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NPS Form 10-900
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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places 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 BLUFF HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Main, U.S.191, 2nd E. St., and the bluffs N/A not for publication

city or town Bluff N/A vicinity

state Utah code UT county San Juan code 037 zip code 84512-

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___nationally ___statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date 9/30/95

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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

for Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

✓ entered in the National Register. — Barbara Wyatt — 11/2/95
___ 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:)

Bluff Historic District
Name of Property

Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
City, County, and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
11	30	buildings
6		sites
		structures
		objects
17	30	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

5

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/village site
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
FUNERARY/cemetery
LANDSCAPE/natural feature
SOCIAL

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/village site
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
FUNERARY/cemetery
LANDSCAPE/natural feature

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN
Other: hall-parlor
Other: double cell

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation sandstone, concrete
walls sandstone, stucco, brick, WOOD
aluminum
roof asphalt, WOOD: shingle
other

Narrative Description

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

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

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Narrative Description

Overview

The Bluff Historic District encompasses most of the original 1880 townsite of Bluff City, cemetery hill, and the 300-foot sandstone bluffs directly north of town which include natural features that have cultural significance. There are 42 buildings in the district spread over a dozen or so blocks. The contributing buildings range from 1880 to the mid-1940s, the majority having been built between about 1890 and 1905. Although just under half of the buildings are contributing, the integrity of the district is bolstered by the prominent locations and dominant scale of many of the historic buildings, the presence of a variety of historic landscape elements, and the community's distinct setting. Overall, the Bluff Historic District retains its historic character.

Setting

Bluff is an isolated small town located in the narrow San Juan River Valley in the extreme southeastern corner of Utah. It is an oasis in a stark desert setting. The town is laid out in a rectangular grid of a dozen or so blocks with its length running east and west. U.S. Highway 191 passes through town and defines the eastern and southern boundaries of the district. The town is bounded by the San Juan River to the south, a few miles of arable farmland to the east, hundreds of miles of uninhabitable desert terrain to the west, and 300-foot sandstone bluffs to the north. These bluffs, which were inspiration for the town's name, are a dominant visual element that serve as a dramatic backdrop to the community.

Buildings

There are 52 principal properties in the Bluff Historic District, 46 of which are buildings. (The other six include the cemetery and five natural features which are discussed in another section.) Of the 46 buildings, 16 are contributing and 30 non-contributing. A majority of the contributing buildings (10) are Victorian eclectic or vernacular sandstone houses built between about 1890 and 1905. Most of them occupy prominent corner locations, and several are substantial, two-story houses. (Five of the largest houses were individually listed in the National Register in the early 1980s.) Other materials, besides sandstone, found on contributing buildings include log, stucco, wood shingles, and horizontal wood siding. Some of the contributing buildings have associated historic outbuildings, though most have non-historic auxiliary structures. All but one of the contributing buildings are houses or residential outbuildings; the sole exception is the old LDS Tithing House/Powell Trading Post. In later years, some of the houses have been converted to non-residential purposes. The town's principal, historic commercial and institutional buildings were demolished over the years, including the school, church, and co-op store.

X See continuation sheet

Within the past 10 years, a number of homes have been rehabilitated, some after decades of abandonment. A few historic houses are still vacant or deteriorated, including the Barton Cabin, the Frederick Adams House, and the Kumen Jones House. The Jones House burned in the 1970s and is now primarily a ruin. It still remains, however, as a distinctive historic structure in the town and as a contributing element in the historic district.

Most of the non-contributing buildings in the district (26 of 30) are out-of-period structures built in the 1950s-1990s. Only four buildings from the historic period are non-contributing because of alterations. Most of the non-contributing buildings are houses, including a number of mobile homes. Though the non-contributing buildings outnumber the contributing buildings, they do not dominate the character of the district. This is in part because they are on less prominent sites--mid-block or fringe locations--and they tend to be smaller in scale than the contributing buildings.

Other Contributing Features in the District

The district's visual character is defined by more than its buildings. Other features include the original grid of large square blocks with historic houses on the corners, vacant lots, fence lines, trees, undeveloped roadsides (no sidewalks or curb and gutter), cemetery hill, the wall of bluffs directly north of town, and the apron of natural landscape that sets off the town from the bluffs. All of these features--developed, undeveloped, and natural--combine to create a distinct sense of place, a place whose past is still readily apparent.

The cemetery is located on a prominent hill directly north of town, between the town grid and the bluffs. It contains graves from the 1880s to the present, including 126 from the historic period. The graves are arranged in rows and most are outlined with cobblestones. Some family plots are demarcated with metal or wire fencing or low stone walls. The cemetery is otherwise unlandscaped. Though cemeteries are not usually considered eligible for listing in the National Register, this cemetery has a number of grave markers that have significant artistic and cultural merit, and the site itself, with its winding drive and panoramic view, reflects the ideals of picturesque rural cemeteries of the period.[1]

The bluffs not only serve as a visual backdrop and boundary of the town, but also include features of historic or cultural significance. The bluffs themselves are a contributing element, as well as three distinct features. These include the natural sandstone formations of Locomotive Rock and Twin Rocks (Navajo Twins), which anchor the western and eastern ends, respectively, of the segment of bluffs included in the district. Locomotive Rock is shaped like a steam locomotive, and Twin Rocks is a paired, upright formation that symbolizes the Navajo Twins of the Navajo creation tradition. Both have been prominent and recognized landmarks in the community since the nineteenth century (the exact

[1]Elisabeth Walton Potter and Beth Boland, "National Register Bulletin 41: Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places" (National Park Service, 1992), pp. 4-6.

X See continuation sheet

date of their identification and naming is unknown). Another natural feature is the Bluff Ballroom, a large alcove or cave in the bluffs that has been used by Bluff residents since the late 1800s for dances and other informal social gatherings. The names of many former residents are carved in the sandstone walls of the Ballroom.[2]

The bluffs also form Cow Canyon and Calf Canyon, which were used historically in the local livestock industry. These box canyons served as natural corrals to keep the cows separate from the calves at roundup time. Calf Canyon has remained in its natural state, while Cow Canyon has been substantially altered by the placement of U.S. Highway 191 down its entire length. The entrance of Calf Canyon is included in the district. Cow Canyon is excluded from the district, except for the bluffs along its lower western edge which include the Ballroom. In summary, specific sites that contribute to the significance of the district include the cemetery, the bluffs, Calf Canyon, Locomotive Rock, the Navajo Twin Rocks, and The Ballroom.

Archaeological Resources

Though archaeological sites abound in the area, they are not being dealt with at this time. An archaeological context will be developed in the future. A cultural landscape study that would include surrounding farmland and outlying sites related to the livestock industry may also be undertaken in the future.

___ See continuation sheet

[2]Dimensions of the Ballroom are 20.6 meters wide at the mouth, 23.7 meters deep, and 12 meters high at the mouth, tapering down gradually toward the rear. The cave has white sand on the floor and a natural spring at the back.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" on one or more lines for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- X **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- X **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X **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" on all 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.
- X **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.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE
ARCHITECTURE
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
RELIGION

Period of Significance

1880 - c.1945

Significant Dates

1880 (date of settlement)
1886 (start of livestock industry)

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Nielson, Jens; Redd, Lemuel H., Jr.;
Decker, James B.; Scorup, John Albert

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

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

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

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
- X 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- ___ Other State agency
- ___ Federal agency
- ___ Local government
- ___ University
- ___ Other

Name of repository:

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Bluff Historic District is historically significant for its key role in the settlement of San Juan County and southeastern Utah. More specifically, it represents a significant achievement by Mormon pioneers to claim the region for themselves and their church. The success of the Bluff settlement led to the establishment of other towns in the region and ensured Mormon dominance in this corner of Utah. Gaining a foothold in this area was part of the overall plan of Mormon settlement that spawned over 500 communities during the last half of the nineteenth century. Maintaining that presence in this inhospitable region was almost too much for the Bluff settlers. The permanence of the town was assured only after years of extreme hardship and disappointment and after the strategic shift of the local economy from farming to livestock raising. Key to the eventual success of the town was the commitment of the Mormon settlers to the religious purposes behind the venture and their willingness to work together, a characteristic of Mormon settlements in general. The period of significance of the Bluff Historic District extends from the establishment of the town in 1880 to the mid-1940s, though the most important phase was the livestock boom period of 1886 to about 1905. Most of the contributing buildings in the district were constructed during that twenty-year period. Many of these buildings are substantial Victorian eclectic style houses built of local sandstone. Several have been individually listed in the National Register because of their architectural significance or their association with important local figures. The Bluff Historic District encompasses not only those "landmark" buildings but also buildings of lesser individual significance and other structures and elements that together convey the historic character of this important community.

Overview of Mormon Colonization

Bluff City was established in 1880 by a group of Mormon pioneers called to colonize the San Juan River area of southeastern Utah. It was settled during one of the most active phases of Mormon colonization. The Mormons arrived in the Utah territory in 1847 and claimed it as their Zion, where they would build the Kingdom of God on earth. Under the direction of church president Brigham Young they immediately set to the task of systematically colonizing the region. By the turn of the century they had founded over 500 agrarian communities, most in Utah and surrounding states, but some in Canada and Mexico as well. Bluff was one of over 120 settlements established between 1876 and 1879. Only the initial phase of Mormon settlement, from 1847-57, was more significant. The colonizing movement of the late 1870s was largely in response to overpopulation. The land and water in the settled regions were all claimed by that point. Other areas had to be searched out and settled to accommodate both the natural growth within the territory and the continual flow of Mormon converts "gathering to Zion." At least 100 of the settlements established between 1876 and 1879 were outside

x See continuation sheet

Utah; the other 20 or so, including Bluff, were established in the more difficult or marginal regions of Utah.[3]

The pattern of colonization for these new settlements was virtually the same as for the Mormon towns established in the 1850s and '60s: settlers were "called" on these colonizing missions by church leaders; settlements consisted of nucleated villages surrounded by farm land; cooperative labor was used to develop irrigation systems; town lots and farm land were distributed by drawing; and tithing from church headquarters was sometimes used to subsidize some of the new settlements until they could get on their feet.[4]

The San Juan Mission was charged with the additional duty of claiming a new area in the face of incursions by "outsiders." Most Mormon settlements were established in areas uninhabited by other Europeans. The San Juan region, located in the extreme southeastern corner of Utah, was a remote edge of Mormon country. Cattlemen and other "outsiders" were beginning to move into that borderland from New Mexico and Colorado. Mormon church leaders were concerned that any foothold by outsiders in what they considered their own territory would result in friction and loss of autonomy.[5] A strong Mormon presence was needed to secure that corner of the territory.

In addition to the cattlemen, a substantial population of Native Americans, both Ute and Navajo, resided in the San Juan region at the time of the Bluff settlement. Coexisting with them represented another challenge to the Bluff pioneers.

"The Trek" and the Founding of Bluff City, 1879-80

In early April 1880, a weary group of Mormon settlers arrived at what would be the site of Bluff City along the San Juan River in southeastern Utah. The party consisted of approximately 230 men, women, and children. The site, though promising, was not their intended destination, but the challenge of trudging fifteen more miles upstream was too much for the exhausted party. They had just completed an arduous 180-mile, five-month winter trek through the extremely rugged and uncharted slick-rock country of southeastern Utah. This course had seemed to be the most direct route from the Mormon settlements they had left in southwestern Utah. It proved otherwise, however, setting them back three

[3]Leonard Arrington, "Great Basin Kingdom," pp. 88, 354. See also Eugene E. Campbell, "Early Colonization Patterns," in Richard D. Poll, et al, editors, Utah's History, pp. 133-134.

[4]Arrington, p. 354.

[5]Some histories of Bluff have claimed that additional reasons for the settlement of the town included dispersing the growing outlaw population in the area and pacifying and even proselytizing the substantial Indian population. Historian Michael Hurst refutes these claims, noting that neither the original settlers nor documents contemporary with the settlement mention those as purposes for the settlement. See Michael Hurst, "Bluff City, Utah: An Historical Sketch" (unpublished manuscript, 1976). Available at Utah State Historical Society Library.

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months and testing their endurance and dedication to the limits. This route became known as the Hole in the Rock Trail. It was named after one of the most difficult segments, a steep, narrow chute that had to be dynamited and improved to accommodate their wagons. (The Hole in the Rock Trail was listed in the National Register in 1981.)[6]

The perseverance shown by the San Juan pioneers in completing the difficult trek set the tone for the entire settlement effort, as historian Michael Hurst has noted.

> For whatever reasons they decided to plunge directly toward their destination--instead of following roads broken by the exploration company--that decision, and its attendant ordeal, became the foundation for the heritage of Bluff, for it led directly to Hole in the Rock. The Hole in the Rock trek became the great gestation for the Mormon colony on the San Juan; it provided the suffering and endurance which united the settlers in an uncommon bond of togetherness, and being so great a price, it became justification in itself for the colony's existence. While the details are best told elsewhere, the ordeal of making roads where there were--and are--none, through the hole, up Cottonwood Hill, the slick rocks, Clay Hill, and San Juan Hill, exacted such a toll from the travelers that by the final week some were making less than one mile per day. Bluff City would never have been what it was--if it had lasted at all-if it had not been born amid such anguished labor pains.[7]

Settlement and Early Agricultural Efforts, 1880-1885

Though the ordeal of the trek was behind them, the Bluff settlers faced another set of hardships in their new home. They soon learned that there was less land than they had thought, forcing them to divide the surrounding farmland into smaller allocations. Plus the area was simply not easily adapted to farming. Marginal soil, floods, dam breaks, extreme heat, and Indian trouble conspired against their every effort. Many left the settlement that first year, discouraged and destitute. Those who remained pleaded with church leaders to allow them to abandon the town. They were advised to remain.

The settlers initially lived in hastily built brush huts or their wagon boxes. In September 1880, buoyed by a visit from church leaders from Salt Lake City, they built a fort of cottonwood logs and dirt-roofed log cabins on the inside of the fort. (The Barton Cabin is the only remnant of these first houses.) Most continued to live in the fort until 1883, when they started moving out onto their town lots. Most of their efforts went into developing an irrigation system and the surrounding farmland. In August 1880 the ditch washed out, leaving the crops to dry up. This would be a regular occurrence in the

[6]A full account of the Hole-in-the-Rock trek can be found in David E. Miller, Hole-In-The-Rock: An Epic in the Colonization of the Great American West (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1959).

[7]Hurst, p.8.

x See continuation sheet

community. Ditches and dams continually required rebuilding or improvement. To supplement their meager yields from farming, many of the men went to Colorado to work in the mines.

Bluff's isolation, harsh terrain and climate added to the settlers' discomfort and hardships, as an unnamed pioneer recalled:

> Our tents and cabins were clustered together in an open flat. It seemed to me that the glistening sun would burn my eyes out; I was half blinded from always seeing it, the barren cliffs seemed little less than prison walls.

Another pioneer, Adelia Lyman, made a similar observation:

> With the spring the sandstorms came, whistling winds from the southwest, loaded with blinding sand which beat its way into every crack and crevice of the old log huts, making everything gritty. When the storm was over and the sun shone down on the white sand it was blinding to go and look at it and it was dismal to look at the stern grey cliffs with their barren walls.[8]

The settlers felt trapped in a miserable situation but felt duty-bound to stick it out. The bluffs, the most dominant feature in the area, seemed to symbolize these feelings of discouragement and imprisonment.

The year 1884 proved conclusively that farming was doomed to failure along the San Juan. In March and April floodwaters up to nine feet higher than normal ruined the ditch, covered the farmland with two feet of mud, washed away several homes, and filled the remainder with silt. The long awaited honorable release from their colonizing mission came from church headquarters, but it also included an appeal for all who could to stay on and build up the place. "[Y]ou have struggled for four years and you shall be blessed if you go away, but those of you who stay will be blessed even more abundantly."[9] Many stayed as a result. But a major change was in store for the embattled community. A new religious leader had been appointed to them. Francis A. Hammond arrived in Bluff in December 1885 as their new stake president. (A stake is an ecclesiastical unit comprising several wards or congregations.) He brought with him his large family, 500 head of cattle, and a plan to develop a local livestock industry.

[8]Both quoted in Hurst, p. 4.

[9]Quoted in Hurst, p. 17.

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The Livestock Industry, 1886-1905

Livestock raising emerged as the dominant industry in San Juan County in the 1880s. Between 1880 and 1890 the number of cattle per capita rose from 1.7 to 47.[10] Bluff's transition to a livestock economy ensured the success of both the town and the San Juan Mission as a whole. The San Juan region of southeastern Utah would become Mormon country. Historian Charles Peterson makes the following observation:

> That the Mormons did not withdraw entirely (from the San Juan) was due in large measure to a shift in emphasis from the farm village to cooperative livestock production and to the person of Francis A. Hammond, who, as new president of the San Juan Stake, was instrumental in putting together a policy implementing this shift. The Mormons took the offensive after 1885, mounting a program that led to a confrontation which was in many ways like the characteristic competition of squatter and cattle baron. In other ways it was the meeting of the two livestock frontiers--Mormon co-op herd on the one hand, and the big cow outfit of the general frontier on the other."[11]

Hammond's "program" of shifting to a livestock-based economy hinged on several critical points. Foremost was cooperation. The Bluff settlers formed the "Bluff Pool," a cooperative livestock venture that enabled them to compete with the large cattle outfits from Colorado, Texas, and New Mexico. These outfits already had large herds in the Bluff area. The Bluff Pool brought in livestock from Mormon settlements to the north, claimed rangeland wherever they could, including making arrangements with local Indians, established towns at prime locations (even in the face of prior claims to the land and water), used legal and political means to further their purposes, and simply bought out some of their competition. Their persistence and aggressive tactics earned them the name the "Bluff Tigers."[12] After years of tense competition, the Mormon livestock interests won out. The Bluff Pool was dissolved in 1897, having accomplished its purpose. Thereafter the Bluff livestockmen operated on an individualistic basis. Historian Charles Peterson sums up Bluff's transition from farming to livestock raising:

> In following the farm village pattern, they had gone at things wrong just as surely as they had taken the wrong trail to San Juan in 1879-80. But they made the shift to cattle and later sheep, met the competition on the ranges, and survived.[13]

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[10]Don D. Walter, "The Cattle Industry of Utah, 1850-1900: An Historical Profile," Utah Historical Quarterly, XXXII (Summer 1964), p. 190.

[11]Peterson, Look to the Mountains, p. 92.

[12]Ibid., p. 96.

[13]Ibid., pp. 99-100.

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The affluence of the livestock boom period of 1886-1905 sparked the rebuilding of Bluff into the town it has remained throughout the twentieth century. Rough, log cabins were replaced by substantial sandstone houses, some quite large and elegant, even by the standards of larger cities in the state. The Redd, Scorup, and Decker houses are good examples. Other notable stone buildings were erected, including the school, church, and co-op store (none of these buildings remain standing). Stone was readily available from the bluffs north of town, and local stonemasons did much of the work. Nick Lovice and Ed Thompson, who came to the area with the oil boom in 1892, are credited with much of the stonework. Finished woodwork and other building materials were shipped in from Durango, Colorado, and construction lumber was provided by the Butt brother's sawmill on the south slope of the Blue or Abajo Mountains. Willard Butt's Second Empire style house is one of the few frame houses in town from this period. Farming had continued during the livestock period, though on a reduced basis. Fruit growing emerged as an important local industry as well. Shade trees, gardens, orchards, and fields complemented the new stone buildings, giving the town a prosperous look during these years.

Included among the homes still standing in Bluff are those of four men who made significant contributions to the community and the cattle industry upon which the town's economy was based. These men were Jens Nielson, Lemuel H. Redd, Jr., James B. Decker, and John Albert Scorup. (Their homes were listed individually in the National Register in 1982-83.) Jens Nielson served as Mormon bishop of the Bluff Ward from 1880 until his death in 1906. His duties and influence extended well beyond the church walls, including virtually every facet of community life. Historian Charles Peterson credits Nielson's leadership and character as key to the town's survival in the early years.[14] Lemuel Redd was also an important local leader in the Mormon church and a key figure in the livestock industry, including helping found and operate the "Bluff Pool." Redd was also prominent in politics, serving as county assessor, tax collector, county commissioner, superintendent of San Juan County Schools, member of the State Constitutional Convention, and as a member of the State Legislature. "Al" Scorup and James Decker were prominent cattlemen, serving as important members of the Bluff Pool. Decker also served on the school board and was the county's first sheriff. Scorup's rise from poor working cowboy to the owner of Utah's largest cattle outfit is legendary. His success in livestock led him into banking, where he served as president a vice-president of banks in Moab and Salina, respectively.

Stability, Transition, and Decline, c.1905-1945

After Bluff's livestock-based economy peaked around 1905, the town settled into a more relaxed mode. Many residents moved 25 miles north to the new town of Grayson (later renamed Blanding), where water sources were more reliable. Both Blanding and Monticello, the county seat, had been established on the heels of Bluff's success, and, being better situated for cattle raising, they quickly outgrew and overshadowed Bluff. The town served as the outfitting headquarters for a series of important exploring expeditions into the canyon country in the 1890s and early 1900s. These included

[14]Ibid., p. 51.

the expeditions of W.B. Douglas and Byron Cummings, which identified Rainbow Bridge and other natural bridges in the area. Bluff also served as headquarters of two short-lived mineral booms, the San Juan River gold rush of the early 1890s and the Mexican Hat oil boom of the early 1900s. None of these ventures had any lasting impact on the community.

Livestock raising and farming continued to be the principal occupations of Bluff residents. A 1912-13 state gazetteer lists the town with a population of 250, a church, post office, school, and several small business. By 1920-21 the population had dwindled to 175, and by 1927-28 no businesses were listed in the town, though the post office was still functioning.[15] A number of the sandstone houses were being abandoned at this time, a condition in which some of them would remain for decades. A few residents were able to sustain themselves with work other than farming and livestock. June Powell, for example opened a trading post in the old tithing house in 1944, exchanging rugs, sheep, wool, jewelry and so forth with the local Navajos. This building, which still stands, is the only remaining trading post of its era.

Despite declines in population and economic vitality, the town progressed in other ways. As early as 1912, Bluff was connected to the outside world by telephone and by a daily stage to the towns of Blanding and Monticello to the north.[16] Artesian wells drilled in 1908 furnished Bluff with its first reliable source of water and provided enough pressure for the water to be piped into the homes.[17] By the early decades of the twentieth century, Bluff, with its gardens, shade trees, stone houses, and community life, had become the successful town the original settlers had envisioned and the idyllic rural haven subsequent generations would remember with nostalgia.

1940s to the Present

Since the 1940s, Bluff has experienced a number of changes. Oil and uranium booms in the 1950s and '60s brought new people and some new construction. Improved roads accommodated a growing tourism industry. Today successful farms border the town on the east, and livestock raising continues, though at a level much diminished from its historical peak. Today (1995) tourism has become a driving force in the local economy. The region's national parks, wild canyons, prehistoric sites, river running, and mountain biking have attracted tourists in unprecedented numbers. An 1884 state gazetteer was remarkably prescient in describing the region's attractions for today's visitors.

> If wild and romantic scenery were a desirable condition, no place in the world could excel San Juan County; and for those interested in the history of the

[15]Gazetteers of Utah, 1884, 1900, 1912-13, 1920-21, 1927-28. Available at Utah State Historical Society.

[16]Gazetteer of Utah, 1912-13, p.54.

[17]Cornealia Adams Perkins et al, Saga of San Juan, p. 84.

x See continuation sheet

aborigines, few places offer such temptations as the cliffs overhanging the old bed of the Colorado River.[18]

The strong local economy has stimulated rehabilitation work on many of the older houses. The Scorup, Butt, and Nielson houses are good examples. It has also led to the construction of newer houses, including mobile homes, and the development of new businesses. Though these new structures do not contribute to the historic character of the district, they do not overwhelm it either. The town still reflects its past, a past significant well beyond the confines of the enclosing sandstone bluffs.

___ See continuation sheet

[18]Robert W. Sloan, editor and compiler, Utah Gazetteer and Directory, 1884, p. 184. Available at Utah State Historical Society Library.

Bibliography

Arrington, Leonard J. Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-Day Saints, 1830-1900. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1958.

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Peterson, Charles S. Look to the Mountains: Southeastern Utah and the La Sal National Forest. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975.

Poll, Richard D., editor. Utah's History. Reprint. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1989.

Westfall, Deborah A. "A Preliminary Assessment of Rural Historic Landscape Qualities in the Calf Canyon Locality, Bluff, San Juan County, Utah." Unpublished report prepared for the Bluff Historic Preservation Association, Division of State Lands and Forestry, and Division of State History, April 1992.

___ See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approx. 225 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	1/2	6/2/8/0/0/0	4/1/2/7/9/4/0	2	1/2	6/2/9/3/2/0	4/1/2/7/9/7/0
3	12	6/2/8/6/6/0	4/1/2/7/1/0/0	4	1/2	6/2/8/1/1/0	4/1/2/7/0/5/0
5	1/2	6/2/7/7/7/0	4/1/2/7/5/5/0	6	/	/ / / / /	/ / / / / /

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

X See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger Roper/Historic Preservation Coordinator (also Deborah Westfall and others)
organization Utah SHPO (also Bluff Historic Preservation Association) date May 1995
street & number 300 Rio Grande telephone (801) 533-3561
city or town Salt Lake City state UT zip code 84101-

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/or 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 multiple
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Bluff Historic District is shown on the accompanying USGS map and the more detailed Bluff Historic District Map. The following description further clarifies the boundary.

Beginning at the northeast corner of the intersection of Main Street (U.S. Highway 191) and 4th East Street, proceed east along the north side of the road, following it as it bends northeasterly, to the intersection of the highway with Navajo Twins Drive. Then proceed westerly along the south side of Navajo Twins Drive approximately 500 feet. Then proceed north approximately 900 feet, passing just to the east of the Navajo Twin Rocks, a natural formation. Then proceed east approximately 1300 feet to a point on the northern/western boundary of the Highway 191 right-of-way which is also the southern point of the mouth of the draw where "The Ballroom" is located. Then proceed northeasterly along the highway right-of-way line approximately 400 feet to the northern point of the mouth of the draw where "The Ballroom" is located. Then proceed north approximately 600 feet to the northern boundary line of the San Juan Service Area #1 (Bluff), which line is also the northern boundary of the south one-half of the southwest one-quarter of Section 19, Township 40 South, Range 22 East, Salt Lake Base and Meridian. Proceed west along this quarter-quarter section line approximately 4300 feet to a point intersected by the north/south-running UTM "easting" line 62800, which point is at the western base of the bluffs. Then proceed in a southwesterly direction approximately 1500 feet, passing to the west of Locomotive Rock, to a point that intersects the section line. Then proceed south approximately 600 feet to the western-most extension of Cemetery Road. Proceed along the southern boundary of Cemetery Road, following it east as it becomes Mulberry Avenue approximately 300 feet. Then proceed south behind the Decker House approximately 500 feet to the south side of Black Locust Avenue (if extended to the west beyond 3rd East Street). Then proceed east approximately 750 feet to the southeast corner of the intersection of Black Locust Avenue and 4th East Street. Then proceed south approximately 500 feet to the beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the remaining historic buildings and structures in Bluff as well as surrounding natural features that have cultural significance. Irregularities in the boundary, specifically along the western and eastern sides, reflect the attempt to exclude non-historic buildings on the edges of the district. More non-historic buildings could possibly have been excluded from the district by using more radical zigzagging, but the result would have been a much more confusing district boundary and the loss of some non-building features that contribute to the overall historic character of the town, such as fences and open spaces (fields, vacant lots, etc.).

The inclusion of the bluffs north of town, as justified in sections 7 & 8, raised the question of how much of the bluffs to include. The existing boundary of the town's special service area provided a well-defined line that seemed reasonable for the resources, allowing more than just the vertical face of the bluffs to be included and incorporating a reasonable section of Calf Canyon to also be included. Extending the northern boundary to include all of Calf Canyon and all of the sandstone bluffs seemed excessive.

The jog in the eastern boundary is probably the most controversial. After following Highway 191 for a ways, the boundary cuts back to the west then proceeds north several hundred feet before jogging back to the east and rejoining the highway. The purpose in this jog was to keep in the district the very prominent and historic Navajo Twin Rocks and Ballroom while excluding non-historic structures in this area. These include new buildings on the north side of Navajo Twins Drive and along the west side of Highway 191 and Highway 191 itself, an overwhelmingly dominant non-contributing structure in the otherwise historic Cow Canyon. The boundary could perhaps have been drawn to follow the contour of the bluffs, thereby excluding the buildings and highway, but the squared-off boundary that was chosen had gained local approval and did not compromise the district, so it was retained.

NTENAH Bond

All photos were taken by Roger Roper, and negatives are on file at the Utah SHPO.

Photo No. 1:
1. Burroughs mobile home (#13) and Lemuel H. Redd, Jr., House
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Sept. 1994
6. Camera facing southwest.

Photo No. 2:
1. Johnson mobile homes (#4) and John and Jane Allan House
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Sept. 1994
6. Camera facing southwest.

Photo No. 3:
1. Overview of Bluff City from Cemetery Hill
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Sept. 1994
6. Camera facing southeast

Photo No. 4:
1. Garden plot of Hall House and Richmond House (#18)
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Sept. 1994
6. Camera facing northeast

Photo No. 5:
1. Bluff Pioneer Cemetery and Locomotive Rock
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Sept. 1994
6. Camera facing northwest

Photo No. 6:
1. Butt and Lyman Houses on Mulberry Avenue
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Feb. 1995
6. Camera facing east

X See Continuation Sheet

Photo No. 7:
1. Willard Butt House on Mulberry Avenue
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Feb. 1995
6. Camera facing west/southwest

Photo No. 8:
1. Albert Scorup House on 7th East Street
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Feb. 1995
6. Camera facing east

Photo No. 9:
1. Jens Nielson House on Black Locust Avenue
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Feb. 1995
6. Camera facing northeast

Photo No. 10:
1. Kumen Jones House Ruin and Barton Cabin on 5th East Street
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Feb. 1995
6. Camera facing northeast

Photo No. 11:
1. Overview of Bluff City from Main Street (U.S. Highway 191)
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Feb. 1995
6. Camera facing northeast

Photo No. 12:
1. Navajo Twin Rocks and Twin Rocks Trading Post
   (trading post is outside district)
   Bluff Historic District
2. Bluff, San Juan County, Utah
4. Date: Feb. 1995
6. Camera facing west

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 95001273 Date Listed: 11/2/95

Bluff Historic District
Property Name

San Juan — UT
County — State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action 11/2/95

==========

Amended Items in Nomination:

Classification: Under Ownership of Property, "Public-Federal" is removed.

Statement of Significance: Under Criteria Considerations, "A" is checked because Religion is an area of significance.

This information was confirmed with Roger Roper of the Utah State Historic Preservation Office.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Bluff Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: UTAH, San Juan

DATE RECEIVED: 10/05/95 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/17/95
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/02/95 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/19/95
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 95001273

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	Y	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ ACCEPT ___ RETURN ___ REJECT _____ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Bluff Historic District is significant for its association with the Mormon settlement of Southeast Utah in the 1870s & 1880s. While established as a farm village, it later thrived as a center of livestock production.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept/a, B+C

REVIEWER Antoinette Lee DISCIPLINE History

TELEPHONE (202) 343-9520 DATE 11/2/95

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



#1

Bluff Historic District

^ 0004 11+05 NNNNNN-11AU 052

Molsike house & Redd House
Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo #1



Kodak • PAPER • PROFESSIONAL

Kodak • PAPER • PROFESSIONAL

25Q JUBO 1+80S MMMM-1+80U 85Z

Website Home & Allan House
Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo #2



Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo #3

Kodak • PAPER • PROFESSIONAL
Kodak • PAPER • PROFESSIONAL
Kodak • PAPER • PROFESSIONAL
Kodak • PAPER • PROFESSIONAL

052 GHDU-20NNMN 2GD2 11+GD2 NMNMN-2GHDU 052



Richmond House (#18)
Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo #4

Kodak PAPER PROFESSIONAL PAPER



Cemetery & Locomotive Rock
Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo #5



Butt and Lyman Houses
Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo #6



Butt House
Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo # 7

ISO CHT-MMM-1402 1+05 ^ 4/94



Scorup House
Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo #8



Jens Nielson House
Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo #9



Jones House Ruin & Barton Cabin
Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo # 10



Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo #11

ISO CMS-NNNN-03PU 051
>051 11+00 NNNN-03PU 051<



Navajo Twin Rocks &
Twin Rocks Trading Post
Bluff Historic District
Bluff, San Juan County, UT
Photo #12

Kodak • PAPER • PROFESSIONAL
>015_13+00 NNNNN+0000 032

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BLUFF QUADRANGLE
UTAH-SAN JUAN CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

109° 37′ 30″ — 37° 22′ 30″ — 109° 30′ — 37° 15′

PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

CONTROL BY	USGS, NOS/NOAA
COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN	1959
FIELD CHECKED	1962
LIMITED REVISION FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN	1985
FIELD CHECKED	1986. MAP EDITED 1989
PROJECTION	TRANSVERSE MERCATOR
GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR	ZONE 12
10,000 FOOT STATE GRID TICKS	UTAH, SOUTH ZONE
UTM GRID DECLINATION	0°52′ EAST
1989 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION	12°30′ EAST
VERTICAL DATUM	NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
HORIZONTAL DATUM	1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM

To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983, move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks (3 meters north and 60 meters east)

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of any Federal and State Reservations shown on this map

Where omitted, land lines have not been established

Public Land Survey System is shown as published in 1962 and verified or supplemented in 1986

PROVISIONAL MAP
Produced from original manuscript drawings. Information shown as of date of field check.

NORTH

SCALE 1:24 000

1 .5 0 KILOMETERS 1 2
1000 0 METERS 1000 2000
1 5 0 1
MILES
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10 000
FEET

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808
To convert feet to meters multiply by .3048

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

UTAH
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3	1 Bluff NW 2 No-Mans Island 3 Big Bench 4 Bluff SW 5 Recapture Pocket 6 San Juan Hill 7 White Rock Point 8 Hogan Mesa
4		5	
6	7	8	

ADJOINING 7.5′ QUADRANGLE NAMES

ROAD LEGEND

Improved Road
Unimproved Road
Trail
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

BLUFF, UTAH

PROVISIONAL EDITION 1989

37109-C5-TF-024

INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 1989

BLUFF HISTORIC DISTRICT
SAN JUAN COUNTY, UT
UTM REFFERENCES
ZONE 12
1. 628000/4127940
2. 629320/4127970
3. 628660/4127100
4. 628110/4127050
5. 627770/4127550

State of Utah

Department of Community & Economic Development
Division of State History
Utah State Historical Society

Michael O. Leavitt
Governor
Max J. Evans
Director

300 Rio Grande
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101-1182
(801) 533-3500 • FAX: 533-3503 • TDD: 533-3502
cehistry.ushs@email.state.ut.us

RECEIVED 413
OCT 5 1995
INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

October 2, 1995

Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
Interagency Resources Division
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the registration form and documentation for the following property which has been approved by the Utah Historic and Cultural Sites Review Committee (Utah Board of State History) and the Utah State Historic Preservation Officer for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

- Bluff Historic District, San Juan County

Thank you for your assistance with this nomination. Please call me at 801-533-3559 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Julie Osborne

Julie W. Osborne
Architectural Historian
Office of Historic Preservation

Enclosures