

Joseph Alfred (Jack) Slade

January 22, 1831 – March 10, 1864

Slade's first role was a stagecoach and Pony Express superintendent, instrumental in the opening of America West and the archetype of the Western gunslinger.

Slade was born in Carlyle, Illinois, he was the son of Illinois politician Charles Slade and Mary Dark (Kain) Slade. During the Mexican War he served in the U.S. Army that occupied Santa Fe, 1847-1848. After his father's death, Slade's mother married Civil War general Elian Dennis.

He married Maria Virginia (maiden name unknown) around 1857. In the 1850's he was a freighting teamster and wagon master along the Overland Trail, and then became a stagecoach driver in Texas 1857-1858. He subsequently became a stagecoach division superintendent along the Central Overland route for Hockaday & Company 1858-1859 and its Successors Jones, Russell & Company 1859 and Central Overland, California & Pike's Peak Express Company 1859 – 1862. With the latter concern, he also helped launch and operate the Pony Express in 1860-1861. All were critical to the communication between the East and California. As superintendent, he enforced order and assured reliable cross-continental Mail service, maintaining contact between Washington, D.C. and California on the eve of Civil War.

While division superintendent, he shot and killed Andrew Ferrin, one of his subordinates who was hindering the progress of a freight train, in May 1859. At the time, shooting deaths of this kind in the West were rare and Jack Slade's reputation as a "gunfighter" spread rapidly across the country.

In March 1860 Slade was ambushed and left for dead by Jules Beni, the corrupt station keeper at Julesburg, Colorado, whom Slade had removed. Slade remarkably survived, and in August 1861 Beni was killed by Slade's men after ignoring Slade's warning to stay out of his territory.

Slade's exploits spawned numerous legends, many of them false. His image as the vicious killer of up to 26 victims was greatly exaggerated: Only one killing by Slade is undisputed. But his ferocious reputation, combined with a drinking problem, caused his downfall. He was fired by the Central Overland for drunkenness in November 1862. During a drunken spree in Virginia City, Montana, he was lynched by local vigilantes on March 10, 1864 for disturbing the peace.

The bereaved widow cursed the town, took her husband's body home in a tin-lined coffin filled, it was said, with a keg of whiskey. She swore he would never be buried in that territory, and shipped the remains to the Salt Lake City with instructions for the coffin to be transferred to an eastbound stage for Illinois. By the time the roads cleared and the stage reached Utah, it was mid-July, and Virginia Slade's instructions had become confused. Slade's body was transferred to the Salt Lake City Cemetery and buried in the Stranger's Lot, Grave Location **Plot – B, Block – 4, Lot – Pauper, Grave – 116** "to be removed to Illinois in the fall". But no one ever came for Jack Slade. And today his remains-and the whiskey that proved his undoing-still await the stage for Carlisle.

On the Cemetery website you can find a map of **Salt Lake City Burials of Notable Individuals** it will show where in the cemetery Jack Slade is buried.

