

When Verdell Hinton retired to his hometown of Hurricane in 1985, he planned to spend many happy hours in his woodshop. He did not plan on becoming the driving force of a vital historic preservation movement or donating thousands of hours to saving Hurricane's past. All that changed when he attended a meeting to discuss preserving the town's red-sandstone WPA library.

Verdell was soon leading the effort to save the library building as a pioneer museum, obtain the surrounding properties, and develop a historic park at the intersection of Hurricane's two major streets. Most reasonable people in town were ready to abandon the plan after the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints declined to donate an adjacent property crucial to the project's success. But as one friend notes, "Lists of reasonable people might not always include Verdell." Verdell persevered until he obtained a one-dollar per year lease on the property and saw the project through to its completion.

Energized by this success, Verdell took up the banner of the Bradshaw House. Hurricane's first permanent home, the Bradshaw House was near collapse and slated for demolition. The Washington County Commission's initial refusal to support saving the house nearly crushed the efforts to preserve it. Verdell's tenacity carried the project forward despite early setbacks.

The impressive list of projects where Verdell played crucial roles includes, the T. M. Hinton House, the Old Hurricane Fort, the Canal Memorial, and the listing of several local buildings in the National Register of Historic Places. Moreover, he helped create a preservation movement in Hurricane that now extends beyond his personal efforts.

That movement will have to find a new leader now. This fall, Verdell and his wife moved to Oregon to live with their son. Verdell's vision and leadership, however, has insured Hurricane's pioneer heritage will be enjoyed by generations to come.