

George Mason House  
150 North Second West  
Willard  
Box Elder County  
Utah

HABS No. UT-92

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GEORGE MASON HOUSE

HABS No. UT-92

Location: 150 North Second West, Willard, Box Elder County, Utah.

Present Owner/  
Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Gardner Barlow.

Present Use: Private residence.

Significance: George Mason, a farmer and dairy owner, had one of the largest stone houses in Willard. The western portion of the house was completed ca. 1865 by Shadrach Jones, a noted stonemason active in Willard. The eastern addition was completed ca. 1883.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Western portion, ca. 1865. Eastern portion was begun in 1880 and completed in 1883.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Mason house is built on lot 4, Block 3, Plat A, Willard City Survey. The following references tracing the title of this lot are located in the Box Elder County Recorder's Office, Brigham City, Utah.

1870 Deed (Probate Judge), signed December 21, 1870, filed December 15, 1891, recorded in Book N. page 372. George S. Mason received from Saul Smith, Probate Judge, title to lot 4 for \$.96.

1906 Deed, signed September 26, 1906, filed September 29, 1906, recorded in Book Y, page 150. Joseph Mason bought from Sylvia M. and Sarah Olive Mason a portion of lot 4 for \$6,500.

1906 Decree of Distribution, signed September 29, 1906, filed December 20, 1906, recorded in Miscellaneous Book C, page 140. Joseph Mason received from the estate of Thomas J. Mason part of lot 4.

1962 Death Certificate, signed February 5, 1962, filed June 18, 1962, recorded in Records Book 161, page 587. Elizabeth Wood Mason received from Walter G. Mason title to a part of lot 4.

Between 1962 and 1965 the record is incomplete regarding the title transfer to the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Gardner Barlow. The first entry under their names is in regard to a cancellation of incumbrances on a mortgage for Lot 4, recorded December 1, 1965.

4. Builder, suppliers: According to the Mason family history, the builder of the western portion of this house was Shadrach Jones. It is not known whether he was also responsible for the eastern portion, completed ca. 1883. The stone was quarried from Willard Canyon east of the city.

More than ten of the historic structures in Willard were constructed by Jones, including the Robert Bell Baird House (HABS No. UT-89), the John Edwards House (HABS No. UT-90), and the Shadrach Jones House (HABS No. UT-86). Jones's influence also extended north into Idaho and to finish work on the Latter-Day Saints Temple in Logan, Utah.

5. Original plans and construction: This substantial residence exhibits some of the simple vernacular qualities seen in the builder's own house. The blue-gray granite stone is squared and laid in broken courses. The western portion (1865) contains a central doorway with windows symmetrically arranged to the left and right of the entry. The cornice is boxed with a denticulated frieze. The cornice returns on the gable ends.

The stairway to the second floor of the western portion is U-shaped and is situated in a central hall opposite the main entry.

6. Alterations and additions: When the house was completed ca. 1883, the east portion, second story, housed the boys of the family and the western portion housed the girls. According to Veda Skanchy, a door was cut through to join the second stories of the western and eastern sections around the turn of the century by Joseph H. Mason.

Joseph Mason also cut a doorway from the kitchen to the back porch (later enclosed to make a utility and laundry room). The date of this alteration is not known.

The chimney in the east was reinforced with iron rails ca. 1900.

Wood frame additions, made at various times, include:

- a. the sleeping porch above the side entrance on the north side;

- b. the two-story L-shaped porch in the southeast corner, which was closed in in 1968;
- c. the laundry room and the utility room on the east end.

A picture window was added in the first story of the west front in 1968.

B. Historical Context:

Willard, in Box Elder County, Utah, was one of the early settlements founded by Mormon settlers upon a request from Brigham Young. It was originally known as "Willow Creek" in recognition of the steady stream flowing from a steep mountain canyon to the great Salt Lake. Later the town was renamed to honor Willard Richards, an apostle in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. In plan the town resembles the plat of the "City of Zion" as designed by Mormon leaders before the settlement of the Utah territory. Instead of dispersed farmsteads, as encouraged by federal land acts of the nineteenth century, the Mormons maintained a closely knit village pattern. Important distinguishing characteristics of a Mormon village manifested in Willard are the presence of barns, granaries, corrals and fences in the village proper. The townsite rests on a wide alluvial fan whose fertile soil has supported farms and orchards since the days of the first pioneers in 1851.

An abundance of finely crafted pioneer stone architecture sets Willard apart from most other Mormon villages. This fact was recognized in July of 1974 when a large portion of the town was designated a National Historic District. The ingenuity of the settlers in making such harmonious use of natural stone, quarried from the mountain canyon just east of the townsite, is uniquely demonstrated in a majority of the more than forty historic structures found within the boundaries of the historic district.

George Mason was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1824. He moved to Ohio and lived about fourteen years in New Portage, Summit County. While there, he was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Later he moved with his mother to Illinois, living with the Smith family, and in June of 1852 they left Illinois for the Salt Lake Valley. Living in Salt Lake City less than a year, he moved to Weber County and then in April of 1853 he moved to Willard.

He married Hannah Gardner in 1855 and they had three children. In 1856 he was sent along with others from Willard to help build stations from Utah to the Missouri River in the interest of Brigham Young's Young Express Carrying Company. In 1861 his wife died and shortly thereafter he married Margaret Townsend Bradbury and they had fourteen children.

In the late 1860s Mason owned a dairy and molasses mill at Mount Springs, four miles north of Plymouth, Utah. He also planted one of Willard's first orchards. He died in his stone house on July 10, 1888.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

a. Old views:

An undated view of th Mason House is on file in the Photographic Collection of the Utah State Historical Society. This view of the southwest corner of the house shows the structure before the enclosure of the rear porch addition.

b. Interviews:

Mrs. Cardner Barlow, September 6, 1974, Willard, Utah. Present owner of the house. Information regarding additions to original structure.

Mrs. Veda Skanchy, October 29, 1974, Salt Lake City, Utah. Facts regarding the Mason family history and alterations to the Mason house.

2. Secondary sources:

Box Elder County Chapter, Daughters of the Utah Pionerrrs. History of Box Elder County. Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, n.d.

Nicolas, Hannah B., ed. Willard Centennial, 1851-1951. Willard, Utah: Willard Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1951.

State of Utah, Division of State History. "Historic Sites Survey Form: George Mason Houue." Compiled by Teddy Griffith and Lorna Rich, April 12, 1972.

Prepared by: Peter L. Coss  
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November, 1974

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: a vernacular T-plan house of random ashlar granite.
2. Condition of fabric: good to excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 41'-3" x 49'-0" plus small rear addition.
2. Foundations: granite.
3. Walls: Random ashlar, gray granite.
4. Structural system, framing: masonry bearing wall with wooden floor and roof framing system.
5. Porches: The original west porch has wooden turned posts and balustrades, both above and below. The north porch, a later addition, has wood posts with fan brackets. The second floor is enclosed with vertical siding and windows.
6. Chimneys: four, brick.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: a variety of stile and rail designs. Front door has a transom and sidelights.
  - b. Windows and shutters: most windows have double-hung one-over-one-light sash. The windows in the north end of the west front have been enlarged with a picture window in between the two original ones. Carved wooden lintels over windows. The frame additions have casement type windows in addition to double-hung sash.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with asphalt shingles.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: The western portion has a boxed cornice with returns, with denticulated frieze. The eastern portion has a plainer boxed cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Center-hall plan. See drawings.
2. Stairways: front stair balustrade constructed of simple turned balusters and newel post. Enclosed risers and continuous baseboard. Open entire north side, half turn with winders.  
  
Rear stairs have quarter turn with landing. Balustrade encloses stairwell at second floor. No handrail along stairs.
3. Flooring: 1" x 2" pine boards in living room; 1" x 3" pine boards in dining room. Other floors have new coverings.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: plaster. Bath cabinet covers entire north wall of the first-floor bathroom. Doors constructed from 1" x 6" beaded boards with nailer across back. Window jambs have wood paneling.
5. Doorways and doors: Openings in masonry walls have wood jambs and heads and wood thresholds. Doors have six panels. Doors, frames, trim and base have an imitation painted oak finish.
6. Trim: 1" x 8" baseboard with 1" x 1" quarter-round shoe.
7. Hardware: surface passage and locksets with porcelain knobs.
8. Lighting: lighting is recent modification.
9. Heating: forced warm air furnace with duct system.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: the house faces west.
2. Outbuildings:
  - a. Granary: Located northeast of the house. A gable-roofed stone structure measuring approximately 21'-11" x 16'-7" with a 17'-6" x 15'-11" frame addition.
  - b. Barn: heavy timber barn with gable roof located east of house. Very poor condition.

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### III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The State of Utah survey, conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey, was cosponsored by the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation and supported by the Utah American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and the Utah State Institute of Fine Arts jointly with the National Endowment for the Arts. All work was recorded under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, during the summer of 1974 at the Historic American Buildings Survey Field Office at the Graduate School of Architecture, University of Utah. The survey team consisted of Burtch W. Beall, Jr., architect (University of Utah), project supervisor; Dr. Peter L. Goss, project historian; student architects Ronnie B. Cullen (Washington State University), Clayton B. Fraser (University of Tennessee), William B. Klein (University of Utah), and Eric V. Ramsing (University of Oregon). Photographs were taken by Louise T. Taft in 1985. The written data were edited by Alison K. Hoagland, HABS Historian, in 1985.