



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name ST. GEORGE SOCIAL HALL
other names/site Gardener's Club Wine Cellar, Opera House, Sugar Beet Factory

2. Location

street & number 212 North Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town St. George N/A vicinity
state Utah code UT county Washington code 053 zip code 84770

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
Name of related multiple property listing:		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total
<u>N/A</u>		No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register <u>-0-</u>	

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

M. J. E. 2-11-91
Signature of certifying official Date

Utah State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)

Albany Byers 4/3/91
National Register Date of Action

fu Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/Subsistence: storage (wine cellar)

Recreation and Culture: auditorium

Current Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

other: vernacular (classical)

Materials
(enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone (basalt)

walls adobe

sandstone

roof wood

other stucco (walls)

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The St. George Social Hall was constructed in two phases--c.1864 and c.1880. The T-shaped building has a stone foundation, gable roofs, and adobe exterior walls. A number of additions and alterations were made to the building in 1928, many of which were reversed, however, in 1989 under the first phase of rehabilitation. Though still only partially restored, the building exhibits much of its nineteenth-century appearance.

The original c.1864 section, the wine cellar, is probably just what is now the basement of the building. It has a ground level entrance on the south, where the ground slopes away, consisting of a central door flanked by a pair of windows. The exposed basement section on the south features a basalt foundation and sandstone walls that extend just beyond the lintels of the basement windows.

The adobe-walled upper story on top of this basement section was probably built between 1877 and 1880. It has a simple gable roof and stuccoed adobe exterior walls, though there are sections where the stucco has been removed and where non-historic openings have been filled in with newly made adobe bricks. There are a pair of windows on the south elevation and a central door set between two windows on the north. The interior consists of a single room which is adjoined to the western wing with a large opening.

The large western wing, also built between 1877 and 1880, creates a T-shaped building. The roof on this section is slightly higher than that of the other section due to the fact that it spans a wider space (approximately 35 feet instead of 23); the pitch appears to be the same. There is a stepped gable parapet on the west facade. The stepped parapets were reconstructed of adobe brick during the 1989 rehabilitation. A late nineteenth-century photograph served as the guide for the reconstruction. The interior of the c.1880 section is a single large room with an arched ceiling (the ceiling is actually gone; all that remains are the trusses and ceiling joists). The wooden floor was a unique structure that pivoted at the west end and could be tilted down approximately four feet to allow for better audience viewing of the stage on the east. Portions of this floor mechanism are still intact.

Other work completed during the 1989 rehabilitation included filling in a garage door on the north, removing non-historic additions on the north and east facades and on the roof, reconstructing new arch-type trusses in one section, and reshingling the entire building with new wood shingles. There are still original openings that need to be re-opened and an incompatible shed-roofed addition on the south that will eventually be removed.

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Though there are other buildings on this parcel of land, they are not included on the portion of the property that is delineated for nomination. Restoration and rehabilitation of the building will continue as funds come available over the next few years. The City of St. George, which owns the building and is undertaking its rehabilitation, plans to use it for a variety of community-based performances and events.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
 nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Areas of Significance	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>c.1864--c.1880</u>	<u>c.1864</u>
<u>Entertainment</u>	<u>c.1880--c.1930</u>	<u>c.1880</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

architect: unknown

builder: St. George Builders Union

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

This building is significant for both its original use as a center of wine production in the area and later, after a large addition was made on the west, as the community's center for theatrical and cultural performances. Though the growing of cotton was the primary goal of the Mormon settlement of St. George when it was established in 1861, wine-making soon emerged as a major agricultural industry as well. The mild climate of this southwestern corner of Utah proved suitable for these warm-weather crops, and for a time at least they were produced successfully. The basement section of this building was constructed c.1864 to serve as a wine cellar. It is the only remaining building in St. George known to have been part of the local wine industry. By 1880, after wine-making had declined, the building was converted into a performance hall by additions on top of the wine cellar and to the west. The Social Hall served as the town's principal theater for almost fifty years. It is the only nineteenth-century performance hall still standing in the community.

The St. George Social Hall has gone through three major phases of operation. The first was as the Wine Cellar. The original basement section, constructed c. 1864¹ as a place to make and store wine, dates back to the early days of settlement in St. George and Washington County.

Washington County, like most of Utah, was settled by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon or LDS church). Colonization began with a series of small settlements established in the mid-1850s along Ash Creek and the Santa Clara River. It was soon discovered that cotton could be grown in the temperate climate, and the area became known as Utah's Dixie. Faced with cotton shortages as the Civil War loomed and convinced of the importance of a local source of cotton to the Mormon plan of self sufficiency, Brigham Young decided to set up a mission that would produce enough cotton to provide for the Mormon settlements. The settlers, fighting the ravages of malaria and facing a critical food shortage, soon

X See continuation sheet

¹Several sources cite the construction date as 1864 (for example, Bradshaw, ed., Under Dixie Sun, p. 324), though other sources note that the Gardeners' Club, which built the Wine Cellar, was most likely organized in 1865 (Salt Lake Tribune, August 13, 1911 and Larson, I Was Called to Dixie, p. 334). It is possible that the Gardeners' Club did construct the building in 1864 before they formally organized as a club.

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became discouraged. Many abandoned the area, leaving an inadequate number of disheartened farmers to carry out the cotton experiment. Seeing that the project was in danger of failing, Brigham Young called over three hundred men and their families to move to Southern Utah and establish a new town which would become the center of the cotton mission. The community was named St. George.

Another agricultural commodity which thrived in Southern Utah's climate was the production of grapes. Soon after colonization, the area was producing more grapes than could be disposed of through local consumption and bartering. The natural solution was to make wine, and this the settlers did with the approval of Brigham Young. It was his intention that the wine was to be used for sacrament services in the various church settlements and that the remainder was to be sold to non-Mormons. There was a ready market for wine in some of the nearby mining towns.

Thus, around 1864, the St. George Gardeners' Club built the Wine Cellar to serve as the center for wine production and storage in the city. The Gardeners' Club was an association formed by leading farmers to find means for improving crops. Though the exact date of its organization remains obscure, sources indicate that it was in full operation by the summer of 1865.² (It was probably not just a coincidence that the Wine Cellar was located kitty-corner across from the home of the Joseph E. Johnson, the organizing force behind the Gardeners' Club and the leading horticulturist in the area.) The Wine Cellar was constructed of stone and set into the hillside, providing a cool area for producing and storing the wine. Wine facilities were probably constructed in most of the neighboring communities as well, though only one other is known to still exist, the 1866-68 Naegle Winery in Toquerville (National Register).

Wine-making in Washington County declined in the 1880s and eventually died out. Two major reasons are given for its demise. First was the concern by Mormon church leaders about local residents imbibing too much. Leaders had always advised that the wine should be exported rather than consumed locally, but their advice was not always heeded. As a result leaders became more outspoken in opposition to wine and wine-making. Second, the value of wine as a cash crop declined. This was due in part to the bad reputation Dixie wine gained for its inconsistent and poor quality. Its marketability suffered as a result. Though there were a few knowledgeable wine-makers, such as John Naegle in nearby Toquerville, most were amateurs.³ Another economic factor was the decline in the number of wine consumers, as most of the miners in the area left with the closure of many of the nearby mines in the 1880s.

Sometime between 1877 and 1880, an adobe-walled upper room was constructed on top of the wine cellar then a large wing was extended to the west. The building then entered its second phase of use as the Social Hall. The section above the wine cellar, possibly completed and used before the western wing was finished, served as a stage with side wings. The western addition was used to seat patrons and could accommodate about 400 people. This was up to four times the capacity of other

²Andrew Karl Larson, *I Was Called to Dixie*, p. 334.

³Larson, pp. 348-350.

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facilities in the community. It is unclear whether the basement continued in use as a wine cellar after these additions were made.

Though some local sources claim that the room above the wine cellar was built at the same time as the wine cellar, the most reliable source indicates otherwise.⁴ This is supported by the fact that in 1867 the Gardeners' Club, which built the wine cellar, constructed at another location the Gardeners' Club Hall where they could hold meetings and exhibit products of the members.⁵ It seems that there would have been no need for a separate building if the Wine Cellar had a meeting room on top. Even the name "Wine Cellar" implies that it was a below-ground structure.

The need for a large performance hall such as the Social Hall had become apparent in the community, which placed considerable emphasis on plays and operatic performances. The Mormons thoroughly believed in the educational and recreational value of the performing arts. Sharing drama, music and dance often held struggling communities together and assumed an important role in their lives. Smaller meeting halls, such as the 1863 St. George Hall and the 1867 Gardeners' Club Hall, were used through the 1860s and 1870s, but were inadequate for larger gatherings. In 1875, the St. George Hall, which had been used since its completion in 1863 for public programs, was sold to private interests. The loss of the St. George Hall for public use necessitated that a new gathering hall be secured.

The recently established Builders Union was contracted to expand the Wine Cellar into the Social Hall. After the completion of the courthouse (1876), tabernacle (1876), and St. George Temple (c.1877), the men who had learned their trades on these buildings decided to form an organization known as the Builders Union whose aim was to promote building in the area. Miles P. Romney, son of pioneer architect/builder Miles Romney, was chosen as their director. It was decided that one of the first projects that the organization would undertake would be to build an addition to the Wine Cellar and convert the structure to an assembly hall. It is probable that the Gardener's Club sold the building to the St. George Social Hall Company about this time.⁶ While little has been documented about the company, it was most likely an administrative concern which oversaw the day to day operations of the hall.

Romney was also a member of the St. George Dramatic Association and performed in many of the local plays produced by them. The St. George Dramatic Association was

⁴Larson, pp. 348, 404-405.

⁵Larson, p. 339.

⁶The title search for the building shows that the Gardeners' Club purchased the property sometime before 1874 (title records weren't kept until that date) and that there were no subsequent transactions until the St. George Social Hall Company turned the building over the Mormon Church in 1900 as payment of a loan. Since the transaction between the Gardeners' Club and the St. George Social Hall Company was therefore not recorded, it seems most likely that it occurred just prior to the construction of the additional wing. In 1938, the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, who had purchased the property from the Mormon Church, was given legal ownership in a judicial decree when members from the St. George Gardeners' Club failed to come forward and make any claim on the property.

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formally organized in 1864 (it appears that they had worked on an informal basis up to that time) and produced many plays with local talent. It seems to have been discontinued for a time during the late 1870s but was reorganized in 1880, the same year that construction was completed on the addition to the Wine Cellar.

Shortly thereafter, a local missionary preaching in New York City learned of the bankruptcy of an opera company which was selling its stage scenery and curtain at a bargain price. The missionary acquired the property and shipped them to St. George for installation in the Social Hall. After this acquisition, it was boasted that St. George had the best stage scenery in the territory. With the additional seating capacity and new scenery, operas as well as plays were soon produced with regularity. The first opera was performed in 1886.

Soon after the building's conversion to a social hall, a movable floor was installed so that dances could be held in the building. The hall was also used for political assemblies and other gatherings. For over fifty years, the St. George Social Hall was the social and recreational center for southern Utah.

In March of 1900, ownership of the Social Hall passed from the St. George Social Hall Company to the Mormon church. The company was indebted to the church for \$2,018.24 and the proceeds from their shows were insufficient to even pay the interest on the loan.⁷ Having no other property with which to settle the debt, they transferred ownership of the hall to the church as payment in full. It would appear, however, that the Social Hall continued to function as before.

In the early 1930s, as the Depression was taking its economic toll, motion pictures began to replace live presentations as the dominant form of entertainment. In 1936, the Mormon church sold the St. George Social Hall to the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company who converted the building into a facility to process sugar beet seeds. They owned the building until 1988, constructing additions and making modifications during the years. This was the building's third phase of development.

In 1988, the St. George Neighborhood Redevelopment Agency acquired the property, restoring the structure and converting it back to a building for public use.

⁷Washington County Recorder's Office, Deed Book Y-2, pp. 292-293.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Agreement of the St. George Gardeners' Club," incorporation document, 1873, located in the James G. Bleak Collection, Utah State Historical Society.

"Dixie Homecoming Recalls Fascinating History..." Salt Lake Tribune, August 13, 1911, page 11.

"Miles Romney Dead," Deseret Evening News, March 12, 1904, p. 10.

Obituary: Miles Romney, Deseret News, volume 26, p. 209.

Bradshaw, Hazel, ed., Under Dixie Sun (Washington County Chapter Daughters of Utah Pioneers & Garfield County News Press: Panguitch, Utah, 1950), pp. 323-325.

Hafen, A. K., Beneath Vermillion Cliff, (published privately: St. George, Utah, 1967), p. 23.

Jensen, Andrew, Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, (Deseret News Press: Salt Lake City, 1936), v.4, p. 594.

Larson, Andrew Karl, I Was Called to Dixie, (Author: St. George, Utah (?), 1961).

___ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ___ previously listed in the National Register
- ___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ___ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- ___ Other State agency
- ___ Federal agency
- ___ Local Government
- ___ University
- ___ Other

Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property ___ less than one

UTM References

A	<u>1/2</u>	<u>2/7/0/5/6/0</u>	<u>4/1/1/0/2/0/0</u>	B	<u>/ /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>/ /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>	D	<u>/ /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>

___ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

SW quarter of the W half of Lot 2, Block 2, Plat D, St. George City Survey

___ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries are delineated to include only the Social Hall and not other non-historic buildings on the larger parcel.

___ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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organization Utah State Historical Society date November 1990
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