

A TOWN CALLED
LEEDS



Established May 9th, 1869

*Compiled by Patricia B. Hadley
Drawings by Jerry Anderson*

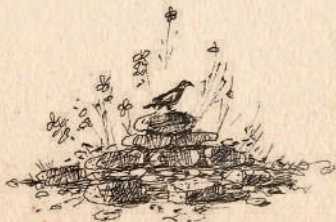
A TOWN CALLED LEEDS



The 1860s in America was a time of great transition. The west was being settled after gold had been discovered in California; a tragic Civil War was fought; Native Americans were struggling with many restrictions to their lifestyle; transportation was by horseback and wagons for most people. Under these conditions, Brigham Young sent groups of emigrants to establish settlements all over the west.

In Southern Utah, the area around St. George was being settled but it was rough going. Getting water to crops was very unpredictable as settlers endured periods of drought followed by heavy flooding. Getting water became the major occupation of new settlers, which is why Moses Harris took his family a little northeast of St. George, near Quail Creek. As other families joined him, they built a canal (the Harrisburg ditch) that was eight miles long.

Even after their hard work of building the canal, they were hampered by unstable soil and limited space where irrigation was possible. By 1867, many settlers believed that a place farther north, which they called "Road Valley" would allow easier diversion of water onto larger tracts of farmland. Groups moved to this new location until they had enough members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to form a local unit, called a "ward." Benjamin Stringham was called to be the first bishop of the ward, and the citizens honored him by naming their town Bennington.



THE BEGINNING



The year 1869 was a very good year. The Transcontinental Railroad was connected with a golden spike at Promontory Point, Utah; John Wesley Powell started his exploration of the Colorado River and Grand Canyon; and in the spring of 1869, Bishop Stringham made it clear that he did not want his little town named for him. He preferred to name it for the location in England where he had served a church mission as a young man. On May 9, 1869, the town was officially organized and given the name of Leeds.

Henry Jolley wrote in a journal that his father, William Jackson Jolley, built the first house in Leeds after several families claimed their property and lived in dugouts. He wrote, "For several years there were more dugouts than houses in Leeds." Others that claimed lots early on were John and Silas Harris, Richard Ashby, Charles Connally, Elijah Thomas, and Bob Pixton. Another source tells that Elijah K. Fuller participated in the effort in Harrisburg, and then moved to Leeds where his family grew up.

The new settlers had to use ingenuity to get water to their farmlands. They created a ditch to bring water from Quail Creek into the town, which required studying the lay of the land to determine a path that would keep the water flowing downhill. The making of ditches was very hard work and required determination and digging knowledge to get the water to each farm and to bring clean drinking water to the townspeople.

During this same period of time, several prospectors had been interested in a white reef-like ridge north of Leeds. They believed there was silver in this area, based on some

of the ore they discovered. Most were just laughed at and were told, "You don't find silver in sandstone!" One of them, John Kemple, kept his rocks for several years—until a willing assayer found that they actually contained rich silver. When word got out, there was a real stampede to an area northwest of Leeds, where settlers had rejected the rocky space as being impossible to build on or raise crops. With the discovery of silver, a new town came into being much faster than the neighboring farm towns.

Meanwhile, Leeds began doing very well agriculturally. The Leeds Ditch that was dug by willing hands, horses and scrapers was bringing its water to many tracts of good, rich soil. Fruit trees were planted, and farms produced vegetables, alfalfa, corn and other crops for animals. Soon there were chickens, pigs, cows, and sheep. Although the settlers were very poor where money was concerned, they produced what they needed and traded with each other for what they didn't have. Their "barter" system worked without a need for cash, which was very scarce.

New families continued to choose lots in Leeds. Alma and Solomon Angell came early, along with William Stirling, Charles Wilkinson, Willard G. McMullin and his sons Brigham Young McMullin, and Ira Edward McMullin. They were soon joined by Goudy Hogan, George Crosby and William D. Sullivan. By 1878 there were 38 families and 178 people living in Leeds and Harrisburg.

Some water issues arose in 1879, and the people of Leeds needed an organized effort to resolve them. There was a Leeds Water Company, but it was not officially



recognized. In February 1879, the Justice of the Peace, Joseph T. Wilkinson (Charles's son), along with others drew up Articles of Incorporation to formalize the company. The first item of business, as recorded in Wilkinson's journal, was to "estimate the cost of moving our water from its present course through the upper end of our town in another and cleaner direction, and (determine) if it is practicable." By February 24, it was decided to move the water from where it had "become fouled" to the new location, which also helped to "bring all the water to town in one ditch." With good water coming in, Leeds residents prospered in their fields and in their town.

Wells Fargo Express Co. built an office on Main Street where there was a stop planned for their stagecoach. When silver was found, the company moved the office and the stop up to Silver Reef, where John Rice hired Willard McMullin to create a large stone building with a retail store, a bank, and the Wells Fargo Express Co. This building was finished in 1878 and is still standing. After a careful renovation in 1985, it is still in very good condition today. The first Wells Fargo office in Leeds was changed into a Tithing Office for the storage of "tithing in kind" that was given by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



SILVER REEF RISES



Meanwhile in Silver Reef, as both mines and silver mills were created, a town grew very quickly around them. Buildings were speedily put up to house the miners and to provide offices and retail stores for the needs of those who were quickly moving into the area. Chinese people also learned about this new mining town, and a group of them came to create services for the community. They opened retail stores, drug stores, meat markets and laundries, and there was even a chair maker. They created a Chinatown and named Sam Wing as its unofficial mayor.

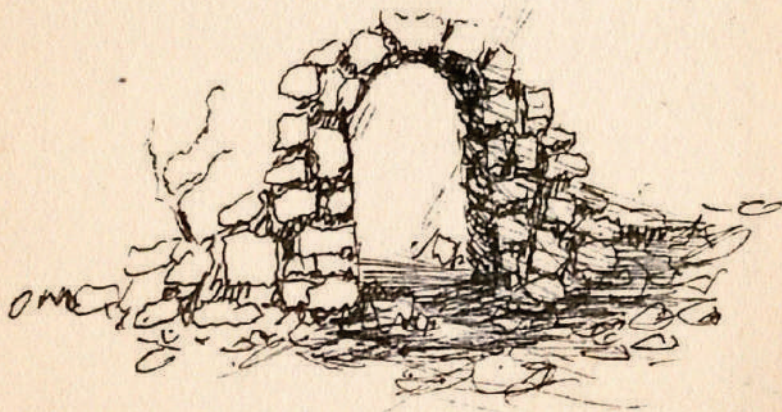
By 1883, there was a mile-long Main Street with a large hotel, the Harrison House, a popular restaurant, the Cosmopolitan, and nine saloons. Many of the miners came from England, Ireland, and Wales, and had crossed the ocean to come to the west. It may have been that the white hill where much of the silver was found reminded them of an ocean reef. At any rate, the town was soon named Silver Reef.

Leeds was one of several farming towns that were near Silver Reef—all settled by pioneers sent by Brigham Young. In the beginning, he discouraged his people from getting involved with mining—but not from providing produce and services to the miners. Soon, there was a symbiotic relationship between these communities. Leeds had a market for the meat and produce the settlers were growing, and Silver Reef provided cash for these products. Very fine grapes grown in the area were turned into an excellent wine that was appreciated by the miners.

Father Lawrence Scanlan, a Catholic priest, came to

Silver Reef hoping to influence the town against becoming as wild as the mining towns in Nevada. He built a church and a school, and brought nuns to serve in both. Other nuns trained in nursing came to serve in a hospital that was created in the basement of the church, possibly the first hospital in Southern Utah. By paying \$1.00 a month, miners could be treated at the hospital. These elements did have a stabilizing influence on Silver Reef, which benefitted Leeds and the surrounding towns as well.

That the Catholic Father had good relations with his Mormon counterparts is evidenced by their invitation to him to hold a Catholic High Mass in their newly constructed Sr. George Tabernacle, with the local LDS Choir furnishing the music—in Latin. The choir practiced for four weeks and then performed under the direction of John McFarlane, with Father Scanlan conducting the Mass. The Tabernacle was filled to capacity by the miners from Silver Reef, other local Catholics, and the curious but faithful Mormons who had supported the occasion.



GROWING PAINS



Leeds was not totally without some violence. George Boyd was a well-known figure in Leeds—considered “dashing” by the women and popular with the children. Through some misunderstanding, he and a storekeeper named Joseph Birch both said that a small piece of property belonged to them. Bad feelings between them grew until one morning Boyd came down Main Street, well-armed, and said he would “shoot it out” with Birch.

Birch came out of his store, saw Boyd coming with his guns, and dashed back inside to find his own gun. He fired through a 2-inch door—to warn off his opponent—but Boyd was right at the door and was killed. Birch was legally acquitted on grounds of self-defense, but he grieved over the shooting for the rest of his life.

The meeting house for the town of Leeds was just being completed in 1877, and the church members wanted it to have a bell. Seth Pixton happened to be going to Salt Lake on business and he chanced to mention the new church and its need for a bell. One of his listeners said, “I think I know of one you can have for free!” He shared a secret that had been kept for many years: When Johnston’s army was sent to Utah, they brought a cannon carriage with a bell that was used to summon the soldiers for various activities. Col. Patrick Connor had little respect for Brigham Young and his followers, and there were hostile relations between his soldiers and the civilians. Some young men took offense at often being called “stupid” and told the

soldiers that if they chose to, they could “steal the fort’s carriage and bell from under the nose of its guard.”

A few of the reckless young men managed to do just that one rainy night, rushing the entire unit to a barn and covering it with hay. Even though there was a reward posted for naming the culprits, they had never been discovered. The listener who told the story finished by saying, “If you’ll take that damned bell to Dixie, it’s yours!” Pixton was able to hide the bell in a sack of grain and transport it to Leeds. By the time the new meetinghouse was ready to be dedicated, a beautiful bell was installed in the bell tower.

The Silver Reef mines began closing down in the 1890s, and Leeds people missed being able to sell their large crops of cherries, peaches, and other fruits and vegetables, so they began looking for new customers. Because they had established a reputation for excellent fruit, they were able to sell large amounts to neighboring towns and eventually even to cities farther north. There were many families who brought their specialty produce to a table by the highway, where the children of the family became good salesmen. The fruit stands also increased the reputation for having excellent produce, especially peaches, cherries and apricots.





The E.C. Olsen home. (Photo 1995)

As the cash economy developed, some notable homes began to appear on Main Street. E.C. Olsen built the first house at the northeast corner of the intersection of Main and Center. It began as a small three-room house, which was added onto as his family increased. Then he purchased the Barbee Store next door and named it “Leeds Mercantile.”

Across the street, southeast, some property was owned by William Stirling, who was the water master in town. When William was in Silver Reef one wintry day, he saw that the stream near to the Christy Mill had frozen over and the mill was overheating. To avoid an explosion, he opened head gates to the Leeds ditch water and saved the mill from being engulfed in flames. The



William Stirling home (Photo 1992)

mill owners were so grateful, they put William on the payroll for the following full year. This extra money made it possible for him to build a two-story Victorian-style house to welcome his bride, Miss Susie Harris. The home is still in use by descendants and is still beautiful.

On the southwest corner, Brigham Young McMullin and his father Willard, the well-known stone mason, built a home for B.Y. and his bride, Ada Parker. It started as a one-room rock building with a nine-foot ceiling and 18-inch stone walls, but also grew as the family grew. At its prime, many guests stopped by on their way to St. George, including Brigham Young and other officers of the LDS Church. It was often called the “Mormon Hotel.”

On the northwest corner of this intersection there was the Church’s Tithing House, which replaced the former Wells Fargo Express Office and Bank. Willard McMullin had built a two-room sandstone building with a dugout basement. It was designed in the Greek Revival style, made entirely of stone with 18-inch walls and high ceilings. The



B.Y. McMullin home (Mormon Hotel) Photo 1994

property was surrounded by a stone wall, which is also still standing. It was originally a storehouse for the produce or animals that members brought to the bishop to pay their tithing, so the basement kept things cooler. When church members began using cash for tithing, the building became available for rent. The Relief Society and other groups made use of the building, but by the 1920s, several families took turns renting the small house. During the period of the Depression, renters were happy for two rooms.



Built 1891-Tithing Office (Picture 1995)

A NEW CENTURY.



By the 1890s, the town of Silver Reef was phasing out, and many of the wooden structures were taken apart and moved to other locations—some of them to Leeds. Two notable buildings, the Catholic church building and the schoolhouse, were purchased and moved to Leeds as they were. Since the town had its own church building, the Silver Reef church became a social hall, or “Opera House,” as some called

it. Dances and programs were held there, but its reputation came from the traveling stock companies which offered two or three-night engagements of fine plays, vaudeville shows and later, early movies. The performers, who were well known in the Mountain West played to packed houses as neighboring towns got word of each performance

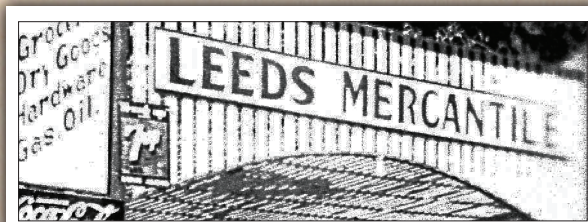
The schoolhouse was also brought to Leeds in 1907. It was somewhat remodeled and served for five decades as the two-room school for eight grades of the town's schoolchildren. The "little school," grades one to four, were taught in the south room, and the "big school" room on the north had grades five to eight. Bert Sullivan was principal in the school for many years, and he taught the children in the "big school." In 1956, the last students were bussed into larger schools, and this building eventually became the Leeds Town Hall.

With the production of fine fruit increasing every year, it was natural for people to think of canning it for sale. After the turn of the century, several Leeds citizens began canning and in 1913, The Leeds Packing Company was incorporated, with Brigham Jarvis as president, Edward McMullin vice president, and Etta McMullin as secretary/treasurer. The intention was to install a plant with the daily capacity of



10,000 cans. The Washington County News reported on December 6th, 1915: "Mgr B.Jarvis and Mrs. Ella Bentley of the Southern Utah Packing Co. arrived here last night from St. George. They started the cannery this morning and expect to keep it running until Christmas. Pork and beans, beef, sausage, and soup will be the principal things canned."

Leeds continued to prosper in the 20th Century as there was a sorghum factory, the cannery, and later a broom factory that gave citizens good work to do and products to sell outside of the town. There were several stores which maintained good business over the years. W.T. Barbee opened the first one on Main Street, and there was a Hillard Bakery just down the street. Orson Adams built a store at the extreme south end of town, run by his daughter, Susann Harris. A Mrs. Hartman's home became the Wilson Butcher Shop. Jerry and Ethyl George had an ice cream shop in the summer. The longest standing store, the Leeds Mercantile, was in the space left by Barbee's store when he left Leeds. It was purchased by E.J. Graff first and later by E.C. Olson who lived next door. It was run for many years by Charles and Kate Allen. Willard McMullin had a very small store at the Log Cabin Inn. The Log Cabin Inn and Leeds Mercantile later added gasoline and oil to their offerings as family cars became more available.



WORLD WAR I YEARS



By 1915, there was a war going on in Europe and the communities around St. George collected money to send "For Sufferers by War." As a testament to the area's prosperity, it was noted in the news that the "St George area (including Leeds) had donated the 5th highest amount out of 73 areas that were collecting."

Most mines in Silver Reef closed before the turn of the century, but there were representatives of several mining companies who visited the area in 1916, investigating their property. Locals wondered if the mines were still viable and would perhaps be opened again.

By 1917, America had agreed to assist in the war by sending fighting men to France, Holland, and Belgium. Those who were called up from Leeds included: Robert P. McMullin, Archie C. Sullivan, and Karl A. McMullin. On September 11, 1917, the County News reported, "Our soldier boys were guests of honor at a dancing party given by Miss Margaret Olsen and Miss Ethyl McMullin at the home of Bishop Stirling. The porch and lawns were effectively decorated in the national colors which, together with the beautiful lighting effects, made an attractive setting for the men's farewell." Other men were called up in subsequent drafts, and Leeds was very proud of her "fighting men."

Later, the State of Utah had engraved certificates made for each of the boys who served in the World War. Those who received certificates from Leeds were: Charles and Victor Angell, Francis and George Leany, Joseph Stirling, Archie Sullivan, and Clifford, Frank, Robert, Karl and Oscar McMullin,



New families came into Leeds at this time who put down strong roots to help the town to develop. Riley Savage moved onto a large plot at the north end of Leeds. (In the 1960s this farm was cut in half by Interstate 15.) His son Ross purchased a large farm from his father's plot and continued to live there with his own family of four girls. Elijah Fuller's son, Donald Elijah, had purchased a lot and moved a building from Silver Reef to Leeds, where he reared a family of nine children with his wife, Lavinnia Angell. His sons Clinton, Stanley and Reed had come of age and were starting families of their own.

Residents of Leeds were no longer discouraged from being involved in the mining itself, and several townspeople opened their own mines or financially backed others. Alex Colbath came to Leeds and was actively involved in the mines. He bought the former Wells Fargo building, and his family moved into it for their home. When Colbath gave up his mining interests and moved away, his stepson Glenn Beal and his wife Wilma Cox moved into the Wells Fargo Building with their family of five children.

After the war, the price of silver went back up and several mining companies did come back to Silver Reef and other mines in the area. Silver was again being mined as well as copper, which was also found in the sandstone. In the next few years, both metals were sought after. By 1920, several mines were able to install electricity to run the machinery and to provide lighting inside the mines.

The decade of the 1920s continued to be a prosperous one for the town of Leeds. Besides the cannery and sorghum factory, which added to the town's economy, the town's orchards were producing great fruit for a

ready market. When Main Street became part of the Arrowhead Trail and later became US Highway 91, the traffic from other states increased, bringing more customers to the Leeds fruit stands. There was some activity in the mines, which meant there were also people on the payroll who needed goods. Although the stock market crash in 1929 was distressing to everyone, Leeds did not feel its impact nearly as much as other areas.

Walter and Jessie Eagar came to Leeds in 1928 to manage E.J.Graff's store and Walter was made the postmaster, which he continued to be for the next thirty years. They and their children were musically talented, and they formed a first-rate band. The "Eagar Beaver Band" played for many dances and other occasions in Leeds and in all the close communities in Washington County.

When telephones came along, there were just two phones in Leeds—one at the Leeds Mercantile and one at the Log Cabin Inn, north of town, run by bachelor brothers Willard and Bob McMullin. Young people would be tapped to be "messengers," and were paid 10 cents to run and get anyone who was wanted on the phone. Later, when phones could be installed in private homes, they were on party lines with at least four receivers. Private lines didn't come to Leeds until sometime after World War II.

In 1929, Edward McMullin was made Bishop of the Leeds Ward. The people wanted a new church building, which they were willing to help pay for and also help build. They incorporated the old one into the new building, so there was an enlargement of their church house. The new part was built in the Spanish Mission style with a covered porch. They could ring the bell with a long rope



hanging down through the ceiling of the porch, and it was rung for church meetings—and for any other occasion in the town. This new building had electric lighting and a coal stoker furnace to heat all the rooms. An additional luxury was that it had indoor rest rooms! The mission-style building was dedicated September 25, 1930, by the President of the Church, Heber J. Grant, which was a great honor for the members of the LDS Church in Leeds.

During the 1930s, several changes came to the people of Leeds which broadened the town's activities and population. Water had always been crucial in this and all agricultural towns in Washington County. While the Quail Creek and ditches had been tapped to provide most that was needed in both Leeds and Silver Reef, the lifestyle was changing after the turn of the Century. Residents scrambled to have both irrigation and drinking water as part of their water rights, so in 1932, the Leeds Domestic WaterUsers Association (LDWA) was formed (out of the Leeds Water Company) to address the culinary water needs. Each residence was allocated 40,000 gallons per month, which allowed for culinary water as well as for irrigating the vegetable gardens and fruit trees.

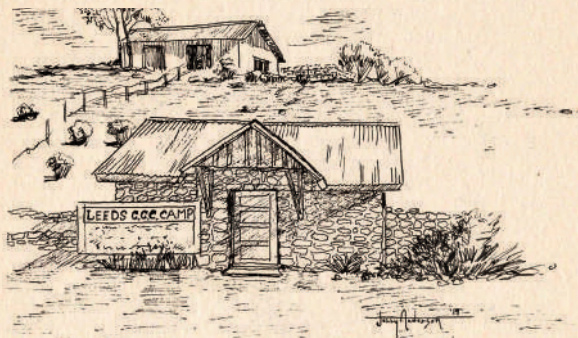
CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CCC



In the middle of the Depression, a national election brought the country a new president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Within days of taking office, President Roosevelt initiated a program to take jobless young men off the streets and hire them at government expense to work restoring forests, building bridges, carving out trails, and fighting fires on public lands. The program was called the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC, and within months it had put three quarters of a million young men to work. The men were housed in barracks and their camp directors were military officers, so they learned the discipline that goes with a military life. Their work was supervised by local experienced men (LEMs) who knew the area and were skilled in the kind of work the boys were asked to do.

A good-sized CCC camp was established in Leeds in 1933, with 200 young men brought to the camp from eastern locations. Several LEMs were hired from Leeds, and a newcomer, Silas Bushman, came to Leeds as the Education Advisor, teaching high school courses to those who were interested. Most of the young men had not graduated from high school, so they could get a GED in camp if they were willing to study. Many took advantage of this opportunity.

Locally, the CCCs built the road to Oak Grove and established a campground there. They were also trained in erosion control, which was badly needed in Southern Utah to protect those water supplies. The small town of Leeds, which had seldom had a population over 200, suddenly



doubled in size. Local residents were grateful for the kind of contributions the young men were making in their surroundings. One matron said, “We learned to love those young men, and we called them ‘our boys.’ We often invited them to join us in our activities at home or in the town.”

An unforeseen benefit occurred as the program came to an end in 1941. These well-trained, hard-working young men who already knew something about discipline were well suited for the armed forces, and one million of them enlisted to serve in World War II!

During this period of time, the Tithing House had good use as the only rental unit in Leeds. Riley Savage started there; The Colbath family used the building for a few years; Stanley and Sadie Fuller lived there and their first son, McKay, was born in the Tithing House; Silas and Virginia Bushman moved in with four children; the Hartley family also spent time in the two-room building.

Although it was purchased in 1965 from the church by Joseph Beesley, who periodically worked on the property and hoped to retire there, he and his family were never able to come and live in the building. In 2013, Kenneth and Patricia Hadley purchased the property from this family and have restored the building to its original layout.

EFFECTS OF WORLD WAR II



During the 1940s, Leeds experienced the same hardships that were felt everywhere because of the wars with Japan and Germany. There was rationing of food and gasoline, communication was difficult, and more young men were sent to war. Farming families were deprived of their sons' strong backs to help, educations were interrupted for those in college, and young men could no longer serve missions for their church. Residents of Leeds were very patriotic, however, and they found ways to manage and to support the war effort.

There were 28 young people called up from Leeds to serve—in all branches of the military—and most of them went overseas. Of these, three were killed in action: Harvey Savage and Clayton Sullivan, both of whom came from long-established families of Leeds. DeLos Bradshaw was also killed, whose mother had grown up in Leeds, moved away, and then moved back during the war.

After the war, US Highway 91 became a busy street again as people began to travel for business and vacations. It connected travelers from the Coast to the many great national parks in Utah and Arizona, and connected northern Utah residents to Arizona and California. Leeds again benefitted from the traffic to sell fine produce along Main Street.

In Silver Reef, the miners found another sought-after mineral, uranium. The discovery and production of this substance actually caused another mining boom as agencies were paying well for any amount of uranium.

MID 20TH CENTURY



In May 1953, Leeds was incorporated, and Clair Stirling was elected as Town President. He had made it known that he was tired of waiting for the county to provide services that were needed in Leeds. When asked by some County Commissioners if he would support them in the next election, he bluntly said no. "You have done nothing for the town of Leeds," he said. "Our roads are a mess, and you have ignored our requests for help, so I am not voting for you." Some county help was quickly given on the town roads, and the request for incorporation went through easily.

Stirling was followed by those who became Mayors of the town.* Many improvements came from the Mayor and City Council form of government. By January 1956, the pipeline bringing pure water from the spring at Pine Valley Mountain was completely installed and Leeds began enjoying its fine culinary water system.

In the same year, the few students still in the school building began to be bussed into St. George, so the building was put to other uses. It was first leased to the

**See appendix*



Leeds Ward to be used as a cultural hall and activity center. The classroom walls were removed, and a stage was built on the south end. There was also a small kitchen for preparing refreshments. Dances and other events were held there for the whole community.

In 1960, curbs and gutters replaced the hazardous open ditches on Main Street. Street lights were installed, streets were named and houses were numbered (which simplified the delivery of packages). Leeds began to look more like a modern residential town.

In the 1970s a volunteer Fire Department was organized with Don Fawson as the Fire Chief. During his leadership, the LDWA saw that a new 8-inch water line that included fire hydrants was installed along the west side of Main Street. By 1976, a fire house was built, and up-to-date materials and equipment were purchased. Fawson was able to recruit good volunteers who were willing to drop everything at the sound of the siren coming from the fire house and race to a fire.

Also in 1976, a new, much larger church house was built for the Leeds Ward which included everything needed for a cultural center, so they no longer needed the school building. The former school house was once again remodeled to become the Leeds Town Hall and community gathering place. It houses the Mayor's office and a small auditorium for council meetings and public activities.

One historian, writing about Leeds in the 1970s said, "Leeds has now grown to boast a new subdivision, a trailer court, and a large nursery with greenhouses." A Daughters of the Utah Pioneers camp was organized. The population of Leeds was growing enough to support these

activities and the town of Silver Reef had possibilities for a rebirth. The rocky area that was considered “worthless property” in the 1860s, began to look like “prime real estate” to many retirees who saw the mild climate and the amazing views as ideal conditions for their homes. With modern equipment to move large boulders, the grounds were no longer “impossible.”

NEW SILVER REEF



The location of the new Silver Reef allows its residents to view not only the scenic beauty, but also a unique junction of three very different landforms. Former Leeds mayor Mike Empey describes the geography:

“Find a location in Silver Reef where you have an unobstructed view in all directions. Look first to the southwest. Where you are standing is almost exactly on the northern boundary of the vast Mojave Desert. The Mojave extends from the Leeds area, across southern Nevada and into southern California.



“Now turn to the north and west. You are seeing the south boundary of the Basin and Range typography. This extends north into Utah, across central and northern Nevada all the way to the Sierra Nevada Range along the California border. One of the best places to see this transition is the Oak Grove Road as you leave Silver Reef and head toward Pine Valley Mountain.

“Next, turn and look east where you will see the Colorado Plateau. This plateau extends all across southern Utah into western Colorado and south into northern Arizona and New Mexico. This is the ‘Red Rock Country’ of Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon, Arches, Canyonlands, and other national parks, including Grand Canyon and Colorado National Monument—some of the most spectacular scenery in the world.”

Plans for a Silver Reef subdivision had been started as early as 1968, but legal problems, such as succession of ownership and water rights, delayed the fruition of the plan. As these problems were resolved, purchasers for the 39 lots appeared quickly. Residents—new and old—became interested in trying to preserve the old Silver Reef, particularly the Wells Fargo building.

Joy Henderlider from St. George worried that the history of Silver Reef might be lost, so she found several Silver Reef residents who had similar fears. They formed a committee, the Wells Fargo Silver Reef Monument Committee, which in 1985 became incorporated. Their first priority was the Wells Fargo Building itself. After the Colbath and Beal families moved out, the Wells Fargo building sat abandoned for a number of years. It was badly in need of repairs so it could be used in other ways. Under the leadership of

Mrs. Henderlinder, local residents donated funds and labor to beautifully restore the impressive stone building.

Jerry Anderson, a local artist/sculptor, was a prime contributor in restoring the building and making it a destination. When the work was completed in 1989, Jerry opened a studio in one half of the building, and a small museum was started in the other side. Many local residents who had an interest in items they found in the landscape and collected them, loaned or donated them to this new museum. Later, donations of artifacts were also given by new residents who found the items as they dug their foundations. An archeologist, Dr. Robert Schuyler, from the University of Pennsylvania took an interest in Silver Reef in 1981 and began bringing students there for field study, to teach them how to find and evaluate artifacts. After they had studied the items they were often donated to the museum.

By 2010, Jerry Anderson moved his studio to his home, and the museum languished and was often open only one day a week. In 2013, a group of concerned residents worked with Washington County to establish a new non-profit organization, the Silver Reef Foundation. Ron Cundick was chosen to be the President of the foundation, and his wife, Pat Cundick, became the Museum curator.



Eric Fleming, who had earlier helped to manage the small museum, became the Museum Director. They found many willing volunteers to act as docents—both in Silver Reef and in Leeds—and opened the museum four days a week.

With the support of many volunteers the museum has become a true destination, attracting local, national, and even international visitors. With expanded exhibits and historical programs being offered, the new Museum Director, Bobbi Wan-kier, prints a schedule that is followed by many travel guides as well as local supporters.

TWO GROWING TOWNS MERGE



In 1998, the boundaries of Silver Reef were annexed into the town of Leeds. Now the small agricultural community, whose population had never been more than 400 in the 1800s, grew with its several subdivisions to 850.

Accolades come easily when discussing the town of Leeds. Residents who leave, for jobs elsewhere, for higher education, or for military service, feel a strong pull to return “home”—and many do come back to rear their own children.

Others from out of state who have bought property in Leeds, feel drawn in to contribute service or help in their new community, and they become involved in the political or service organizations. Many of them have become members of the Town Council and several have run for Mayor of Leeds. The current mayor, Wayne Peterson, came from New Jersey in 2011. Another transplant since 2003, LoAnne



Barnes, is President of the Leeds Preservation Committee, a group of early and late-comers, who have placed historical markers throughout the town and keep the interest in preservation high.

Although Leeds started out as an agricultural settlement of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it has evolved into a pleasant community with much more diversity, while retaining its welcoming ambience.

In 1993, Bart Anderson, writing in *The Spectrum*, headlined an article about Leeds: "Productive Leeds an Example of Perfect American Village." He quotes from earlier historians, including LDS Church historian, Andrew Jenkins, who visited there in 1892: "It occupies a pleasant situation and is a prosperous place from a financial point of view. The people there are perhaps better off than any of their Dixie neighbors."

Nell Murbarger wrote of Leeds in 1950: "Dipping down from the Red mesas of southwestern Utah, US 91 skims through the center of a green valley checkered with fields. Fringing the road for the space of a dozen heart beats are neat houses, orderly yards, a church, post office, tiny store, school house then, once more, the pavement is climbing back toward the arid hills." Murbarger said that travelers might pass through Leeds quickly without realizing they have visited this "perfect example of the American village."



APPENDIX

Mayors of Leeds:

Clair Stirling 1953-1954

A.A. Eastman 1954-1957

Willard G. McMullen 1958-1961

Frank Eager 1962-1965

Glenn Beal 1966-1969

Ross Savage 1970-1977

Clynn Davenport 1978-1981

Carl Seierup 1982-1985

Stanley Roberts 1986-1993

Brent DeMille 1994-1997

Mike Empey 1998-2001

Norma Gier 2002-2005

Trudy Law 2006-2009

Hyrum D. Lefler 2010-2011

Alan Roberts 2011-2013

Angela Rohr 2013-2014

Wayne Peterson 2014-Present



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Grateful appreciation is expressed to the following contributors for their time, information, and editing for this project (alphabetically):

Jerry Anderson

LoAnne Barnes

Ray Beal

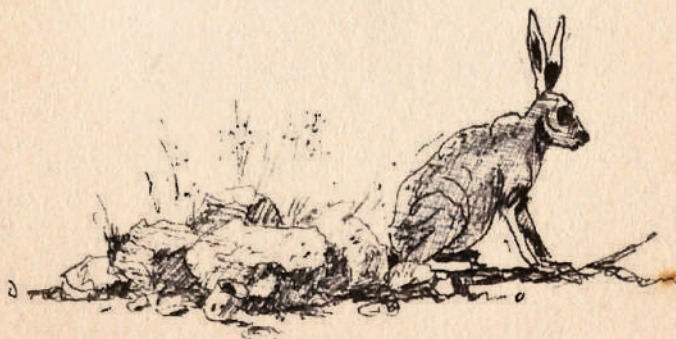
Pat Cundick

Ron Cundick

Karen Peterson

Wayne Peterson

Susan Savage

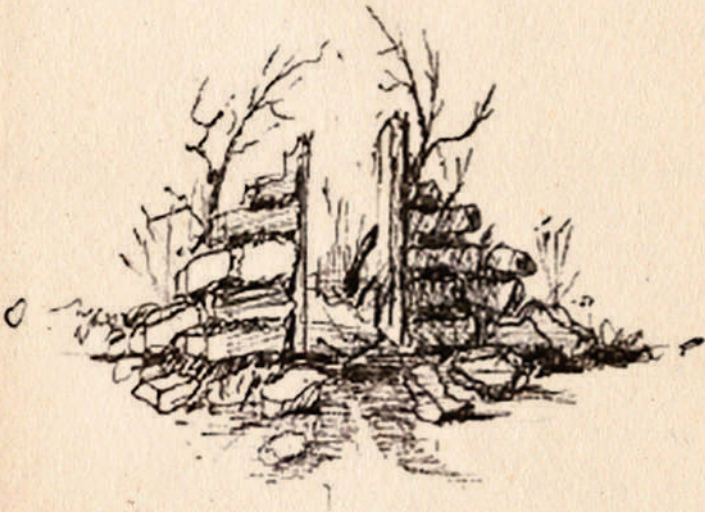


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*So come and sit beneath our vine,
Eat our fruit and drink our wine,
Jump in your car and speed away,
But you'll be back again some day.*

- Marietta Mariger