

## Henry “Hank” Parrish

Henry “Hank” Parrish was born about 1840 Nova Scotia, Canada.<sup>1</sup> His early life is unknown, but he had acquired a mean reputation in Wyoming or Idaho in the 1870s. Known as the terror of southern Nevada; he carried a sawed-off pistol in the breast of his shirt. In 1879, he was living in Eldorado Canyon, forty miles from Las Vegas. He had a mining partner named Paddock. One night, they were playing cards and Hank accused him of cheating and shot him in the leg. Paddock left town on a horse, and Hank followed him and shot him dead in the desert.<sup>2</sup> That year he also shot a man named Taylor over a game of cards. Taylor upset the table, drew a knife, and Hank shot him twice.<sup>3</sup>

On the 1880 census, Hank was marked as married, working as a quartz mill worker, and living in Eldorado Canon, Lincoln, Nevada.<sup>4</sup> He and three others had built a cabin and established a camp called the “1880 camp” in Eldorado Canyon, about 22 miles from Searchlight, Nevada.<sup>5</sup> In 1881, Hank was involved in another gunfight with a man over a card game in a saloon in Eldorado. He shot N Clark and then the saloon keeper Jim Greenwood/Greenwald. He returned to the saloon as the coroner came in, and threatened him and others. He defied arrest at pistol-point and remained at large. Clark recovered but Greenwood died a few months later.<sup>6</sup> Soon after that, Hank killed a man in Bodie, Nevada, also over a card game.<sup>7</sup>

Hank worked at the Christy Mining Company at Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory. Most citizens were afraid of him and he was a bully when he was drunk.<sup>8</sup> He headed a gang of highway robbers. In 1884, his gang waylaid Archibald Stewart, a prosperous cattleman, at the Kiel Ranch (a notorious hangout for lawbreakers) in Las Vegas Valley, Nevada. Stewart was killed and a valuable herd of horses taken as the gang split up to elude pursuit. Hank was never found and the jury voted to dismiss charges against two other men in the area, feeling it was self-defense.<sup>9</sup>

In 1885, a stage was carrying one passenger and a sack of gold and silver coins worth \$345 among the cargo. When the sack was missing at arrival, the stage coach driver and Hank, a bystander, started beating up the passenger. Hank and the driver were arrested on \$1000 bail, which was dropped the next day when the sack was found under suspicious circumstances.<sup>10</sup> Hank showed up in Pioche in 1887 as a miner at the Centennial-Eureka. He killed a crippled gambler from Colorado after another card game in a saloon in Eureka City. He was arrested and released on bond of \$2,000, pending an examination by the coroner’s jury.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Findagrave.com*

<sup>2</sup> *Nevada State Journal*, 3 August 1975, p. 30

<sup>3</sup> *Reno Evening Gazette*, 9 September 1879.

<sup>4</sup> United States Census, 1880.

<sup>5</sup> Biennial Report of the Nevada Historical Society, 1909, p. 100; Hank Parrish from Pioche! by Donna C. Frederick, at *robertwynn.com*

<sup>6</sup> *Reno Evening Gazette*, 26 March 1881; Biennial Report of the Nevada Historical Society, 1909, p. 106.

<sup>7</sup> *Reno Gazette-Journal*, 10 March 1881, p. 3; 16 March 1881, p. 3; *Decatur Herald*, 11 March 1881, p. 1; *Los Angeles Herald*, 10 March 1881, p. 2; *Nevada State Journal*, 11 March 1881, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> A Historical Study of Silver Reef, by Alfred Bleak Stucki, 1966, p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> A Short History of Las Vegas, by Land and Land, 2004, p. 32; *Arizona Daily Star*, 23 July 1884, p. 1; *Record-Union*, 28 July 1884, p. 3; *Nevada State Journal*, 3 August 1975, p. 30; *Reno Gazette-Journal*, 24 July 1884, p. 3; *reviewjournal.com*; Las Vegas: The Great American Playground, by Robert D. McCracken, 1997, p. 16; Hank Parrish from Pioche! by Donna C. Frederick, at *robertwynn.com*

<sup>10</sup> Mohave County Miner, 1 November 1885, p. 3; *Arizona Weekly Citizen*, 7 November 1885, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Nevada State Journal*, 3 August 1975, p. 30; *Salt Lake Herald*, 23 December 1887, p. 8.

In 1888, Hank was charged with the murder of Enos S Blancett at Eureka. They had been quarreling at Daniel's saloon and agreed to fight a duel the next day. Blancett was on his way to the duel when he was shot in the street. Hank had been hiding by a house on the opposite side of the road.<sup>12</sup>

In 1890, Hank moved to Royal City, Nevada, where he killed his last man. The newspaper states, "It became necessary to arrest a fellow named Hank Parish, who had 17 notches on his gunstock. He had left a bloody trail all the way between Arizona and the coast and made brags that he was good for a few more. The record of the murderer was so bad and he was known to be so quick with his gun (in fact, shooting was a pastime with him) that no officer would accompany the sheriff to make the arrest. Hence [Sheriff D Turner] went to the cabin of the murderer alone, and getting the drop on him, arrested his man, who in due time was hanged."<sup>13</sup>

Pete Thompson was playing poker when Hank leaned over his shoulder. Peter asked him to stop, but Hank kept returning and pestering Peter. Finally, Pete reacted aggressively and Hank stabbed him in the belly. Hank was arrested and jailed in Pioche without bail, to await the action of the grand jury. He was constantly guarded during his stay. Pete who died from peritonitis a few days later. Due to prejudice against Hank, a change of venue took the trial to White Pine County. He was convicted of murder in the first degree and given the penalty of death by hanging. He was hung at Ely on 12 December 1890.<sup>14</sup>

Hank stood on the scaffold over the trap door and explained, "I have been charged with a great many crimes; I killed three men and was right in doing it. The last man I killed assisted in stringing me up three times. They say I have a wife and family that I have not treated right. My wife has been dead thirteen years; I have two children in Oregon, well fixed. I am an ignorant man, have always been persecuted and am innocent of crime. All this will appear in Mr Murphy's book of my life and I want you to believe it." The book was never published.<sup>15</sup> White Pine County ask Lincoln County to pay \$588 "on account of the little job it did for that county, namely: the hanging of Hank Parish."<sup>16</sup> Hank was buried in the Ely City Cemetery. White Pine, Nevada.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Salt Lake Herald*, 12 October 1888, p. 2; 13 October 1888, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Fitchburg Sentinel*, 12 October 1896.

<sup>14</sup> *Nevada State Journal*, 3 August 1975, p. 30; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 October 1890, p. 3; *Aspen Evening Chronicle*, 25 November 1890, p. 1; *Reno Gazette-Journal*, 15 August 1890, p. 3; 16 December 1890, p. 3; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 August 1890, p. 6; 23 October 1890, pp. 3, 7; *Daily Times*, 13 October 1956, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Nevada State Journal*, 17 December 1890, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Daily Nevada State Journal*, 25 March 1891.

<sup>17</sup> *Findagrave.com*