

THE STORY OF THE LEEDS TITHING OFFICE

Tithing offices were built in most Mormon settlements between 1850 and 1910.

Leeds was settled in 1869. The Leeds Tithing Office was constructed in 1891-92. Of the tithing offices built before the 1890's only 4 of the 8 were built of stone. The Leeds Tithing Office has the distinction of being one of these four. The stone wall in front of the Leeds Tithing Office, although in need of repair, is original and unique as no other tithing house in the state has the traditional wall still standing.

The Stone Masons:

The Willard G McMullin family arrived in Harrisburg in 1860's and he and his son built many of the stone homes and public buildings in Harrisburg, Leeds and Silver Reef. A number of these homes and buildings are still standing. Examples of this family's considerable skill as stone masons are showcased today in the restored Adams House in Harrisburg, the Wells Fargo Building in Silver Reef and the Leeds Tithing Office. All three sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Building Site:

The corner where the Tithing House stands today was originally owned by William Stirling who owned the entire block. He sold it in 1877 to Charles A Connelly who sold it in 1878 to John H Rice. In 1881 it was sold to Thomas Judd (of Judd Dry Goods). Thomas & Mary Judd sold the property in 1890 to the Leeds Ecclesiastical Ward.

Prior to the Tithing Office being built The Wells Fargo Express Company operated an office and bank on this corner site. This was before the Wells Fargo Express Office was built in Silver Reef. Oscar McMillin ("Saga of Three Towns") tells of walking from Harrisburg "just to see express coach as it thundered down the street" of Leeds.

The Function:

Tithing Offices served as community centers of trade, social welfare, and economic activity in the cash-poor Utah Territory. Donations were primarily "in kind." Leeds like other nineteenth and twentieth century Utah towns was a cash-poor agricultural community.

The Leeds Tithing Office had a cellar which contained bins for storing "in kind" produce. Many remember a big set of scales for weighing produce. Dried peaches, pears, apples, apricots were some of the produce given as tithing. At one time oak barrels were used to store up to 300 gallons of wine.

The Owners:

The 1920's saw "in kind" tithing discontinued and the Tithing Office become a home to several families in Leeds. In 1964 the LDS Church sold the building to Joseph Beesley for \$500.00.