

**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

For HCRS use only

received JUN 11 1982

date entered

1. Name

historic Johnson-Nielson House

and/or common Glen and Virginia Nielson House

2. Location

street & number 351 North Main Street _____ not for publication

city, town Ephraim _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district-

state Utah code 049 county Sanpete code 039

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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<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 Glen J. and Virginia K. Nielson

street & number 351 North Main Street

city, town Ephraim _____ vicinity of _____ state Utah

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office, Sanpete County Courthouse

street & number North Main Street

city, town Manti _____ state Utah

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Sanpete County Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 _____ 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 Johnson-Nielson house nicely illustrates the Queen Anne style as it surfaced in rural Utah during the late nineteenth century. Builders broke with traditional concepts of regular massing and symmetry in erecting new monuments to economic and social achievement. The Queen Anne here is characterized by a subdued irregularity and asymmetry, punctuated by side turrets and semi-octagonal bays. The frequent use of masonry construction precludes the elaborate detail and wall texture attainable in wood. Eclectic in nature, the Sanpete Queen Anne often incorporates classical and Eastlake features into its overall design.

The Johnson-Nielson house is a 1 1/2 story brick structure distinguished by irregular massing and varied roof planes, decorative window treatment and Eastlake molding. The front facade is unusual in its two porches which flank the half-octagonal two-story projecting bay. Above the entrance on the south porch is an octagonal tower with a bell-cast roof topped by a tall finial. The hip roof above the north porch is broken by a gable-roofed triangular window. The Eastlake porch posts are intact, although the wooden porch railings and deck were replaced with wrought iron and concrete about 1945. Scroll-sawn ornament below the cornice line is intact on both porches.

There are six rooms, two halls and a pantry on the main floor. The ceilings have been lowered from 12 1/2 to 10 feet. Pocket doors separate the two front rooms, while most of the other paneled doors have glass transoms above. There are three bedrooms, a storage room and a small hall on the second floor, finished in tongue-and-groove paneling on some walls and the ceilings following the irregular slopes of the roof.

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/ 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 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. 1895 **Builder/Architect** Soren Johnson

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Johnson /Nielson house, built in about 1895, is one of several distinctive Queen Anne brick houses to be constructed in Ephraim, Sanpete County, Utah, during the late 19th century.* These houses are significant because they represent, first, a dramatic shift in architectural thinking away from the rigid symmetry of earlier vernacular designs, including types transplanted from Scandinavia, and second, the emergence of a local elite who capitalized upon the expanding livestock industry of the 1880s and 1890s. This house was built by Soren Johnson, a Danish contractor who also ran the Union Hotel in Ephraim. Louis B. Nielson purchased the house in 1905 and from here managed one of Sanpete County's most successful livestock businesses. Nielson raised quality Rambouillet sheep and developed a valuable fine stapled, long fiber, crinkled wool.

*Other significant Queen Anne examples are the Larsen-Noyes house (National Register 1979) and the Dorius-Olsen house (Nomination being prepared).

The town of Ephraim in Sanpete County was settled in 1853 by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormons, as part of the larger colonization of the Great Basin region during the second half of the nineteenth century. Like most other early Utah towns, Ephraim's economy was based upon a rather limited subsistence-oriented agricultural system. Typical farm homes of the pioneer period were generally fashioned around a small number of vernacular house types which were outwardly symmetrical in design.² This traditional architectural aesthetic, imported into Utah from the eastern U.S., prevailed in Sanpete County until the closing decades of the century when newly introduced Victorian styles conspired with an emerging lucrative livestock industry to dramatically change the architectural complexion of the area. After 1870 factors such as a favorable climate, the availability of open range land, and the accessibility of eastern markets over the newly completed transcontinental railroad, led to the rapid expansion of sheep ranching in Utah.³ In Sanpete County, many local businesses flourished in the wake of the livestock boom. New homes erected during this period followed the Victorian stylistic preferences for visual complexity and asymmetry with the Queen Anne and Eastlake styles being particularly popular. Soren Johnson's Union Hotel profited from the flush times and in 1895 he built a fine new Queen Anne home which reflected the changing architectural tastes of the Ephraim community.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Abstract of Title (in owner's possession), Tax notices.
Interview with present owner, Glen J. Nielson.
Life story of Louis B. Nielson by his daughter, Melva N. Rigby, other family members and friends.
See continuation sheet 3

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Ephraim

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	2	4	4	9	4	5	0	4	3	5	7	4	1	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

Beg. SE corner, S 1/2 parcel 22, Plat A, Ephraim City Survey, Th N 6-1/2 rds; W 150 ft., S 6-1/2 rds, E 150 ft. to pt. of beg. Cont. 0.36 acres.

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 Virginia K. Nielson-Nielson Family/Tom Carter-Architectural Historian

organization Utah State Historical Society

date March 1982

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 May 26, 1982

For NPS use only

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

Ronnie Ann Day

date 7/26/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Emma Jane Saxe*

date 7/28/82

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 8

Page 2

Soren J. Johnson, the original owner of the home, was born in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1860. He emigrated to Minnesota as a boy of 14 and later, probably in the 1870s, arrived in the Danish-Mormon colony of Ephraim. Here he was befriended by Anthon Lund, a local church leader who later became one of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Lund was responsible for converting Johnson to the Latter-day Saint faith. In the 1880s, Johnson married Anna Sophie Dorius, the daughter of one of Ephraim's leading citizens, C.C.N Dorius. Johnson was a painter and house builder by trade, but also served as manager for Anthon Lund's furniture business and later was owner-proprietor of Ephraim's Union Hotel. In the early 1890s, the large Queen Anne brick house on the north side of town was designed and constructed by Johnson himself. The house was completed in about 1895. However, by 1900, Johnson's main activities were centered around the prosperous Union Hotel, so he moved his family into residence there and rented out the house.

In 1905, Johnson was becoming increasingly worried about the worldly influence of hotel living on his religious family. The rapidly expanding Sanpete livestock industry was drawing considerable outside attention and the Union Hotel was becoming the Ephraim home for many non-Mormon traveling salesmen, drummers, and businessmen. Johnson concluded that a hotel was not the place to instill the proper values in his growing family, so in 1905 he sold both the business and his house and moved to Salt Lake City. In the capitol city he became a successful developer-contractor-builder and is perhaps best known for his work on the Capitol Hill Ward for the LDS Church.

When Johnson moved north in 1905, he sold his fine brick home to Louis B. and Ann Nielson for \$1,000. Prior to purchasing this home the Nielsons lived in a two room house that was formerly a chicken coop. They then moved to Second Pigeon Hollow, where they lived in an adobe house supposedly built by Willy Larsen. Four sons were born there.

Louis B. Nielson raised quality Rambouillet sheep, which proved to be of primary importance to the rapidly expanding agricultural base of Sanpete County. The county would eventually become a Rambouillet breeding capitol of the sheep world. In 1897 W. S. Hansen and John H. Seeley purchased pure-bred Rambouillet sheep from France (see John H. Seeley House, National Register, March 9, 1982). In 1907 Mr. Nielson purchased 100 head of these, of which "Old Wood" was one who made the Nielson Sheep Company famous. The ram weighed 350 lbs. and sheared 42 lbs. of wool for two years in succession, probably the world's champion wool producer. Through selective breeding Mr. Nielson developed a fine stapled, long fibre, crinkled wool. He shipped lambs to Nebraska and Missouri, receiving gold as a portion of the payment. Mr.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 8

Page 3

Nielson owned about 1,000 acres of land on the west side of the valley, in addition to extensive grazing permits in the East Mountains. He had about 1,000 head of Rambouillet sheep.

Mr. Nielson, David Madsen and A. C. Anderson devised a plan to excavate a ditch on the East Mountain. They followed a survey along the "Low Pass" to bring needed water to Ephraim and the valley farms. Months were spent on the project. A similar plan, in a similar location, was later adapted by Ephraim City to increase the water supply. The old ditch is still visible.

Glen J. Nielson, and his wife Virginia purchased this home from the Louis B. Neilson estate on January 24, 1938. Glen is the fifth child, and the first one born in this home. He was a pioneer in the now prominent turkey raising industry. His were the first "broad-breasted Mammoth bronze" turkeys. He was succesful in this venture. He also had an outstanding herd of Rambouillet sheep. He pioneered the huge, white Charolais industry in Ephraim, and received national awards on his heifers, after following selective breeding procedures. He owned several farms in Sanpete where he ran his turkeys, cattle, and sheep.

Glen Nielson served in various positions in the city, including a term on the City Council, and was a counselor and then Bishop in the Ephraim West Ward. The present chapel was constructed under his jurisdiction. Following his release as Bishop he was sustained as a Patriarch in the South Sanpete Stake (presently the Manti, Utah Stake).

Notes

¹Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1890, (1958, reprint ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).

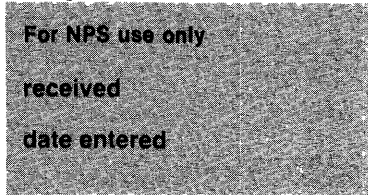
²See, Austin E. Fife, "Stone Houses of Northern Utah," Utah Historical Quarterly, 40:1 (Winter 1972), pp. 6-23, and Tom Carter, "Folk Design in Utah Architecture: 1849-1890," in Utah Folk Art, ed. by Hal Cannon (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), pp. 35-60.

³See, Everett H. Mecham, "The History of the Sheep Industry in Utah," unpublished thesis, University of Utah, 1925.

⁴Peter L. Goss, "The Architectural History of Utah," Utah Historical Quarterly, 43:3 (Summer 1975), pp. 222-223.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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



Continuation sheet 3

Item number 9

Page 2

Personal interview with first owner, Soren J. Johnson, as he visited his home in his later years (about 1940).
Personal remembrances by Virginia K. Nielson, co-owner of home.