

Ustick: A Community on the Brink of Place



Harlan P. Ustick



Dr. Harlan P. Ustick: Boise Entrepreneur and Pioneer

- Born in Bloomingburg, Ohio.
- Moved to Boise in 1903.
- Established the Ustick town-site in 1907.
- Helped establish the Boise Valley Rail Road Company which became the first interburban line in the Boise valley.
- Co-founded the Boise Gas Company.
- Co-founded the Idaho Horticulture Society.
- Operated the third largest commercial orchard in the Boise Valley.

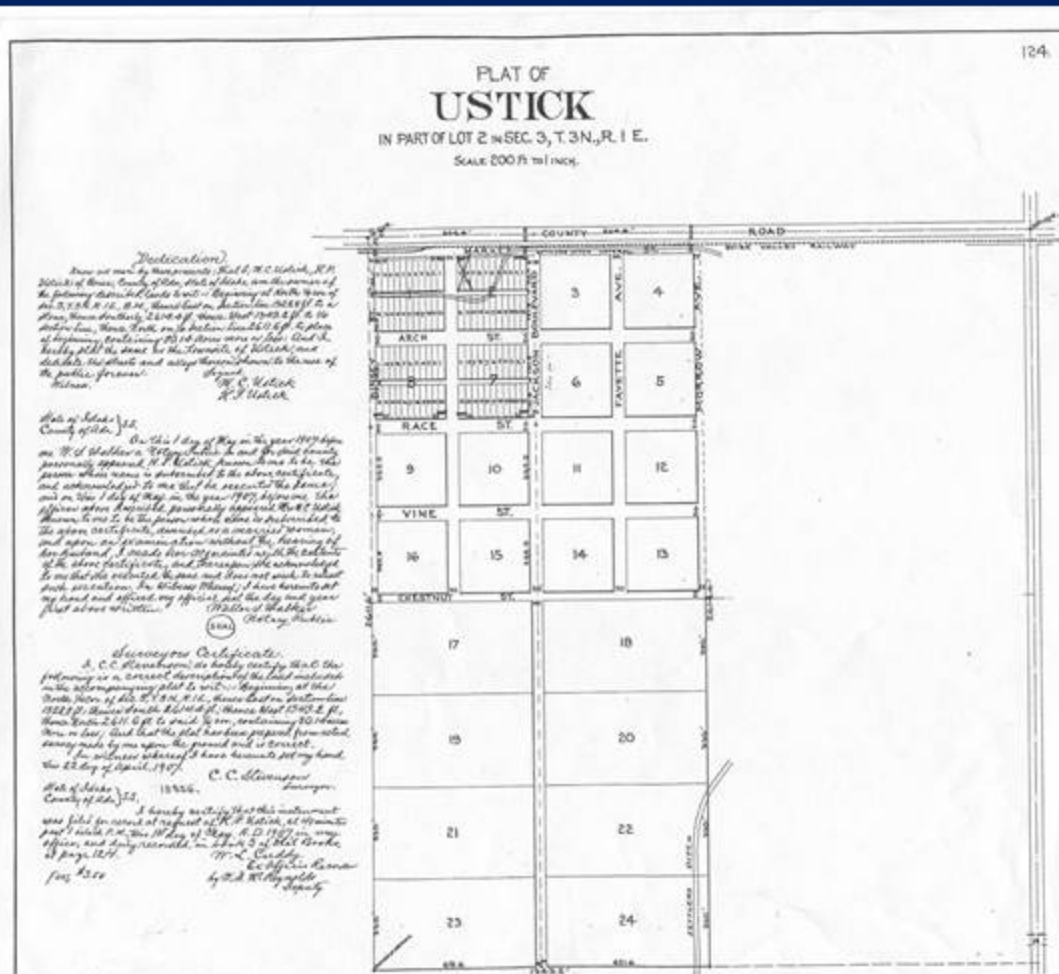


The Ustick Town-Site: An Agricultural History

- Platted in 1907, Ustick at its peak supported a school, a bank, a store, a church, a creamery and up to three vinegar processing plants.
- Up until 1920 the Ustick town site area was part of a flourishing agricultural region with some of the largest apple orchards found in the Northwest.
- Most of the apples were processed into cider at one of the Ustick vinegar plants.
- The orchards became the foundation for a self-reliant and largely self-contained rural community.



Original Ustick Plat (Dec. 1, 1907)



December 7, 1907

147

AMENDED PLAT OF BLOCKS NO^s 1 AND 2 IN USTICK

SCALE 100 FT. TO 1 INCH.

Know all men by these presents: That H. C. Ustick of Union County of Ohio, State of Ohio, for the purpose of Block 1 and 2 of the Township of Ustick, and I hereby dedicate the streets and alleys as shown hereon to the use of the public forever.

H. C. Ustick
H. C. Ustick

State of Ohio } ss.
County of Union

On this 7th day of December in the year 1907 before me, B. F. Neal, a Notary Public in and for said County, personally appeared H. C. Ustick, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the above certificate, described as a married man, and upon examination without the having of his husband, I made due comparison with the contents of the above certificate, and thereupon she acknowledged to me that she executed the same and consented to the sale and lease hereinafter; and on the same 7th day of December in the year 1907, before me the officer above described, personally appeared H. C. Ustick, known to me to be the person who, above named, is subscribed to the above certificate, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and official seal this day and year first above written.

B. F. Neal
Notary Public

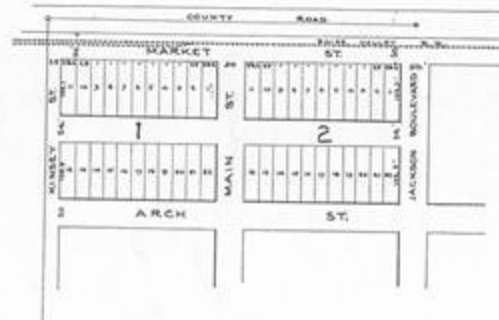
State of Ohio } ss.
County of Union

I hereby certify that this instrument was filed for record at 10:00 A.M. of Dec. 15, 1907, in my office, and duly recorded in Book 5 of Plat Books, at page 147.

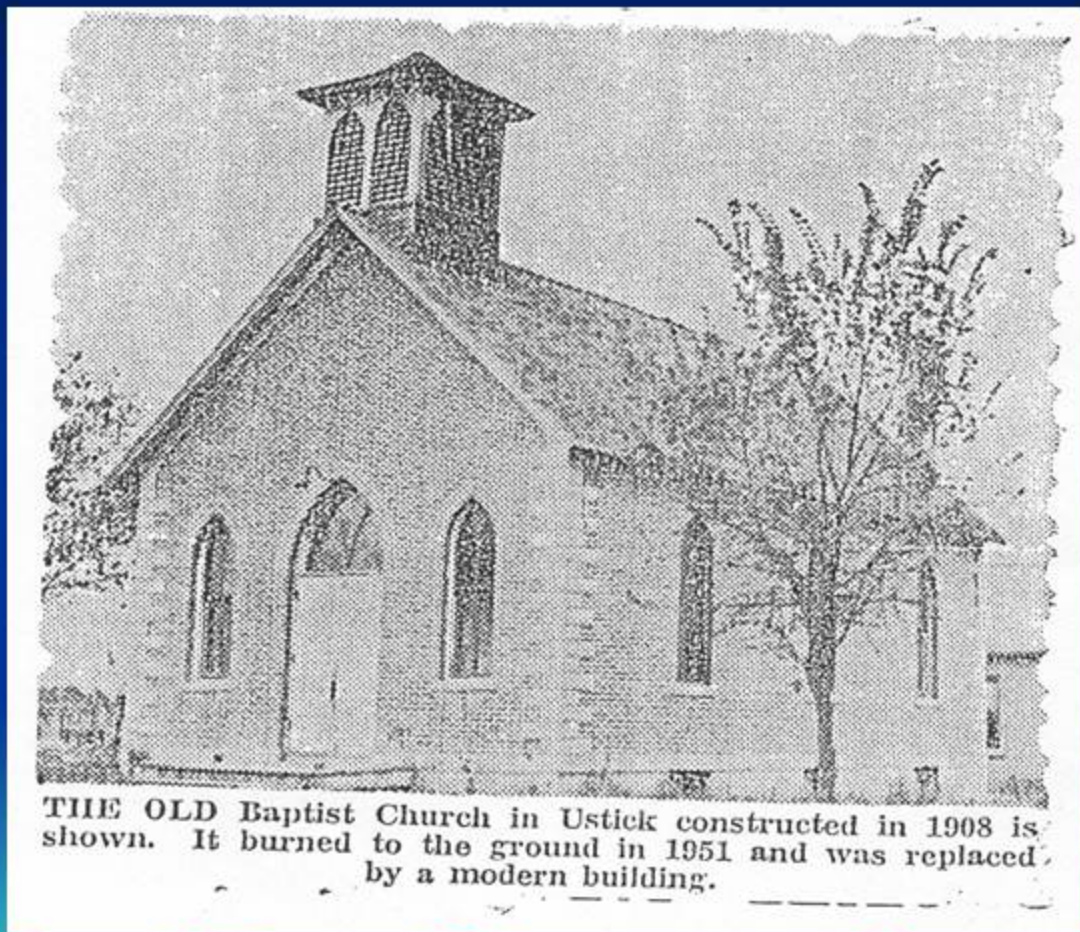
H. C. Ustick
By J. S. Kelly
J. S. Kelly
Deputy

File #300

FOR SALE AND CONVEYANCE OF
IMPROVEMENTS SEE PLAT BOOK 5



The Ustick Baptist Church



THE OLD Baptist Church in Ustick constructed in 1908 is shown. It burned to the ground in 1951 and was replaced by a modern building.

Apple Pickers



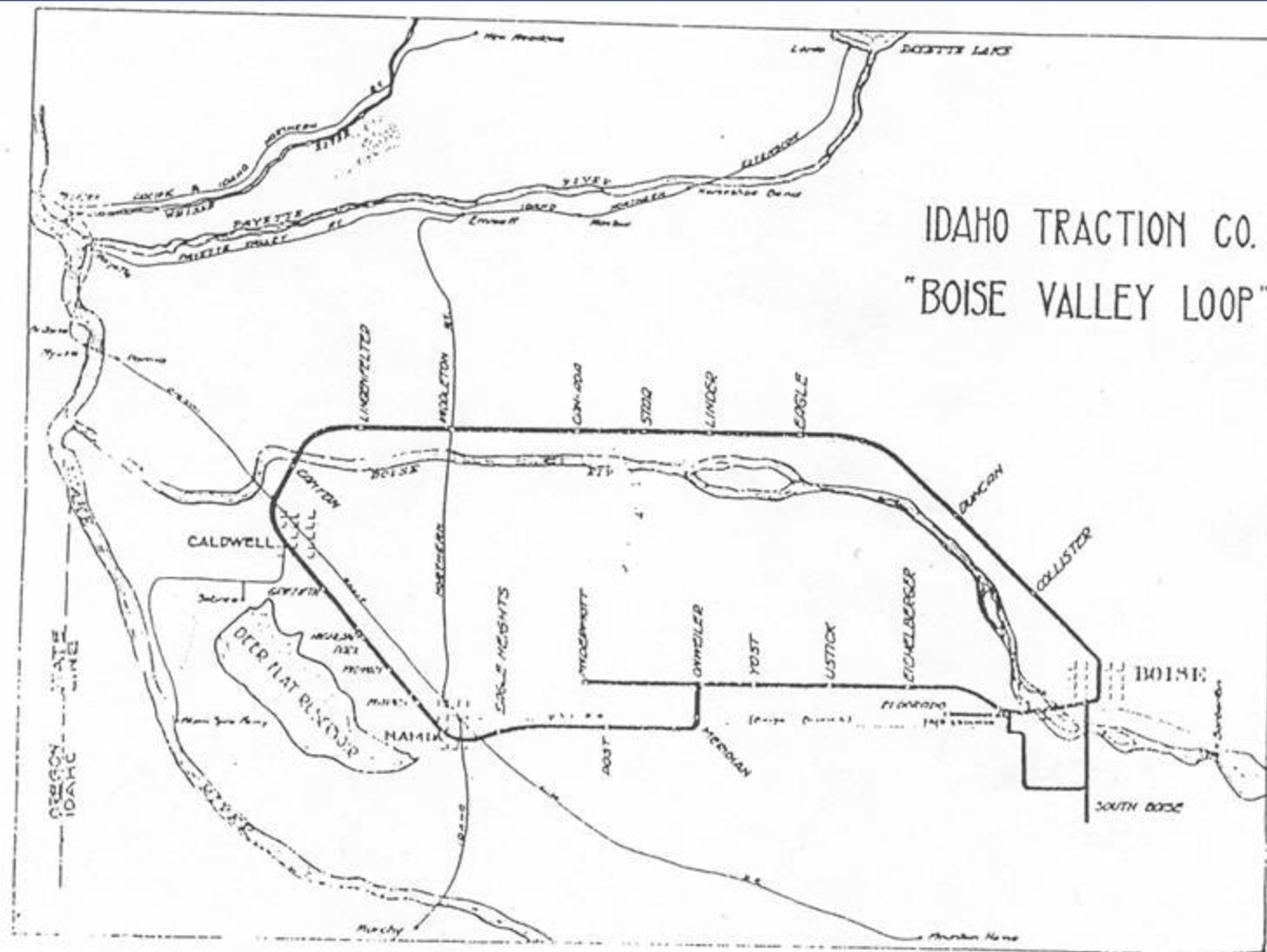
PICKERS IN WAITS' ORCHARD



“The Interurban”

- In 1907, With encouragement from Dr. Ustick, the interurban railway system was installed along what is currently Ustick road, then called Market street. Once completed it connected a series of rural farming communities ultimately stretching from Caldwell to the commercial hub of Boise. The interurban transported produce as well as passengers to and from Boise making it just as important as agriculture in establishing Ustick as a town-site.





The Decline of Place

- By the 1920s the automobile, as well as mismanagement and debt, had all but made the interurban railway irrelevant. By this time its use as a form of public transportation had ceased completely, and by 1925 the lines stopped transporting goods and services.
- The Ustick town-site neighborhood remained rural and somewhat agricultural through the mid-century mark. However, after World War II suburban growth began to take affect on the community and by the 1970s Ustick was no more than a east-west corridor and suburban community to Boise.



What is Left?

- Not much. Most of the early century buildings have been torn down or have burned down. Poorly planned commercial and residential development projects have also taken their toll on the character and identity of the neighborhood.
- What does remain consists of the school, the store, the bank, the creamery and a number of residential houses.



The Ustick Merc (1912)



The Ustick School (1908)



The Ustick Bank (1908)



The Creamery Building



Residential Architecture

- Much of the original residential architecture within the Ustick town-site has either been remodeled beyond the original design or completely replaced. However, there are several good examples still standing including a house that Dr. Ustick had designed and built for himself.



The House that Ustick Built



Early Ranch-Style Home (appx 1907)



Country Home of Freemont Wood (1903)

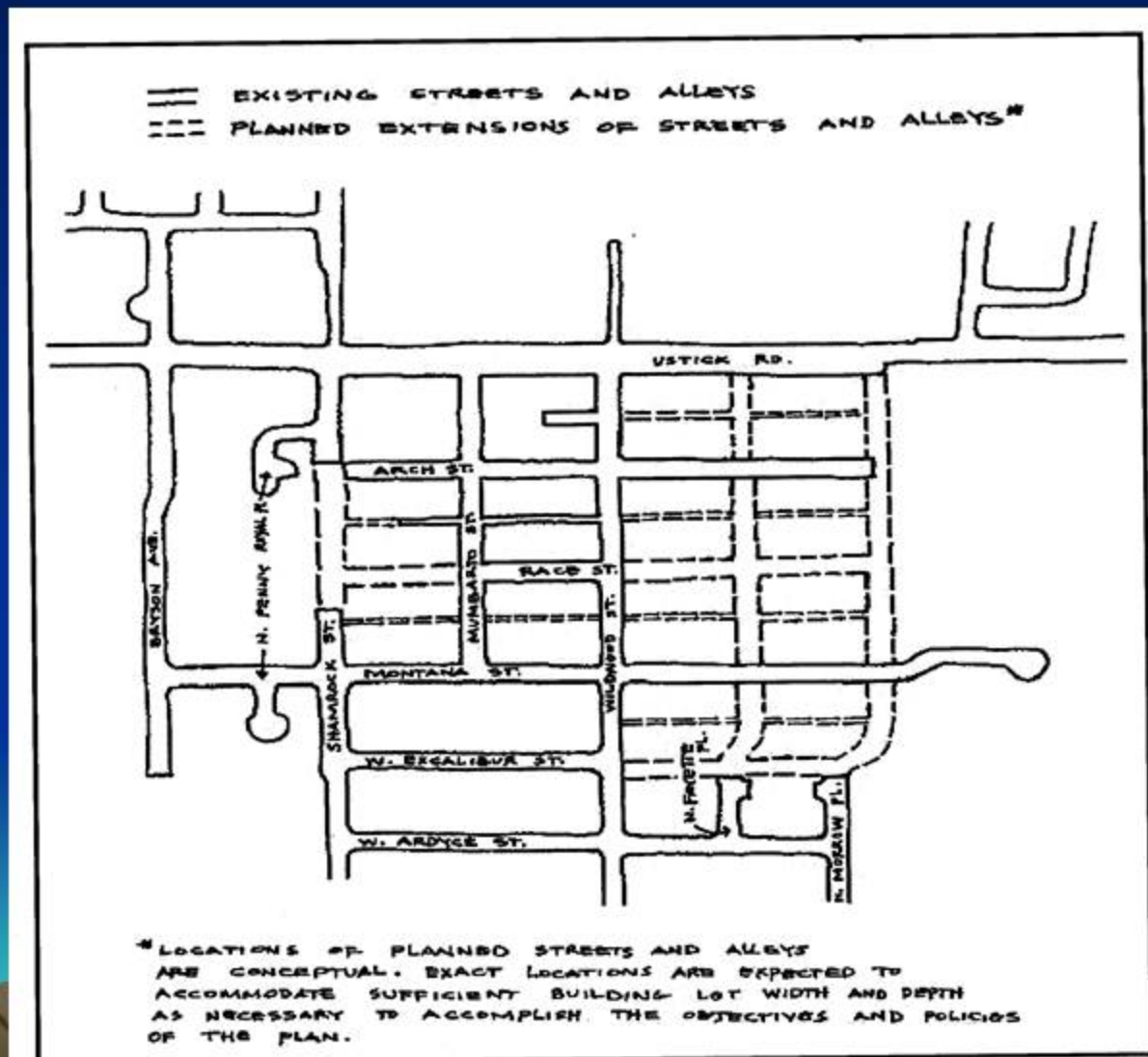


The Town-Site Resurrection

- The Ustick town-site neighborhood association, called the West Valley Neighborhood Association, is one of the most active and organized associations in the city of Boise. They have drafted a neighborhood plan that outlines their vision for the future, and have outlined many of the development issues that they see as continuing to cause problems with Ustick. The neighborhood plan is in compliance with the city's comprehensive plan and many of the tenets of New Urbanism. The WVNA has also outlined to the city a performance zone ordinance policy that would give them more involvement in the development patterns of their neighborhood.



Ustick Town-site Gridmap



Ustick Township
Plat Grid Map

Design Elements of the Neighborhood Plan

- Homes should be oriented to the streets with front porches
- Garages should be de-emphasized and accessible from alleys
- Businesses should not be separated from residential houses as long as they are compatible structures.
- Business should front streets and side-walks so that they are pedestrian friendly. Parking should be to the rear or side of business.
- Business buildings should be in scale with small town districts. Size limit will be 15,000 square feet.
- Residential fences shall be designed to encourage interaction among neighbors. To achieve this fence heights should be limited to four feet.
- A pedestrian friendly environment should be encouraged through the proper implementation of detached sidewalks and landscaping.
- Historic light fixtures should be installed along Ustick road and Shamrock. And a historic lighting district should be designated for the Ustick town-site area.

Elements of “The Good”

- Smaller lot sizes.
- Functional service alleys
- Detached rear garages.
- Functional porches.
- Grass pavers instead of gutters.



The Good



Elements of “The Bad”

- No ally access
- “Snout” design: shotgun style home with protruding garage dominating the facade.
- Non-functional, faux porches.



The Bad



Elements of “The Ugly”

- Poorly maintained homes that devalue the neighborhood.
- Poorly or scantily remodeled homes whose designs are incompatible with the neighborhood.
- The above example is of an early 20th century home that burned down in the 1970s. Residents decided to just put a roof over the existing basement rather than rebuild the structure.



The Ugly



Performance Zone

- Allows flexibility in development and design patterns, Instead of the more rigid zoning system currently in place.
- Encourages a mixed-use environment, including in-home businesses as long as they comply with certain restrictions.
- Allows residents to take more control in the development patterns of their neighborhoods by allowing them to serve on sub-committees and design compatibility teams.
- Excludes development that is not compatible with the neighborhood vision laid out in the ordinance.
- Encourages interaction between public officials, neighborhoods and the private sector.

To Widen or Not to Widen?

- The Ada County Highway District's long term plan to widen Ustick road to five lanes has created a storm of local controversy over the relevancy of road widening and its impact on neighborhoods. Arguments for and against the widening project have come from the city, the county, the neighborhoods and commuters.



The Future

- Today the Ustick town-site neighborhood teeters on the brink of place. Decisions made or not made by the county and the city will ultimately determine the neighborhood's future. There is an opportunity to either make Ustick an example of the new vision in smart growth and New Urban design, or to allow the status quo to further blight this historic neighborhood. If comprehensive plans and neighborhood plans truly have any meaning in this debate then we should have nothing to worry about.

