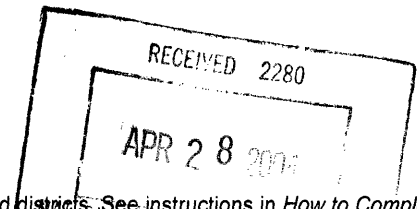


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Nielson, John R., Cabin

other name/site number Nielson Cabin, New Cabin

2. Location

street & town Manti Canyon, Manti-La Sal National Forest  not for publication

city or town Manti vicinity  vicinity

state Utah code UT county Sanpete code 039 zip code 84642

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Wilson M.A. 2/18/04  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Utah Division of State History, Office of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

G. P. Reso 4/26/04  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 4/8/04

Nielson, John R., Cabin  
Name of Property

Sanpete County, Utah  
City, County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(check only one box)

- district
- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
2	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Camp  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Camp  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Rustic  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls ROUND LOGS  
roof METAL  
other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Nielson, John R., Cabin  
Name of Property

Sanpete County, Utah  
City, County and State

**8. Description**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION \_\_\_\_\_

GOVERNMENT \_\_\_\_\_

ARCHITECTURE \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL HISTORY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1950-1953 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1950 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Persons**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

John R. Nielson and family (builders) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Nielson, John R., Cabin  
Name of Property

Sanpete County, Utah  
City, County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.25 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/2 4/5/6/8/2/0 4/3/4/6/2/6/0  
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

1/4 ACRE LEASE ON LAND IN THE NE 1/4 OF SW 1/4 OF NW 1/4 OF SECTION 8, T1 8S R4E, SALT LAKE BASE MERIDIAN, SEE MAP FOR EXACT BOUNDARIES.

Property Tax No. N/A

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundaries are those that have been historically and continue to be associated with the property.

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Korral Broschinsky, Russell Nielson, & William Bruce Ellis (Manti-La Sal National Forest)

organization Preservation Documentation Resource date November 21, 2002

street & number P.O. BOX 58766 telephone (801) 581-1497

city or town Salt Lake City state UT zip code 84158

#### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

##### Continuation Sheets

**Maps** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs:** Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

#### Property Owner

name/title Nielson family lease of USFS land; family representative, Russell Nielson

street & number 814 Green Vista Court telephone (801) 743-0907

city or town Salt Lake City state UT zip code 84107

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 1

Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

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### Narrative Description

The John R. Nielson Cabin is located nine miles east of Manti in Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, Utah. The cabin was built between 1949 and 1950. The cabin is built of round logs on a stone and concrete foundation. The simple gable roof is corrugated tin painted green. The cabin is a rectangle measuring approximately 18 feet by 33 feet. The cabin is built in the twentieth-century rustic style with structural log work and stone masonry. The interior is open with sleeping niches and lofts at the east and west ends. The cabin has no running water or electricity. The Nielson Cabin has been modified only slightly since 1950 and retains its architectural integrity.

The cabin is built of aspen logs found near the site in 1948. The logs were peeled while green then left to cure for over a year before construction began. The foundation was built using rocks, mostly limestone, gathered in the canyon and held together with concrete. The round logs were laid with a simple saddle notch. Some nails were used to secure the notched logs where needed. The logs were cut to extend beyond the walls of the cabin. These log extensions include logs that have been sawed off (mostly northeast and northwest corners) and logs with the original pointed ax cut (mostly southeast and southwest corners). One log at the top of the northwest corner extends an additional four feet and was using for drying and cleaning the hunter's kill.

At the same time as the log walls were being constructed, the large chimneystack on the north elevation was built. The chimney is constructed of limestone blocks mortared with concrete. Flanking the chimney are two stone enclosures projecting slightly from the wall. The west structure was built to house the cooking stove, and to the east is a firewood box. The chimney was damaged during a heavy snowstorm in the winter of 1983-1984, causing it to tilt slightly. After the storm, a triangular brace of 4" diameter metal pipe was installed on the exterior of the cabin to prevent further damage to the chimney and fireplace. The addition of the brace is the only modification to the cabin since 1950.

The cabin's only door is centrally located in the south elevation. It was salvaged from the previous Nielson family cabin (built in 1932 and demolished in 1948). Another item saved from the first cabin is the ridgepole, which is currently mounted under the eave and above the door. Two multi-paned, wooden fixed-sash windows flank the door. The windows are square in shape with twelve lights each. Similar windows are located on the east and west elevations, two each on the lower level and one under the gable. The majority of windows are screened. The windows in the cabin were surplus from a razed World War II building (location unknown, probably Manti). There are no windows on the north elevation. The roof is supported on round aspen log joists and rafters. The ridgepole is also log, and supported by two interior log posts. The roof deck is lumber planking. A corrugated tin roof covers the planks. The roof has been painted green several times, the most recent being about five years ago. The cabin floor is composed of rock and concrete. It was poured about the same time as the roof was completed. The final construction phase was the chinking of the log walls with a mix of lime, sand and a mortar compound.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 2

Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

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On the interior, the cabin is an open room with niches at the west and east ends. The arched partitions are covered with circa 1950s paneling. The niches contain tables, beds and some shelves. Above the niches are the sleeping lofts. Access to the girls' loft (west end) is via a ladder built of lashed poles. The boys' loft (east end) is accessed by a log pole with hooks on either side. Bedding is built into the lofts with curtains to provide privacy. There is no ceiling per se. The rafter and joists poles are visible, as is the underside of the wood roof deck planks. A "chandelier" made from lanterns suspended from a buggy wheel hangs in the center of the space. There are benches and tables on the north wall. The fireplace is a large stone structure with an open firebox and stone hearth. A Monarch cook stove is to the west and the firewood box to the east. An exterior opening with a simple wood door allows firewood to be placed in the wood box from outside. Above the wood box is a glass enclosure, also open to the exterior, which provides a cool storage space for foodstuffs. Above the cooling box, shelves are built to the rafters.

The Nielson cabin is located north of the North Fork Road near Swen's Spring in Manti Canyon. It sits on a ridge on the north side of the canyon. The cabin sits on a 0.25-acre parcel that is currently part of the Manti-La Sal National Forest. The land is public forest service land leased by the Nielson family. The cabin is surrounded by aspen and pine groves. It is accessible by a dirt road only by four-wheel drive vehicle. The cabin originally had a larger front yard before a snowstorm and landslide in the winter of 1983-1984 caused ten feet of land to slide down the ridge. There is a bench and picnic table located just outside the cabin door. An outhouse is located about 50 feet northeast of the cabin (rescued and moved to a new foundation at its current location after it slid down the ridge in 1984). The contributing outhouse is a WPA-era structure. It is covered with drop siding with a shed roof and rests on a concrete foundation. The single "seat" is covered with a hinged wooden lid. The outhouse structure was relocated from Manti and moved to the cabin site about 1950. The Nielson Cabin is a contributing structure in Manti Canyon.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 1

Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

### Narrative Statement of Significance

The John R. Nielson Cabin, built in 1949-1950, in Manti Canyon, Utah, is significant under Criteria A and C as one of only a few remaining historic log cabins in the Manti-La Sal National Forest. It is the only surviving example of an "isolated" cabin, as described by the United States Forest Service (USFS), in Manti Canyon. The history of the cabin represents changes in USFS policies concerning the private use of public lands, particularly concerning summer homes and cabins. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, the USFS encouraged recreational and commercial use of public lands through a system of special use permits. The ongoing dialogue on the status of the cabin documents both the controversy and cooperation that characterizes the relationship between government officials and private local interests regarding public lands in Utah and the western United States. The Nielson Cabin represents a mid-twentieth-century example of this relationship. The cabin is also significant for its importance to the surrounding community. The Nielson Cabin was originally built as a hunting-recreational cabin by the extended family of John R. and Alice J. Nielson, and members of the Nielson family have maintained and used the cabin for over fifty years, but it has also been a resource to the neighboring communities. Scouts, church and 4-H groups, hunters, skiers, honeymooners, and many others have used the cabin through the years. The USFS supervised the construction of private cabins and the Nielson cabin is architecturally significant under Criterion C as a surviving example of the influence of the USFS design guidelines on rustic style cabin construction. The Nielson Cabin has excellent historic integrity and is a contributing historic resource in the Manti-La Sal National Forest of Utah.

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### HISTORY OF THE JOHN R. NIELSON CABIN

The Manti-La Sal National Forest is located in the mountains of central Utah. The forest is largely pine and aspen, and located along the eastern one-third of Sanpete County. The area was originally home to the local Sanpitch Indians and also used by Ute Indians as a winter base. The first non-native settlers were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon Church) who arrived in 1849, two years after the settlement of Salt Lake City. The settlers chose the Manti area because of the nearby warm springs, abundant limestone, and land for farming and grazing. After a decade-long period of confrontation with the native tribes, a dozen communities were founded by the 1860s. Sanpete County was established in 1850 with Manti as the county seat. The population of the county grew from 365 in 1850 to 11,557 in 1880, primarily due to a large influx of Scandinavian converts to the LDS Church.

The rapid growth of the Utah's population had a deleterious impact of the nearby forests. Because years of unregulated logging and overgrazing had denuded the mountain slopes by 1890, forest and rangeland deterioration had become critical.<sup>1</sup> The Forest Reserve Act of 1891 authorized the federal government to set

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas G. Alexander and Rick J. Fish, "The Forest Service in Utah."

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

aside forest reserves for the protection of timber and watersheds. In 1905 Congress transferred responsibility for these national forests to the newly created Forest Service. The Manti National Forest (later called the Manti-La Sal National Forest) was one of six national forests established in Utah. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, the USFS developed a system of special use permits for private use of the forestlands. The first permits were issued for the development of waterpower. An early power plant was built just east of Manti at the mouth of Manti Canyon. Other permits were issued for lumber operations, and livestock grazing and related facilities. The residents of Manti and other communities in Sanpete County had a long history of using the water, timber, and other resources of the canyon. By the early twentieth century there were a number of mills, quarries, logging camps, and livestock facilities in the canyon. Because agriculture was difficult due to the lack of water, livestock was the most important economy of the area. A number of early ranchers had permits for ranges in the canyon. In an ongoing effort to preserve the canyon, the Forest Service began reducing the number of grazing permits over the years.<sup>2</sup>

In the period following World War I, there was rapid growth in the number of people wishing to use the national forests for recreation, particularly with the increase in mobility that accompanied automobile usage.<sup>3</sup> By the mid-1920s, there were large increases in private motoring, group tours, picnicking, and hotel and resort guests. The Forest Service (and the National Park Service) began a program of recreational land management that included road building and other facilities, especially in the scenic venues such as Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks. Because the Manti National Forest and Manti Canyon were somewhat isolated and boasted no scenic wonders comparable to Zion or Bryce Canyon, the recreational use of the canyon was mostly limited to local hikers, campers, hunters, and skiers. In an effort to increase the number of recreational uses of the area, the Forest Service issued special use permits for small private vacation cabins or summer homes. An advertisement dated June 1931 proclaimed "vacation home" sites on national forest land could be obtained from the government for a \$5 a year perpetual lease, and for another \$7.50 the government would supply the lumber.<sup>4</sup>

In the summer of 1932, John R. Nielson, a resident of Manti, applied for a special use permit to build a log cabin approximately nine miles up Manti Canyon. John Rudolph Nielson, Jr., was born in Manti on January 21, 1888, the son of Norwegian immigrants. He married Alice Johnson on June 25, 1913. Alice Johnson was born in Manti on May 7, 1889. The couple had seven children: Errol, Eve, R. Lynn, Martha Alice, Margaret, John Henrie, and VeLois. John R. Nielson was a schoolteacher in Manti. He also worked at a variety of jobs, including chicken ranching, to supplement his teaching salary. During the summers, he would take his three sons up Manti Canyon to cut firewood for the winter. The group usually camped in the canyon for two weeks at a time. After two or three years of camping, John R. Nielson decided to apply for a permit to build a cabin. The Forest Service reviewed the permit in August 1933 and the cabin was completed the following year. The official permit was issued in April 1935. The cabin was located on a hill above the North Fork Road within

<sup>2</sup> Today the controversies are more likely to be regarding the number of ATVs, rather the number of livestock in the canyon; but the local residents and federal employees still have differences of opinion regarding the use of canyon resources.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas G. Alexander, *The Rise of Multiple-Use Management in the Intermountain West: A History of Region 4 of the Forest Service*, United States Department of Agriculture. Forest Service, FS-399, May 1987.

<sup>4</sup> Scheinert, A. C., "National Forest Cabins," from *Outdoor Life Century Review*, June 1931, from the Nielson family collection. Photocopy on file at the Utah State Historic Preservation Office.



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

sight of Swen's Spring. The cabin was small, constructed of pine logs with a dirt roof and a sod floor. The cabin had only three small windows. A lean-to, called the "Kickin' Coop," was added to the west side for an additional bedroom.<sup>5</sup> The cabin was used as a home base for wood chopping and deer hunting, but also for family camping and ski trips. The cabin was authorized as a free-use permit, which required the cabin to be open and stocked with supplies for anyone in the area who might require shelter.

On March 7, 1947, the Forest Service informed the Nielson family that the cabin no longer met the requirements for a free-use permit. Three days later Ranger Merrill Anderson amended the permit stating "Old Cabin to be removed and new one constructed in its place on a new location near by."<sup>6</sup> According to the Nielson family, the Forest Service was concerned the cabin was too close to the road and Swen's Spring, which was attracting more traffic each year. The cabin also did not meet current guidelines for cabin construction. The old Neilson cabin was demolished in 1948. Both the new site (hidden from view on a ridge approximately 200 feet north of the road) and the construction blueprints were provided for the Forest Service's approval. A Timber Sale Permit for the new cabin was obtained, and logs were cut in 1948. Construction on the second Nielson cabin began in the summer of 1949. John R. and Alice Nielson, their seven children with spouses and friends helped to build the new cabin, which was completed in 1950.

Assignments were given to each family member to be responsible for a part of the cabin. Those who did not live close by sent money.<sup>7</sup> John R. and John Henrie Nielson selected the secluded location and built a road to the site. Martha Alice, Margaret and Eve hauled the rocks for the foundation. Errol built the chimney, fireplace and stove. Lynn mixed the cement. John R. and Alice J. Nielson were responsible for building most of the walls. Alice Nielson did most of the chinking herself. The roof was installed and the concrete floor poured at about the same time.

The construction of the cabin followed guidelines for summer homes developed by the USFS in the late 1940s.<sup>8</sup> The foundation was low to the ground with the exterior chimney constructed of stone. The logs were peeled and roughhewn. The tin roof was painted green to comply with Forest Service stipulations that the exterior colors blend with the surrounding landscape.<sup>9</sup> In the spirit of their pioneer ancestors, the Neilson family used only hand tools to build the cabin.<sup>10</sup> The only tools used were the bare minimum: ax, adz, hammer, shovel, pick, handsaw and pole peeler. Photographs were taken of the cabin throughout the construction process.

The construction of the second Nielson Cabin was one of the few examples regulated by the Forest Service. In addition to the first Nielson cabin (1932-1948), there were about a dozen historic isolated cabins in the canyon

<sup>5</sup> R. Lynn Nielson, *Who Moved My Mountain? Place and Stories of Manti Canyon*, (Manti, Utah: Sun-Up Publishing, 1998), 107.

<sup>6</sup> Photocopy of letter on file at the Utah State Historic Preservation Office, from the Nielson family collection.

<sup>7</sup> R. Lynn Nielson, "The Building of the New Nielson Cabin, 1948-1949."

<sup>8</sup> Steve McNeil and Dana Supernowicz, *A Programmatic [sic] Approach for Identifying and Evaluating Recreation Residences on the Eldorado National Forest, Region 5-California*, (Davis:California: University of California, Davis, 1992, reprint, 1993), 31-32.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

<sup>10</sup> Pioneer nostalgia was an important part of the Utah's history during the late 1940s. In July 1947, every community in the state celebrated the centennial of the Mormon pioneers' arrival in Utah in 1847. Many of these celebrations included the salvage and restoration of pioneer-era cabins.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

potentially under the Forest Service's jurisdiction.<sup>11</sup> Most of the cabin sites were cleared by the Forest Service after the owners failed to maintain them. The oldest may have been the cabin near Al Johnson Hill (built by loggers possibly as early as the 1890s and demolished by the 1920s). Further up the canyon from the site of the old Nielson is the site of a cabin built by Alex Nielson, a brother of John R. Nielson, built around 1937. This cabin was demolished by the 1950s. Near Logger's Fork is the site of a cabin reportedly built by cattlemen in the 1940s, and used as a camp and for equipment storage. This cabin was demolished after a few years of use. The Wallace Tatton cabin, near Lowry Fork, was built about 1936 as a logging camp. The cabin eventually rotted away and little remains of the structure.<sup>12</sup>

At the upper end of Lowry Fork is Clark Kellar's campground, a hunting camp from the 1930s. There is no structure, but the campground is still in use today, although not an official Forest Service campground. Alt Stringham's camp was a tent on a wood frame over a wood floor. Stringham never had a permit to use the site, and the semi-permanent camp was eventually demolished after a couple years of non-use (date unknown). The City Cabin on the Bench Road was built to house equipment for the water pipeline (built around 1937 and demolished circa 1970s?). The Scout's cabin was built around 1930 in an area between the North and South Fork Creeks. The log cabin in the pines was demolished at an unknown date, probably in the 1970s. In the Burnt Hill area was the Homer Jay (Jr.) Cox and Carl Peterson cabin, built in the late 1930s, by Cox and Peterson as a hunting cabin. The two men were reportedly discouraged by Forest Service restrictions in the canyon and lost their "zeal to own and use" the cabin. The cabin changed hands several times until the 1980s, when it fell into disrepair and was demolished.<sup>13</sup> The Nielson Cabin is the only extant example of an isolated cabin in the canyon.

By 1950, the Forest Service had instituted an "Approved Summer Home" program that encouraged summer homes to be grouped together in one location. In Manti Canyon, this site was located near the South Fork Creek crossing. The Summer Home Area includes three historic cabins, the Morris Pack, Leland Anderson, and Edward Sorensen cabins. They were built between the late 1930s and early 1950s, and at least two of these cabins have been remodeled. Ranger Anderson's approval of the new Neilson cabin as an isolated cabin in 1947, even after the establishment of the summer home tract, was likely an acknowledgement of the family's careful stewardship of the original cabin and the surrounding land.

Because the 1947 letter from the Forest Service changed the usage from "free use" to a pay permit, the Nielson family was required to keep the new cabin locked.<sup>14</sup> There was also an increase in the number of non-family members who used the cabin, therefore the Nielson family drew up a set of rules for the new cabin: 1) leave the

<sup>11</sup> Over the years a number of structures, have been built to support various industries, most of these were located near the mouth of the canyon: foundry, grist mill, power plants, two dams, gravel pits, lime kilns, lumber mill, salt mine, quarry and pioneer monument. The Pole Haven ski area also had a few structures built in the 1930s. In the late 1930s, the Forest Service began working on the first of the community campground about one-tenth of a mile above the reservoir. The hunting-recreation cabins were all built in the higher elevations.

<sup>12</sup> *Who Moved My Mountain?*, 91-92, 115-118, 122-123, & 126-127.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 130-131, 135-136, 144-146, 155-158 & 161-162.

<sup>14</sup> The family has noted there was no vandalism at the old cabin, but the new cabin was vandalized several times after the locks were installed.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

wood box full, 2) leave the cabin clean, 3) respect the mountain environment, 4) record your visit, and 5) lock the door. The family also began keeping a log of all overnight trips to the cabin by family members and visitors. Though the log begins in the summer of 1954 with a few family-friends outings and the honeymoon of VeLois Nielson and Dennis Carbine, the comments in the log represent the types of uses for the cabin during the historic period between 1950 and 1953.

The cabin logs indicate a large number of both family and non-Nielson family members used the cabin. Boy Scouts have made semi-annual trips (summer and winter) to the cabin nearly every year since its construction. Deer hunting trips were also annual events. Stanly W. Duncan, the oldest son of Billy and Martha Alice Duncan, suggests that the construction and use (especially the deer hunts) of the cabin was a catharsis and a therapeutic refuge for his father and uncles (most of whom were World War II Veterans) in the years between the WW II and the Korean War.<sup>15</sup> On August 18, 1956 “nine crazy people” stayed at the cabin for a “Bow & Arrow” deer hunt. A few weeks later on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, Forest Ranger LeGrand Olson signed the log with these encouraging words, “This is a beautiful spot, and ingenious cabin. Keep it attractive, in repair, and enjoy the canyon.” On October 19<sup>th</sup>, a group of tourists wrote these words: “Americans sure show lots of hospitality.” In July of 1957 a large group of nine and ten-year-old girls stayed at the cabin as part of a 4-H Club outing. At the end of that month, Margaret Nielson Peterson brought her family and a friend’s family to the cabin. Her friend, Jackie Bryant, wrote: “Didn’t ever think I’d see any place big enough to sleep both the Peterson & Bryant broods. Couldn’t sleep in the night I figured there are 22 beds. We can both expand our families – If we have the courage. Don’t blame Margaret a bit for bragging about ‘the cabin’.”<sup>16</sup>

Though beloved by the Nielson family and the community, the new Nielson cabin was embroiled in controversy from the beginning. In July 1950, before the cabin was finished, Forest Ranger Howard Folger sent a letter to the family indicating the service had no record of a permit for the new cabin. The Forest Service was working toward the goal of authorizing cabin construction only in the Summer Home area. It was also beginning to enforce a policy that required the removal of isolated (and unauthorized) cabins from public lands. Alice J. Nielson spoke to the rangers by phone and received permission to continue the construction work. After the death of John R. Nielson on April 6, 1951, Alice J. Nielson was again required to negotiate with the Forest Service to adjust the ownership of the cabin. In 1954, the permit was authorized for Alice J. Nielson and John H. Nielson. The Forest Service continued to accept the annual permit fee after the death of Alice J. Nielson on November 20, 1979, and John Henrie Nielson in October 18, 1999.

In January 2001, the status of the cabin became the subject of intense discussions between the Forest Service and the Nielson family. The Forest Service initially wished to demolish the cabin in order to comply with its “removal of isolated cabin policy.” Besides the Nielson Cabin, there is currently one other historic example in the Manti-La Sal National Forest, the Whitlock cabin in Mayfield. This cabin, in cooperation with the Forest

<sup>15</sup> Duncan, Stanly W., “The Nielson Family Cabin: A Military Veteran and Family Member’s Perspective.” TMS, August 26, 2003, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Photocopies of log transcripts available at the Utah State Historic Preservation Office, from the Nielson family collection.

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Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

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Service, is being preserved by its local community. The controversy surrounding the Nielsen Cabin highlights the decades-old relationship (marked by both cooperation and tension) between federal oversight of public lands and the local citizens. The Nielson family (with the support of numerous city, county and state leaders) hopes to preserve the cabin as an important historical resource in Manti Canyon. A proposal in which the Nielson family establishes a not-for-profit entity to relieve the Forest Service of maintenance and liability requirements is currently being considered. The compromise has prompted one of the most complete compilations of construction documents, correspondence, anecdotal remembrances and historic photographs of a private cabin on public land. The John R. Nielson Cabin is probably the best-documented historic recreational cabin in Utah, and is a contributing historic resource in the Manti-La Sal National Forest.

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United States Department of the Interior  
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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. PHOTOS Page 1

Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

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### Common Label Information:

1. John R. Nielson Cabin
2. Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, Utah
3. Photographer: Korral Broschinsky
4. Date: August 2002
5. Negative on file at Utah SHPO.

### Photo No. 1:

6. South elevation of cabin. Camera facing northeast.

### Photo No. 2:

6. Southwest corner of cabin. Camera facing northeast.

### Photo No. 3:

6. West elevation of cabin. Camera facing southeast.

### Photo No. 4:

6. East and north elevations of cabin. Camera facing southwest.

### Photo No. 5:

6. Log and notch detail, northeast corner of cabin. Camera facing west.

### Photo No. 6:

6. Interior of cabin, view of south wall, entrance and west loft. Camera facing southwest.

### Photo No. 7:

6. Interior of cabin, view of west wall, loft and niches. Camera facing northwest.

### Photo No. 8:

6. Interior of cabin, view of east wall, loft and niches. Camera facing northeast.

### Photo No. 9:

6. Interior of cabin, view of east loft from west loft. Camera facing northeast.

### Photo No. 10:

6. Interior of cabin, view of north wall with fireplace. Camera facing north.

### Photo No. 11:

6. Interior of cabin, detail of wood box and cooling box. Camera facing north.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. PHOTOS Page 2

Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

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**Photo No. 12:**

6. West and south elevations of outhouse. Camera facing northeast.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. PHOTOS Page 1

Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. PHOTOS Page 2

Nielson, John R., Cabin, Manti Canyon, Sanpete County, UT

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**Photo No. 12:**

6. West and south elevations of outhouse. Camera facing northeast.

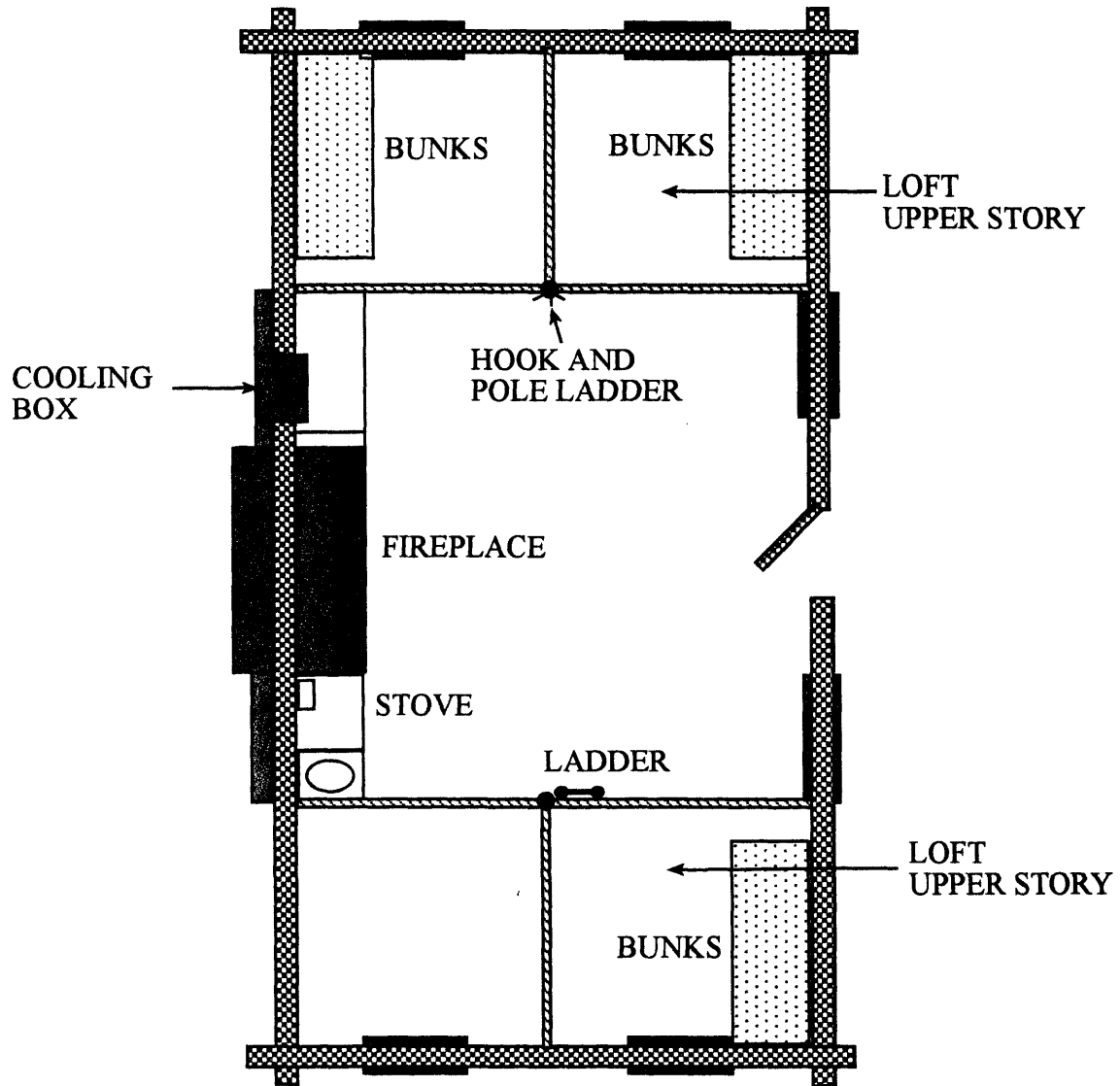
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# FEATURE DRAWING

JOHN R. NIELSON CABIN

DATE: 10.31.01

By: Lorna Billat -  
Earth Touch LLC



KEY:

SCALE

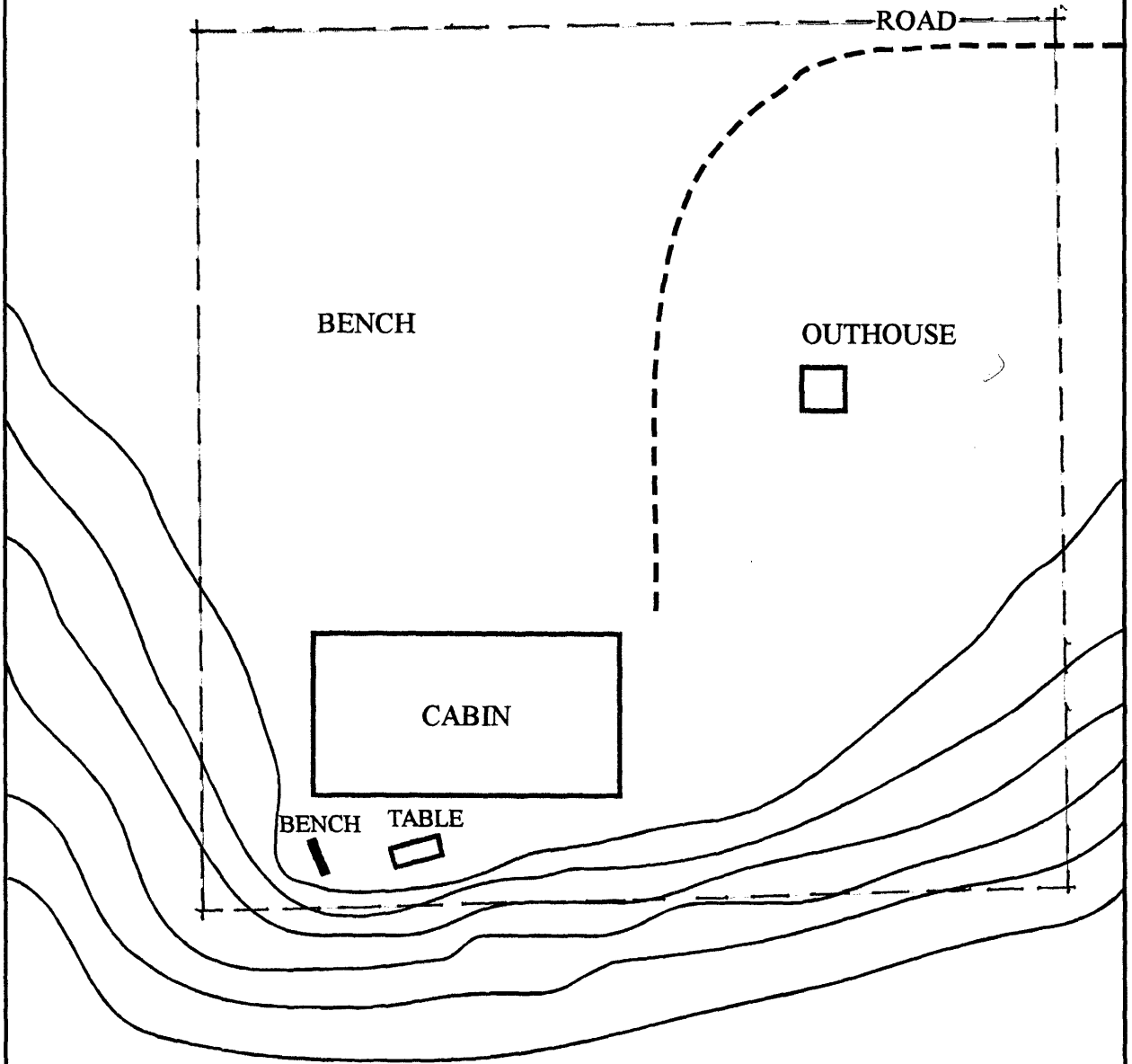
2  
FEET

# SITE SKETCH MAP

JOHN R. NIELSON CABIN

DATE: 10.31.01

By: Lovna Billot-  
Earth Touch LLC



KEY:

----- 1/4 acre boundary

SCALE

2.5  
METERS