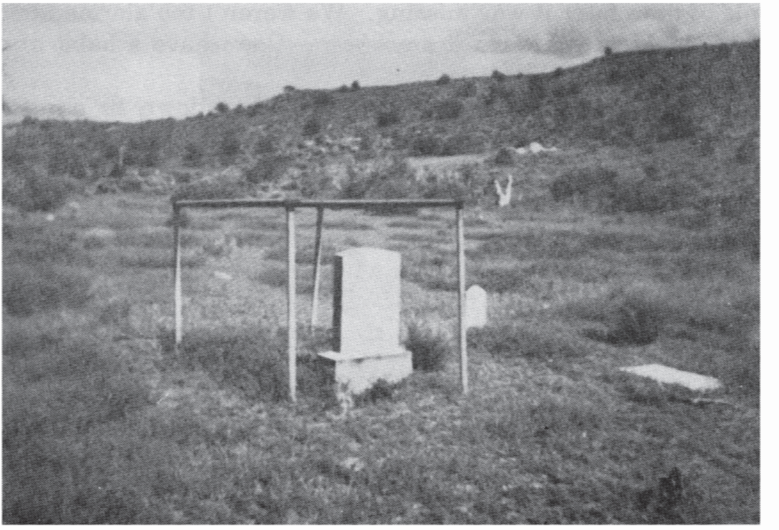
One bright sunny day, when I had a day off from work, even though I was in the middle of getting my washing done, Glenn mentioned the graves again. I said, "Well, it's now or never. Let's go take some

pictures.'' I grabbed my polaroid camera and jumped in the car, with Glenn, and headed for the cemetery.

The beautiful filaree marked the distinct shape of each grave. I didn't count the graves but it was a sight to behold, to look down on the row after row of tall green mounds with short brown growth between each one.



Graves



Grave with pipe rail

My polaroid was not the new fangled instamatic like they have today and it took a little time to take each picture. I made sure the grave with the iron pipe around it was in one picture. I didn't want anyone to question where the pictures were taken. I took three different pictures, trying to get at least one good view. By the time I took the third picture, the clouds, had darkened and hid the sun. After I snapped the picture, I had to cover my polaroid and run for the car to keep from getting soaked. The rain really poured down for awhile, so that ended my picture taking that day. I have always been thankful that I took the time to take those pictures, so I could show as well as tell about the graves.

What caused such a thing? I can't think it was the chemical composition of the remains, as it has been suggested, because most of those graves have been there for one hundred years or more. If it was the chemical composition or disturbing of the ground, surely it would have shown up during some of the previous wet years. I have seen numerous wet springs in my fifty odd years here and 1973 is the only year that the green filaree grew in such a way as to mark the graves in the Silver Reef cemetery.

Now my masterpiece ends with the telling of the story of the drill hole calf.

In 1952 Western Gold & Uranium, Inc. started extensive exploration of the Silver Reef property. They were looking for uranium. Drilling started on the Big Hill and they left many drill holes unmarked so you never knew when you might break a leg in one. We were really quite careful as we walked over the area. Our animals were pasturing within the fenced enclosure so we had occasion to be there quite often. One day a cute little calf was born to one of the cows feeding in the field. A couple of days later it was missing. We weren't too alarmed because the cow could have hidden it anywhere. Cows have a habit of doing such things.

This particular Sunday morning, we went down to our Church meetings but checked on the calf again at noon. It still hadn't shown up and the mother cow looked like she needed to be relieved of her milk. By this time we were a little alarmed. We wondered if some wild animal had killed the calf. Our son, Ray, had come up to help look for the stray, so we spread out, each going in a different direction. Ray headed straight up the Big Hill. About half way up, he called to us then stooped to examine something in the brush. We couldn't understand what he said so we rushed over where he was. As we drew near he exclaimed excitedly, "Look at the beaten path of cow tracks around this small hole. You'd think something was down in it." The hole was only about six inches in diameter. Glenn said, "That's probably one of those drill holes."

"The way these cow tracks are circling it you'd think the cow had lost her calf down this hole," Ray added.

I put my two cents worth in saying it wouldn't be possible because the hole was too small. Just the same, we each took turns looking down the hole. The sun was high over our heads, which gave us a little advantage.

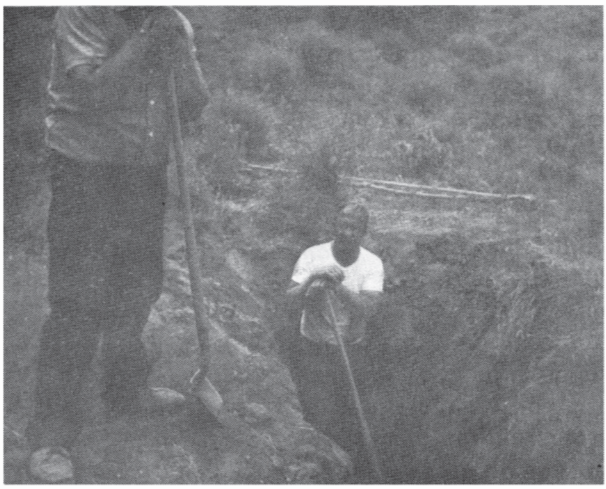
As Ray continued to look, he remarked, "I think I see movement." Of course it was so dark in the hole and so deep, who could be positive?

I rushed to the house for a flashlight and a mirror to help reflect the sun light down the hole. When I reached the house, I was out of breath. Neidra, my daughter, wanting to be in on the excitement, took me back to the hill on the motorcycle. We were all keyed up figuring the hole was so small that a calf couldn't possibly be down there, but all signs pointed in that direction.

A neighbor, Dennis Blair, who lived just a short distance down on the flat, saw and heard all the commotion so he came up the hill to satisfy his curiosity. He took his turn looking down the hole and he, also, thought he saw movement.

Well, we knew we couldn't get a calf out of a hole like that so the next question was what to do. If the calf was still alive, it would be terrible to let it just lie there and die. If we started to dig from the top of the hole, dirt would fall down on the calf, provided there was a calf down there, and smother it anyway. Someone suggested getting a gun and shooting down in the hole, just in case it was still living. We felt that would be more humane than just leaving it.

After quite a lengthy discussion, someone came up with the bright idea of digging a trench to come into the hole from the downhill side. It was worth a try. You see, we were still shooting in the dark. Was there a calf down there or not? At any rate, we got shovels and started excavating.



Ray Beal in trench, Glenn Beal leaning on shovel

Since we like pictures of everything, I went to the house again to pick up the camera. By the time I got back Verlynn, Ray's wife, and kids were there, too. It took some time to do the digging. Glenn and Ray took turns working in the trench. As Ray got close to the hole, he had to work very carefully. With the last shovel of dirt eased out of the way, low and behold, the gaping hole revealed one small calf lying quietly about three feet farther down. The hole was definitely larger at the bottom than it was at the top. Glenn had to hold Ray's feet to keep him from falling in the hole, as he reached down to pull the calf out by it's hind leg. It was a real struggle to get it out.

Would you say we were mining calves?

As they stood the calf out on level ground, the watching mama cow came bellering up the hill. We had to scramble to get out of her way.

The main picture we took was mama cow feeding her hungry calf.



Mama cow and calf

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The Silver Reef Foundation operates the Museum at Silver Reef and works to collect, preserve, interpret and promote the history of the town and surrounding communities. Visit SilverReefUtah.org for more information.

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