

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 27 1985
date entered OCT 24 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Adams, Joseph Frederick, House

and/or common Fred Adams House

2. Location

street & number Off U.S. 163 (formerly State Route 47) not for publication

city, town Bluff vicinity of

state Utah code 049 county San Juan code 037

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mary Fountain

street & number P.O. Box 510561

city, town Salt Lake City vicinity of state Utah

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 Block Survey of Bluff has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Spring 1985 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 Adams House is a two story red sandstone Box Style house. It was constructed of locally quarried coursed ashlar. The roof is a low pitch hip with overhanging eaves. Gables project from the roof on the south and west sides. There are diamond patterned shingles on the pediments of the two gables, and two second story windows pierce each gable. A three part bay topped by a low pitch hip roof with overhanging eaves projects from the south half of the facade. A porch spans the remainder of the width of the facade, and a door and window open off the porch. A one story frame addition was made on the south side of the house. It, however, is in an extremely deteriorated condition and could easily be removed. That change is unobtrusive and does not affect the original integrity of the building.

Elements of the this house which identify it as a Box Style house include the two story rectangular form, the low pitch hip roof with overhanging eaves, and the porch spanning the facade.

The first floor plan of the Adams House consists of five rooms. The front door opens into a large living room on the south side of the house. Behind it is a simple staircase to the second story and a small room. There are three rooms on the north side of the house. The room at the front of the house probably served as a bedroom. Behind it is a room that may have been a dining room, and the third room was the kitchen. Although the original internal floor plan is discernible and essentially unaltered, the internal partitions are in a deteriorated condition. The exterior walls are 15" thick and the interior walls are studded and about 5 1/2" thick.

The Adams House is in a deteriorated condition. Most of the doors, windows, and original casings have been removed, and the first floor openings are boarded up. There is a large vertical crack in the exterior wall near the north east corner of the building, but otherwise the house appears to be structurally sound. Despite its condition, it retains its original character.

Contributing resources on the property: 1 (this house)

Non-contributing resources: 0

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 checked="" 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 c. 1895 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Joseph Frederick Adams House, constructed c. 1895, is locally significant because it is one of less than a dozen houses remaining in Bluff that document an important phase in the history of the town: the evolution from farm village to large-scale livestock production. The livestock industry of the 1880s and '90s brought relative prosperity to the small community of Bluff, which, due to unfavorable natural conditions, was unable to depend on farming for its survival. Substantial buildings, such as this stone house, reflect the economic prosperity of the livestock period, which ensured the permanence of the town. The Adams House is architecturally significant both for its style and materials. It is primarily significant as one of eleven well preserved red sandstone buildings in Bluff, three of which are already listed in the National Register.¹ Bluff's stone buildings were primarily constructed between 1890 and 1910, and are the most sizeable, well preserved early collection of buildings in San Juan County. In addition, because stone was used only in isolated examples throughout the county, the Bluff buildings also represent the only significant collection of stone buildings in San Juan County. A number of stone buildings in Bluff have been demolished, including a church, school and several large residences. The Adams House, therefore, is one of a diminishing number of stone buildings which distinguish Bluff from other San Juan County towns. Within the larger context of southeastern Utah, Bluff is the only town with a collection of stone buildings which document both the use of local materials, stone specifically, and the existence of experienced stonemasonry. The Adams House is also distinctive among Bluff buildings as the only Box Style house. The Box Style was common in Utah's major communities such as Salt Lake City and Provo, but occurs infrequently in rural areas. It is generally characterized by a two story square or rectangular plan, a low pitch hip roof with overhanging eaves, and a porch spanning the facade. This house is the best preserved of only two examples of the style that have been identified in San Juan County and all of southeastern Utah.

Southeastern Utah was one of the last areas in Utah to be settled by Mormon pioneers as part of their systematic colonizing efforts in the territory. Bluff was established in the spring of 1880 by a weary band of Mormon pioneers who had miraculously succeeded in their perilous winter trek across the inhospitable, rocky canyon region of southern Utah. They discovered that the site of their new community had significantly less arable land than they had hoped, and the water supply proved to be unreliable. After struggling to survive for four years, the final straw came when a disastrous flood destroyed their irrigation canals and ditches, wiping out any hope of crops that season. It became clear to the people of Bluff that they would either have to find another means of making a livelihood or abandon the town and settle elsewhere. Some did leave. Those that stayed turned to stockraising, and by

9. Major Bibliographical References

Deseret Evening News, 1899.

Jones, Lenora B., Nielson, Marian G., and Perkins, Cornelia. A Saga of San Juan.

Monticello(?), Utah: San Juan County Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1968.

Walter, Don D. "The Cattle Industry of Utah, 1850-1900, 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 1:62,500

UTM References

A

1	2	6	2	8	6	0	0	4	1	2	7	2	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

All of Lot 6, Plat B, Bluff Townsite Survey.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger Roper/Historian; Debbie Randall/Architectural Historian

organization Utah State Historical Society

date August 1985

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

A. Kent Powell

title A. Kent Powell, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date August 25, 1985

For NPS use only

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

for Alloues Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered To
National Register

date 10-24-85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Joseph Frederick Adams House

Continuation sheet

San Juan County, Utah

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1890, San Juan County, along with Box Elder County and Rich County, were the centers of the cattle industry in Utah. In 1880, for example, there were 267 head of cattle other than milch cows and working oxen in San Juan County. That was 1.3 head for every person in the area. In 1890, there were 17,100 head of cattle in the county, 47 for every man, woman, and child. According to one historian, "Never again in Utah history would so few people live with so many cattle."²

With the growth of the cattle industry, Bluff's built environment began to change. In 1890, all of Bluff's approximately 25 families lived in log houses, and all of the public buildings, including the post office, the hotel, the church, and the school house, were built of logs. Gradually, the log buildings began to be replaced with stone ones. The nearby sandstone cliffs provided the stone for the buildings. Although no specific stone masons have been credited with the work on these houses, it is likely that local builders, such as Charles Sitzler and Edward Thompson, were involved to at least some degree in the construction. The stone buildings constructed in Bluff during the late 1880s and 1890s reflect Bluff's new-found prosperity and stability.

This house was probably built ca. 1895 for Joseph Frederick "Fred" Adams and his wife, Agnes Allan Adams. As children, both Fred and Agnes were among the first settlers of Bluff, accompanying their families to the new settlement in the early 1880s. Fred was born in Parowan in 1870 to William and Mary B. Adams, who settled in Bluff in 1882. Agnes Allan Adams was born in 1872 to John Allan and one of his two polygamous wives, pioneers to San Juan County in 1881.³ Fred and Agnes were married c. 1892 and had three children over the next six years. Judging from the size and quality of this house, Fred was successful in both his livestock and mining interests. He owned several hundred dollars worth of capital stock in the San Juan Loop, a cattle cooperative, and in the San Juan Co-op.⁴ He also owned a placer mining claim located 75 miles west of Bluff, where he died unexpectedly of typhoid fever in November 1899.⁵ Agnes and her children moved away from Bluff soon after her husband's death. The house was used for a number of years as a hotel, according to local tradition, but it has been left vacant in recent years.

Notes

¹Stone houses in Bluff that are already listed in the National Register include the following: The Jens Nielson House, Lot 2, Block 12, Plat A; the Lemuel H. Redd, Jr. House, Lot 3, Block 10, Plat A; and the John Albert Scorup House, Lot 2, Plat B.

²Don D. Walter, "The Cattle Industry of Utah, 1850-1900, An Historical Profile," Utah Historical Quarterly, XXXII (Summer, 1964), 190.

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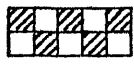
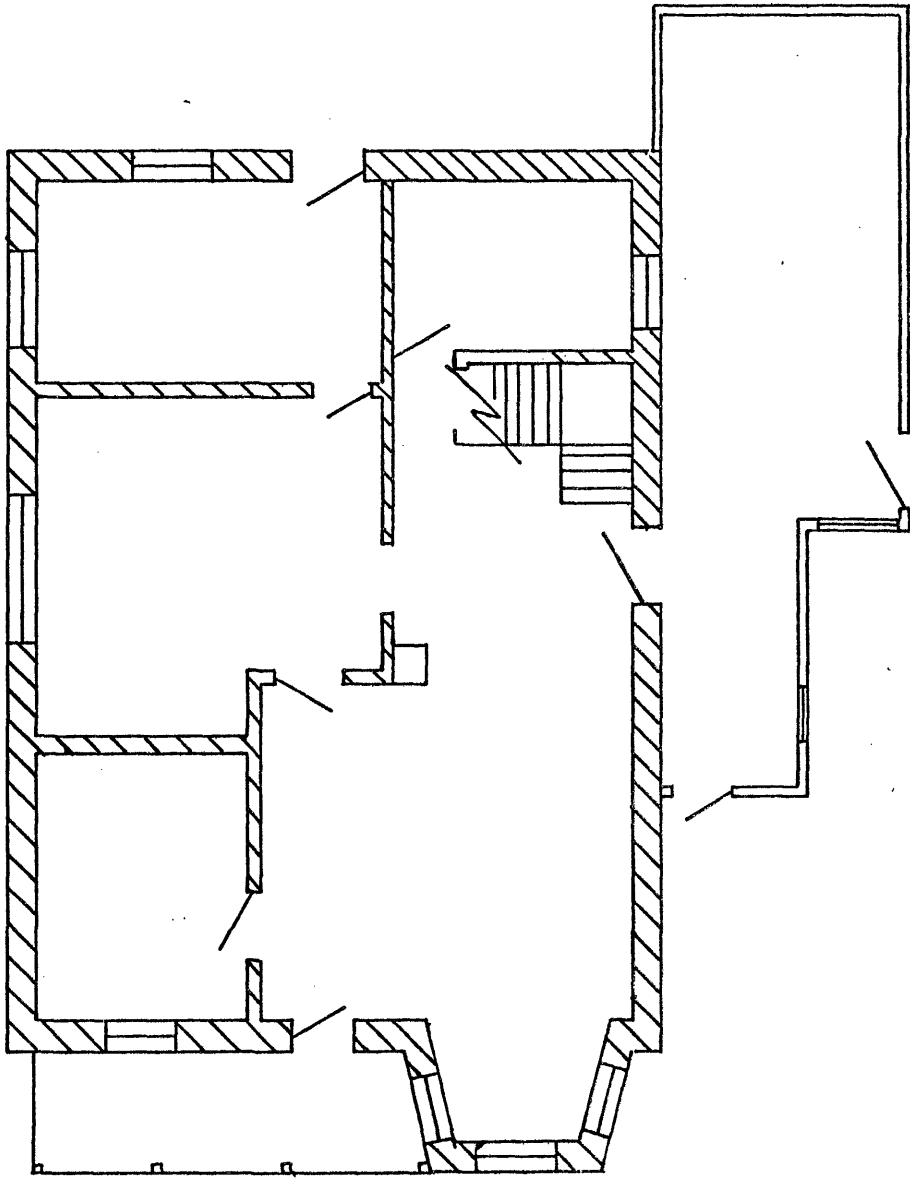
received



date entered

³John Allan's two wives were Jane Fleming Fergusen Shaw Allen and Agnes McAuslan Allan. His daughter, Agnes Allan Adams, is identified as the daughter of Jane, although, judging from her name, it is possible that she was the daughter of Agnes. See Saga of San Juan, p. 293-294.

⁴San Juan County Recorder's Office, Miscellaneous Book "B" p. 367-368.

⁵Deseret Evening News, December 6, 1899, p. 7. Obituary of Joseph F. Adams.



 c. 1895
 c. 1915

JOSEPH FREDERICK ADAMS HOUSE
 BLUFF, SAN JUAN COUNTY, UTAH
 6-5-85