

# HISTORIC SITE FORM

(10-91)

UTAH OFFICE OF PRESERVATION

## 1 IDENTIFICATION

Name of Property: **Zitting-Stokes House**

Address: 2202 E. Cottonwood Cove Lane

Township: 2 S Range: 1 E Section: 34

City, County: Cottonwood Heights, Salt Lake County, Utah 84121 UTM: 12T 429979 4495510

Current Owner Name: Allen L. Nielson

USGS Map Name & Date:  
Draper, Utah Quad, 2011

Current Owner Address: 2202 E. Cottonwood Cove Lane  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84121

Tax Number: 22-34-128-013

Legal Description (include acreage): BEG S 89°08'53" E 1647.84 FT & S 0°07'18" W 650.91 FT FR THE NW COR SEC 34, T 2S, R 1E, SLM; S 81°06' E 144.28 FT; S 70°23'02" E 70.36 FT; S 0°06' W 107.02 FT; N 89°54' W 44.11 FT; S 0°06' W 103.8 FT; N 89°54' W 162 FT; N 0°02'47" E 32.18 FT; N 77°09' W 2.91 FT; N 0°07'18" E 223.57 FT TO BEG. 1.03 AC M OR L.

## 2 STATUS/USE

### Property Category

☒ building(s)  
☐ structure  
☐ site  
☐ object

### Evaluation

☒ eligible/contributing  
☐ ineligible/non-contributing  
☐ out-of-period

### Use

Original Use: Single Dwelling  
Current Use: Single Dwelling

## 3 DOCUMENTATION

### Photos: Dates

☐ slides:  
☒ prints: 2016  
☐ historic:

### Research Sources (check all sources consulted, whether useful or not)

☒ abstract of title  
☒ tax card & photo  
☐ building permit  
☐ sewer permit  
☐ Sanborn Maps  
☐ obituary index  
☒ city directories/gazetteers  
☒ census records  
☐ biographical encyclopedias  
☒ newspapers  
☒ city/county histories  
☐ personal interviews  
☒ USHS Library  
☒ USHS Preservation Files  
☐ USHS Architects File  
☒ LDS Family History Library  
☐ local library:  
☐ university library(ies):

### Drawings and Plans

☒ measured floor plans 1945 (tax card)  
☒ site sketch map aerial photograph  
☐ Historic American Bldg. Survey  
☐ original plans available at:  
☐ other:

### Bibliographical References (books, articles, interviews, etc.)

Attach copies of all research notes, title searches, obituaries, and so forth.

Broschinsky, Korral. "Selective Reconnaissance Level Survey 2016: Cottonwood Heights, Salt Lake County, Utah." Final Report and Appendices, May 30, 2016. Available at the Utah State Historic Preservation Office.

"Charles F. Zitting." Autobiography. Unpublished TMs, [n.d.].

Polk Directories, Salt Lake City, 1920-2022. Published by R.L. Polk & Co. Available at the Utah State Historical Society.

Roberts, Allen D. *City Between the Canyons: A History of Cottonwood Heights, 1849-1953*. United States: Cottonwood Heights City, 2018.

[Salt Lake County Tax Assessor's Cards and Photographs]. Available at the Salt Lake County Archives.

[Salt Lake County Title Abstracts]. Available at the Salt Lake County Recorder's Office.

Salt Lake Tribune, Salt Lake City, Utah, various issues.

United States Census. *Butler Precincts, Salt Lake County, Utah, 1920-1950*.

Researcher/Organization: Preservation Documentation Resource/prepared for Cottonwood Heights City

Date: 2022

Building Style/Type: Arts & Crafts Vernacular / Other: Basement House No. Stories: 1½  
Foundation Material: Concrete Wall Material(s): Cement, Vertical Siding  
Additions: X none    minor    major (describe below) Alterations:    none X minor    major (describe below)  
Number of associated outbuildings 4 and/or structures   .

*Briefly describe the principal building, additions or alterations and their dates, and associated outbuildings and structures. Use continuation sheets as necessary.*

The *Zitting-Stokes House*, located at 2202 E. Cottonwood Cove Lane in Cottonwood Heights, Utah, was built between 1940 and 1945. The house is an unusual example of a mid-twentieth century building that is not based in a particular type or style. In type, the house resembles a basement house with the main living space halfway below grade. There is also a small loft in the upper level under the steeply-pitched gable roof. The foundation and lower walls are concrete. The gable trim is vertical wood siding. The roof is covered in rectangular asphalt shingles. The house has cobblestone-faced chimneys and piers supporting the front entry, giving it a modest Arts & Crafts feel. The house sits near the lane on a large parcel of 1.03 acres [Map #1]. There are four associated outbuildings: two contributing circa 1940s sheds, one non-contributing shed (circa 1980), and a non-contributing garage (1992). The newer outbuildings impact the integrity of the setting, but otherwise the exterior of the house and the property have excellent historic integrity.

The autobiography of Charles F. Zitting suggests that the house was started in 1940. Tax assessment records give 1945 for the date. Because the house has two distinct blocks, it is likely the house was built in phases between the two construction dates. The irregular footprint includes a rectangular main block measuring 22 by 15 feet and an offset roughly square second block measuring 16 by 14 feet. Both blocks have steeply-pitched simple gable roofs. They are connected by a shed roof structure adding another 10 feet to the length. The foundation walls are approximately three feet high putting the window sills near grade. The concrete is covered in at least one layer of cement stucco painted yellow, but the form lines are still visible [Photograph 1]. The façade (south elevation) features a projecting entry porch with a simple gable roof.<sup>1</sup> The porch roof is supported on wood posts and tapering cobblestone piers. There is an arched opening. The porch was originally open but is currently sheltered by corrugated plastic panels. The windows are mostly aluminum sliders with two later windows. The windows are not original, but the wood surrounds are from the 1940s.

There are two original cobblestone-faced tapered chimneystacks with stove pipes [Photographs 1-2]. One is on the north elevation of the main block and the other is on the south elevation of the west block. There is a concrete root cellar attached to the southwest corner of the west block. The gable ends and connecting structure are faced with vertical wood siding. The east end of the main block has a cut opening, which may have been a door. The interior has 624 square feet of main floor space with living room, kitchen, one bedroom and two bathrooms.

The *Zitting-Stokes House* is located in the south Union area of Cottonwood Heights. For many years Cottonwood Cove Lane was an unnamed private lane off of 2000 East (later Highland Drive). The number 7897 South was used as an address for the house and for the lane, before 2202 E. Cottonwood Cove Lane was assigned as the address. The current 1.03-acre parcel is a small portion of the larger Zitting farmstead, which Charles F. Zitting called the "Cottonwood Farm." The surrounding property was subdivided and developed with new housing between the 1970s and early 2000s. One other historic house associated with the Zitting family is 2236 E. Cottonwood Cove Lane, but this house has been modified since its construction in the 1920s. The *Zitting-Stokes House* was built near several mature trees at the north end of the lot, not far from the lane.

The 1992 garage is located near the house at the end of a short gravel driveway. The garage is frame with aluminum siding and doors [Photograph 3]. There is a double-car door and a taller single-vehicle door on the north elevation. The property is fenced with wood and chain link between the house and garage. The south yard is mostly lawn with mature pines at the south property line. The current owner also owns the adjacent lot to the south, part of the original parcel that bordered Little Cottonwood Creek. The new house on this lot is accessed from a right-of-way adjoining the west property line of the Zitting-Stokes House parcel [Map #2]. The circa 1980 shed is located near a gate on the right-of-way. The gable-roof contributing shed is also near the right-of-way. This building has a wood shake roof and plank siding. The shed-roof contributing shed is south of the house and also has plank siding. There is a wood patio deck near the sheds [Photograph 4].

<sup>1</sup> The tax records suggest the front door may have faced north to the road originally.

Architect/Builder: Zitting and Stokes families, builders Date of Construction: 1940-1945

Historic Themes: Mark themes related to this property with "S" or "C" (S = significant, C = contributing).  
(see instructions for details)

<u>C</u> Agriculture	<u>  </u> Economics	<u>  </u> Industry	<u>  </u> Politics/ Government
<u>  </u> Architecture	<u>  </u> Education	<u>  </u> Invention	<u>  </u> Religion
<u>  </u> Archeology	<u>  </u> Engineering	<u>  </u> Landscape	<u>  </u> Science
<u>  </u> Art	<u>  </u> Entertainment/ Recreation	<u>  </u> Architecture	<u>S</u> Social History
<u>  </u> Commerce	<u>  </u> Ethnic Heritage	<u>  </u> Law	<u>  </u> Transportation
<u>  </u> Communications	<u>  </u> Exploration/ Settlement	<u>  </u> Literature	<u>  </u> Other
<u>  </u> Community Planning & Development	<u>  </u> Health/Medicine	<u>  </u> Maritime History	
<u>  </u> Conservation		<u>  </u> Military	
		<u>  </u> Performing Arts	

Write a chronological history of the property, focusing primarily on the original or principal owners & significant events. Explain and justify any significant themes marked above. Use continuation sheets as necessary.

The *Zitting-Stokes House* is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History as one of two houses originally associated with the Zitting family farm in Cottonwood Heights. A second house associated with the family is nearby but has been altered with no associated outbuildings. The Zitting farm was a family compound for Charles F. Zitting and his polygamous wives between 1928 and 1963. Charles F. Zitting was a mid-twentieth century polygamist living openly decades after the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints banned the practice in 1890. Zitting was among fifteen Utah polygamists who made national news when they were sent to serve between one and four years in prison in the early 1940s. Seven of Charles' ten wives spent between a few months to over thirty years living at the farm: Rachel, Elvera, Edna, Laura, Orpha, Frances, and Bonnie. Although other family members lived in the concrete and cobblestone house in the 1940s to 1960s. According to Charles' autobiography, the house was built for Frances' father, William E. Stokes and occupied by him and two of his wives, Elva and Elsie. The property may also contribute to the history of Cottonwood Heights in the area of Religion, as the family practiced their religion at the farm; however, they probably did not hold meeting in the concrete house.

The *Zitting-Stokes House* also contributes to the local history of Cottonwood Heights under Criterion A in the area of Agriculture. While there are numerous examples of extant historic farmhouses being incorporated into later subdivisions, the setting of the *Zitting-Stokes House* is a rare example of individual lot development that helps to maintain the private lane ambience, even though the historic fields and orchards have disappeared. Most of the newer houses within the boundaries of the former farm are built on large irregular lots and hidden from view from Cottonwood Cove Lane. This is very different from much of Cottonwood Heights where the numerous tract houses are on modest sized lots on easily accessible public streets.

Much of the history of the farm can be found in the autobiography of Charles F. Zitting. Charles Frederick Zitting was born in Harrisville, Utah, in 1894. He married Minnie Affleck in 1920. Charles and Minnie had three children. Minnie Zitting obtained a divorce from Charles in 1927 on the grounds of "cruelty for continually nagging at her to gain her consent to his entering polygamous relations."<sup>2</sup> The first of Charles' ten wives, Minnie was not involved in the subsequent polygamous relationships. Minnie remarried in 1934 and again as a widow in 1967. Minnie Affleck Zitting Rossiter Parker died in 1968.

In August 1927, Charles married Rachel Wells (born 1902) and Elvera Charlotta Olson (born 1901) two weeks apart. Neither marriage was officially recorded by the State of Utah. The two women had mutually agreed to become his polygamous wives. In the spring of 1928, the Zitting family bought a home and 33¾ acres of land on the Little Cottonwood Creek. The property was bought on a twenty-year contract from the State of Utah using Elvera Olson's maiden name. A four-room farmhouse was located on ten acres north of the creek while the rest of the land was south and east of the creek (later demolished). Charles, Rachel, and Elvera moved into the farmhouse in May 1928. Rachel Wells Zitting, who was six-months pregnant, died in July 1928 while on a visit to her parents in St. George. She and her child were buried in St. George. On August 28th, Charles married Edna Aleen Christensen (born 1899). He then married Laura Tree (born 1894) in January 1929. He married Orpha Cope (born 1900) in 1932. Four wives and six children were living together at the farm when Charles decided to trade another property for a house in Taylorsville. Laura and Orpha moved to Taylorsville leaving Elvera and Edna at the Cottonwood farm. They stayed in Taylorsville between 1933 and 1935 when the two families moved to 1209 East 2700 South. Orpha Cope Zitting died of pneumonia at her home in 1940 leaving two children.

<sup>2</sup> *Deseret News*, May 25, 1927.

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Charles Zitting had several occupations during his lifetime. As young man, he worked in the mines and construction. In the 1930s, he became a real estate agent, which remained his primary occupation until his death. Charles also spent time working and improving the Cottonwood farm. The family raised hay, alfalfa, and maintained a large orchard. They raised rabbits, chickens, pigs, and a few dairy cows. He married Nellie Taylor Ricks Smellie in May 1933. Nellie was born to a polygamous family in Canada in 1906. After living at the Taylorsville house for a year, Nellie left Charles and the polygamous lifestyle. She married in 1936 and again in 1957. When Nellie S. Lubeck Murdock died in 1997, Charles Zitting was not mentioned in her obituary.

Charles married his eighth wife, Essie Frances Stokes, in August 1935. Frances was born in 1918, also to a polygamous father, William Edwin Stokes, and his wife, Mabel Francis Crouch. Frances lived in Taylorsville, at the Cottonwood farm, and at a home they owned at 1740 S. Main Street, in Salt Lake City. The home on Main Street was traded for a home and small farm property at 4118 S. 500 East in Murray. The ninth wife, Bonnie Elaine Kilgrew (born 1925), married Charles at the age of fifteen in February 1940. Frances and Bonnie lived together in the Murray house. The tenth and last wife, Amalie Christine Henriette Able Volmar (born 1871), was an older widow, who heard Charles preaching and asked to be married to Charles in April 1940. Amalie continued to live in her Salt Lake City home, where Charles visited her often. He joked that he would have to give her up for tithing as she was his tenth wife. Amalie Volmar Zitting died in March 1954 at the age of 83.

In 1940, Charles offered Frances' father, William E. Stokes, a chance to build a home at the Cottonwood Farm and live there rent free in lieu of labor. The description of the house: "a three room cement house with bath room and cellar and room in the loft," appears to match the existing house at 2202 E. Cottonwood Cove Lane.<sup>3</sup> Charles states that 80-year-old William and his 50-year-old wife Elva Stokes built the cement house with help from a few of Charles' boys. Charles may have overseen the work with his experience in construction and building cement coops for the farm.

When William moved to Cottonwood, he left two wives in Clinton, Utah: Hannah S. Child (1868-1940) and Frances' mother, Mabel Francis Crouch (1892-1947). William Stokes married a widow, Elva May Cook Robinson (born 1894), in 1934. They had a son, born in 1935, who lived at the Cottonwood farm with them. In June 1943, William Stokes married Elsie Auguste Elizabeth Bollach, perhaps the reason for constructing the second block on the house. William Edwin Stokes died at the age of 83 at the farm in 1948. Elva Stokes married Austin N. Abbott in 1949 and moved to Salt Lake City. Elva moved to California where she died in 1986. Elsie Stokes was listed on the 1950 census at the Cottonwood farm just one year before her death in 1951.

It is unclear who lived in the cement house after the Stokes family, possibly some of the grown children still living at the farm. Charles had purchased a second frame home from the neighbor to the east in 1940. This is the extant altered house, which became Edna's house. Elvera continued to live in the first home (located close to the creek, demolished circa 1959).<sup>4</sup> In 1946, Charles asked Elvera and Bonnie to switch homes. Though Bonnie was reluctant to move to the Cottonwood farm, she and her family are listed there on the 1950 census, not far from Edna and her children. The 1950 census is the first time each wife had a separate home. Elvera and her youngest son lived in Salt Lake City. Laura is living on 2700 South and Frances is at 500 East.

The Zitting families experienced the consequences of polygamous living in Utah in the mid-twentieth century. Charles and six wives (Elvera, Edna, Laura, Orpha, Frances, and Amelia) were all excommunicated from the LDS Church. Bonnie was not officially baptized and therefore not in the church records. Charles was arrested more than once beginning in 1931 but did not face serious prison time until 1944 when he and Edna were charged with transporting a minor across state lines to marry a fellow polygamist. The trial was part of a larger prosecution of fifteen men for polygamy, which made national news, including a writeup in Life Magazine in 1945 after the men were convicted. Edna did not serve jail time. Charles was sent to the Utah State Prison in Sugarhouse in May 1945 and ten days later sent out to work on the prison farm in Draper. Charles kept a detailed diary of his time in prison. He served a little over two years. Charles Frederick Zitting died at the Cottonwood farm on July 14, 1954.

<sup>3</sup> Charles F. Zitting, "Life of Charles F. Zitting," unpublished TMs, written circa 1945, transcribed 2017: 107.

<sup>4</sup> The Main Street home still stands, and possibly the Taylorsville home, although its exact location on the south side of 4800 South is unknown. The homes at 4118 S. 500 East and 1209 E. 2700 South have been demolished and replaced by apartment buildings.

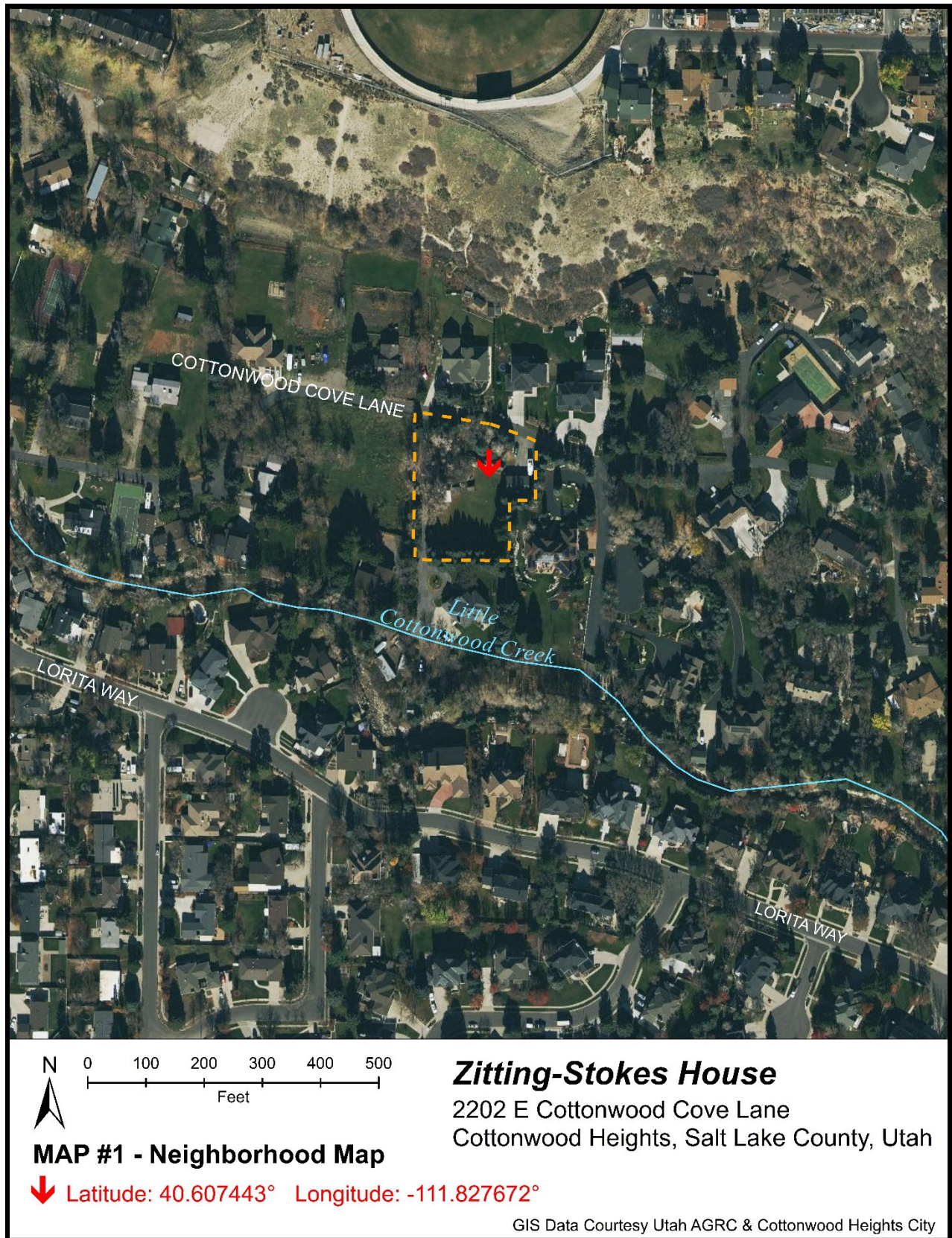
—continued—

Elvera Olson Zitting had two children. She worked at West High School and as a chocolate dipper for Sweet Candy to help support the family. Elvera lived part time at the Cottonwood farm for a few years after Charles' death. She later moved to St. George, Utah, where she died in 1993. Edna Aleen Christensen Zitting served a mission for the LDS Church before her marriage. She had eight children and raised Orpha's son, Lorin, after Orpha's death in 1940. She was a teacher before her marriage. She spent all of her married life on the farm in Cottonwood, staying longer than any of the wives. In the 1980s, she moved to Arizona near where several of her children were located. Edna Zitting died in Arizona in 1991.

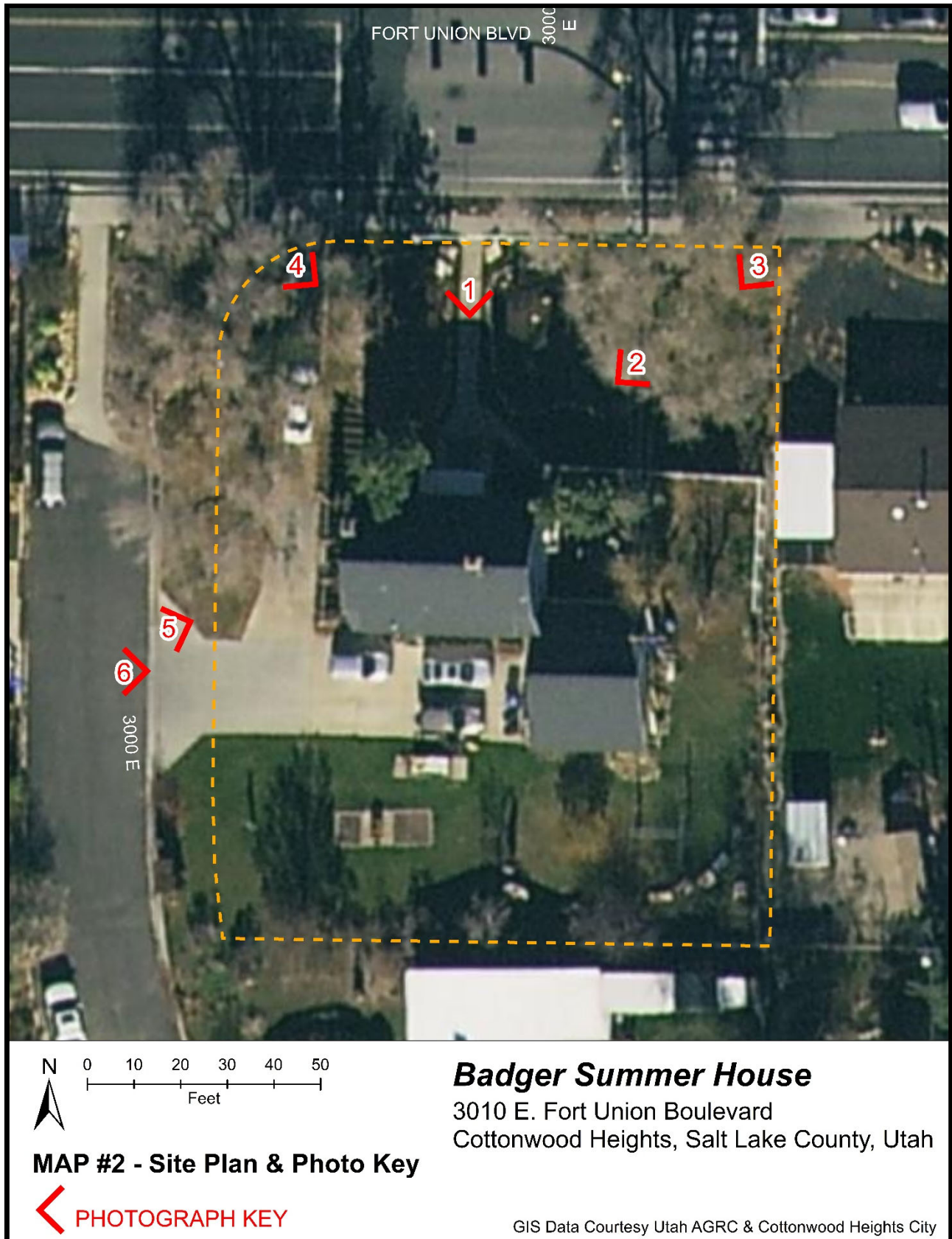
Laura Tree Zitting had three sons and raised Orpha's daughter, Caroline. Before her marriage, she served an LDS Church mission to the Northern states. She spent her married life at the home on 2700 South. Laura Zitting passed away in her home at the age of 91 in 1985. Essie Frances Stokes Zitting lived on the Cottonwood farm for only a few years before settling into her long term home in Murray. She had eight children but lost two as infants and one nineteen-year-old daughter. She moved to West Jordan after her marriage to James Reed Stratton in 1962. After his death, Frances Z. Stratton moved to St. George where she died in 1993. Bonnie Elaine Kilgrew Zitting had nine children from her marriage to Charles Zitting. After his death, Bonnie married Wayne Murdock Hunter in 1956 and had six children with him. In 1989, she moved to the Colorado City, Arizona, to be closer to her children. Bonnie Hunter died there in 2005. A large number of the Zitting children moved to the Short Creek community consisting of Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah. The fundamentalists living in the area were able to practice polygamy with little interference from authorities until 2011 when their leader was convicted of child rape. The community has lost population since that time.

Before the Cottonwood farm was sold off in parcels. Lorin Cope Zitting, Orpha's son, and Marvin Christensen Zitting, Edna's son, stayed on the farm with their families. Lorin was a mechanic for Peterson Tractor. Marvin ran a fur farm on the property in the 1950s and 1960s. He also earned a BS degrees in Physics from the University of Utah. Members of his family have built new homes in the area. In 1990, Marvin C. Zitting sold the parcel at 2202 E. Cottonwood Cove Lane to Marc and Cyndy Tillinghast. Cyndy deeded the property to Marc in 2002, who sold the property to the current owners, Allen L. and Nancy Jo Nielson.













**Photograph 1**  
South elevation of house. Camera facing northwest.



**Photograph 2**  
East and north elevations of house. Camera facing southwest.





**Photograph 3**

North elevation of garage near house. Camera facing south.



**Photograph 4**

East elevations of outbuildings. Camera facing southwest.