

JOSEPH F. BARTON CABIN
REMNANT OF THE BLUFF FORT
SAN JUAN COUNTY'S OLDEST
PIONEER STRUCTURE

Compiled March 1998 by Lamont Crabtree in preparation
of and prior to the cabin's preservation work.

THE JOSEPH F. BARTON CABIN

SAN JUAN COUNTY'S OLDEST PIONEER STRUCTURE



*1993 photograph of the northeast corner of the Barton Cabin
Gary Guymon in the foreground*

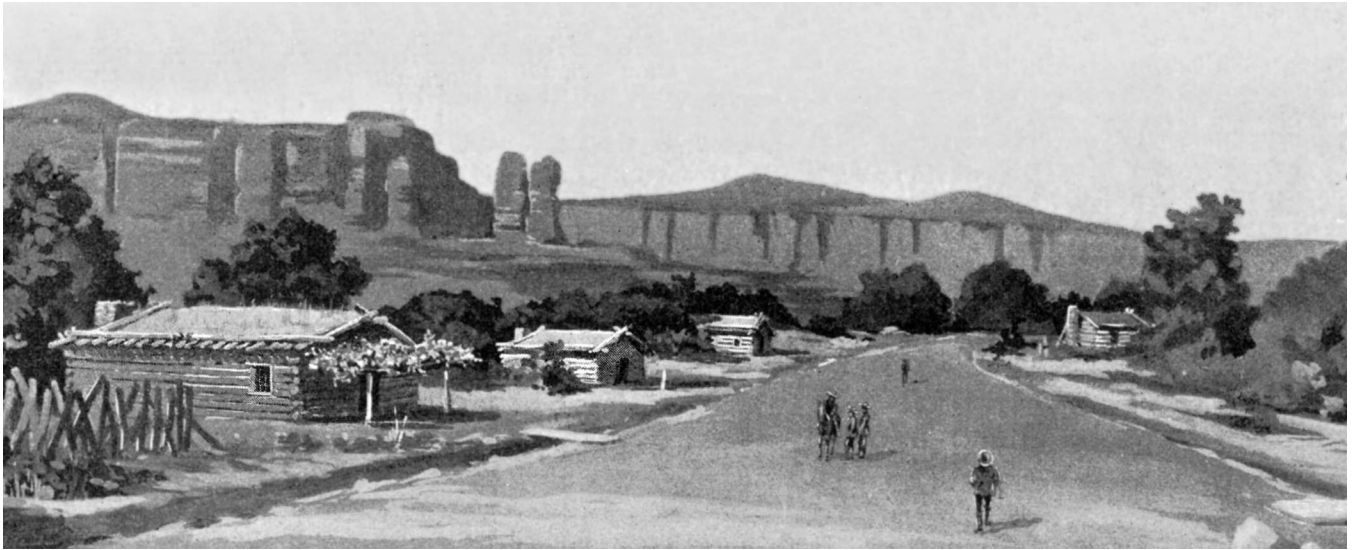
The uniqueness of the Barton cabin lies not in the shape of its logs but in who it was that chopped, jointed and lifted its logs into place. Its value lies not in that it provided shelter but in whom it sheltered — Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to share information on the Joseph Barton and its restoration. If you have additional information pertaining to the cabin, the Bluff fort or other aspects of the early years of Bluff, photographs/copies would be greatly appreciated. Lamont Crabtree, 3675 Chippewa Rd. West Valley City, UT 84120. Phone # 801-966-8393

LOG CABINS OF BLUFF

When the pioneers of Hole-in-the-Rock fame declared that their arduous journey was over on April 6, 1880, water, planting crops and shelter became their paramount concerns. As soon as a crude irrigation ditch was in and crops were planted, their energy was directed to the construction of adequate shelter that they might not spend another winter in wagon beds and tents. By early fall they were helping one another construct log cabins from the surrounding cottonwood trees. Initially arranged in close proximity to each other to form a fort, small log cabins became their homes until resources and circumstances allowed for something better. It was several decades before they would again have the accommodations to which they were accustomed. Thus, it was in these humble log cabins that most of the San Juan pioneers raised their families. Mothers gave birth, the sick were cared for, domestic chores were performed, children were loved and nurtured and Christian values were taught.



Sketch of Bluff by Remington Lane, Spring of 1893.
Harper's Weekly, Dec. 9, 1893, Volume XXXVII



1907 Aunt Jan Allen residence. Utah State Historical Society Photo Library

LOG CABINS OF BLUFF

Photographs of Bluff taken between in 1906 - 1936 show a number of log cabins still in use at that time. These photographs reveal walls of wonderfully irregular cottonwood logs, sod roofs and stone fireplaces. Clotheslines, fenced yards, porches and a water well are among the visible features. Today the only reminder of early pioneer life among the sandstone butts of Bluff, Utah, is the Joseph F. Barton cabin (see page 4).



1907 Unknown Bluff residence. Utah State Historical Society



1909 Unknown Bluff residence. Utah State Historical Society Photo Library



1909 the residence of B. Perkins. Utah State Historical Society Photo Library



1936 Joseph F. Barton cabin. Charles Kelley Photo (1936). Utah State Historical Society Photo Library

JOSEPH F. BARTON CABIN

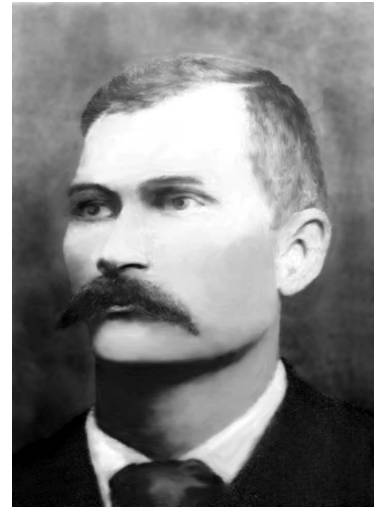
Of the dozens of log houses that were once home to the pioneers of Southeastern Utah, the Barton cabin is all that is left. It is now the only tangible reminder of early home life on the San Juan frontier. Its walls have echoed the voices and laughter of the seven Barton children. Under its sod roof, its occupants experienced times of joy and times of great sorrow. On May 29, 1896, Harriet Barton died at age 40, just seventeen days after giving birth to their eighth child. Nine days later, the baby, Ray Wesley, died.

In close examination of the Barton cabin, it becomes evident that the builders put much more into the cabin construction than merely alternating the placement of logs. Large sand stone blocks were buried to provide a stable foundation. In addition to the tightly fitting corner joints, holes were drilled or chiseled through adjacent logs of the walls into which tightly fitting pegs were driven. The inside walls were cut / planed to provide flat wall surfaces. Gaps between large logs were fitted with smaller logs and then finished off with a mortar of mud and straw. Roofs were constructed by laying twigs between the outside walls and a large central support beam. The twigs were then covered with straw followed by a thick layer of soil sprinkled with grass seeds.

Thousands have visited the Barton cabin and have gone away with a glimpse of the home life of the faithful men women and children who, in answer to an assignment from their church, settled Southeastern Utah. May there be thousands who will yet have this opportunity.



Harriet Richards Barton
Sept 14, 1855 - May 29, 1896



Joseph Franklin Barton
March 31, 1855 - April 10, 1926



Barton home between 1800 -1898. Following a L.D.S. Mission to the Southern States the cabin was again home to the Bartons until the fall of 1902, when they moved to Verdure. For several years, starting in 1908, Joseph Barton Jr. and his wife Hattie Redd lived in the home. While living in the home their first two children were born. View is of the northeast corner of the cabin taken in 1996.



Southeast corner of the cabin



Examples of the tightly fitting pegs which added to the strength and stability of the walls.



Interior view of the west wall of the southwest room.



Interior view of the east wall of the southwest room.



Southwest corner of the southwest room.



Southeast corner of the southwest room.



Interior view of the roof of the southwest room.

When the Bartons came to Bluff in 1880, as members of the Hole-in-the-Rock expedition they had two girls Harriet age 3 and Mary age 1½. Between Aug 1881 and May 1896, Mrs. Barton gave birth to six more children. It is believed that the Bartons were still living in the cabin at the time of the deaths of Harriet and her eighth child.



Photograph of the Barton Family taken sometime between 1892 and 1893.



Northeast view taken in 1979. Most of the frame extension and roof of the south rooms have now collapsed.

Bluff Fort

The following are quotes from histories and journals regarding the Bluff fort / cabins. Added commentary is italicized:

INSTRUCTED TO BUILD A FORT

"There are small predatory bands of renegade Indian tribes who prey on defenseless persons as well as lawless adventurers from among the whites. We therefore deem it a matter of solemn prudence that temporary dwellings should be in close proximity to each other, and where practical we would recommend that you build in the form of a hollow square, and close up the spaces between your dwellings with a stockade." Erastus Snow Sept 5, 1880, San Juan Stake Records.

WORK ON THE FORT BEGINS

"Drove to Bluff City and found all well. The folks are forting up by advise of Brother Snow." Platte D. Lyman journal, Friday Sept. 24, 1880.

CENTER OF FORT A HOLLOW SQUARE

"The people of Bluff built adjacent log houses in the shape of a hollow square a. A rude fort with all windows and doors to the inside and only portholes or peep-holes looking to the outside. Albert R. Lyman, Indians and Outlaws, Pg. 33.

ONE ROOM CABINS

MUD MIXED WITH STRAW

"We began to build a log cabin immediately. A one-room affair with one window and a big door that faced the inner circle. It had a mud roof and floor. The mud was mixed with old straw or weeds and a horse was used to tromp it down. I know because I rode the horse round and round till I was dizzy. We were three or four days getting the floor to where we could pat it down with a shovel." Lars Christensen, Emigration Stake High Priest Quorum Bulletin, Quoted in text by John Henry Ayre, Utah State Historical Society.

DIRT FLOORS SPRINKLED TO HARDEN / REDUCE DUST

"...floors required sprinkling at intervals to lay the native dust and tempt the soil to harden." Albert R. Lyman, History of San Juan County, 1918, Unpublished, Utah Historical Society.

WATER WELL IN THE CENTER ALL OPENINGS FACE THE CENTER

"In this fort there were no doors or windows opening to the outside. All open into the space in the center. From north to south and east to west a small passageway ran in a gap between houses, permitting teams to drive in. A well in the center furnished water." Mary Jones, Anchored Lariats on the San Juan Frontier. Pg 48.

CLOTH STRETCHED OVER CEILING

"Factory, an unbleached cotton cloth, was stretched over the ceiling to make that better looking and to catch the water in rain storms - a difficult task as it became badly mud stained." Mrs. Frederic I. Jones, Saga of San Juan , Pg. 66.

SOD ROOF DRIPPED DISMALLY

"...roofed them with thick of coats sand. Which feathered out into a crop of runty sunflowers and stink-weed, if the seed-weed had time to sprout before the wind carried the sand away. But whether it raised weeds or blew away, it never turned the rain, which dripped dismally from it long after the sky was clear." Albert R. Lyman, History of San Juan County, 1918, Unpublished, Utah Historical Society.

BLACKSMITH SHOP IN S. E. CORNER

Amasa Barton's blacksmith shop was located in the corner of the fort. Albert Lyman, Indians and Outlaws, Pg. 85. On the maps of bluff prepared by Albert R. Lyman in 1970 the blacksmith shop is shown at the southwest corner of the fort. Utah State Historical Society's Bluff Historic District Files.

GATES AT EACH CORNER MEETING HOUSE AT NORTH END

"They built their houses joining a hollow square covering about three acres, with all doors and windows on the inside. Peepholes or portholes in the back of houses to look from the fort in all directions. Four heavy gates wide enough to admit a wagon opened into each corner of the fort, and a log meeting house stood in the north center looking south." Albert R. Lyman, Improvement Era, April 1949.

ALL OPEN IN THE CENTER

"There were no doors or windows to the outside - all opened into the space in the center. From north to south and east to west, a small passageway ran in a gap between houses permitting teams to drive in." Mrs Frederic I. Jones. Saga of San Juan, Pg. 65.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION ALL DOORS AND WINDOWS FACE THE MEETING HOUSE

"It was in this square with doors and windows on every side that the writer of this story first became aware that he was a living being in a most wonderful world with other living beings. The memory picture of that old fort is still vivid in his mind with log walls, the dirt roofs and the quaint old-fashioned windows and doors all facing the big log meeting house as if in the attitude of worship." Albert R. Lyman, Improvement Era, April 1949.

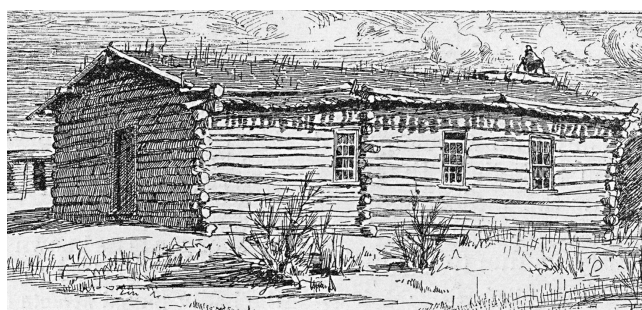
SCHOOL / MEETING HOUSE AND A NUMBER OF HOUSES COMPLETED

"Attended meeting and spoke to the saints in the log school house which has been built since I went away." (*He had been away Sept 27, 1879 through Jan 1, 1880*) "A good spirit prevails in camp and the prospects for the future are good, quite a number of houses have been built and the people generally are well supplied with the necessities of life." Platt D. Lyman Journal, Sunday Jan 2, 1880.

SCHOOL HOUSE

FORMS NORTH WALL OF FORT

The old log meeting house was part of the north wall of the fort and served as chapel, ballroom, courthouse, school house and a place for all public gatherings. Altert R. Lyman, Indians and Outlaws, Pg. 35.



North Side of School House s sketched by Remengton Lane, spring of 1893.

EXTENSION ADDED TO MEETING HOUSE

"During the week most of the brethren have been at work putting an extension of about 14 feet on the north end of the school house which gives it much more room." Platt D. Lyman Journal, December 22, 1883.



Trading post Co-Op store. Sketched by Remengton Lane, spring of 1893.

CO-OP STORE IN THE NORTH EASTCORNER OF THE FORT

"...first log home of the San Juan Co-op, built in the early eighties, was part of the fort (north-east corner), three rooms running north and south." Homes in Bluff , unpublished document by Albert R. Lyman, Utah State Historical Society's Bluff Historic District Files.

MOVING OUT OF THE FORT

"During the week moved one of my houses onto one of my lots, preparatory to getting all of my effects out of the fort." Platt D. Lyman September 19, 1883. Moved my family onto my lot in the afternoon..." Platt D. Lyman Journal, August 26, 1883. *This journal entry seems to imply that when living in a fort was no longer necessary, the residents moved their log houses and assembled them on their town lots. The process of dismantling, moving and reassembling had to be easier than building a new cabin from scratch.*

FLOODS

"The cottonwood wash sent down a large body of water which deviating from its normal course struck the Southwest corner of the fort filling a number of houses with water and mud to the depth of 8 or 10 inches and causing the inmates to move to higher ground." Monday April 28, 1884, ... another flood has been down the Cottonwood raising higher in the Fort more than the previous one but doing less damage." Platt D. Lyman Journal, Saturday March 15, 1884.

SOME LIVING IN FORT

AS LATE AS MARCH 16, 1884

As late as March 16, 1884 people were still living in the fort. Saga of San Juan, pg 66.

MEETING HOUSE DISMANTLED

Meeting house was dismantled in 1893. Albert R. Lyman, Pioneering in Southeastern Utah, Improvement Era, June - Aug 1915.



1893 photograph of the meetinghouse. Taken just prior to its being dismantled.

THE CITY LOTS FOLLOWING THE FORT
 "Nearly every house had its orchard, its cellar, its wood pile, and by all means its privy, peering modestly from among the peach trees. Many families had grape bowers, all had gardens, some had wells, but the water was hard. Bull fences were the only kind at first and everybody had to bench for cattle and horses roamed the streets. Everybody had pigs, chickens, cows and horses." Signed document by Albert R. Lyman, State Historical Society's Bluff Historic District Files

RELATIONSHIP OF THE BARTON CABIN TO THE OLD FORT

"Part of the house (log home of Joseph F. Barton still standing) was at one time a part of the west wall of the fort." Signed document by Albert R. Lyman, State Historical Societies -Bluff Historic District Files. *This statement leaves no room for speculation on the cabin's location with respect to the fort. However, this position raises two dilemmas. The window (of the intact north west room of the cabin) and the door/ breezeway face the outside of the fort. This contradicts all written descriptions of the fort which clearly state that no doors or windows faced the outside. It is possible that the window and door in question were added later. Initially the glass panes and lumber for windows and door jams would have been purchased elsewhere and freighted to Bluff. With money and resources scarce, windows may have been a luxury that were not afforded to some rooms/ cabins.*

The second dilemma relates to the position of the west wall of the fort. On some maps the west wall of the fort is shown several hundred feet farther west than the current location of the cabin. The early descriptions of the fort, quoted previously, clearly state that the center of the fort was hollow and the cabins formed the exterior boundaries of the fort. It is also unknown if the remaining structure is untouched from the days of the original fort. When the fort was dismantled and part of the original fort site became the Barton lot, the Bartons may have

made modifications, added rooms or even moved them to better suit their needs.

If the west wall of the fort was where the Hurst and Perkins maps place it, the Barton cabin and any other structure forming the west wall would have had to be moved to accommodate the city street layout. Based upon Platt D. Lyman's Journal, some cabins were moved from the fort to the city lots. Is it possible that the Barton Cabin was moved? Likely not. The northeast corner of the cabin was built around standing tree trunks. The log beams supported by these tree trunks will need to be closely examined. If the beams supported by the tree trunks are part of the main structure, it would

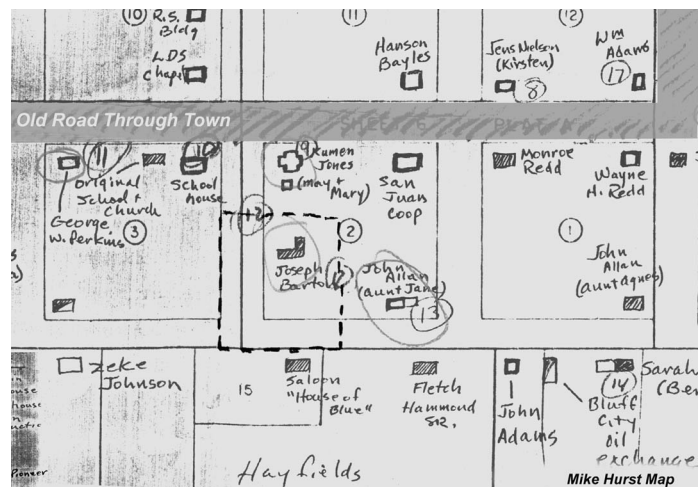
seem to rule out a possible move.

Albert R. Lyman's maps and descriptions place the west wall of the fort more in line with the current location of the Barton cabin. Although it does not resolve the window/door issue, this map eliminates the problem of the cabin being too far from the west end of the fort. Albert R. Lyman lived in the fort as a young boy and spent his life in the San Juan area. His map contains more detail than any other known map. Until additional documents/evidence are found, the Albert Lyman map must be relied on to establish the cabin's relative position to the fort.

MAPS OF THE BLUFF FORT

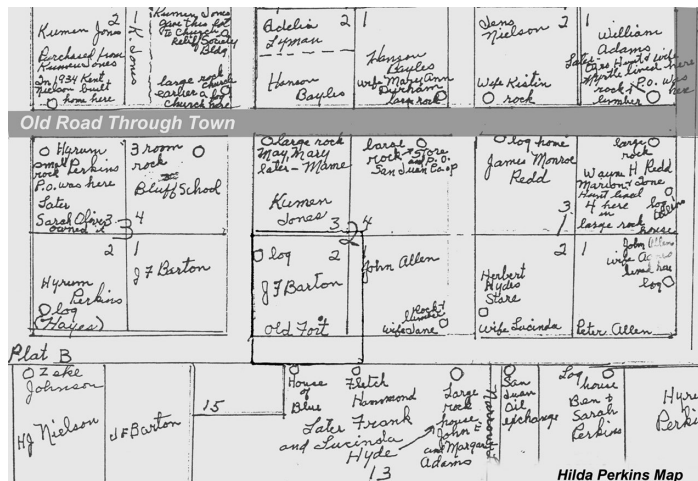
Mike Hurst Map ?

Located in the Utah State Historical Societies Bluff Historic District Files. The map contains no information as to its authorship or creation date. Kent Powell, Director of Historic Preservation for the Utah State Historical Society, believes that it was created by Mike Hurst in the early 1970's.



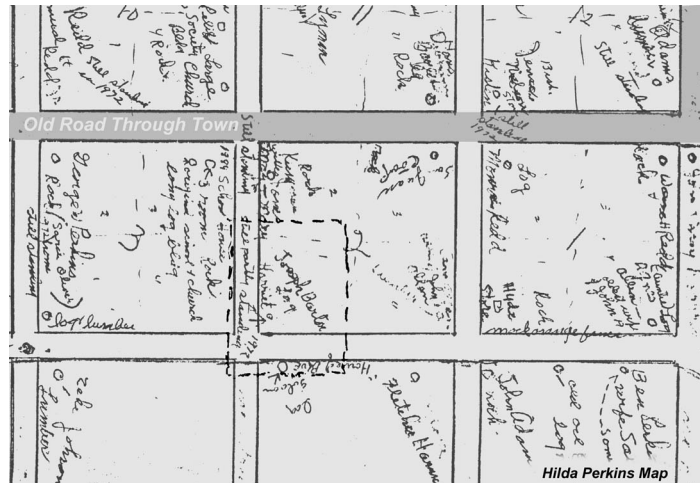
Hilda Perkins Map

Located in the files of the San Juan County Historical Commission. Notes on the map indicated that it represents the Bluff of 1903. Map creation date is unknown.



Hilda Perkins Map

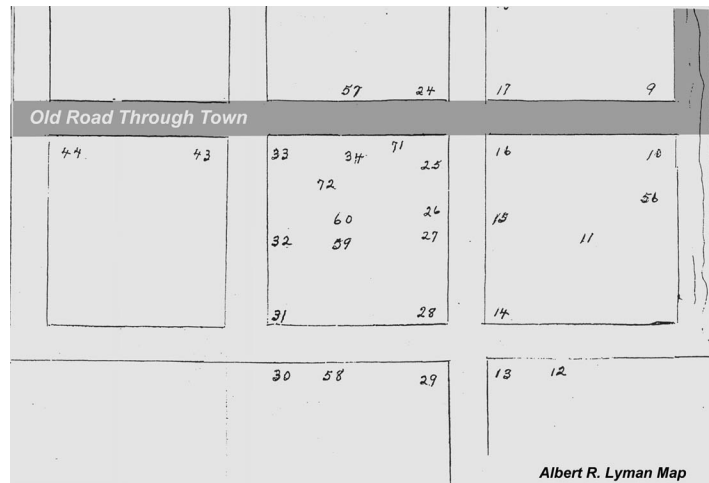
A second map by Hilda Perkins. No creation date. There are some differences between the two Perkins maps. It is not known which map was created first or why Perkins created two maps. Located in the Utah State Historical Society's Bluff Historic District Files.



Albert R. Lyman Map

Map with descriptive notes created and signed by Albert R. Lyman 1971. Located in the Utah State Historical Society's Bluff Historic District Files.

- 13 Frank Hyde Store
- 14 Log Home of Jens Nielson, later became the home of Sarah Perkins
- 16 Manroe Redd's log home. Became the post office
- 17 Aunt Kristen Nielson two room log home
- 24 Hanson Bayles log home
- 25 Co-op three room log home. Northeast corner of fort
- 26 One room camp house notorious for its bad company
- 27 John Allen's corral
- 28 John Allen log home
- 29 John Adams stone home
- 30 Fletch Hammon home
- 31 Blacksmith shop southwest corner of the fort. Later became the home of Dave Edwards followed by Charles Lang
- 32 Joseph F. Barton cabin, west wall of the fort.



- 33 Kumen Jones log home, part of the west wall of the fort. Later replaced with a stone home.
- 34 Log school / meeting house, north wall of the fort
- 43 Two room stone school house built in mid nineties. Later demolished, some stones used to build the jail
- 44 Hyrum Perkins log home
- 57 Hans Bayles' corral and shed
- 58 Fletch Hammond's corral
- 59 Joseph F. Barton corral
- 60 Kumen Jones corral
- 72 Meat market

Bluff Fort

Approximate location of known structures based on Albert R. Lyman's map and notes.

