

The Swett Tragedy

From the Journal of Andrew Fjeld

During the Fall of 1868, a mining boom was on at White Pine, West and South of Lehi. Many miners passed through Lehi on their way to make their fortune.

Harlem P. Swett, a Mr. Mayfield and a young wild street arab from New York, Chancy W. Millard, passed through Lehi and camped for the night at the "stone house" on the west shore of Utah Lake. While Swett sat near the fire on which he was cooking supper, Chancy shot him in the back killing him instantly. He next turned and took a shot at Mayfield who was looking for the revolver in the wagon. Mayfield was shot in the hand but jumped out of the wagon and ran out on the ice on the lake. This was on December 11th so there was a thin sheet of ice on the lake hardly thick enough to carry the weight of a man but as Wakefield had to take the chance to get away he ran as fast as he could. Chancy started to follow but the ice cracked so dangerously that he turned back.

Wakefield kept going and made his way to the Nagle Ranch (now Saratoga). Carl Fjeld was living there at that time and he brought Wakefield to Lehi the next day. A party was soon on their way to the scene of the tragedy. They found Swett lying where he had fallen but the boy and some of the horses was gone.

A coroner's jury was empanelled but they were not able to decide how Swett met his death thinking perhaps that he and Wakefield had quarreled.

Orrin Porter Rockwell was living in Lehi at that time and he was soon on the trail of this young outlaw. He first started east in his buckboard and team of fleet horses, but had not gone far before he turned about face and went west. He traveled in the night and arrived at a sheep camp early in the morning. With his gun ready he ordered the herder to come out. The herder came bounding out followed by Millard. Porter promptly brought him back to Lehi and lodged him in the tithing office cellar (the late Lide Slade corner). Millard freely confessed his crime, was taken to Provo where the court sentenced him to be shot.

Swett was buried in the southwest corner of the Lehi cemetery. A brown sandstone headstone with an iron band around it marks his grave.

Swett was a native of one of the New England States, and when his relatives heard of his death, they ordered this stone in Salt Lake City and on its way to Lehi, it was broken in two or three pieces. Samuel Taylor the blacksmith put the iron bands around it to hold it together and there it is to this day.