

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received MAR 2 1983  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Decker, James Bean, House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Lot 3 Block 8 Plat A not for publication

city, town Bluff vicinity of congressional district

state Utah code 049 county San Juan code 037

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Eugene and Mary Foushee

street & number Recapture Lodge

city, town Bluff vicinity of state Utah 84512

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. San Juan County Courthouse

street & number -----

city, town Monticello state Utah

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Survey of Bluff, San Juan County, Utah has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1975-76  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Utah State Historical Society

city, town Salt Lake City state Utah

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Decker house is a large, two-story brick house (now stuccoed), which is an example of a cross-wing type found in Utah during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The principle wing--gabled and projecting forward perpendicular to the street--has a central chimney, gable decoration that includes cornice returns, patterned shingle siding, and an arched attic window, and a one-story three-sided bay window. There are projecting hip-roofed wings to the west and east and a small gabled addition at the rear. The main roof flares at the eaves, adding a distinctive decorative flourish to the overall appearance of the house. On the west wing the second floor windows stick up above the roof line and are covered by slightly flared shed-roof domers. Both the west and east wings have chimneys with corbelled decoration. On all wings except the rear, all window and door openings are round with stone sills. The house was originally brick but was plastered in the 1950s to give the house a stucco exterior appearance.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1898 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The James Bean Decker House, constructed in 1898, is significant as one of only four properties remaining in Bluff that illustrates the prosperity generated from the transition of the area's economy from a basically farming to livestock economy. As a member of the "Bluff Pool" James B. Decker was important in this transition. This prosperity was made possible after a shift from an emphasis on farming to livestock in 1885. The traditional Mormon settlement program in the intermountain West called for the establishment of communities adjacent to adequate water supplies for use in irrigating crops. This pattern was attempted on the San Juan River at Bluff; however, the dams and ditches constructed for irrigation purposes frequently washed out and the quantity of farm land was minimal. The marginal economy necessitated men from Bluff traveling to the silver mines in western Colorado to earn money to help sustain the settlement. Therefore, the shift from a subsistence level existence, based on farming and working at odd jobs (such as mining), which took place in 1885 when Francis Hammond was sent by church authorities to direct Mormon efforts in the San Juan country, marked an important change in the economy and lifestyle of the Mormon settlers. James Bean Decker was one of the leaders of the "Bluff Pool", a cooperative organization among Mormon livestock men which successfully challenged the non-Mormon cattlemen for control of the area. The success of the Bluff Pool was not only reflected in its ability to hold the San Juan County under Mormon control, but also in the financial rewards which the new policy and direction brought to the San Juan pioneers. This house constructed by James Bean Decker reflects the success of this change by illustrating a move from small log cabins built shortly after their arrival in 1880 to more permanent and substantial dwellings made possible by their new financial situation.<sup>1</sup>

This house was constructed for James Bean Decker and his wife Anna Marie Mickelson Decker in 1895. Born March 25, 1853 in Parowan, Utah, James B. Decker married Anna Marie Mickelson on July 13, 1874. She was born April 7, 1855 in nearby Cedar City. Called to settle the San Juan Region in 1879, James B. Decker was a member of the 1879 exploring expedition which traveled to the San Juan River in the summer of 1879 by way of northern Arizona and returned to Parowan along the Old Spanish Trail through eastern and central Utah. Upon his return he completed preparations for a permanent move to the San Juan region, and was one of the original settlers who made the journey across the Hole-in-the-Rock Trail from Escalante to Bluff in 1879-1880.

James B. Decker soon became a man of considerable importance in Bluff. He was elected San Juan County's first sheriff, was a member of the district school board for many years and operated large cattle and sheep ranches. Active in the Mormon church, he was the first superintendent of the Bluff Sunday School and was locally known for his encouragement of music and as director of the Bluff choir. He died December 15, 1900 when a diphtheria epidemic struck the

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Jones, Lenora B.; Nielson, Marian G.; and Perkins, Cornelia, A Saga of San Juan, San Juan County Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1968.  
Miller, David E., Hole-in-the-Rock, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1959.  
Walker, Don D., "The Cattle Industry of Utah, 1859-1900, An Historical Profile, Utah Historical Quarterly, XXXII (Summer 1964).

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Bluff, Utah

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UMT References

A 

1	2	6	2	7	9	0	0	4	1	2	7	2	5	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes all of Lot 3, Block 8, Plat A, Bluff survey.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kent Powell, Historian/Tom Carter, Architectural Historian

organization Utah State Historical Society date Summer 1980

street & number 300 Rio Grande telephone (801) 533-6017

city or town Salt Lake City state Utah

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Melvin T. Smith*

title Melvin T. Smith, State Historic Preservation Officer

date

4-20-83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

8/4/83

*J. Beth Grosvenor*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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community also claiming four of his seven children: Horace, Gertrude, Lynn and Clair. The seven remaining children were Lillian, Jennie, Lena, James, Elmer, Claude, and Afton. Mrs. Decker lived in the house until 1918 when she sold it and moved to Monticello. The house is currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Gene Fouchee and has been renovated as a guest house in connection with Recapture Lodge.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Two other houses also document the significance of the livestock industry to southeastern Utah--the Al Scorup House and the Lemuel Hardison Redd, Jr. House in Bluff. These houses were identified and documented as part of a study of the town of Bluff as a potential historic district nomination. After application of the four criteria and review of integrity questions, these three houses, along with the Jens Nielson House (listed in the National Register on 2/22/82) and Old Fort Cabins were considered eligible for nomination. A related nomination is the Hole-in-the-Rock Trail which is the road constructed by settlers of Bluff to reach the San Juan River (listed in the National Register on 8/8/82).