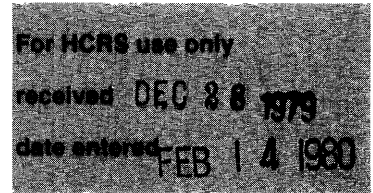


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



**1. Name**

historic Moab Cabin (Balsley Cabin)  
and/or common Balsley Cabin

**2. Location**

street & number E. 1st St. 55 1st East St.  not for publication  
city, town Moab  vicinity of Moab congressional district 01  
state Utah code 049 county Grand code 019

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no at present	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name Howard W. Balsley  
street & number 55 East 1st South  
city, town Moab  vicinity of Moab state UT 84532

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Grand County Recorder's Office  
street & number 125 East Center  
city, town Moab state UT 84532

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title none has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

---

## 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**

A single-story rectangular log structure. The walls are of rough-hewn logs with mud chinking, unevenly notched at the corners. The flat roof is made of parallel logs covered with branches and mud, sporting a final layer of growing plants.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture (cattle)	<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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry (uranium invention mining)	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates**      c 1893                      **Builder/Architect**      prob. John Jackson

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Moab Cabin is important to the city of Moab because it is a tangible link with the community's earlier days, and because the history of the cabin in many ways perfectly reflects the progress of history in many of the major economic and social events that have been important to Southeastern Utah and the American West in the last 100 years. Built by Mormon pioneers, used by cowboys who served the area's cattle boom, owned by the first clerk of the La Sal Forest which had been created to provide sensible management of the region's fragile ecology, and home to a succession of humble prospectors who brought about Moab's Uranium boom, the Moab cabin is an important focus for regional history.

The original owner was Marietta Pierce Stewart, the third plural wife of Randolph Hockaday Stewart, the first bishop of Moab. In 1879 R. H. Stewart and his three families started south from Rich County, Utah in response to a call of the Mormon Church to settle Emery County (which then included the present Grand County, where Moab is located). They were stopped by the fierce winter of 1879-80 in Huntington, Emery County, where Bishop Stewart built three log houses for his families.(1) They stayed there for one year and in the spring of 1881 arrived in Moab. Presumably he once again built three log cabins, although that supposition cannot be verified. At any rate, he acquired all of Block 14, the site of this cabin, from Leonidas L. Crapo, the original homesteader. He and his first counselor in the LDS Church, Orlando W. Warner, deeded this block to Marietta, Bishop Stewart's third wife.

Marietta's children inherited the cabin, and in 1910 deeded it to John Jackson, a Wild West, yarn-spinning, old-time cowboy. Local tradiion claims that John Jackson (ne Hinton) actually built this cabin in the 1890s of cottonwood logs hauled from the creek that ran through Moab. (2) He was rough and tough and enjoyed a good tale, regardless of its veracity. He was raised in Texas and orphaned at eleven, lived with an uncle for a time and got in several scrapes with other cowboys, Indians, and horse thieves. He claimed that when he left Texas the sheriff and his posse wanted him to stay so bad they chased him all the way to the border, trying to get him to come back.(3) After his hasty exit from Texas, he was forced to change his name. He then became known as John "Jackson," although he stayed in Arizona with his brother, Bill Hinton, and the two came to Utah together in 1890. In 1891 Jackson drifted up to Moab, spent a night or two, and did not return until 1893, when he settled there. Locally, he got his start as a cattleman as he "roped wild

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheets

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Moab, UT

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**  
**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

A	1 2	6 2 6 6 5 0	4 2 7 0 1 5 0			
	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D		
E				F		
G				H		

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Beg at a pt N 89 deg 54'W 135.5 ft from the SE cor Blk 14, Moab townsite, th N 89 deg 54'W 123.5 ft, th N 132 ft, th E 28 ft, th N 99 ft, th S 89 deg 54'E 124 ft, th S 0 deg 17'W 10 ft, th S 89 deg 54'E 107 ft, th S 0 deg 17'W 70.7 ft, th N 89 deg 54'W 143 ft, th S 0 deg 17'W 81.5 ft, th S 89 deg 54'E 7.5 ft +-, th S 0 deg 17'W 68.8 ft to beg.

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

state	code	county
state	code	county
state	code	county

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy J. Taniguchi/Historic Preservationist, Carbon and Emery Counties

organization Southeastern Utah Assn. of Governments date June 1979

street & number P.O. Drawer AI telephone 637-5852

city or town Price state UT 84501

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Melvin T. Smith

title Melvin T. Smith, State Historic Preservation Officer date December 17, 1979

**For HCRS use only**  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Carol D. Stuel date 2-14-80  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: William H. Brennan date 2-13-80  
Chief of Registration

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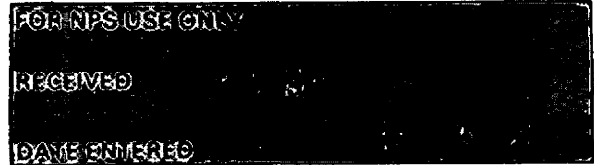
mavericks in the canyons surrounding the Blue Mountains and sold them for \$5 a head. John did a lot of trading and finally had a herd of cattle, which he ran down the river."(4) Local residents insist that he was more of a rustler in the beginning, a common start for cattlemen in the Old West. He worked for a local cattle company and was allowed to rope mavericks for himself, but at the end of the season he had more cattle than the company did! Jackson himself never discouraged tales about his escapades, although he wound up a wealthy man with money to lend to several of the leading families of Moab. During his days on the range he usually kept his wife and family out with him. On their trips to town they stayed in this cabin and eventually lived there. His first wife, Lillian Webb, bore at least one of her children in this cabin and the family was settled there by 1900.

In April 1910, John Jackson officially acquired title to the property from the children of Marietta Stewart for twenty-five dollars. He didn't keep the cabin long, selling that part of the lot to John E. Dubois in July for four hundred dollars. Dubois in turn sold it to Henry A. Bergh and Howard W. Balsley in November for four hundred and fifty dollars. Balsley got sole title to the property eleven months later in October, 1911 for six hundred and fifty dollars and has owned it ever since.

Howard W. Balsley, now 92 and the second oldest person in Moab, still owns the cabin and his own experiences give a fascinating glimpse of the process of change in the American West since the early 20th century. By 1908 when Balsley came to Moab, the West had been officially "closed" for almost twenty years.(6) Traditionally, the American West had been a land of wide open spaces, with room for all. The Old Spanish Trail ran through Moab, one of the few points that allowed a relatively easy crossing of the Colorado River. Indian families, Spanish padres, explorers, traders and trappers of various nationalities had passed through the area for centuries. In 1877, the last call of Brigham Young for the settlement of Emery County (which then included Grand County, and Moab) encouraged Mormons to settle there although other residents, mostly bachelor cowboys and traders, were already in residence. The Mormon pioneers initiated a settled order of life which the community had previously lacked and started farming and agriculture on a wide scale (including the cultivation of the famous Stewart peach, bred by the first Mormon Bishop and possible builder of this cabin, Randolph Hockaday Stewart).(7) The main concern any farmer in the desert has always been water. In addition to private effort, irrigation

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companies organized to raise money back East for the schemes of opening desert land to cultivation. One of these companies originally drew Howard Balsley to Moab.

A native of Pennsylvania, Balsley was living in Indianapolis when he and his sister invested heavily in the stock of a western water company, known variously as the Grand Valley Land and Mineral Company or the Valley City Reservoir Company. This irrigation project was designed to impound water from the washes between the towns of Green River and Moab, opening large tracts of land to homesteaders. Several people settled the land while an Indianapolis bank partially financed the project, selling stock to eastern investors such as Howard Balsley.(8) After his first job campaigning for the Republicans in 1908, Balsley decided to go West and see what happened to his investment. "I got out here and found that the secretary-treasurer of the company had been spending the money on horse races instead of putting in a concrete dam as he was supposed to have done. They just had an earthen dam. The first big flood that came along, why, away it went. Anyhow, that's one investment made and lost I never regretted, otherwise I'd have never been out. It was a means to an end."

"What made you decide to stay?" "Oh, I just liked the country. These red rocks had quite an attraction for me. It was quite romantic in the old stage days, you know."(9) The Old West wasn't quite dead in Moab.

After working hard on a farm and saving his money, Howard Balsley accrued the thirty dollars necessary to take the U.S. Civil Service examination, qualifying him to join the U.S. Forest Service. He became the first permanent clerk of the LaSal National Forest, now part of the Manti-LaSal. He started as a clerk and later served as clerk-ranger from 1909 to 1918, during the tenures of four of the first five supervisors: John Riis, Henry A. Bergh, J.W. Humphrey and Samuel B. Locke.

The creation of the National Forest Service resounds to the credit of President Theodore Roosevelt.(10) The American Forestry Association was founded in 1875 at the urging of Gifford Pinchot, an early conservationist. The government reacted unenthusiastically, but by 1891 Congress authorized the President to create forest reserves; which he did immediately. These reserves underwent several changes of title and control, but by 1905 the Forest Service was in operation under the Department Agriculture, where it remains today. "The LaSal Forest Reserve was established by proclamation on January 25, 1906. The Monticello Forest was established by

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proclamation on February 6, 1907; and the LaSal and Monticello were consolidated on July 1, 1908."(11) By the time Howard Balsley became forest clerk in 1909, the previous temporary clerk had quit and he was left to do the clerical work of the entire forest, stretching over a wide area in Grand and San Juan Counties in Utah and Mesa and Montrose in Colorado.

Balsley lived in Moab, boarding for a while with the Forest Supervisor, Henry Bergh, and his wife Zena in the house where Balsley now lives. He and Bergh together bought the log cabin, situated on the same block as the present Balsley residence.

After purchasing the cabin, Balsley moved in there for a short while with his friend, Loren L. "Bish" Taylor, who became the second owner and editor of the Moab newspaper, The Times Independent. The two men lived in the cabin only a short time while they built a frame structure directly to the south; it had room for some cupboards and was generally more spacious. (This frame dwelling is now part of the main structure of the "Atomic Motel," a name undoubtedly coined during the uranium boom of the 1950s.) Balsley's parents came out for a visit in 1910 and stayed almost a year in the log cabin. His father put a glass window in the front door, apparently the only alteration in the building since its construction.

In 1912 Howard Balsley married Jessie Trout, a local girl whose father, Tom Trout, was one of the wild Texas cowboys to settle in the Moab area. Tom Trout lived in this cabin, too, for three or four years before his death on July 15, 1939. Trout had run cattle in Texas and participated in the big cattle drives to Dodge City, Kansas. He was on the first grand jury in Texas and perhaps thought that made some enemies, for local tradition claims that he was dumped over the Texas state line wrapped in a cowhide. True or not, by 1885 he was in Monticello, Utah, punching cattle. At Christmas 1886, he came to Moab to celebrate (in the hard-drinking, gun-shooting manner of the wild west cowboy) and won ten dollars on the horse race held on Moab's main street. A local citizen asked if he'd like to buy a town lot. "I just as well invest my money in town lots as anything I know of," Tom replied.(12) Then he left town, returning in 1888 when the local citizens offered to buy the lot for \$1,000 to build a schoolhouse. Impressed by the worthiness of the cause, Trout freely gave them his lot, now the site of the junior high school. He later married Elizabeth Standifird of Moab, became a cattle rancher, county road commissioner, deputy sheriff and miner.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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Finally, the cabin is significant because of its ties to Howard Balsley and his career in uranium. Commencing in 1913 while he was still in the employ of the Forest Service, Howard Balsley helped pioneer the development of the Uranium industry in the west. Later, during the uranium boom of the fifties, the cabin was again home to a succession of hopeful prospectors.



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Footnotes

- 1 Faun McConkie Tanner, The Far Country: A Regional History of Moab, and LaSal, Utah (Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing Company, 1976), p.94.
- 2 Eliza Burr and Howard W. Balsley, interviews with Nancy J. Taniguchi, Moab, Utah, June 12, 1979.
- 3 Balsley interview, June 12, 1979.
- 4 Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Grand County, Grand Memories (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Company, 1972), pp.226,227.
- 5 Grand County Warranty Deed Records, Grand County Recorder's Office, Moab, Utah.
- 6 The popular date for this major event is 1890, based on Frederick Jackson Turner's "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," read before the American Historical Association at Chicago in 1893.
- 7 Tanner, p. 191.
- 8 Charles S. Peterson, Look to the Mountains (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975) p.234.
- 9 Howard W. Balsley, interview with Nancy J. Taniguchi, Moab, Utah, May 7, 1979, A.O.G. Colletion #36.
- 10 Information on the creation of the U.S. Forest Service is from Peterson, pp. 109,110.
- 11 Leland Heywood, "Historical Information about LaSal National Forest, 1940," unpublished notes cited in Tanner, p. 195.
- 12 U.P., Grand Co., p.299.

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Balsley, Howard W. Untitled paper prepared for Southeastern Utah Chapter of American Institute of Mining Engineers, Moab, Utah, 1975. Mimeographed.

\_\_\_\_\_, Interview with Mayor Harold Jacobs. Moab, Utah, March 3, 1979, A.O.G. Collection #35.

\_\_\_\_\_, Interviews with Nancy J. Taniguchi. Moab, Utah, May 7, 1979 and June 12, 1979, A.O.G. Collection #36 and #38.

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- Proctor, Paul Dean et.al., Uranium: Where it is and How to Find it. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1955.
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