

Benjamin Head Paddock

Benjamin Head Paddock was born 8 September 1841 in Little Valley, Cattaraugus, New York. He was the fifth of ten children of Ichabod Paddock and Mary Ann Van Tassel. In 1850, the family was living in Centre, Lafayette, Wisconsin.¹ By 1860, Benjamin was a laborer, living with his brother and uncle in the home of E. Dennis, in Paskenta, Tehama, California.² He moved to Fort Mohave, Mohave, Arizona Territory in 1864, where he was a miner. The census shows that he was married with a family in California.³ He joined the Mormon Church in 1867, and married Margaret Davidson on 8 August 1868 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah Territory. They had no children and divorced before 1880.⁴

On the 1870 census, Benjamin was farming and living with his wife Margaret and three servants in St Thomas, Pah-Ute, Nevada.⁵ This area was contested by Arizona, Nevada, and Utah territories. Surveyors worked under government contract to establish new state lines. Benjamin was quoted in the newspaper as saying, "I am satisfied that these settlements are east of the Nevada line. From the point the surveyors are now at, a due south line will go west of this place."⁶ Benjamin was a member of the Nevada legislature for Mohave and Pah-Ute Counties in 1870.⁷

Benjamin served on the 4th of July committee in St George, Washington, Utah Territory, in 1872.⁸ He was one of the 1874 incorporators of the Grand Gulch copper mine, located just over the border in northern Arizona.⁹ He was involved in stopping a beating in Leeds, Washington, Utah Territory, in 1876. It seems that Jack Kirby was refused admittance to a dance in Washington City about two years earlier and though Mr. Y. S. Ferris was the cause. Kirby went into William T. Barbee's store in Leeds and grabbed Mr. Ferris and dragged him out back. He drew a pistol and struck Ferris over the left ear, then continued to strike him until Benjamin stopped the beating.¹⁰

Benjamin served as the first postmaster in Silver Reef in 1877.¹¹ On the 1880 census, he was a miner, divorced from Margaret, who was also living in Silver Reef under her maiden name, next door to Margaret Grambs.¹² Benjamin was serving as justice of the peace in 1880 when Gibson Clark complained about a newspaper article published by the Pike brothers. Clark charged the Pikes with libeling Captain Henry S Lubbock. Clark was accused of bribing Benjamin Paddock with \$200 in gold, but he denied it. He did admit that he gave an "open order" to saloon keeper George Miller to furnish liquors and cigars which amounted to \$145 which was paid by the Christy Mining Company.¹³ Benjamin set the bail at \$4,000 (he set a bail of \$1,000 for an alleged murderer a short time later).¹⁴

¹ United States Census, 1850.

² United States Census, 1860.

³ Arizona Territorial Census Records, 1864-1882.

⁴ United States Census, 1880.

⁵ United States Census, 1870; Nevada Compiled Census Index, 1860-1910.

⁶ *Arizona Weekly*, 10 December 1870, p. 2.

⁷ *Arizona Weekly Citizen*, 17 December 1870, p. 2.

⁸ *Deseret News*, 10 July 1872, p. 5.

⁹ *Deseret Evening News*, 15 December 1900, p. 46.

¹⁰ *Deseret News*, 19 July 1876, p. 1.

¹¹ *San Francisco Chronicle*, 12 February 1877, p. 3; *The Union*, 4 October 1878, p. 3; *Deseret News*, 14 February 1877, p. 9.

¹² United States Census, 1880.

¹³ *Salt Lake Herald*, 29 July 1880, p. 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Lubbock claimed that he was being blackmailed by the Pike brothers for \$3,000 not to publish the articles.¹⁵

Benjamin was farming in Hanford, Tulare, California, in 1882. He was shot in the arm during a disagreement with Daniel Spangler that year. He was the superintendent of the Mussel Slough Ditch Company and later the New Deal Ditch Company.¹⁶ By 1888, he was farming in El Monte, Los Angeles, California, and served as a judge of election and a delegate to the Democratic County Convention.¹⁷ In 1889, Benjamin, his brother Nelson, and W L Godman located a tin mine in Van Tassel canyon near Monrovia. The mine was sold for \$50,000.¹⁸

Benjamin was murdered by an Indian near Ensenada, Baja California, on 4 November 1890. He had had knocked the Indian down after a quarrel about work on his ranch. The Indian waited a few days and shot Paddock from ambush.¹⁹ Benjamin was a member of the Masonic order of El Monte.²⁰ It is not known what happened to Margaret.

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¹⁵ *Silver Reef Miner*, 22 September 1880.

¹⁶ *Reno Gazette-Journal*, 15 May 1882, p. 1; *Record-Union*, 11 May 1882, p. 2; 14 November 1885, p. 5; California Voter Registers, 1866-1898.

¹⁷ California Voter Registers, 1866-1898; *Los Angeles Herald*, 20 August 1888, p. 1; 23 October 1888, p. 5.

¹⁸ *Los Angeles Herald*, 30 March 1889, p. 6; 1 April 1889, p. 7; *Los Angeles Times*, 30 March 1889, p. 6.

¹⁹ *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 November 1890, p. 13; *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 23 November 1890, p. 2.

²⁰ *Los Angeles Herald*, 2 December 1889, p. 3.