

**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 JAN 26 1982

date entered MAR 9 1982

1. Name

historic John H. Seely House

and/or common Seely House

2. Location

street & number 91 South 5th West St. _____ not for publication

city, town Mount Pleasant _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district First (1)

state Utah code 049 county Sanpete code 039

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input 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
		<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 Chesla S. Patterson - Ina S. Morgan - Lucy S. Capel

street & number 513 W. Capitol Street

city, town Salt Lake City _____ vicinity of _____ state Utah

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office

street & number Sanpete County Courthouse

city, town Manti _____ state Utah 84642

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date July 1980 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records USHS

city, town Salt Lake City _____ state Utah 84101

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John H. Seely home in Mt. Pleasant is an interesting case study in the architectural development of rural Utah. As it presently stands, the house represents the extensive 1890 remodeling of a much smaller home that was built in about 1870 by Jens C. Meiling. The new house is indicative of a Victorian architectural aesthetic which became popular in the second generation of Sanpete County's settlement. These fine homes were primarily associated with wealth acquired in the booming livestock industry of the late 19th century.

The town of Mt. Pleasant was settled by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1859. The 1860s saw the town grow slowly but steadily upon a rather narrow, agriculturally oriented economy. Typically, farm homes of this initial settlement period were fashioned around a small number of vernacular types. The Jens Meiling home was a 1 1/2 story brick example of the popular "hall and parlor" house, having two large rooms on the ground floor of the main house and two smaller rooms upstairs. A rear "T" extension, also of fired brick, provided the house with an additional pair of rooms. The house had a symmetrical, three-opening facade and gable-end stove chimneys. In most respects, the original Meiling home reflected the architectural aesthetic which prevailed in Sanpete County until the closing decades of the century when the local economy was stimulated by the development of a lucrative livestock industry.

In 1887, John H. Seely purchased Meiling's house and lot for \$1500. At the time, Seely was fast becoming one of Sanpete County's leading sheepman, and he immediately started making plans to remodel the existing house. It seems probable, given his standing in the community and the sophisticated nature of the finished product, that Seely hired an architect to design and supervise the rebuilding of the home. Family records do not reveal the architect's name, but a good guess would be Richard C. Watkins of Provo. Watkins was known to have worked in Mt. Pleasant during the 1880s and 1890s (particularly on the commercial buildings along Main Street) and could very well have provided the plans for Seely's new mansion. Work commenced on the new house soon after Seely bought the property in 1887. In 1890, the family moved into a completed structure which bore no resemblance to the smaller Meiling home. Indeed, it almost appears that the original house was removed to

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make way for the new construction. The structure John Seely built in 1890 is a large, two-story example of the stylistic eclecticism which characterized much of late 19th century Utah architecture.

The John Seely house is constructed of locally produced orange brick and successfully combines design elements drawn from several major architectural styles. The general stylistic mood of the house is set by the Renaissance Revival features of the square tower which stands at the southwest corner of the facade. The tower has a slightly flared and bracketed flat roof which is topped with a heavy balustrade of rusticated stone. A corbelled brick belt course, prominently visible on the tower but banding the entire house, divides the first and second floors. The smooth brick wall surface of the tower is further disrupted by four bands of rusticated stone which connect the lintels and sills of the windows on both floors. The four tower windows contain elaborately leaded transoms.

While the house is clearly dominated by the massive corner tower, other ornamental features contribute to its distinctive appearance. There is a two-tier classical portico over the front entrance which challenges the visual surpemacy of the tower. At the top there is an enriched pediment and both tiers contain dentiled cornices, stylized Tuscan columns, and spindled Eastlake ballusters. On the west side entrance is another two-tier portico flanked by a one-story porch which runs north to the end of the house. At the first level, over the side door, is an elaborately decorated pediment. Tuscan columns support a dentiled cornice which spans the length of the side porch. At the upper level there is an enclosed porch which has a dentiled cornice and Tuscan pilasters. Other distinctive features of the Seely home are corbelled chimneys, a multiple hip flat roof, overhanging, bracketed eaves, and a small hipped roof dormer.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1870 - 1890 **Builder/Architect** Not known

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This fine brick home was the residence of John H. Seely, one of the most successful livestock breeders in the Intermountain West. Seely is credited with introducing purebred French Rambouillet sheep into Utah during the 1890s. His achievements with selective breeding vastly improved the quality of Utah's range stock in a period of rapid herd and market expansion, contributing directly to the remarkable success of the local sheep industry during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Seely's sheep operations helped make Mt. Pleasant the Rambouillet breeding capital of the sheep world as well as the commercial center of central Utah's livestock industry. The Seely house represents the extensive 1890 remodeling of a much smaller home built by Jens C. Meiling in about 1870,

Mt. Pleasant was settled in 1859 as part of the general occupation of Utah by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during the second half of the 19th century.¹ Growing steadily in the 1860s and 1870s, Mt. Pleasant formed one link in the chain of Mormon agricultural communities running through the Sanpete Valley. Farm production during this early development period was largely subsistence in nature, with a limited supply of grain and other foodstuffs being shipped north to Salt Lake City.² The town's religious population was composed of converts from the eastern United States, the British Isles, and the Scandinavian countries. A Danish immigrant, Jens C. Meiling built the first home on what was to become the John H. Seely city lot.

Jens Meiling, or more commonly anglicized to James C. Meiling, was born in Denmark in 1834.³ He joined the LDS Church in 1856 and emigrated to Utah and the Mormon Zion in the following year, settling along with many other Scandinavian converts in the Sanpete Valley. After several years in Ephraim, Meiling moved to the new settlement of Mt. Pleasant in 1859. Meiling acquired 20 acres of farmland and supplemented his income by making bricks. For many years, Sanpete settlers had difficulty securing clay of sufficient quality to produce fired brick and relied mainly upon sun-dried adobe as a building material. Meiling's yard, located just west of town (and very close to his city lot), was the first in Mt. Pleasant to turn out kiln fired bricks, probably in the late 1860s.⁴ Meiling built his own brick house about 1870, but sold both house and land to John H. Seely in 1887 for \$1500.

John Henry Seely was born in the Mormon colony of San Bernardino, California, in 1855.⁵ His father, Justus Wellington Seely, was an early convert to the LDS faith from Ontario, Canada. As persecution and

9. Major Bibliographical References

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Longsdorf, Hilda Madsen. Mount Pleasant, 1859-1939. Mt. Pleasant: Pioneer Historical Assoc. '3
 Lever, W.H. History of Sanpete and Emery Counties. Ogden: W. H. Lever, 1898.
 See family records.
 Sanpete County Records.

10. Geographical DataAcreeage of nominated property 1.5 acresQuadrangle name Mt. PleasantQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	2
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 Zone

4	6	0
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 Easting

1	5	0
---	---	---

 Northing

4	3	7	7
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2	1	0
---	---	---

 Northing

B

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 Zone

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 Easting

--	--	--

 Northing

C

--	--

 Zone

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 Easting

--	--	--

 Northing

D

--	--

 Zone

--	--	--

 Easting

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 Northing

E

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

F

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

G

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

H

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

BEG 87' N SW COR LOT 3, BLOCK 44, PLAT A MT. PLEASANT CITY SURVEY THEN, E 36', N 15',
 E 178 1/2', TO E LINE LOT 3; N 112', W 214 1/2', S 127 1/2', TO BEG.

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

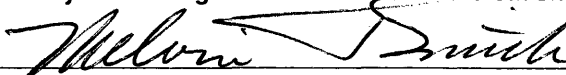
11. Form Prepared Byname/title Tom Carter, Architectural Historianorganization USHSdate November 1981street & number 300 Rio Grandetelephone (801) 533-6017city or town Salt Lake Citystate Utah 84101**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature


title Melvin T. Smith, State Historic Preservation Officerdate 1-15-82

For HCERS use only

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


date 3/9/1982

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date 3-2-82

Chief of Registration

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Received: 10/23/80

Date entered:

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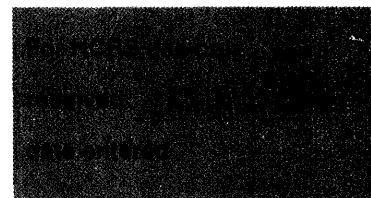
conflict drove them from their homes around Nauvoo, Illinois, the Seelys had moved westward to Utah in 1847 with the Mormons. They had traveled on to California in 1852 to help establish a Mormon "corridor" of settlements leading from Utah to the sea.⁶ Conflict with the U. S. Government in the late 1850s necessitated the abandonment of many outlying colonies, and in 1858-1859 the family moved back to Utah and settled in Mt. Pleasant. Here John H. Seely, one of eleven children, was educated and grew up into the farming life. Though he started out in the business with very little, the stage was set by the late 1870s for an economic boom in the western livestock industry. John H. Seely, combining foresight with aggressive business tactics, took full advantage of the favorable market conditions to build an extensive commercial empire which stretched far beyond his native Sanpete.

The first Utah sheep herds were trailed west with the Mormon pioneers of 1847.⁷ Though the LDS Church leaders encouraged the development of an indigenous woolen industry as part of its program of self-sufficiency and home production, the program lagged behind expectations because herds remained small and of rather marginal breeding quality. After 1870, several factors contributed to the rapid expansion of sheep ranching in Utah. First, it was discovered that the state's climate and geography were ideal for establishing a "summer-winter" system of range management. During the summer, herds could graze on the high mountain bunch grasses and then, when winter snows arrived, the sheep could be moved down to the lower desert country. This system, coupled with the availability of vast tracts of public grazing land, made a significant increase in herd size possible. Second, in 1869, the Utah Territorial Legislature acted to aid the flagging sheep industry by abolishing taxes on sheep and appropriating public funds for the improvement of breeds. Third, the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 opened up eastern markets to Utah wool and mutton. Fourth, the general ending of Indian hostilities in 1870 opened up sizeable new sections of land for grazing. As Everett Mecham reported in his 1925 study of the Utah sheep industry, 1870 was the "take-off" year:

The year 1869 ushered in a new era for sheepmen in Utah. The Indian menace was removed, the railroad established, greater market demands for mutton and wool were created and the big scale production was established, involving larger herds, more woolen mills, bigger shearing plants.⁸

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In 1870, Utah could count about 60,000 head of sheep within its borders; by 1890, there were well over a million. For a man with ambition, the time to exploit such opportunities was perfect. By constantly working to improve his herds, J. H. Seely pioneered the use of quality Rambouillet breeding stock and became one of the wealthy men of Sanpete County.

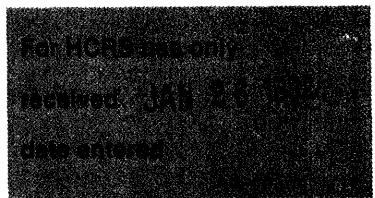
At the age of 21, Seely made a start hauling mine timbers from Sanpete County to the copper mine at Bingham. Soon he decided to go into the sheep business and took over the small Mt. Pleasant co-operative town herd on shares, paying a fixed amount of wool per head. The sheep were of poor breeding quality and Seely was dissatisfied with his condition, feeling that his operation would not amount to much until he improved the wool-yield of his sheep. In the 1880s he journeyed to California and purchased several Rambouillet rams and gradually bred his share sheep until he had a couple of well graded herds of his own. With these he started in the business on his own account, yearly increasing the number of purebred sheep until his animals were well known throughout the Sanpete County area. Later he sent his personal secretary, Mr. Will Clos, to Europe to bring back the best Rambouillet blood that he could secure in France and Germany. Seely's Mt. Pleasant farm supplied rams at this time to many areas of the West, and also to Japan, Russia, and to certain African and South American countries. In 1899, his flock of purebred sheep was accepted for record by the American Rambouillet Sheep Breeders Association, a group for which he served several years as president. He was for many years connected with the Utah Wool Growers Association as a member, director, and finally, vice-president. For about twenty years, Seely was connected in a supervisory capacity with the Utah State Fair.

John H. Seely died in 1930. The great ranching and livestock business he had created remained in the Seely family and even today the Seely name is synonymous with sheep ranching in Sanpete County. The large brick house which he built for his family in 1890 becomes a fitting monument to Seely's contributions to Utah's economic history.

¹See Hilda Madsen Longsdorf, Mount Pleasant, 1859-1939 (Mt. Pleasant: Mt. Pleasant Pioneer Historical Association, 1939).

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- ²Leonard Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp 223-231.
- ³W. H. Lever, History of Sanpete: Emery Counties (Ogden: W. H. Lever, 1898), p. 258-259.
- ⁴Longsdorf, Mt Pleasant, p. 142.
- ⁵Seely biographical information summarized from Lever History of Sanpete: Emery Counties, p. 269, J. Cecil Alter, Utah, the Storied Domain, Vol.III, (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1932), pp. 303-306, and W. H. Olin, "A Noted Stock Breeder in Utah," The Breeder's Gazette, Vol. 91:17 (April 28, 1927), pp 2-3.
- ⁶Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, pp. 86-88.
- ⁷Information on Utah's sheep industry from Everett H. Mecham, "The History of the Sheep Industry in Utah," unpublished thesis, University of Utah, 1925, and Edwin M. G. Seely, "A History of the Rambouillet Breed of Sheep in Utah," unpublished thesis, Utah State Agricultural College, 1956.
- ⁸Mecham, p. 17.