

Historic Preservation Research Office

**Structure/Site Information Form**

IDENTIFICATION 1

Street Address: 103 E. Main  
Midway, Wasatch County, Utah

UTM: 12 460250 4484520  
Heber City Quad  
T. 3 S R. 4 E S. 35

Name of Structure: Bonner, George, Sr., House

Present Owner: John E. Told  
555 N. 300 East

Owner Address: Pleasant Grove, Utah 84062

Year Built (Tax Record): \_\_\_\_\_ Effective Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax #: OMI-0105-0-013-034  
Legal Description Kind of Building: \_\_\_\_\_

W 89 feet of Lot 2 and the S 37 feet of the W 89 feet of Lot 3 Block 13 Midway Survey.  
0.28 acres

STATUS/USE 2

Original Owner: George Bonner, Sr. Construction Date: c. 1876 Demolition Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Original Use: Residential Present Use: Residential

Building Condition: Integrity: Preliminary Evaluation: Final Register Status:

- |  |                                |   |   |                                     |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> Site  | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant | <input type="checkbox"/> Not of the | <input type="checkbox"/> National Landmark | <input type="checkbox"/> District    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Alterations            | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributory           | Historic Period                     | <input type="checkbox"/> National Register | <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Resou |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated    |                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major Alterations | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Contributory       |                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> State Register    | <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic    |

DOCUMENTATION 3

Photography: Date of Slides: 1985-6 Slide No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Photographs: 1985-6 Photo No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Views:  Front  Side  Rear  Other Views:  Front  Side  Rear  Other

Research Sources:

- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abstract of Title | <input type="checkbox"/> Sanborn Maps                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers                               | <input type="checkbox"/> U of U Library |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plat Records/Map  | <input type="checkbox"/> City Directories                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utah State Historical Society | <input type="checkbox"/> BYU Library    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tax Card & Photo  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biographical Encyclopedias | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal Interviews           | <input type="checkbox"/> USU Library    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Permit              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Obituary Index             | <input type="checkbox"/> LDS Church Archives                      | <input type="checkbox"/> SLC Library    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sewer Permit                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County & City Histories    | <input type="checkbox"/> LDS Genealogical Society                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other          |

Bibliographical References (books, articles, records, interviews, old photographs and maps, etc.):

Schaer, Mary A. A Brief History of the Pioneer John Watkins. Ogden, Utah: Commercial Press, 1979, Second Edition.

Wasatch Historical Society, "Lethe Coleman Tatge Tells the Story of Her Home in Midway," n.p., 1968. Copy available in the National Register File "Watkins-Coleman House," Preservation Office, Utah State Historical Society.

Mortimer, William James, comp. and ed. How Beautiful Upon the Mountains. Heber City, Utah: Wasatch County Chapter of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1963.

Architect/Builder: John Watkins

Building Materials: brick

Building Type/Style: cross-wing variant/Gothic Revival

## Description of physical appearance &amp; significant architectural features:

(Include additions, alterations, ancillary structures, and landscaping if applicable)

The George Bonner, Sr., House, built c. 1876, is a 1 1/2 story brick house designed in the Gothic Revival style, and is a variant of the popular nineteenth century cross-wing house. The cross-wing house is characterized by a central forward-facing wing intersected by a perpendicular side wing in a T- or L- configuration. One variant of the cross-wing was a house with side wings placed to either side of the center block. The Bonner house, arranged with bedroom and kitchen wings to either side of a central parlor, is an example of this latter type of cross-wing house. The rear kitchen ell was either original to the house or added very soon after the front section was completed. Open porches were initially found to either side of the rear ell, but in the twentieth century were enclosed to become part of the house. In 1974 a large concrete block garage was attached to the rear of the kitchen.

Nineteenth century photographs indicate that the original house was highly ornamental. White sandstone quoins were found at the corners, contrasting nicely with the deep red brick walls; scroll-cut bargeboards and finials were found on all the principal gables; wall dormers and fancy balconied porches were located on the front of both side wings; wooden cresting ran along the ridge of the roof; and there were diagonally placed chimney pots, wooden pedimented window heads, and a distinctive bay window on the principal wing.

(See Continuation Sheet)

## Statement of Historical Significance:

Construction Date:

Constructed c. 1876, the George Bonner, Sr., House is one of seven houses contained in the ARCHITECTURE OF JOHN WATKINS THEMATIC RESOURCE NOMINATION, having been designed and built by John Watkins, an accomplished early Utah builder. John Watkins' work effectively illustrates the dynamic role the professional builder played in shaping Utah's early architectural landscape. While it has been customary for historians to explain Utah architecture from the time of first settlement in 1847 up to about 1890 as the simple extension of eastern folk styles or the replication of popular pattern-book designs, John Watkins' houses suggest a more generous appraisal. Slave to neither tradition nor pattern-book, Watkins found useful ideas in both, ideas that formed the basis of essentially new if nevertheless familiar designs. From two-room cottages to elaborate Gothic Revival houses to houses intended for multi-family polygamous living, Watkins drew upon his broad building experience to create not copies of other houses, but new ones designed to meet his client's functional, aesthetic, and symbolic needs. This house is significant not only as an important example of the Gothic Revival style in early Utah, but also because it demonstrates Watkins' ability to deftly manipulate basic picturesque design concepts. Drawing upon a set of ideas embodied in the basic cross-wing house form, Watkins was able to generate a rich variety of housing designs.

John Watkins was born in Madsone, Kent, Kingland in 1834. He received training in the building trade in his native England before joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and emigrating to Utah in 1855. Watkins' skills were welcomed in the nascent Mormon towns of, first, Provo, and then Midway. In Provo, Watkins helped build the original LDS Tabernacle (1856) and the Opena House (1859) and after moving to Midway in the upper Provo River

George Bonner, Sr., House  
Description continued:

By the 1950s, however, very little of this elaborate garnishment remained. In fact, only the quoins and the window heads were left to suggest the decorative quality of the original design.

In 1985, working from historic photographs and early photographs of Watkins' other Midway houses, the present owner began to refurbish the house. Plaster was removed from the exterior walls and chimneys, the asphalt roof was replaced with a wooden one, bargeboards and finials were carefully copied and remounted, and the original porches were painstakingly reconstructed. The large garage that was built on the rear of the house in 1974 was detached, exposing the original rear wall of the house. The garage, now a separate building, does not contribute to the significance of this property. The Bonner house today has regained much of its original appearance. This work, accomplished with the aid of ample documentation, does not adversely affect the historic integrity of the house.

Total number of contributing buildings: 1

Total number of non-contributing buildings: 1

George Bonner, Sr., House  
History continued:

best and most significant examples of the Gothic Revival architectural style in the state of Utah.

George Bonner was born January 8, 1822, at Kiliver, Monaghan County, Ireland, to George and Ann Travers Bonner. He left his native land at the age of 14 and went to Scotland, where he married Margaret Edmundston on October 22, 1849. They were baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon Church) soon after their marriage, and in 1856 they sailed to America to gather with the Saints in Utah. After spending a few years in Pennsylvania where George worked in the coal mines, they reached Utah in 1861, settling in Wasatch County. George Bonner was probably one of the first settlers in Midway, Wasatch County, which was established in 1867 after the Black Hawk Indian War was peacefully resolved. It is unknown where Bonner's first house was located in the town, perhaps on this same property.

Around 1876,<sup>1</sup> Bonner hired John Watkins to design and construct this two-story Gothic Revival house.<sup>2</sup> Watkins had built his own similarly styled house at 5 E. Main c. 1869, and Bonner apparently liked that house well enough to have his own house built in a similar style. Watkins also built houses for Bonner's two sons, George Jr. and William, in 1877 on the corner lots across the street to the south from their father's home. George and Margaret Bonner lived in this house from the time of its completion until their deaths in 1905 and 1920, respectively.

George Bonner was a farmer and for a time was involved in a commercial grocery business with his sons. Their first store was located in the west front room of this house until 1879, when a store was constructed on the corner across the street to the west. (This store was designed by John Watkins, but it has been altered to the point where it is no longer eligible for inclusion in this thematic nomination.)

George Bonner, Sr., House  
History continued:

One of the rooms in the house served at times as a hideout for John Watkins who, as a polygamist, was subject to capture and trial by federal officials. Since Watkins' own house was not a safe place to hide when the officials were in town, the Bonners offered a room in their house for his use at any time. It was stocked with provisions and reading materials to sustain Watkins until it was once again safe for him to venture out. Either the west or east front room apparently served as the hideout, since they fit the description of the room as "a cheerful front room with an outside door with large windows looking onto the highway...."<sup>3</sup>

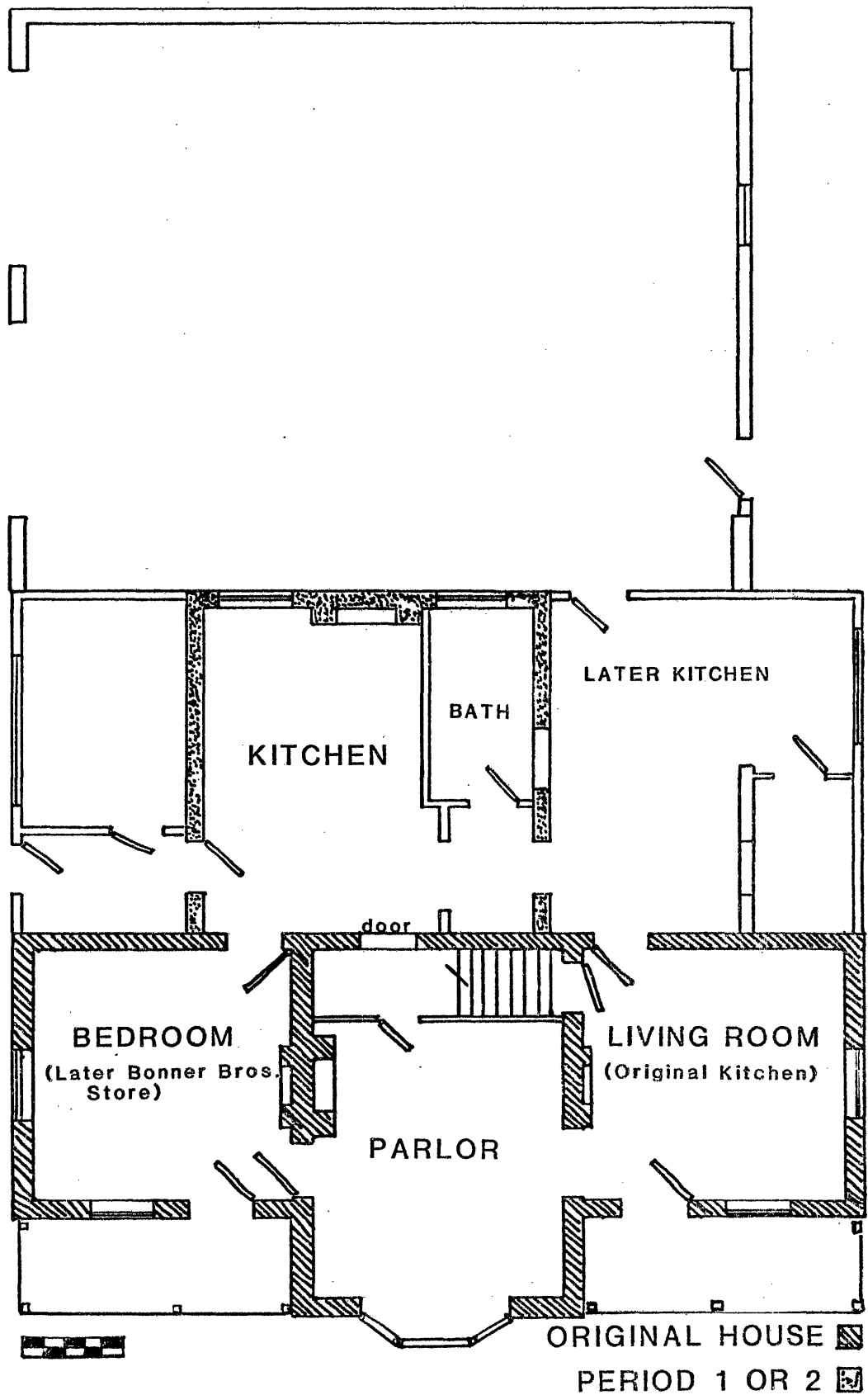
This house remained in the Bonner family until 1970, when it was sold to Rulon M. Huntington. John Told purchased the house from the Huntingtons in 1985 and is currently in the process of renovation and restoration.

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<sup>1</sup>The county tax file for this house lists its date of construction as 1876. Though tax file dates are often inaccurate approximations, this date may be valid since it generally conforms to the known historical facts.

<sup>2</sup>Wasatch Historical Society, "Lethe Coleman Tatge Tells the Story of Her Home in Midway," p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Mary A. Schaer, A Brief History of the Pioneer John Watkins, p. 114.



George Bonner, Sr., House