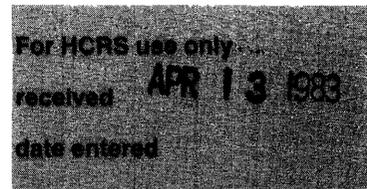


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Ensign-Smith House

and/or common Silas Smith House

**2. Location**

street & number 96 North Main \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Paragonah \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Utah code 049 county Iron code 021

**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 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
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<i>MA</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" 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 R. J. Reynolds

street & number Box 384

city, town Palm Springs \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state CA 92263

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Iron County Courthouse

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

city, town Parowan \_\_\_\_\_ state Utah

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Utah Historic Sites Survey/  
Iron County Survey \_\_\_\_\_ has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date Spring 1981 \_\_\_\_\_ 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 Ensign-Smith house in Paragonah is a long (the front section measures about 50' x 17') 1-1/2 story adobe house. The dwelling is vernacular in its design and was constructed in two separate stages.

The original house was built c. 1862 by Marius Ensign. The house was 1-1/2 stories high, built of locally produced red-clay adobe, and had a floorplan consisting of two square rooms on each level. This house type is called a vernacular "double-pen" type. Normally such houses have a symmetrical facade with an even number of openings (four or six) divided equally between the two rooms. Ensign chose to have an odd number of openings--three in this case, which meant that the front door had to be moved to one side to avoid the center partition. This move gave the house a slightly asymmetrical facade elevation. The second level openings were "half" windows. Large fireplaces were found at the gable ends. The location of the original staircase is unknown, though it is now contained in the rear addition. Stylistic trim on the house was minimal, being confined to the beaded window moldings and the elaborate 12-over-8 light windows on the facade. In 1872 the house was formally sold to Silas Smith who added a 1-1/2 story addition to the north end.

The 1872 addition may be conceived of as the adding of a separate house--a 1-1/2 story, two bay, square-cabin type vernacular house--to the already existing double-pen house to create an essentially new house, five bays and three square rooms wide. The new section had the same height, massing, and half-windows of the original house, but it has smaller 6 over 6 light windows, plain window surrounds, and a battened front door. A small stove chimney was present in this new section and probably replaced the large fireplace which had originally been found in the north gable. Several rear lean-to extensions were also added by Smith to the house, as were the two small frame rooms at the southeast corner which housed the town post office. A porch with chamfered posts was placed across the length of the facade to integrate the two separate sections into a complete whole.

The Ensign-Smith house remains in good historical condition. The adobe has deteriorated somewhat on the south gable and has been covered with siding on the north end to prevent weather damage. In 1976, new board-and-batten siding was added to the frame sections at the rear of the house. While not in keeping with the original appearance of the house, this replacement siding does not significantly detract from the house's historic integrity.

## 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/ 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** ca. 1862, remodeled **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** c. 1870

The Ensign-Smith House in Paragonah, built in 1862, is primarily significant due to its association with Silas S. Smith, an important early Utah settler and the leader of the legendary "Hole-in-the-Rock" expedition of 1880 in which a small group of Mormon pioneers cut their way across what is now considered an impassable section of the Colorado River canyon. Listed in the National Register in 1982, the Hole-in-the-Rock trail and expedition has come to reflect the dedication and courage of a people who were convinced they were a part of a divinely inspired and directed mission to build a millennial kingdom of God in Utah's Great Basin. The trail itself is an important symbol of the Mormon colonization effort in the West and although it came at a relatively late date in this history, the descent through the Hole-in-the-Rock and the struggle to construct a road through one of the most rugged and inhospitable sections of the United States illustrates the fortitude of the Mormon pioneer and serves as a vivid lesson to later generations of the importance of commitment and cooperation in meeting the challenges of their day. As the captain of the Hole-in-the-Rock expedition, Silas S. Smith achieved prominence in the settlement history of early Mormon Utah. He continued as a leader in pioneering endeavors, reportedly having established 35 different residences on the Mormon frontier. However, the Paragonah house, which he owned until 1882 is the only documented one that remains in Utah. The Smith house is also important as an unusually large and well preserved example of early Utah vernacular architecture--the original structure being a "double-pen" type (two rooms), with the later addition a "square cabin" type, forming an essentially new house.

Silas S. Smith was born October 26, 1830 in Stockholm, St. Lawrence County, New York. Born the same year that his cousin Joseph Smith Jr. founded The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Silas S. Smith's life was in the mainstream of Mormon history for its first eighty years until his death on October 11, 1910. His parents, Silas Smith and Mary Aikens, were early converts to the Mormon church. In 1836 the family moved to Kirtland, Ohio, the first gathering place for members of the new Mormon faith. Tying their own destiny to that of their relative, Joseph Smith Jr., the Silas Smith family participated in the move to Missouri and the Mormon expulsion from that state to Illinois. Shortly after the move to Illinois the family leader, Silas Smith died leaving Silas S. and Jessie N. to care for their mother.

Following the abandonment of Illinois by the Mormons in 1845, the mother and two sons moved with the main group to Winter Quarters, Nebraska. In 1847, during the first of year of Mormon emigration to Utah, the family traveled west with the Parley P. Pratt company and reached Salt Lake City on September 25, 1847, two months after Brigham Young's vanguard group had arrived.

Once in Utah, Silas S. Smith and his younger brother Jessie, (his house in Parowan was listed in the National Register on June 20, 1975) emerged as two of the stalwarts of the Mormon colonization process in the West. Both were

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continually on the edge of the Mormon frontier as it first pushed north from Salt Lake City into Davis County, then south two hundred miles from the Mormon capitol with the Iron Mission in 1851. Silas and Jessie constructed the first log building in Cedar City to help pay for the use of a home in Parowan, 18 miles away. The two brothers took up farms as part of the Mormon effort to establish an agricultural basis for the intended iron industry of that region.

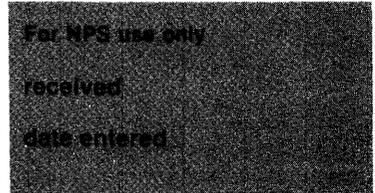
In 1854 Silas Smith left his two wives--both sisters Clarinda and Sarah Ann, to serve a two-and-one-half year proselyting mission in the Hawaiian Islands. After his return home Silas Smith moved to Paragonah, four miles northeast of Parowan, in the Spring of 1857. Here he served as bishop for several years and was elected to terms in the Utah Territorial Legislature from 1859 to 1878. While a resident of Paragonah, Silas Smith served as a Captain in the Territorial Militia during the Black Hawk War of 1865-1866. During 1864 Silas' two wives died within four months of each other leaving a total of nine children between the ages of 11 years and 3 weeks. A year later, on July 19, 1865, he married Martha Eliza Bennett who helped raise the nine motherless children in addition to her own twelve children by Silas S. Smith.

During the winter of 1878-79, Silas S. Smith was selected by Mormon church President John Taylor to lead a settlement effort to the San Juan country of southeastern Utah and southwestern Colorado. Accordingly Smith led a scouting party of 26 men, 2 women and 8 children southeast into Arizona then back northeast into Utah, reaching the junction of Montezuma Creek and the San Juan River at the end of May 1879. Here ditches were dug, a diversion dam constructed, crops planted, some cabins constructed, and the surrounding region explored for potential settlement areas before returning to their homes in Parowan and Paragonah in September 1879 via the Old Spanish Trail route through eastern and central Utah.

With word of a direct route to the San Juan River through Potato Valley, later named Escalante, Mormons from a dozen southern Utah communities traveled separately to a rendezvous at 40 Mile Springs. From here exploring parties were sent out to reconiter the untraveled route down to the Colorado River and across what most concluded were impassable canyons and cliffs east of the river. With the unfavorable scouting reports, Silas S. Smith faced a difficult decision--to push ahead toward the San Juan River with limited supplies and equipment or to return to their homes and follow the circuitous northern route in the spring. Because snow in the mountains would make the return trip dangerous if not impossible, Silas S. Smith asked the group to push ahead. Leaving his assistant, Platte D. Lyman, in charge of work on the road, Silas S. Smith returned to the settlements where he secured 25 pounds of

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blasting powder, reportedly all that could be found in Southern Utah, and sent it to assist the construction work. In meetings with Erastus Snow, the Mormon Apostle directing affairs in southern Utah, and his brother Jessie N. Smith, both of whom were members of the territorial legislature, he secured their endorsement for a \$5000 appropriation for blasting powder, tools, and payment for work on the road. During the winter of 1880 Silas S. Smith was bed-ridden with pneumonia and did not rejoin the San Juan Mission, or Hole-in-the-Rock expedition as it became known, until May 22, nearly two months after the group arrived at Bluff on the San Juan River.

Silas S. Smith had a broad vision of his responsibility as leader of the San Juan Mission. Looking beyond the borders of Utah, He made exploring trips into Colorado with particular attention to Colorado's San Luis Valley. This southern Colorado valley with its small population of Spanish speaking residents and English speaking ranchers and miners, had drawn a group of Mormon converts from the southern states in 1878-79. Dividing his time between the Utah settlement at Bluff and those in Colorado's San Luis Valley 250 miles to the east, Smith established a residence at Manassa, Colorado in 1882.

In 1883 two ecclesiastical districts were established and Silas S. Smith, who had jurisdiction for the entire San Juan area until the division, remained in charge of Mormon activities in the San Luis Valley until 1892. Smith returned to Utah in 1901 living in Layton, Davis County, until his death in 1910. In a state which withholds its deepest respect for its pioneers, Silas S. Smith was a pioneer among pioneers. He reportedly established 35 different homes or residences on the Mormon frontier. The Paragonah residence is the only one that remains in Utah from the era of his pioneering endeavors and as such is significant in understanding and documenting the settlement process of Utah.

This large adobe house was originally constructed by Marius Ensign, an early convert to the Mormon church and one of the original settlers of Paragonah. Ensign had come to Utah in 1849 and accompanied the first group of Saints called to open the Iron Mission in central Utah. Ensign and several other men moved to Paragonah in the spring of 1852, the site having been previously selected because of its abundant water supply and suitability for agriculture. By 1853 log cabins and several substantial adobe houses had been erected by the pioneers. Indian hostilities necessitated the evacuation of the town in the summer of 1853 and the community was not resettled until 1856. At this time a large adobe fort was constructed and the residents occupied small homes within its protective walls (the fort was located on the block directly across the street west of the Ensign-Smith house). The fort

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was utilized until about 1860 when a townsite was surveyed and settlers began to move out onto their new city lots to build. It was in the 1860-1862 period that Marius Ensign built the first part of this house, perhaps using adobes secured from the dismantling of the nearby fort.

The original house was a 1-1/2 story adobe structure measuring roughly 33' x 17' and consisting of two equal sized rooms on each floor. The rooms conformed to the vernacular "double-pen" type. The facade is asymmetrical because the front door had to be shifted to one side to accomodate the internal wall separating thw two front rooms. As the house was nearing completion, Ensign was called by church leaders to settle further south at Santa Clara, in Washington County. The historical documents seem to indicate that Ensign left Paragonah shortly thereafter but it is not clear, however, what immediately became of the house. Silas Smith officially purchased the home from Ensign for \$500 in 1872 and the use of the house during the ten years from 1862, when Ensign left for Santa Clara, to the time of the Smith transaction in 1872 is not known. It seems that Ensign could have left one of his plural wives in the home during this time, or that Smith could have bought the home earliler than the recorded deed indicates--not an uncommon practice in Utah during the early years of settlement.

Silas Smith had moved to Paragonah in 1857 and soon became a leader in both church and civic affairs. Plat records for the early 1860s show that Smith owned the city lot just east of Ensign's house so that the purchasing of the home required a move of only a short distance. Smith soon added a 1-1/2 story adobe section to the north end of the original home. This new addition gave the house its unusually long appearance and was remarkable compatible with the design of the original section. It was at this time that the other adobe sections were added to the rear of the home. Also, a small frame post office was attached to the southeast corner of the house to serve Smith's duties as town postmaster. After his call to the San Juan Mission, Smith sold the house in 1882 to William H. Dame, another of Paragonah's original settlers and one of its leading citizens. The Dames held the property until 1902 when it was purchased by William McBride. The house remained in the McBride family until 1976 when it was sold to Giralld Smith. It was at this time that the house was remodeled on the inside and some changes were made to the rear exterior fabric. Such changes do not affect the historic integrity of the dwelling.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Smith, Albert E., Silas Sanford Smith, Pioneer, Statesman, Colonizer, Salt Lake City, 1963.  
Dalton, Luella Adams, The History of the Iron County Mission, Parowan, Utah.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Paragonah, Utah

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	2	3	4	4	0	0	0	4	1	9	4	5	4	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

Block 2, Lot 3, Plat A, Paragonah City 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 Tom Carter/ Architectural Historian

organization Utah State Historical Society date November 1982

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Melvin T. Smith

title Melvin T. Smith, State Historic Preservation Officer date 3-31-83

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

Susan McClelland date 5/19/83  
Keeper of the National Register

Patrick Andrews date 5/19/83  
Attest: Chief of Registration