

December 9, 1985
Royce Jones
Chamber of Commerce
St. George, Utah

In a quick survey of properties for an historic district, I feel there are enough buildings to do this project.

I will need a surveyor to do the description of the area, and someone to help me measure the buildings.

I have not done some of the buildings Mr. Curtis showed me, due to the fact, I wanted to see if there were enough for a district as mentioned in the walking tour of St. George, which in itself, is enough, for a district.

Your old courthouse is already on the National Registry and some of the other buildings are registered with other organizations which should help for the district nomination.

Mary Lontz, C.G.R.S.
Historic Site Surveyor

Mary Lontz

Describe the Present and Original:

St. George, Utah is about 190 miles South of Salt Lake City, Utah and about 90 miles North of Las Vegas, Nevada. The desert lands here depend on water from the Virgin River for the people, cattle, and crops.

The route to St. George was a hard one to find three hundred years ago. Today St. George has an excellent access Route in Interstate 15. In the early days, even the Mormons had no good route here.

The Indians were of course, the first people in the area of Utah. They had a canal system which the Mormons learned to use, and they all grew cotton and dyed the wool and wove their clothes. The pre-historic people lived here in the area from about 500 A.D. to 900.

The Spanish came within a hundred miles of St. George in their conquest for gold and Father Escalante in the 1776's led an expedition from Santa Fe through the southwest into the area of St. George. They were in the area of what is Hurricane, Utah, and they identified the Virgin River.

Now, in more modern times, Mexico had hold of this area in 1821. In 1826 Jedediah Smith, reached the Virgin River and saw the area of Santa Clara, Utah and the narrows of the Virgin River. Another group led by Thomas Smith, trapped in this area. The old Spanish Trail came near here in 1829.

The Indians became slaves to the Mormons and Jacob Hamblin, a Mormon leader, had Indian girls living with him. Jacob Hamblin brought back to this area red peaches and grew them.

In 1844, John F. Fremont came to this area and named the river RIO VIRGIN.

In 1848, gold was discovered in California and the migration westward began.

The Indians and Mormons were at unrest with the U.S. Government and therefore the government tried to get a railroad into the area, but it did not work out.

Mining came into the area in 1861 and therefore brought steamers on the river.

The Arizona Territory was cut out of New Mexico in 1863 and gold now became the want of the Mormons.

John Wesley Powell, a surveyor of the Colorado River, explored the area of St. George, Utah. He saw the need to harness the water to reclaim the desert. Mr. Powell knew Jacob Hamblin, one of the Mormon leaders, and used him as a guide and Mr. Powell drew topographical surveys and established or helped to start what is Bureau of Reclamation which aided the arid West.

In the 1870's mining brought more people to the area for gold and salt.

Joseph Smith, the Mormon, wanted to have a railroad to Kanab, and the area of the Grand Canyon, which was a dream, but still led people to this area.

Between 1849 and 1889, the Mormons discovered cotton grew well in this area, and they now found they could get along with the Indians and traded with them. They now grew grapes, cotton, and tobacco, as well as other fruits. Now Brigham Young called three hundred of his people to this area. They knew how to build dams on the Virgin River and even though they did not last during floods, they did learn to supply water to the fields for crops.

About 1864, a cotton industry grew up in Washington, Utah, not far from St. George. This was Brigham Young's. He now saw the need for a courthouse, tabernacle and temple.

DESCRIBE PAST AND PRESENT

Brigham Young's idea of having a railroad failed. His churches influence on the national government did not go well, because of the polygamy, which the government outlawed.

However, all these ideas brought people to the area and today we still have a significant area which still shows the past.

There are approximately twenty-four commercial buildings in the downtown area of St. George, Utah. They comprise older homes that have now become business properties, as well as business properties.

Most of these buildings were finished in the 1870's and 1880's. Many were built by local, prominent Mormons who emigrated here. The buildings range in size from 14 feet by 12 feet, to larger sizes. Many are made from local red sandstone which was obtained right here at St. George, and black lava rock.

The styles vary from pioneer vernacular, to pioneer embellished, to house pattern book, to commercial. These styles associated with the idea of the late 1800's, illustrate the development at that time of a growing community.

These buildings are a mixture of one and a half to two story buildings. The primary building material was adobe brick, and sandstone. The colors were usually that of the native stone, red, orange, black. Some of the buildings have a second floor porch.

A few of the buildings are distinguished from the others by their size and design. All the buildings are in good to excellent condition with owners who are actively maintaining them.

A few drastic alterations have been done to the buildings. However, electricity has been added as well as running water, toilets, and fire protection devices.

The development here was by early Mormons, sent to start a community. Some of the inhabitants of this district were prominent Mormon church leaders, and although not nationally famous, they were prominent in their community. Their energy and initiative in managing their activities helped the town grow. And these people had an influence upon all those they met.

Erastus Snow was a Missionary and Pioneer of the early Mormon Church. He had a natural endowment for leadership. He was descended from Richard Snow, who came to England on the ship, Expedition. Erastus Snow was born November 9, 1818 in Vermont, and died May 28, 1888 at Salt Lake City, Utah. He married first- Artimesia Beman, of New York state, December 13, 1838, then Minerva White on April 2, 1844, third- Elizabeth Ashby December 19, 1847, and last Julia Josephine Spencer, April 11, 1856.

Erastus Snow was elected to the territorial legislature

He was also elected to the committee on roads, bridges, ferries, and built the "Big House" at St. George, Utah in 1868. The most respected guest in this house was Brigham Young.

In 1849, Erastus Snow, as an Apostle of the Mormon Church, left for Denmark. He toured England, Scotland, and Wales. Under his direction, missionaries went to the provinces of Denmark, Norway, and Iceland. In Copenhagen, he learned the Danish language, and then travelled in Prussia, and Belgium. He undertook the translation of the "Doctrines and Covenants: which was completed in 1852. He also issued a new and enlarged edition of Hymns. There are too many other facts to mention about him here.

The citizens of St. George, Utah today are interested in documenting and preserving their community's history. Here, was an academy, now called, DIXIE. It was opened in 1911 and has grown today.

At St. George, today, there is also an: airport, library,

3.

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL

Mormon Tabernacle, Mormon Temple, the largest tennis courts in the world, and a Cancer treatment center, plus many other facilities.

REFERENCES:

"ERASTUS SNOW" by Andrew Karl Larson, 1971 pub., page 230.

"I WAS CALLED TO DIXIE" by Andrew Karl Larson, 1961, p. 562,563.

Utah Historical Quarterly, Spring, 1979, Vol. 47, # 2, p. 110-129
in summary. By Melvin T. Smith.

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL: (Buildings)

The St. George, Utah historic district begins with the old courthouse on St. George Blvd. which is on the National Registry. We then go North to what was the old opera or social hall on the N.E. Corner of Main and 200 N. Street. The social hall was started by the Gardners Club, who built a large basement and upper room 23 feet by 56 feet, known as the wine cellar. Miles P. Romney was selected to build a 35 foot by 50 foot addition to the wine cellar joining the west of the building. The old part of the building was used as a stage and side wings the new part, to seat patrons. People bought stock in the building to help raise money for it. The new addition formed a T shaped building. Many local people performed here as well as a few from New York City.

The main floor had a slope from the west entrance to the stage of four feet, with an archestra circle in the front, just off stage. On each side was a four foot gallery at stage height with room for forty chairs on each side which were reserved seats. In this way four hundred could attend. A movable floor was used so dances could be held in the building. The building was also used for speakers of political offices. About 1887, the building was sold and later used for a beet seed cleaning factory.

We now go West to the corner of 100 W and find the Brigham Young home which is on the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. Brigham Young wintered here and was the second president and prophet of the Mormon Church. The original portion of the house was built in 1869 and completed in 1871.

Across the street from the Young home is the Woolley house. It sits on the corner of 217 North 100 West and was one of the largest homes in St. George for its period. Mr. Woolley owned the home until 1907 when he sold it to Charles F. Foster. The Foster Family owned it for almost sixty years. It was scheduled to be torn down when Col. Elvin Maughn took it and restored it. It is now owned by Jay Curtis and his wife and is in excellent condition and used as a Bed and Breakfast Inn. It is registered with

The house just north of the Curtis house is also an old home. It was built in 1883 by George Whitehead, who enlarged the house with the family. It had two staircases: one going east to west and one going west to east but with a common landing. There was no plumbing in the house so Mr. Whitehead ran a pipe from the irrigation ditch to an upstairs bathroom so the family could have baths.

We now go South on 100 W to the Israel Ivins home. Dr. Ivins was the first doctor in the area and had a drugstore at the rear of his home for making products from herbs. He also helped to survey the town and start the first government.

South of this house is the Anthony Ivins home. Mr. Ivins was twice President of the St. George stake and as mayor of St. George from April, 1890- Jan., 1894. He was also a territorial representative to the Utah Constitutional Convention. Later he was called by his church to Mexico.

Just next door and south of the Anthony Ivins house is the Moses Andrus home. The rock foundation for this house was laid and let stand a year before building upon it. In this way the foundation settled and dried and has never cracked. Moses Andrus was the first pioneer cattleman in the area.

In the next block across the street is the Benjamin F. Pendleton home. He was the community blacksmith for Brigham Young,

Homes, (continued)

and began construction for the house by mixing his own adobe on the site where Dixie College was started. He had only a three brick mold, so only three bricks were made at a time, then dried, stacked, and then three more made. The house was completed by his son, who used the same molds.

The Woodward School is on the corner of Tabernacle St. and 100 West. In 1898 ground was cleared for a foundation and in 1901 the building was finished. George Woodward gave \$3,000.00 toward the building of the school so it was named after him. He also paid for the heating plant. Large and small blocks were used.

Across from the Woodward School on Tabernacle Blvd. is the Orson Pratt home. He was one of the Apostles sent by Brigham Young to lead the St. George colony. He knew well astronomy, mathematics, and debate. Orson Pratt left New York State and arrived in Salt Lake City in 1861. He explored Canyon Creek and was of those who moved to elect Brigham Young President of the Church.

Orson Pratt was a nominee for the state Senate in 1862.

He and his wife and son arrived in St. George, in 1862.

In 1864, Orson was on the board to build a library at St. George.

And in 1862, he was on a committee for a road proposal -for a road to be built from Old Harmony to St. George via Toquerville.

Sept. 15, 1863, Apostle Orson Pratt officiated at the cornerstone laying for the tabernacle in St. George.

References: "Erastus Snow" by Andrew Karl Larson, 1971, pgs: 159,160,221,310,339. I WAS CALLED TO DIXIE, by Andrew Karl Larson, 1961, pgs: 567,568,517,507,114.)

In 1864 Orson Pratt was called to Europe and the home went to Richard Bentley. He partially converted it to a mercantile business and his family lived upstairs. In a large upper room, eggs of silk worms hatched and were fed mulberry leaves. The price for a gunny-sack of mulberry leaves was .05 to feed the worms.

The Judd store is next to the Pratt home on Tabernacle Blvd.

The small house, the western attachment to the store, was built in 1866 by Joseph Bentley, Jr. Richard Bentley added the store sometime in the 1870's. In 1911 the Judd family purchased the store. In 1870, Richard Bentley helped survey St. George and put a permanent marker in the corner of the public square.

He also helped with the petition for return of Mormon land to Utah from Nevada in 1870. August 25, 1865, he helped arrange what was to be called the best fruit show in St. George.

(Reference: I WAS CALLED TO DIXIE, by Andrew Karl Larson, 1961, pgs. 431,436,548.)

The George W. Worthen Home is on Tabernacle Blvd. next to the Judd store. George Worthen was an early builder in St. George. His home has a simple charm, and is presently run by LaJeans Draperies.

The Mormon Tabernacle is on the corner of Tabernacle Street and Main Street. It is listed on the Utah State Registry.

The cornerstone was laid June 1, 1863 by Apostle Orson Pratt, Amasa M. Lyman, Erastus Snow, and Chief Mason, Edward L. Parry.

The dimensions are 106 feet long and 56 feet wide on outside of main walls. There are five large windows on both sides, fifteen feet high and five feet wide, each window having 72 smaller panes about five inches by five inches. Each piece of glass cost .75 when put into the building. There are two front doors, at the top of eight concrete steps. The doors are approximately 24 inches wide and six feet high, made of wood. The eight steps lead down to a landing, and then there are another eight steps down to ground level. The steps are ten feet long and a foot wide.

The architect for this building was Miles Romney.

The basement walls are three feet thick with nine foot ceiling and a projecting water table between the basement and upper part.

The main walls are 2½ foot thick of solid masonry and 29 foot high ceilings.

The gallery to be extended along the North, South, and East of assembly room, supported on North and South with 9 solid turned columns and 2 such columns under the east end of the gallery.

Front of the gallery to be formed with 36 inch paneled baluster, with pilasters over each supporting column. The part extending over the supporting columns, to be panelled in artistic stucco work.

The foundation was layed of soft conglomerate lime rock found at the foot hills at the north of the valley.

Walls were of vermilion sandstone gotten from rock quarry three miles away, to the southeast of the West City Springs.

A skilled Scotch quarryman, Archibald McNeil ran the quarry. He was assisted by Hector McQuarrie, a blacksmith and tool sharpener. The stone cutters were: William Fawcett, Charles L. Walker, Wilson Lund, and George Brooks. The masons: Oswald Barlow, George Woodward, Lars Larson, and Samuel Worthen. The chief stone cutter was Edward L. Parry. The woodwork and architecture was by Miles Romney, an English master builder, and assistants: William Barns, Edson Barney, Willis Coplan, Hosea Stout, David Rogers, Joseph Judd, William Thompson, and Miles Romney. Turning in shops of: Benjamin F. Blake, Thomas Cottam, Josiah and Warren Hardy. The painters: David Milne, William Smith. Plastering and plaster paris by: Master Scotch artist-William Burt, assisted by his sons, George F. Jarvis, and Thomas P. Cottam.

While building was in process, Mr. Robbins sacrificed his life while prying stones loose. One of the stones suddenly broke off and rolled on him, crushing him to death.

The roof lumber was hauled from the saw mill on Pine Valley Mountain.

The border and centerpiece was made by using a bees wax mold and filling it with the prepared plaster and then turned out to dry.

The final painting and decorating was by David Milne.

George Jarvis and John Lloyd hoisted all materials to the workers. The planner and designer was Brother Folsom. When the building was up to the square and it was time to erect the tower high above any existing thing, Horatio Pickett nobly climbed a ladder and banded together the 8 uprights at the very top.

The basement was used for sacred and educational purposes. (It took eight years to complete).

Lighting was by three hugh chandeliers which are still there, only now electric light is used. The original was coal oil lamps, which were lowered from the ceiling by pulleys. The hugh stone which was used as the weight to hold the chandeliers down is on display in the building.

Heaters were placed at intervals along the aisles and long pipes extended to the ceiling. They were later changed to steam pipes connected with the boiler at the Woodward school; and then with hot air piped underground from the boiler room of the Dixie College.

While the building was constructed the bell was hung temporarily on the main floor and rung at 12:00 noon each day to tell workers the time.

The building cost \$110,000.00 and was finished in 1971. (condensed from material by Albert E & Mary Ann Cottam Miller).

The Dixie Academy was on the corner of Main and South Street. The St. George Stake Academy was begun in 1888. The two year college program was begun and then it was known as Dixie Jr. College and now Dixie College.

The Augustus Poore Hardy (Sheriff house) in the middle of St. George Blvd. between Main and 100 West.

This building is 15½ feet across the front and 24 feet in width. The windows are 27 inches wide and 54 inches high. Each window has 12 smaller panes in it. Sheriff Hardy built his house in 1871. While holding a man prisoner, the vigilante group broke into his house and took the keys from the sheriff. A bullet hole can still be seen in one of the doors. The prisoner was put in jail and then hung.

The jailhouse sets right behind Sheriff Hardy's house. It is a one room building made of lava rock from the area foothills. It may have been built by Sheriff Hardy about 1880. The front is twelve feet and the width is 14 feet. The sides are 3½ feet off the ground, with windows 27" X 27" and each has 4 iron bars in it. The windows are on three sides and a door on one side. To enter the building you walk down about three steps to the door which is higher than the side walls. In the door is a small window about 3" X 5". This building was used as a storage area and grainery after the new jail was built. In 1978 it was rebuilt and restored.

Sheriff Hardy came to Utah in 1854 and lived as a missionary among the Indians; then built a cabin of cottonwood logs. In 1881, he had trouble with the miners who went on strike. In 1870 he was an interpreter with the Indians. In 1898, he gave a report of the help that was given the Indians .
REFERENCE: I Was CALLED TO DIXIE by Andrew Karl Larson, pgs: 23,38,320,539,541. and ERASTUS, SNOW, by Andrew Karl Larson, 1971, page 315: Augustus P. Hardy got a quart of cotton seeds in 1855 from Sister Nancy Anderson of Parowan, Utah and planted the seeds which produced sufficient lint to make 30 yards of cloth. As a result more families came the next year and cotton soon became a crop.

The Grundy House is in the middle of the Main Street between St. George Blvd. and 200 North. It was built in 1901 by Emma Packer Morris. A smaller house was built in 1890 and probably dates the huge mulberry trees still standing. The existing building is constructed of hand made adobe and faced with red fired brick which was the building material at that time. The design is classical Victorian and the large panel windows, a luxury in those days, indicate that with other expensive wood trim details, that no expense was spared. The house passed on to the daughter, Isadore Grundy.

The Gardner home on Main St. is between St. George Blvd. and 200 North. The first ladies coop was founded on this property by the third wife of Robert Gardner-Mary Ann. Robert Gardner was first bishop and first mayor of St. George. This house was built in 1896. Mary Ann later sold merchandise to members of Brigham Youngs family.

The Washington County News building on St. George Blvd. had its birth as a saloon in Silver Reef in 1880. This was a mining town. It was moved here and has been a printing establishment ever since. In 1958 F.W. Mountford family purchased it and in 1985 run it as a printing business.

The Benjamin F. Pendleton House is between St. George Blvd. and Tabernacle Street, on 100 West. This man was called by Brigham Young to come here as a blacksmith. He began construction of his home by using only three brick molds, and as these dried he made three more. The house was eventually completed by his son, using the same method of making bricks.

The Gardeners Club is situated on the north side of St. George Blvd. between Main and 100 West Street, and is one of the oldest and most perfect buildings in St. George. It was built by a group called the "Gardener's Club." They constructed in 1867 an adobe building on lot 1, block 30, Plat A, and had gatherings and displayed their crops and held a fair here. The south front of the building facing first North Street had the same type of cornice as was used on the St. George Hall.

March 29, 1878 the members were: J.E. Johnson, H.W. Miller, B.F. Pendleton, William Frost, Charles Terry, Israel Ivins, J.M. Moody, S.G. Higgins, Charles Smith-Joseph E. Johnson being one of the most popular of the members. It was he who grew fruit and came here from Spring Lake, Utah. He was once a newspaper publisher in Council Bluffs, Iowa and printed a paper here, also, devoted to gardening, called the, "POMOLOGIST and GARDNERS." He promoted the growth of flowers, shrubs, and ornamental trees.

The club worked to have all parts of the city growing flowers, trees, vines, fruits, and flowers.

The building is 27 feet wide and 18½ feet across the front. The two tiny front doors measure 17 inches wide each and 6 feet 10 inches high. The door knob is 2 feet three inches from the floor. There are small front windows and a window on each side of the building. The wooden floor has been done over with linoleum. (REF: material by Albert E & Mary Ann Miller.)