Stone Barn to Relic Hall: 
a search for identity

Elisabeth Carroll
This history is dedicated to you,
to all who contributed to your construction
and to all who enjoyed your shelter as the years went by,
whether on four legs, two legs
or four wheels.

Cover image: The first known photograph of the stone barn—taken by Thomas B. Cardon (at right), dated 13 Feb 1877—was taken from the northeast looking to the southwest. The stone barn is the Greek Revival building partially obscured by trees in the center of the image. The Benson / Thatcher Union Flouring Mill, with its distinctive clerestory windows, is to the left. At center right is the two-story, three-chimney, Federal / Greek Revival, Hezekiah Thatcher home, later donated to Brigham Young College.

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Dedication - Stone Barn to Relic Hall: a search for identity
A building is not just walls, doors, windows, floors, ceilings, and furnishings. It is a record of its architect(s), builders, owners, and, often, inhabitants. It sits in relation to the land under and around it, and to the structures that surround it. It may be added to or subtracted from and its use may change over time. It may even disappear completely, either absorbed by additions or by demolition, to be replaced by a new structure or by an empty, or parking, lot.

When a building that was an important part of human history is gone, often, it vanishes from human memory. If someone cared enough, a historical marker may commemorate its existence, though, sometimes, the marker is erected “in the vicinity” of the once-appreciated building, because no one remembers exactly where it was.

This short history commemorates a stone building, the search for which became a mild obsession of mine during the months of November and December of 2014 and, of which, I became unexpectedly fond.

E. C. Salt Lake City, Utah

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Stone Barn to Relic Hall a search for identity - Preface
“See if you can find a photo of the Relic Hall in Logan. It’s not important. Don’t take too long on it.”

Asked by a Salt Lake City architect, historian and author to find a photo of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers (D.U.P.) Cache County Relic Hall, all I had to start with was a photo of D.U.P. Historical Marker No. 9 on a rock in front of a building on the grounds of Logan High School in Logan, Utah, near 100 West 100 South. (Photo credit: Jacob Barlow, www.jacobbarlow.com)
An online search for “Cache County Relic Hall” yielded only more images of the historical marker. Searching for “pioneer relic hall” yielded a grainy image of a building (the “Hezekiah Thatcher Memorial building”) obscured by trees, but with a very distinctive covered entry.
“...unknown old pioneer stone house,” with a very distinctive covered entry.

After emailing off the Deseret News article, thinking my search was done, out of curiosity, I looked through the online Historic Photo Collection at the Logan Library and—as has happened to many a sincere student of history—felt a thrill when I saw this c. 1910 photo captioned: “The west building of Brigham Young College, now part of Logan High School. It remains the only building of the college left standing. Image also includes unknown old pioneer stone house.”  
(Source: Ray Somers Photo Collection)

Clearly, this “stone house” was the Relic Hall, but just where, exactly, had it stood?

I, again, turned to the excellent online research resources at the Logan Library.
This close-up image, cropped from the *Birds Eye View of Logan City* panoramic map on pages 6 and 7, shows circled in red the stone barn and an attached building in relation to the Logan Tabernacle, other structures and streets. The attached building does not appear on the 1890 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map® on the following page.

(Over 2,400 panoramic maps were created for sale by subscription in the United States until the advent of aerial photos from airplanes. See *Views and Viewmakers of Urban America*, by John W. Reps.)
On all Sanborn Maps®—a boon to researchers—stone buildings are colored blue, so, though the only building on this map large enough to be the stone barn is not labeled, the fencing connected to it gives a compelling clue to its probable use.

Plus, researching Brigham Young College yielded that the framed building (yellow) in the NE corner of the map was the former home of Hezekiah Thatcher, which, along with the stone barn and 33 acres of land, was deeded to the College in 1877.

In a history of the Relic Hall found at the D.U.P. Pioneer Memorial Building in Salt Lake City, it is related that “the lower part [of the barn] was used for horses and other livestock. The upper half was used as a hay loft and carriage room. This building was the first rock barn in the valley…,” and “was used for the school of Chemistry, Domestic Arts, Carpenter Shop and also as a school house…”

The Mormon men who worked on the Logan Tabernacle and Temple were paid “in kind” with unneeded construction material which was used to build stores, homes and outbuildings. The stone barn was built of dark-colored fucoidal (trace fossil) quartzite, used in the Tabernacle and Temple, from the Green Canyon quarry northeast of Logan.
E. S. Glover drew and published this map; his name is misspelled.
Here, the framed (yellow) additions to the north and south sides of the stone barn and the label “Laboratory” indicate that, as the College was growing, the stone barn was considered valuable enough to convert to a school building.

This undated photo from History of Logan, a wonderful two-volume work by Ray Somers, shows the Brigham Young College orchestra practicing outside the south entrance of the re-purposed stone barn.
In 1926, Brigham Young College closed and the buildings were sold to the city of Logan for use as a high school, except for the stone barn / school building, which was given as a gift to the Cache County Chapter of the D.U.P. in the form of a renewable, 25-year lease from the LDS Church for use as a “MUSEUM”.

On September 12, 1935, D.U.P. Historical Marker No. 9 was placed on the north side of the Relic Hall (to the right of the entrance in this photo, which shows that the stone barn had been built on a steep slope, being one story on the north side and two stories on the south. Image credit: D.U.P. Salt Lake City).

The marker states that the building was “ERECTED IN 1861 BY HEZEKIAH THATCHER, ASSISTED BY ROBERT CROOKSTON, ROBERT MURDOCK AND JOHN HILL,...” but was it?
Hezekiah Thatcher, fondly called “Father Thatcher”, arrived in Cache County—by way of West Virginia, the gold fields of California (where he became rich selling goods to miners) and Payson, Utah—in August of 1859. As it was more important to build the mills needed to produce flour and lumber, and to erect homes more comfortable than living in Maughan’s Fort (now Wellsville, Utah), wagon boxes and dugouts, it is unlikely that what became known as “Thatcher’s Old Barn” was a priority to the new settlers.

Robert Murdoch (as spelled by him and his descendants), was a stone mason and Mormon convert from Scotland. He, along with his wife and five children ranging in age from infant to 15 years, was part of an emigrant train led by John Riggs Murdock (no relation). As the emigrants arrived in Salt Lake City on 12 September 1861, it is unlikely that Murdoch rushed up to Logan to build a stone barn, but it is not known when he arrived in Cache Valley.

Robert Murdoch and his family set sail from Liverpool on 16 May 1861 on the *Monarch of the Sea*. This cropped image of the ship’s passenger list shows Murdoch stated his occupation as “Mason”.

Beautifully carved headstone of Robert Murdoch in Logan Cemetery. (Photo credit: Carrie H. Saunders)
The year the stone barn was built, continued...

Robert Crookston, Sr., also from Scotland, was a friend and neighbor of Hezekiah Thatcher when both lived in Payson, Utah. Crookston worked as a stone mason on the Thatcher mill, the Logan Tabernacle and the Mendon Meetinghouse, c. 1865-66; it is probable that he also worked on other early, and later, buildings in the area. After Thatcher moved his family to Logan, he invited Crookston to visit. In his Journal, Crookston wrote: “The people were digging canals and they wanted to build a flour mill and they wanted me to go with them to do quarry and mason work.” Crookston’s daughter and son remember moving to Logan in the spring of 1864.

The last man listed on Historical Marker No. 9 was most likely John Brice Hill, son of John Hill and born in Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1846. According to his obituary in The Deseret News, John Brice Hill moved to Wellsville in the spring of 1860 where he helped build and run a grist mill.

Hezekiah Thatcher and John (Brice) Hill are the only men listed on Historical Marker No. 9 who were definitely in Cache Valley in 1861. Robert Crookston, Sr., did not arrive in Logan until 1864. The early settlers were involved with projects of greater importance between 1859 and the mid-1860s. Robert Murdoch died in March 1872.

In conclusion, the stone barn was most likely built between 1867 and 1871.
This engraved aerial view, looking to the southwest, was used to help draw students to the College in an advertisement in the 1909-10 Logan City Directory.

The stone barn / school building is the small building with chimney directly above and to the left of the two-story former Hezekiah Thatcher home, just left of center, which had been converted to different uses as a College building. (Image credit: History of Logan, two-volumes, by Ray Somers)
As of 1955, the stone barn / Relic Hall was still standing. On 30 August 1962, two of the old Brigham Young College buildings (now part of Logan High School) were badly damaged by a 5.7 earthquake centered north of Richmond, Utah, and had to be torn down. In 1999, the only remaining College building, the gymnasium (at far left on the above map), was demolished to make way for more modern school buildings. The approximate location of the original stone barn is shown on the map below, looking south; its date of demolition is undetermined.
Summary: Though the stone barn was of relatively minor importance in the built environment of Utah between 1867 and, possibly, the late 1990s, this history establishes with reasonable certainty the men who built it, its location, its uses over time, the men and women who enjoyed its use, and the year it was most likely constructed.

What is most significant about the stone barn is that it outlasted many of the other more important buildings surrounding it. The stone barn’s very design—its sturdy construction and floor plan—enabled its use to change as the needs of its owners changed.
Many thanks to award-winning architect, historian, author, and mentor, Allen D. Roberts, A. I. A, who started this whole quest by asking me to “find a photo of the Relic Hall”—and who provided expert knowledge and advice when the stone barn research became personal, as I continued to do research for his forth-coming book, *Brigham’s Architects: Utah’s Pioneer Architects, 1847-1877*, (an encyclopedic work covering the achievements of over 100 men who, under the direction of Brigham Young, were responsible for much of the excellent early built environment of Utah).
Elisabeth Carroll is an artist, writer and photographer who became a computer graphic designer after being introduced to desk-top publishing when she got her first 128k Apple Macintosh years ago. She has self-published a book of Salt Lake City graffiti photographs, *the same only more so*. She produced the book *Allen Dale Roberts: Selected Works of Art*, and prepared photos for *Salt Lake City’s Historic Architecture*, also by Allen D. Roberts, part of the “Images of America Series” from Arcadia Publishing. She is an amateur* historian and geologist who moved to Utah, in part, for its geologic splendor. She is a firm advocate of not playing fast and loose with history.

*Amateur: from the Latin “amare” meaning “to love.”*