

## Visitor Information

### *Directions to the Adams House from St. George, Utah:*

- Traveling north on I-15, take Exit 22 to Leeds/Silver Reef.
- Turn right and travel south on Old Highway 91 for approximately 3 miles.
- Turn right at the BLM sign marking the Red Cliffs Recreation Site.
- Travel under I-15 and stay on the narrow paved access road.
- The road crosses Quail Creek, makes a sharp "hairpin turn," then heads west.
- The Adams House will be on the right side of the road.

### *Hours and additional information:*

You are free to walk around the outside of the Adams House to view and enjoy it during the hours posted on-site. The interior of the Adams House is open to the public on specified days, so please contact the Bureau of Land Management's St. George Field Office for more information.

St. George Field Office  
345 E. Riverside Drive  
St. George, Utah  
(435) 688.3200

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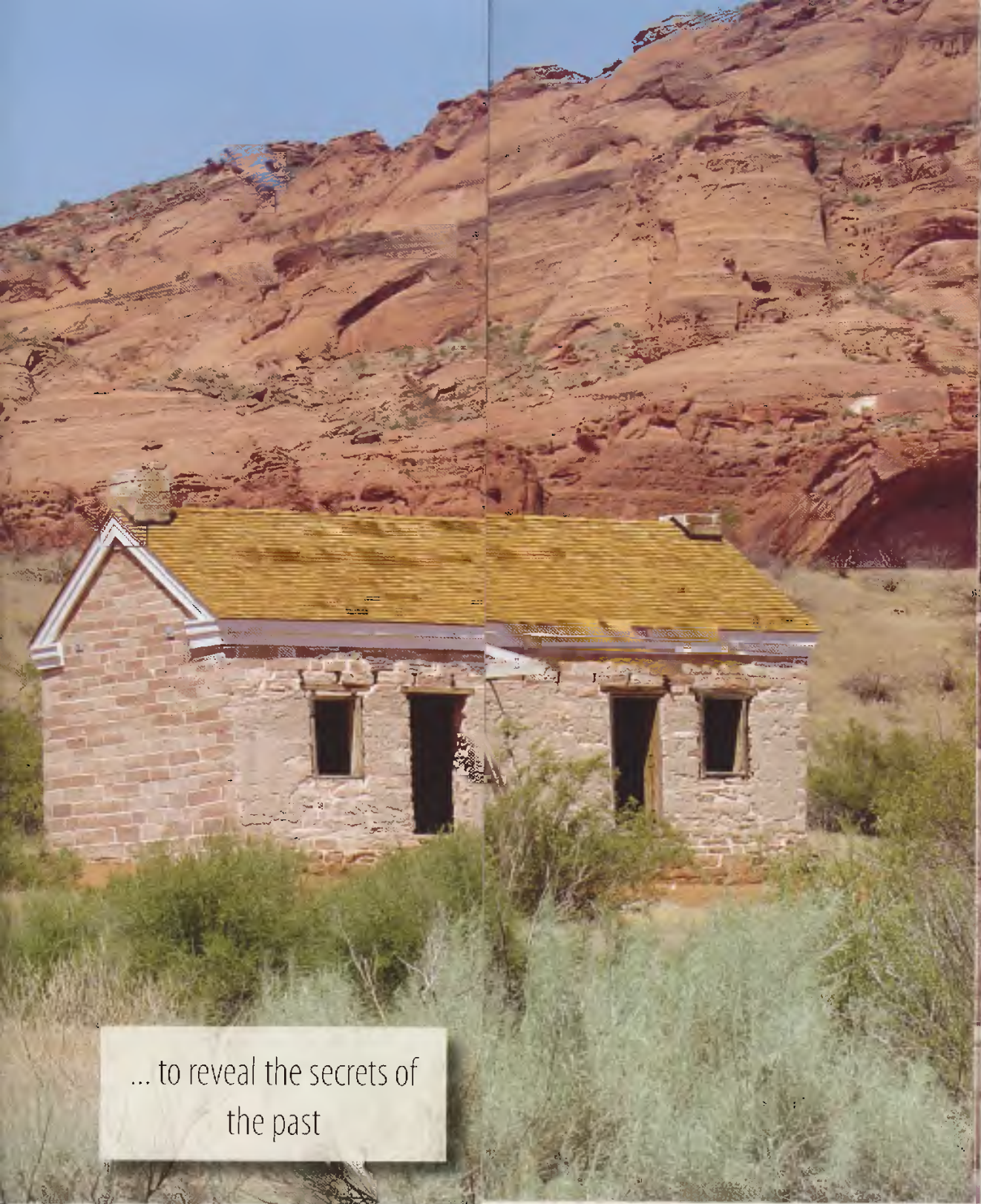


Of a once thriving  
community, only one  
House remains...

St. George Field Office



**The Adams House  
& Harrisburg, Utah**



... to reveal the secrets of  
the past



## Harrisburg, Utah & The Adams House

In a small valley, tucked between the sandstone outcrops of White Reef and the "Harrisburg Bench," two creeks — Leeds and Quail —

join, forming a narrow flood plain. In 1861, the Orson B. Adams family and nine other

families were called by the leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) to settle here. A "Cotton Colony" of new agricultural settlements was being established in

southern Utah [nicknamed Utah's "Dixie"] to grow cotton and supply other goods that were no longer reaching the West during the Civil War. The settlers named their new community "Harrisburg," in honor of the group's leader Moses Harris.

A year later, William G. McMullin, a master stonemason, came to live in Harrisburg. He and his sons built native rock homes for the settlers, including the Adams House, between 1863 and 1865. These small dwellings are examples of early Utah vernacular architecture and attest to the considerable masonry skills of their builders.

For nearly 20 years, the Harrisburg pioneers prospered, raising livestock, fruit trees, and other crops. By 1864, 128 people were living at Harrisburg and they had constructed a system of irrigation ditches to divert water from Leeds and Quail Creeks to their fields. Their meat and produce found a ready cash market in the booming silver mining camp of Silver Reef,

Native rock was used for all types of construction at Harrisburg, including rock walls to corral livestock.



located about 5 miles north. However, in 1867, a new upstream settlement at Leeds began to divert water from Leeds Creek and the water supply in Harrisburg was no longer adequate for irrigation. By the late 1880s, most of Harrisburg's settlers had abandoned the settlement, many moving to Leeds.

Orson Adams and his wife Susannah remained in their home until her death in 1892. They continued to farm, since their fields were irrigated by water diverted from Quail Creek. Adams died in 1901, leaving the Harrisburg property to his daughter. It was eventually purchased by its final owner, William M. Emmett, in 1910. Emmett, his wife Katie Dodge



Historic photograph of Orson Adams (with beard) standing in front of his home, taken around 1880.



Emett, and eventually seven children lived in this small (approximately 675 sq. ft) home, and for years were the only family in Harrisburg. Emmett grew wine grapes, alfalfa, fruit, and other garden crops, including what some say were the "best watermelon" around. They stayed in Harrisburg until William's Emmett's death in 1944. The house has been empty since then.

More than 50 years later, the Bureau of Land Management purchased the Adams House and 215 acres of terraced fields to the north and east, all that remains of mid-19th century Harrisburg's agricultural landscape. In 2003, the BLM and Washington County formed a partnership to stabilize and rehabilitate the Adams House for public use, as a small visitor center for the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve and Red Cliffs Recreation Site.

Rehabilitation work underway on the Adams House in October 2005.