

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 Willie, James G., House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 97 North 100 West not for publication

city, town Mendon vicinity of congressional district

state Utah code 049 county Cache County code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<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 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
	<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 Eufrasina A. Kuntze

street & number 97 North 100 West

city, town Mendon vicinity of state Utah 84325

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cache County Courthouse

street & number 179 North Main Street

city, town Logan state Utah

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Utah Historic Sites Survey/
title Mendon City Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Spring 1982 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 James G. Willie House is a 1-1/2 story central-hall type built of coursed rubble stone. It has a plain, five-bay facade facing east with large ashlar quoins at the corners. Stylistically, the Willie house reflects Greek Revival influences which are evident in the small pedimented porch, the molded entablature, and the cornice returns on the gables. There are two gable-end chimneys. A one-story addition was attached to the rear of the original stone section in the 1950s. At the same time, the central hall was removed and the stone painted green.

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 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 checked="" 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 1865-1867 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This 1-1/2 story stone house, built between 1865-1867, is significant for its association with James G. Willie, one of the captains of the Mormon handcart companies of the 1850s, and because it is one of four extant stone houses remaining in Mendon which best documents that community's early settlement by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. James G. Willie is historically important in Utah and Mormon history because his name is linked to the legendary handcart migrations of the mid-1850s. The Handcart plan was devised by Mormon leaders as a means of transporting poorer converts from the British and Scandinavian missions to the Salt Lake Valley.¹ By 1855, church emigration funds had been depleted by poor harvests and the heavy influx of converts during the preceding years. Money was not available to furnish new immigrants with wagons and teams for the overland journey. Rather than curtail the flow of foreign Saints to Zion, Church officials decided that these converts should walk the 1400 miles from the railhead at Iowa City, Iowa to the Salt Lake Valley, pulling their possessions and supplies in wooden handcarts. James G. Willie captained one of two companies that were caught in fall snows in 1856, ending in the tragic death of about 200 pioneers. Willie moved to Mendon, an agricultural settlement in Cache Valley (north of Salt Lake City), and in 1865 built this stone house, which represents one of the first permanent dwellings erected by the Mormon pioneers outside their camp-like forts. The Willie House is only one of four extant stone buildings which retain their historic integrity. The other houses are the James Gardner House, listed in the National Register, 1981, the George W. Baker House, nominated to the National Register, 1982, and the Samuel Baker House, nominated to the National Register, 1982. These structures were identified in an ongoing, comprehensive study of Mendon's historic buildings during 1980-1982.

James G. Willie was born in England in 1814. He emigrated to America in 1835 and joined the Mormon Church in 1842. With his friend, Simon Baker, Willie came to Utah in 1847. In 1852, Willie returned to England on a proselyting mission for the LDS Church and, in 1856, he was named captain of the Fourth Handcart Company for the return journey to Utah. The Thirteenth General Epistle of the Church announced: "Let all the Saints who can, gather up for Zion and come while the way is open before them; let the poor also come...let them come on foot, with handcarts or wheelbarrows; let them gird up their loins and walk through, and nothing shall hinder or stay them"² The plan was placed into effect during the spring of 1856 and was plagued by problems from the outset. First, the ships laden with emigrants from English ports were delayed by weather. Arriving in Iowa well behind schedule, the immigrants found that their handcarts were not yet ready and further waiting was required. The companies started west in June, dangerously late in the season

9. Major Bibliographical References

Cache County Records.
Fife, Austin E. "The Stone Houses of Northern Utah" Utah Historical Quarterly 40:1 (Winter 1972), pp. 6-23.
Hafen, Leroy R. and Ann W. Handcarts to Zion: The Story of a Unique Western Migration. Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark, 1976.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Wellsville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

East 1/2 of Lot 6, Block 4, Plat A, Mendon City Survey

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tom Carter, Architectural Historian

organization Utah State Historical Society date _____

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

city or town Salt Lake City state Utah 84101

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 February 10, 1983

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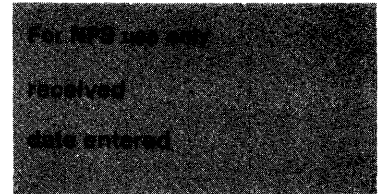
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for/ Lynne McClelland date 4.13.83
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Patrick Andrews date 4/13/83
Chief of Registration

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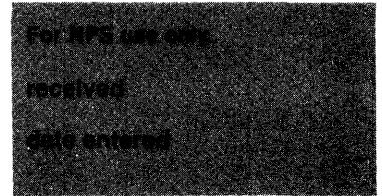
for such an overland crossing. The first three companies reached Salt Lake Valley before the snows came, but the last two--the companies captained by James G. Willie and Edward Martin--were caught by early fall snows in the Wyoming passes. Before rescue wagons from Salt Lake Valley could reach them, the companies suffered greatly. Of the approximately 800 pioneers in these two companies, over 200 died from cold and starvation.³ Sixty-seven people in Willie's company died before they were rescued by wagons from Salt Lake City. There would be several more seasons of handcart migrations, but the tragedy of the Willie and Martin companies effectively brought to a close this chapter in the larger story of Mormon pioneering. In Utah, where all pioneers are honored for their sacrifices in settling the Mormon kingdom, the handcart pioneer holds a special place of distinction. These were the people who paid the supreme price for their faith. As one of the principle participants in the Handcart migration and captain of one of the ill-fated companies, James G. Willie played an important if tragic role in early Utah history.

After his arrival in the Mormon capital, Willie moved to Mendon in Cache Valley to be near his friend, Simon Baker. At that time, the settlers in Mendon were living in a fort to protect themselves from Indian raids. In 1865 the city was surveyed and the residents moved out onto their town lots. Writing in 1870, a correspondent for the Salt Lake City Deseret News reported that there were about 20 stone buildings standing in Mendon where only three years earlier there had been only log dwellings.⁴ The period 1865-1870 witnessed the building of many of the principle stone houses in the town, including, presumably, the Willie House. James Willie was the fourth mayor of Mendon and in 1886 he served as a counselor to the Mendon Mormon bishop, Henry Hughes. He died in 1895 in Mendon. The home was then transferred to his wife and son, William. In 1906, it was deeded solely to William and then immediately sold to Herbert B. Whitney. The home remained in the Whitney family until 1957 when it was sold to Fred B. Hardman. It was while Mr. Hardman owned the property that the frame addition was added to the rear of the home. In 1970, the home became the property of the current owner, Eufrasina A. Kuntze. The Willie house is additionally significant as one of ten stone houses which remain in Mendon from its early period of settlement by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Mendon's stone buildings represent the first permanent dwellings erected by the Mormon pioneers outside their camp-like forts. For their builders, these substantial homes signaled the long awaited end to a precariously fragile frontier existence. For later generations, the houses became monuments to

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those whose endurance and sacrifice paved the way for the comforts and prosperity of later years. The James G. Willie house, primarily significant due to its association with this early pioneer, is particularly important today because it is only one of four of the extant ten stone buildings which retains its historic integrity. The other houses are the James Gardner house, listed in the National Register in 1981, the George W. Baker house, nominated to the National Register in 1982, and the Samuel Baker house, nominated to the National Register in 1982.

Cache Valley was explored in the 1850s as a much needed grazing land for the main Latter-day Saint settlements around Salt Lake City.⁵ By 1859, permanent townsites had been established in the Cache Valley area at Wellsville and Mendon. Arriving at the site of Mendon in 1859, the early settlers quickly erected two rows of log cabins which served both their needs for shelter and fortification. These cabins were small, usually about 16 feet square, and were often found with a shed or lean-to on the rear.⁶ The fort homes were, however, viewed as a temporary condition and by 1864, when the town was surveyed into individual building lots, a sense of personal security and relative prosperity would cause Mendon's residents to contemplate, in the words of one pioneer, "improving their real estate."⁷ In setting about building new houses, there was a limited number of local materials available to the settlers. Log was never an attractive housing material in Utah for it was universally associated with the deprivations of frontier life. Hewn logs, closely resembling their natural condition as trees, were also not considered aesthetically pleasing.⁸ In a message to the brethren at Logan during June 1860, the Mormon Church President, Brigham Young, addressed the issue of log construction: "What are you going to build with? Log buildings do not make a sightly city. We should like to see buildings that are ornamental and pleasing to the eye as well as convenient and commodious. We wish to see cities that are an ornament to the country."⁹ Young went on to recognize Cache Valley's abundance of timber and recommended initially that the Saints produce lumber for frame houses. There is some indication that the prophet's suggestion was followed;¹⁰ however, the difficulties involved in erecting sawmills made it hard in the 1860s to secure lumber for rafters, floors, and casings, in addition to acquiring the boards needed to build entire houses. The alternatives exhausted, Young visited the Cache Valley settlements in 1864 and asked the pioneers, "Why not quarry rock and build stone houses and make rock fences?"¹¹ Like their counterparts in neighboring northern Utah towns, Mendonites turned during the 1860s and early 1870s to the local stone for their house construction needs.¹²

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Notes

¹Leroy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, Handcarts to Zion: The Story of a Unique Western Migration (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark, 1976).

²Handcarts to Zion, p. 35.

³Wallace Stegner, The Gathering of Zion (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 256.

⁴Deseret News, December 27, 1870.

⁵See Joel E. Ricks, ed., The History of a Valley: Cache Valley, Utah-Idaho (Logan: Cache Valley Centennial Committee, 1956), pp. 67-75.

⁶See Leon S. Pitman, "Folk Housing in the Mormon Culture Region," Dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1973, pp. 116-126.

⁷Issac Sorensen, "A History of Mendon," manuscript, Utah State Historical Society.

⁸See Tom Carter, "Folk Design in Early Utah Architecture," in Utah Folk Art, ed. Hal Cannon (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), pp. 39-42.

⁹Journal of Discourses, Volume 8 (Liverpool: George Q. Cannon, 1861), p. 79.

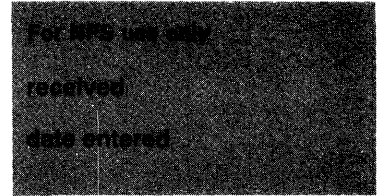
¹⁰Samuel Crowther Mitton constructed a large frame house in Wellsville around 1865. This home has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, 1982.

¹¹Joel Ricks, History of a Valley, p. 57.

¹²See, Austin E. Fife, "The Stone Houses of Northern Utah," Utah Historical Quarterly 40:1 (Winter 1972), pp. 6-23.

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Ricks, Joel E., ed. The History of a Valley: Cache Valley, Utah - Idaho. Logan, Utah:
Cache Valley Centennial Committee, 1956.



JAMES G. WILLIE HOUSE

