

ONE NO. 1024-0318
EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUN 30 1983
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Pratt, Orson, House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 76 West Tabernacle Street not for publication

city, town St. George vicinity of congressional district

state Utah code 049 county Washington code 053

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: office

4. Owner of Property

name Dr. Mark H. Greene

street & number 702 East South Temple

city, town Salt Lake City vicinity of state Utah

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

street & number

city, town St. George state Utah

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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 Orson Pratt House, built in 1862, is a two-story, gable-roofed house, rectangular in shape with the broad side to the street. The six-bay facade is symmetrical except for the slight misalignment of the central doorway. Its classical appointments and symmetrical design are typical of the vernacular architecture used by the Mormon pioneers during their early years of settlement, roughly 1849-1870s. The house is constructed of adobe brick, the most popular building material of that period, and was probably first stuccoed in the late 1800s in order to protect the soft adobe from the elements and to provide a cleaner, more refined appearance. Chimneys at both gable ends reinforce the symmetrical appearance of the house.

The house was altered by the c. 1930 enclosure of the second-story porch and the creation of arches across the tops of the porch openings. Two of the three doorways on the facade are either additions made about this same time or were built as part of the original house, which was claimed to have been a house/store combination, allowing separate access to living and business areas. The two-story rear addition was probably built on before that time.

Recent rehabilitation and restoration efforts on the house have returned it to much of its pre-alteration appearance. The two-story front porch is a reconstruction of the nineteenth-century porch that was on the house in an early photograph and which, if not original, was a very early addition. A portion of the balustrade was found during the removal of the front porch addition and was used as a pattern for an exact reconstruction of the balusters, top and bottom rails, and newel posts. The brackets are exact replicas of those originally on the porch as shown in the early photograph of the house. The exterior walls were re-finished with a stucco/fiberglass matrix which provides added strength to the structure. Rehabilitation of both the interior and exterior was made in an effort to conform to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and the project is currently under review by the National Park Service for certification. The building will be used as office space upon completion.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates 1862 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Orson Pratt House is significant as the only remaining house in Utah associated with Orson Pratt, one of the most influential and important leaders in the first half-century of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and a noted mathematician, astronomer, scientist, author, public servant and educator. Pratt, as a member of the first Quorum of the Twelve, the governing body of the church under the First Presidency, was involved not only in directing ecclesiastical and settlement activities, but also, as a philosopher and intellectual, made unique contributions to Mormonism by articulating and systemitizing religious philosophies of the church. Self-educated in a wide range of disciplines, he gained international recognition for some of his published mathematical and astronomical theories, and was a leading proponent of education in territorial Utah. He served for thirteen terms in the territorial legislature, eight as Speaker of the House of Representatives. Orson Pratt had this house built in 1862 while helping direct the settlement of St. George and the Cotton Mission, the LDS Church's attempt to establish a cotton industry in the warm southwestern corner of the state. Although he lived here for only about two years, residing in Salt Lake City for most of his years in Utah, none of his other houses remain standing. His home in Nauvoo, Illinois, headquarters of the LDS Church from 1839 to 1846, is still standing.

History

In 1861, Brigham Young, fearing cotton shortages as a result of the Civil War, sent a group of colonizers to the Virgin River area in what is now southwestern Utah to establish a cotton industry in that warm climate. Under the leadership of apostles Orson Pratt, Erastus Snow and George A. Smith, the group established the community of St. George late in 1861. Pratt, though presiding leader of the group, was not gifted as a colonizer, and much of the responsibility for settlement was assumed by Snow and Smith. Orson Pratt first settled upriver from the main settlement, but joined them a few months later in the spring of 1862 when he accepted the office of postmaster there. He built this two-story adobe house soon after, but lived here for only a short time, being called to the territorial capital by his duties as a legislator and later to Great Britain as a missionary. In 1864 he sold the house to Richard Bentley, whose family retained ownership of it for more than a century. This settlement effort in St. George was Orson Pratt's only colonizing attempt. He spent the remainder of his life either in Europe as a missionary or in Salt Lake City. Richard Bentley, a prominent political, civic, and business leader in St. George, operated the first mercantile business in the city out of part of the first floor area of the house from 1864 until 1875.¹ He served in many civic positions including Water Commissioner (1871), City Alderman (1872), County Treasurer, and Mayor for three terms.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Hafen, Arthur Knight, Beneath Vermillion Cliffs, (St. George, Utah : Arthur Knigh Hafen, 1961)
Larron, Andrew Karl, I Was Called to Dixie, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961).
Lyon, Thomas Edgar, "Orson Pratt, Early Mormon Leader," M.A. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1932.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name St. George

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

1	2	2	7	0	4	2	0	4	1	0	9	8	5	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

The South 184 feet of the West $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 3 and the South 184 feet of the East $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 4, Block 25, Plat A, being part of the St. George City Survey.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A		N/A	

state	code	county	code
N/A		N/A	

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger V. Roper, Historian

organization _____ date May 10, 1983

street & number 185 North 300 East telephone (801) 785-1135

city or town Pleasant Grove 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *A. Kent Powell*

title A. Kent Powell, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 6-17-83

For NPS use only

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

ja *Bell Garsvine* date 8/11/83
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

CRS NO. 1021-0010
EXP. 12/31/24

**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

Orson Pratt was born September 19, 1811 in Hartford, New York to Jared and Charity Dickinson Pratt. The fourth of six children, he had little opportunity for education as a youth, but pursued studies on his own and gained proficiency in several subjects, including mathematics, astronomy and physical sciences.

A major turning point in his life occurred on his nineteenth birthday when he was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by his older brother, Parley P. Pratt. For the remaining fifty years of his life, he served the church tirelessly in many positions, continuing faithfully with the organization as it moved from New York, to Ohio, to Missouri, to Illinois, then to Utah. Soon after his conversion he began proselyting as a missionary, and in 1835 he was chosen as a member of the first Quorum of the Twelve of the church, which had been organized in 1830. (His brother Parley was also chosen as a member of that body.) The Quorum operated under the direction of the prophet and president of the church, and its members were called to help direct the preaching and administrative affairs of the church. Their responsibilities usually included serving proselyting missions that often lasted for two or three years. Orson Pratt was sent to Scotland on such a mission soon after his appointment to the Quorum, and, in all, he crossed the Atlantic Ocean sixteen times in response to the call to serve. His success as a missionary in the British Isles was phenomenal, bringing thousands into the church through the power of both his speech and his writing, having authored and published many pamphlets and written for and edited the Millennial Star, the LDS Church publication in Great Britain.

While serving in his church positions he found time to pursue his educational interests as well. He discovered a law governing planet rotation in 1850, published Pratt's Cubic and Bi-Quadratic Equations in 1866 in England, and later published an astronomical work, Key to the Universe. Although such discoveries and publications gained him some international attention at the time they were brought forth, he never attained international prominence as a mathematician and astronomer, primarily because, due to lack of time and proper facilities, he did not empirically prove his theories.² Pratt's abilities, however, were remarkable enough to prompt Richard Anthony Proctor of the Royal Astronomical Society to pronounce him to be "one of only four real mathematicians in the world."³

His keen perception and gift of expression enabled him to expand and combine the doctrines and principles introduced somewhat randomly by Joseph Smith, founder and first prophet of the LDS Church, into a philosophic system of the Mormon religion.⁴ He would often combine his own scientific knowledge with Biblical and Mormon scripture to create a philosophy which reinforced both. He was chosen by Brigham Young in 1870 to represent the church in the celebrated three-day debate on polygamy with Dr. John P. Newman, an eloquent Methodist minister. Although the debate was officially ruled a draw, most newspapers around the country conceded Pratt the victor.

Orson Pratt is also credited for devising the symbols of the Deseret Alphabet, a phonetic alphabet which church leaders viewed as a major breakthrough in

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

aiding thousands of Mormon converts from foreign countries to easily learn English. He transcribed and published the Book of Mormon in the Deseret Alphabet in 1869, but the new alphabet never gained widespread acceptance. In 1877 he arranged the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon, canonized Mormon scriptures, into paragraphs with footnotes and references, a format which remained virtually unchanged for over one hundred years. He also served as Church Historian from 1874 until his death in 1881.

Although his main interests were in preaching the gospel and engaging in educational pursuits, Orson Pratt was also involved in the initial settlement of the church in Utah. As a member of the vanguard company of Mormon pioneers who led the trek across the plains to Utah in 1847, he and Erastus Snow were sent ahead as scouts when the party neared the Salt Lake Valley. Alternating walking on foot and riding the single horse that they shared, Pratt and Snow were the first two men of the Mormon group to enter and explore the valley. On August 2, 1847, Orson ran the official survey of Salt Lake City, ascertaining the altitude of the valley and determining its longitude and latitude at the same time.

Education and learning were extremely important to Orson Pratt, perhaps second only to preaching the gospel, and "he dreamed of establishing a great educational system among the Saints, where the more cultured things of life could be taught."⁵ He never realized that dream, however, due to the lack of interest by the people, who had little time for anything but providing a living for themselves in the desert wilderness, and due to the unsupportive and even opposing attitude of practical-minded Brigham Young. Pratt served for a time as an instructor and regent at the University of Deseret, and was well known in the Salt Lake area for his series of twelve lectures on astronomy, which stirred great interest in the subject. In 1869 an observatory was constructed for him at the southeast corner of Temple Square from where he made astronomical observations, the most noted of which were his detailed observations of the lunar cycle in 1878, which were depicted in fifty granite moonstones inserted in the temple walls as part of its symbolic decoration. (The observatory was razed in 1909.)

His political activities included serving in the territorial legislature for thirteen terms, eight as Speaker of the House of Representatives. While in that position, he was instrumental in securing passage of the act giving women in Utah the right to vote in 1870; Utah was the second state or territory in the Union to grant that right. He also served for a time on the Salt Lake City Council.

Orson Pratt died in 1881 at his home in Salt Lake City, survived by his several wives and forty-five children. His eulogy included all the expected praise and respect for one of his abilities and position, but, unlike any of his fellow luminaries in the church, he stood alone as a philosopher and intellectual.

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 3

Item number

8

Page

4

Notes

¹Arthur Knight Hafen, Beneath Vermillion Cliffs, (St. George, Utah: Arthur Knight Hafen, 1967), p. 8; also, an untitled, unpublished pamphlet on the Richard Bentley Home in St. George, made available through the current owner, Dr. Mark H. Greene.

²Thomas Edgar Lyon, "Orson Pratt, Early Mormon Leader," MA dissertation, Department of Church History, University of Chicago, 1932, p. 95-96.

³Ibid., p. 97.

⁴Ibid., p. 99.

⁵Ibid., p. 69.