

Moroni Cannery
Name of Property

NRHP Listed Date:
7/16/2026

Sanpete County, Utah
County and State

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Moroni Cannery

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 144 W. 100 South

City or town: Moroni State: Utah County: Sanpete

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

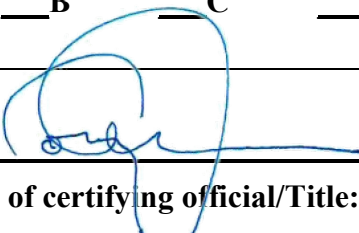
I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

 /Deputy SHPO 6/1/2026

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Utah State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private X
Public – Local: ___
Public – State: ___
Public – Federal:: ___

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s): X
District: ___
Site: ___
Structure: ___
Object: ___

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing (cannery)

GOVERNMENT: public works

GOVERNMENT: fire station

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional (art studio)

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Industrial Vernacular

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Walls: OTHER/concrete block;

Roof: METAL/steel; Foundation: CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Moroni Cannery, completed in 1946, is located at 144 West 100 South on an open gravel lot in a residential neighborhood in the heart of Moroni (population approximately 1,600), Sanpete County, in rural central Utah. The building retains its historic integrity with its intact gable-roofed rectangular form, largely open floor plan, exposed hand-built wooden trusses, concrete block walls, original wood windows, and its overall setting. The vehicle door on the front is not original but probably dates from the first decade or two of use. Although some changes have been made on the exterior and interior, these are minor and don't have a significant impact on its overall historic integrity.

Narrative Description

Exterior

The 1946 Moroni Cannery is approximately 30 feet wide and 100 feet long. It is constructed of concrete block and, from an architectural style perspective, is probably best described as "vernacular industrial." It has a simple gable roof with skylights and painted concrete block walls. The existing standing-seam metal roof was installed about 15 years ago. The southwest corner had settled significantly over the years, so

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that was remedied in 2021 by installing a footing/foundation at that location and repairing the stair-step cracks in the mortar joints at that corner and on the facade. Floor-level metal tie rods have also been installed in recent years to prevent outward spreading of the walls, following the guidance of a structural engineer.

The front (south) elevation consists of a personnel door and an original window on the left side and a vehicle door on the right side. The vehicle door was not original to the building, as shown by a 1945 historic photograph (see Figure 1), but it was probably added either during the cannery years (1946-1952) or in the mid-to-late 1950s or 1960s when the city began using the building for other purposes (water department, parade float storage, fire trucks, emergency response vehicles, etc.). The vehicle door consists of two side-hinged doors sheathed in vertical wood siding with diagonal braces.

The west elevation, like all of the elevations, consists of concrete block walls with projecting concrete-block pilasters spaced at approximately 15-foot intervals interspersed with original wood double-hung windows, some of which have been restored, as needed. The west wall is within a few feet of the west property line. The settling at the southwest corner over the years required installing a footing and foundation at that location and extending north along the west wall for 20-30 feet. That was completed in 2021, along with repointing the cracked stair-step mortar joints at the southwest corner. An original window opening at the north end of the west wall was replaced (date unknown) with vertical wood siding recessed to the plane of the original window.

The north elevation has a simple Dutch gable roof with no fenestration in the unpainted concrete-block wall. This may have been a very early addition to the building, given that it is not under the main gable roof and it lacks corner pilasters that are on the front corners of the building, though it is identified on the c.1945 Sanborn map as the boiler room.¹ A small open-sided, gable-roofed wood shed was added to the north (rear) wall in 2025, set below the eaves of the main roof.

The east elevation is similar to the west elevation but with additional openings beyond just the double-hung wood windows. There is a double-door entrance near the front of the building that apparently accommodated input and output of canning supplies and finished products. There is also a dormer toward the rear that provided light to the rear workspace but may also have been a “hayloft” sort of opening for loading produce from trucks for the canning operation. A door at the northeast corner provides access to a windowless room on the north end that was used as the boiler room. Interior access to that room was closed off many years ago.

Interior

The interior of the cannery/art studio consists primarily of two large rooms—a framing shop in the front and an art studio in the rear. The wall that separates the framing shop from the studio was completed in recent years to help prevent wood dust from getting into the art studio. There is a small restroom/storage area in the front southwest corner that was original to the building. That was reconfigured in 2024-2025 to include an upgraded single restroom and replace a second restroom with a storage area (See Figure 5, drawing of existing and proposed floor plan modifications that were completed in 2025). There is another narrow storage area at the rear of the building that spans the width of the building. That room is accessible only from an outside door at the northeast corner of the building. Previously, there was an interior door

¹ Sanborn Map Company, *Moroni, Utah*, 1924 map, Sheet 3, updated in draft form from 1931 into the mid-1940s. Available online through the University of Utah’s Marriott Library digital collections: https://collections.lib.utah.edu/search?q=Moroni&facet_setname_s=dha_sfim (accessed August 14, 2024).

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into that rear room, but that was closed off many years ago, prior to the current owners' purchase of the building in 2000. As noted previously, the Sanborn fire insurance map (1924 map, updated c.1945) indicates that this was the boiler room.²

The open ceilings, skylights, and hand-made wooden trusses are still visible throughout the building. Insulation has been added within the rafter cavities and covered with a plastic-like sheathing. Virtually all of the original windows remain, having been rehabbed as needed over the years. The restroom area in the front southwest corner has recently (2024-2025) been reconfigured by replacing the two restrooms with a single unisex restroom and using the remaining space as storage (see Figure 5). This reconfiguration does not enlarge the original two-restroom space, and it keeps the existing demising walls intact. The building has newer concrete floors throughout that have been replaced in recent years due to severe settlement issues and cracking from heavy vehicles, equipment, and other items over the years.³

Setting

The one-story concrete block cannery is set back from the street a little deeper than neighboring residences, and it does not have the typical front yard of lawn, shrubs, and trees. Rather, it has more of an industrial appearance with an apron of gravel and concrete in front and a wooden vehicle door that dominates the facade. A gravel driveway extends along the east side of the building. Though it runs deeper into the block (100 feet) than neighboring homes, its street-facing façade (30 feet wide) is similar to adjacent residences. There is an open field to the east, a separate parcel that was once occupied by the old city hall and other city structures. To the west, is a residence set just several feet from the cannery.

Alterations

The existing metal roof was installed about 15 years ago. It is unclear from a 1945 newspaper photo what the original roof material was (see Figure 1). The garage door on the façade was probably added sometime between the 1940s and 1960s when the building was adapted from its original cannery use to a multi-purpose facility for various city functions, including emergency vehicles. It has been rebuilt or refurbished at various times over the years, including the 1970s when the volunteer ambulance corps spent many hours "cleaning and fixing the huge wooden front door" of the cannery to accommodate the ambulance and EMT services.⁴

Other exterior alterations include a new metal roof (c.2011), the replacement in 2025 of two standard doors—one on the south elevation (front) and two on the east elevation, and the installation of rain gutters in 2025.

Other minor modifications have been made over the past 25 years after the building was purchased by the current owners and converted into an art studio and framing/wood shop. The most notable interior alteration is the installation of a partition wall (2025)⁵ that separates the front half of the building (a framing shop) from the actual art studio—a necessary installation to prevent wood dust from the shop from contaminating the in-progress paintings. The original floorplan of the cannery was probably just one large open space open with minor carve-outs for restrooms, storage, etc., but there are no records to

² Ibid.

³ This was part of a federal rehabilitation tax credit application for the cannery that was approved by the National Park Service on January 27, 2026 (NPS Project #48615).

⁴ Moroni City Historical Committee, *History of Moroni City*, p.508.

⁵ This was part of a federal rehabilitation tax credit project approved by the Utah State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service in 2025, project #48615.

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confirm that. The current two major spaces (studio and framing/wood shop) retain the open feel of the original building, especially since the original wood trusses and ceiling heights are intact, and no other dividing walls have been added. All of the recent work was completed as part of a federal tax credit project.

Historic Integrity

The building retains a high degree of historic integrity on both the interior and exterior. More specifically, the following bullet points address the seven elements used to evaluate historic integrity:

- Location: The building is in its original location.
- Setting: The residential neighborhood in which the building is located is very much the same as it was at the time of construction, with the exception that the town hall and fire station to the east were demolished decades ago, and that parcel (separate from the cannery parcel both physically and in ownership) is now a field with no structures except fencing along the perimeter.
- Design: The exterior is virtually unchanged from the historic period, though the vehicle door on the front was added at some point, perhaps in the 1950s or 1960s. All of the other window and door openings are intact in terms of their size, and the windows are all original.
- Materials: The original concrete block walls are still intact, though they probably were not painted originally. The personnel doors have probably been replaced over the years. At least two appear to have been recycled interior doors, but they were replaced recently by more appropriate exterior doors (approved by the National Park Service for federal tax credit purposes in January 2026, along with other work on the building). The vehicle door on the front and the double-doors on the east have probably been rebuilt over the years, but they are still wood and side-hinged. The current roof is a newer metal roof (15+ years ago), while the original was probably wood shingles (the historic 1945 photo is not clear enough to confirm that).
- Workmanship: The concrete block walls retain their original utilitarian appearance, and the concrete floor on the interior (replaced in 2021) is very much like the original concrete floor, which had cracked beyond repair. The hand-made wooden trusses are still visible and are probably the building's most expressive and distinctive feature of workmanship on the interior.
- Feeling: The building still retains much of its original form, interior spaces, and materials, so it conveys a very strong feeling of the utilitarian industrial building it was historically.
- Association: The site/property is still as it was in 1946, and the building itself is still largely intact. Its association with the functions and appearance from the historic period is very strong.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ 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" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

SOCIAL HISTORY

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1946-1976

Significant Dates

1946

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Builder: local citizens/volunteers

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Completed in 1946, the Moroni Cannery in Moroni, Sanpete County, is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Industry, Social History, and Politics/Government. In the area of Industry, it is significant as it was the only community cannery in Sanpete County during the 1930s-1950s period. That was a time when the exigencies and shortages of the Great Depression and WWII stimulated communities across the country to grow and preserve food, both to get by and to support the war effort. In the area of Social History, the Moroni cannery reflects the popularity of community canneries nationwide during that period. It represents an important cooperative social movement involving citizens working with all levels of government—local, state, and federal—to address the needs of families and community organizations and programs, especially school lunch programs. Though its run as a cannery ended in 1952, the Moroni Cannery building continued to play an important role in the community. In the Area of Politics/Government, the cannery is significant as it housed a variety of essential city government functions into the 1970s, including housing the city's fire engines, its first ambulance, and water department operations, among other uses. The building is also one of the last remaining structures constructed through local cooperative efforts that were a significant part of the town's history dating back to its founding in the 1850s. Given the building's ongoing use for a variety of important community programs and services after its cannery functions had ceased, the Period of Significance is 1946-1976. This includes the date it was constructed and continues up to fifty years ago, as it continued this use up into the 1980s.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A Significance: Industry

The Moroni Cannery is significant under Criterion A in the Area of Industry because it was the only community cannery in Sanpete County during the 1930s-1950s period. After a few years of planning, the community-based Moroni Cannery was completed and put into operation in 1946 and continued to serve that purpose until 1952.⁶ It was the only community cannery in Sanpete County, and it served as a model for other communities in the state.⁷

Federal and state agencies encouraged communities across the country to construct and operate community canneries to provide produce and other foods for schools, community groups, and individual families, greatly extending the availability of foodstuffs beyond just the harvest season. Thousands of canneries were built around the country, though Utah, like many western states, embraced the idea much less than some other parts of the country did, especially the South. Georgia alone had more than 400 community canneries.⁸

⁶ Moroni Historical Committee, *History of Moroni City*, pp. 399-400; The cannery's accounting books, which are in possession of the current owner, end abruptly in September of 1952.

⁷ One specific example is the cannery in Oak City, Millard County, some 60 miles to the west of Moroni. The Oak City Cannery was completed in 1948. See "Oak City Cannery is Ready for Fall Season," *Millard County Chronicle*, July 29, 1948, p.1; Margaret Roper, *Echoes of the Sage and Cedars*, p.71.

⁸ R.E. Naugher, "Improving the Program of Instruction in School-Community Canneries." *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, Vol. 18, No. 8., 1946, pp. 148-149, 155.

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After the war, enthusiasm for labor-intensive Victory Gardens and canning to “support the war effort” declined. Concurrently, the economy picked up, rationing restrictions were lifted, home refrigerators became increasingly available and popular. Also, large corporate canneries began to dominate the scene and abandon local operations,⁹ and new technologies such as freezing produce, rather than canning, emerged.¹⁰ As a result, many community canneries, which relied heavily on volunteers and modestly compensated staff, ceased operation, including this one in Moroni, which closed its doors in 1952.

Criterion A Significance: Social History

The Moroni Cannery is significant under Criterion A in the Area of Social History because it represents an important movement in Utah and the United States during the 1930s-early 1950s to address food shortages at the community and household levels. Community canneries not only encouraged food self-sufficiency, they were also intended to help bolster the country’s efforts to alleviate some of the significant economic hardships caused by the Great Depression and World War II.

The Moroni Cannery was the only community cannery in Sanpete County during the 1930s-1950s period. Community canneries were being encouraged by federal and state governments during the Great Depression and WWII eras as a way to get through the tough times of economic decline and shortages of food and many other materials due to rationing restrictions and other factors. The Moroni Cannery’s design and layout reflected the recommendations for community canneries that were being promoted by government agencies and canning industry experts at the time. State and federal officials behind the community cannery program visited the site and made recommendations about the equipment, the flow of products through the cannery, and specific instructions about using the processing equipment.¹¹

The cannery demonstrates the community’s embracing of efforts to strengthen the home-front as part of the WWII campaign through food independence and security. The cooperative nature of the cannery reflected Moroni’s long commitment to pulling together to create a wide range of cooperative ventures, a tradition that went back to the town’s founding in the 1850s. Led by a group of volunteer citizens, and with a little help from the city, the cannery enjoyed several years of success, especially in providing canned goods to the local school lunch programs and in helping local families achieve an important degree of food independence and self-sufficiency. Canning and bottling fruits and vegetables has continued in the area to the present, both at the household level and institutional (church) level.¹²

Criterion A Significance: Politics/Government

The Moroni Cannery represents an important role the government played at all levels—federal, state, and local—during the tough years of the 1930s and 1940s. State and federal agencies and officials provided training and

⁹ Local examples are the 1950 closing of commercial canneries in the nearby Sanpete County communities of Ephraim and Manti when their national parent companies refused to pay local farmers enough to make it worthwhile for the farmers to grow the crops. See “Ephraim Cannery May Operate This Year,” *Manti Messenger*, March 3, 1950, p.1; “Dawn After Darkness,” *Manti Messenger*, March 17, 1950, p.4.

¹⁰ National Park Service, “Canning and Food Preservation on the World War II Home Front.” Last updated November 16, 2023. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/canning-and-food-preservation-on-the-world-war-ii-home-front.htm>, downloaded July 25, 2024.

¹¹ Lyman Willardson, “Moroni Waits Opening of Canning Unit,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 26, 1945, 12A; Moroni Historical Committee, *History of Moroni City, 1859-2009: Legacy of Cooperation* (Paradise Press: Richfield, Utah, 2009), pp. 399-400.

¹² The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the predominant religion in Utah, started a number of canneries as part of its church welfare program, which was established in 1936. While there was some overlap with the emergence of community canneries, most of the church’s canneries came along well after community canneries had closed their doors in the early 1950s. In Moroni, the 1954 high school gym eventually became a cannery and bishop’s storehouse (in the 1980s?) after it was no longer needed as a school gymnasium. See Moroni Historical Committee, “History of Moroni City,” p. 422.

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guidance in both the construction of the cannery and the operation of the commercial-grade equipment.¹³ The city did its part in providing a little up-front cash (\$500) and by donating the land on which the cannery was built. Nearby communities also made cash contributions toward the overall \$5,500 cost in order to be able to participate in the new facility.¹⁴

After the cannery ceased operation, the building was taken over by the city and used for a variety of essential municipal services and activities.¹⁵ It was adjacent to the town hall, being located on the long-time “city lot” in the middle of town, so accessing it was convenient and its open floorplan accommodated a variety of uses. This was an important flex space for city and community services until the 1980s, when state and federal funds came along for capital improvement projects, such as the new city hall and fire department equipment.¹⁶

Though the two-story town hall and other city buildings and facilities are long gone from the site, the cannery remains as a symbol of both the city government’s presence in the heart of the community and a significant period when cooperation between citizens and their government worked together to accomplish big community purposes.¹⁷

Additional Historical Information

National Context of Community Canneries

Community canneries were established throughout the United States primarily in the 1930s and 1940s during the Great Depression and WWII years. Severe economic hardships and shortages of food and many other materials at that time galvanized efforts to make better use of existing resources. Canning vegetables and fruits was a way to extend their availability throughout the year. Community canneries provided more efficient commercial-grade facilities that individual and institutional users could take advantage of to increase the quantity and quality of canned goods. These efforts were promoted by federal, state, and local governments, but often relied on citizen volunteers to make them a reality.

Some community canneries started earlier as part of the WWI “Victory Garden” effort that encouraged citizens to cultivate gardens and can their produce, both as a means to supplement their rations and to boost morale. More than five million Victory Gardens on private and public lands were established as a result.¹⁸

Though the Great Depression resulted in severe economic hardships, WWII brought on a new wave of rationing and belt-tightening that triggered an increased interest in community canneries. Government agencies promoted the effort through publications and training, and some even provided funds to help with construction and equipment costs. In 1946, the Production and Marketing Administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture updated earlier publications (1941 and 1944) on “Food Preservation Centers”

¹³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Production and Marketing Division, “Community Canning Centers, Miscellaneous Publication No. 544” (U.S. U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1946).

¹⁴ Lyman Willardson, “Moroni Waits Opening of Canning Unit,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 26, 1945, 12A.

¹⁵ Moroni Historical Committee, *History of Moroni City, 1859-2009: Legacy of Cooperation* (Paradise Press: Richfield, Utah, 2009), pp. 399-400.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 419 and 482-483. State Community Impact Board grants were essential for the new city hall (2008) and the new fire engine (1986).

¹⁷ A common refrain in the 2009 *History of Moroni City* is the important role of volunteerism, community cooperation, and ingenuity in the town’s development and history. See pp. 399, 422, 483, among others, and the subtitle of the book, “*Legacy of Cooperation*.”

¹⁸ “Victory Garden.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation. Downloaded May 15, 2024: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victory_garden.

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and issued an 86-page manual titled “Community Canning Centers” to help guide the effort.¹⁹ The publication had instructions for a wide range of cannery-related topics, including how to organize as a community, financing, selecting a supervisor, recommended building floor plans, required equipment, training guidelines for workers and families who use the facility, and detailed instructions about the best way to can more than 35 specific kinds of vegetables, fruits, and meats.²⁰

Southeastern states were especially embracing of the community cannery concept. A 1945 map marking the locations of “school-community canneries” nationwide shows heavy distributions in states such as Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Texas. Georgia alone had some 400 canneries, a number that dwarfs all of the western states combined. Utah had only a half-dozen or so canneries, among the fewest of all western states, but even California had only about 65.²¹ The reasons for that regional disparity in the number of canneries are multiple and go beyond the focus of this National Register nomination.

History of the Moroni Cannery

In the early 1940s, a group of Moroni residents started planning for the construction of a community cannery. Its purpose was to provide commercial-grade canning services for the North Sanpete School District’s school lunch programs and for local citizens who wanted to process and store vegetables, fruit, meat, and other food items.²² The lean years of the Great Depression and WWII heightened awareness of the economic value and food-security benefits canning provided.

Many of those involved with this local initiative were affiliated with the North Sanpete School District. These included Moroni residents Lawrence Kelson and Eldon Westenkow, vocational instructors at Moroni High School. Canning foods for the school district was a big part of the cannery effort, though providing services for home-canners was also heavily promoted. Home-canners could bring their own produce and canning supplies or purchase them from the cannery at reasonable costs.²³

In May of 1944, while WWII was still underway, the local newspaper noted that “Work is well underway for the construction of a Community cannery in Moroni... The plans call for a unit large enough for a population or 5,000 to 6,000 people,” which would have included most of the people in Sanpete County at the time. The newspaper article also advised that “Now is the time to plant plenty of vegetables in your gardens so you can make use of the new cannery.”²⁴ It would take a couple more years (August 1946), however, before the cannery was operational.

Funding and constructing the building was a community effort, with volunteers contributing many hours of donated labor toward its construction. Local organizers of the project also solicited financial and other support from local residents and the city. The cannery was to be a non-profit enterprise, financed in part

¹⁹ Production and Marketing Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Community Canning Centers: Miscellaneous Publication No. 544,” (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., issued April 1944 and revised March 1946).

²⁰ National Park Service, “Canning and Food Preservation on the World War II Home Front,” (National Park Service: Washington, D.C., last updated Nov. 16, 2023), <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/canning-and-food-preservation-on-the-world-war-ii-home-front.htm>, downloaded on July 25, 2024.

²¹ Naugher, R. E., “Improving the Program of Instruction in School-Community Canneries.” *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, Vol. 18, No. 8., 1946, pp. 148-149.

²² “Community Canning Plant at Moroni,” *Mt. Pleasant Pyramid*, May 12, 1944, p.6.

²³ Moroni Historical Committee, *History of Moroni City*, pp.399-400

²⁴ “Community Canning Plant at Moroni,” *Mt. Pleasant Pyramid*, May 12, 1944, p.6.

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by selling two thousand shares at \$100 each.²⁵ A 1945 newspaper article noted that the building was financed with \$5,500 in cash and many hours of donated labor.²⁶ The project may have received some state or federal funding as well, given that there were government programs supporting community canneries, though the only support from state or federal sources was the donation of cannery equipment from the State Department of Education.²⁷ Beyond that, the available historical records reference only the encouragement and professional advice those agencies provided for this cannery project.

Moroni City was also involved in the effort, contributing \$500 in cash and donating the land on which the building was constructed,²⁸ dividing off a parcel on the west side of the city lot that included the town hall and the fire station (see Figure 3, c.1945 Sanborn map update). This land donation was formalized on December 5th, 1945. The deed filed with the county recorder on that date transferred the cannery parcel to the North Sanpete School District for one dollar and noted that the school district “with the cooperation of the citizens of Moroni City and nearby residents erected a building suitable for a community cannery to be operated in coordination with the educational and extension programs of the [school district].” It also included a provision that if the school district failed to operate the cannery for one year during the 30-year agreement term, then the property would revert to the city.²⁹

Though the cannery was very much a locally driven initiative, it enjoyed the support of federal and state agencies charged with encouraging local food preservation programs, especially regarding some of the technical aspects of safe and efficient canning processes. The local newspaper reported the following in August 1946 when the cannery was put into operation:

Three years of cooperative community effort were climaxed Wednesday, August 7th at Moroni when the school-community cannery began operation under the direction of James Ryan, Food Preservation Specialist for the United States Department of Agriculture. Following three days of final preparations, green beans, beets, carrots and chard were canned Wednesday afternoon as Mr. Ryan gave detailed instruction in the use of canning equipment and food preservation methods.

The article went on to describe other aspects of the new operation:

The Moroni School-Community Canning Plant is an excellent example of progressive community enterprise. Much credit is due Mr. Westenkow and Mr. Kelson...for their untiring efforts in soliciting membership contributions, obtaining support of Moroni City and surrounding communities, coordinating their efforts with the North Sanpete School District, and for supervising the actual construction of the building and the placement of the equipment.

The services of the Food Preservation Specialists were made available through the cooperation of Avarad A. Rigby, Production and Marketing Administration, Salt Lake City, Utah, who accompanied Mr. Ryan to Moroni. Both Department of Agriculture men are enthusiastic over the canning prospects in this vicinity, and feel that with proper organization the plant can handle the food preservation for all school lunches within the district as well as for church(,) club, and community groups.³⁰

²⁵ Moroni Historical Committee, *History of Moroni City*, pp.399-400.

²⁶ Lyman Willardson, “Moroni Waits Opening of Canning Unit,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 26, 1945, p.12A.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Sanpete County Recorder, “Deed #148414” (December 5, 1945).

³⁰ “Community Plant Begins Operation at Moroni Site,” *Mt. Pleasant Pyramid*, August 9, 1946, p.1.

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The cannery's first month of operation was very busy. The local newspaper claimed in September of 1946 that 330 families from the area had used its services. The article also noted that "For the convenience of the people the plant keeps on hand a supply of peaches, tomatoes and prunes which can be had at market prices." It also advised that "Cans will be available if desired. However, it is preferable that fruit be put in your own bottles."³¹

The cannery continued busy over the next several years. It was noted that during the 1949 season there was a "heavy run on food processing for individuals and school lunch programs." This included "more than 16,000 gallons canned for school lunch programs in various sections of the state, and an estimated 30,000 cans processed by individual users of the cannery's facilities."³² Like of most canneries, the Moroni Cannery typically operated only during the harvest months of summer and fall.

But the post-WWII years brought changes that would doom most of the community canneries in Utah, including the Moroni Cannery, and those in many other states throughout the U.S. The post-WWII national economy embraced large-scale systems that emphasized efficiency and profit-making (versus the "support-the-war" and "home-production" goals), shifting the calculus and putting most local canneries into an unviable situation.³³

Even small for-profit canneries could not compete with the large regional commercial canneries. For example, the Sanpete County towns of Ephraim and Manti both saw their privately owned canneries shuttered in the early 1950s after the national Hunts Food Corporation decided they were no longer profitable. Significant cuts to the prices Hunts was willing to pay local growers was a big part of the decision to close those plants. Local farmers were unwilling to continue providing the volume of peas and other produce to make those facilities viable if the pay for doing so was too low.³⁴ In addition to commercial cannery competition at the time, improvements were being made concurrently to freezing rather than canning many commodities, further eroding the community cannery effort.³⁵

Though no specific reasons were given (or have been found in the historical record) for closing the Moroni Cannery, it probably boiled down to the simple fact that it was no longer economically viable. And perhaps the corps of volunteers or modestly paid staff ran out of steam and enthusiasm for an enterprise that was trending downward.

The local history of Moroni, published in 2009, simply noted that "the cannery operated for seven years with no reason for its demise." But it also noted that "It was one very busy place while it operated."³⁶ The cannery's financial ledger, which is in possession of the current owners, ends abruptly in September 1952.

Post-Cannery Period

Per the original terms of the 1945 deed, the city reclaimed the building and property from the North Sanpete School District, an action that was formalized by a quit-claim deed dated May 4, 1961. It is

³¹ "Moroni Cannery is Ready to Serve the People of Sanpete," *Mt. Pleasant Pyramid*, Sept.13, 1946, p.1.

³² "Cannery at Moroni Ends '49 Season," *Salt Lake Telegram*, Oct. 11, 1949, p.10.

³³ "Canning and Food Preservation on the World War II Home Front." National Park Service. Last updated November 16, 2023. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/canning-and-food-preservation-on-the-world-war-ii-home-front.htm>, downloaded July 25, 2024.

³⁴ "Ephraim Cannery May Operate This Year," *Manti Messenger*, March 3, 1950, p.1; "Dawn After Darkness," *Manti Messenger*, March 17, 1950, p.4.

³⁵ Emily Matchar. "A Brief History of the Mason Jar." *Smithsonian Magazine*, August 26, 2020.

³⁶ Moroni Historical Committee, *History of Moroni City*, p.400.

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likely, however, that the city began using the building prior to that date for a variety of city functions—water department headquarters, housing fire engines, parade float storage, etc.

From the early 1950s into at least the late 1970s the building was able to serve a variety of city uses in large part because of its open floor plan, vehicular access, and central location in the community on the city-owned lot. Today, it is the sole surviving structure from the decades-old city complex located at the NW corner of 100 West and 100 South streets that previously included the two-story city hall and a small fire station.³⁷ Like most city lots such as this, it probably also served as a storage and work area for miscellaneous materials and even vehicles that are typically part of a municipality with its variety of programs and projects, such as water, sewer, irrigation, road maintenance, etc.

In the early 1970s the city acquired its first ambulance for local EMT services, so the cannery served as home for that vehicle as well. According to one of the first two EMTs at the time, Casey Blackburn, the cannery building needed some work before it could accommodate the ambulance. “After a few—well, many—hours of cleaning and fixing the huge wooden front door, we made an adequate building to keep an ambulance in.”³⁸ A new public safety building was completed a few blocks away in 1982.³⁹ It had space for the ambulance and fire engines, apparently leaving the cannery building largely unused for anything but storage.

By the time the current owners, Bradley and Julia Aldridge, acquired the building in 2000, the building was in a “dilapidated condition.”⁴⁰ Over the years, the Aldridges have made the building into a very functional and attractive art studio for Bradley, a professional artist. The last phases of that rehabilitation work were culminated in January 2026 when the National Park Service approved the project for federal rehabilitation tax credits after determining that all the work met the required Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

Cooperative Enterprises in Moroni

Throughout its history, Moroni City has prided itself on its strong spirit of volunteerism and cooperation. The town history written in 2009 makes special note of this in the subtitle of the book, *History of Moroni City, 1859-2009: Legacy of Cooperation*. This cooperative spirit was noted decades earlier in a 1955 newspaper article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*.⁴¹ It noted that “Cooperation has been the watchword in Moroni” since its beginning in 1859. The article noted the following cooperative enterprises in the city’s history to date:

- The Big Pasture: a community cattle-grazing field, 1859+
- The first city library established by donations from local young men (1890s?)
- Amusement Center, first known as The Pavilion then as Paradise Gardens, 1890
- The People’s Sugar Factory, 1917
- Turkey processing plant, 1936*
- The cooperative feed mill, 1937*
- Community canning plant, 1946 (this building)

³⁷ Sanborn Fire Insurance map for Moroni, sheet 3.

³⁸ Moroni Historical Committee, *History of Moroni City*, p. 508.

³⁹ “Moroni—125 Years of Progress,” *Mt. Pleasant Pyramid*, December 5, 1984, p.3.

⁴⁰ Moroni Historical Committee, *History of Moroni City*, p.400.

⁴¹ “Moroni...”, *Salt Lake Tribune*, Dec. 25, 1955, p.57.

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- Moroni Race Track, 1946
- Cooperative service station and implement company, 1955

*The turkey operation in Moroni is of particular note. It is the functional headquarters of the national Norbest Inc./Pitman Farms (aka Moroni Turkey Processing) turkey-raising and -processing enterprise.

In addition to the cooperative ventures cited above, the Moroni Gymnasium was completed in 1954 as a joint effort by the city, the school district, and the local congregations of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Many local men contributed labor toward its construction.⁴² This gym, located near the old high school site, is still standing and in use today (2026). It was probably one of the last of the major facilities built in town through such cooperative efforts.

The emergence of state and federal government programs and funds in later decades have played a primary role in the development of other city facilities and services, including a new \$100,000+ fire truck (1986) and the \$1.22 million new city hall (2008), both beneficiaries of significant contributions of funds from the state Community Impact Board.⁴³ Volunteer and cooperative community efforts for capital construction/improvement projects became less necessary as a result.

Community Canneries in Utah

Although there is no known history of community canneries in Utah, a “community cannery” (and variations thereof) search in the online *Utah Digital Newspapers* website revealed that similar canneries were put into operation in several communities (most of Utah’s newspapers have been scanned and are available at digitalnewspapers.org.) Communities with canneries included Moroni, Oak City, Vernal, Morgan, Lehi, Granite Park (now South Salt Lake), and Pleasant Grove. There may very well have been other communities that joined in, but only those listed above were identified in the “community cannery” online search described above. The Moroni and Oak City canneries are the only ones in Utah that have been confirmed to be standing at this time.

Many of the community cannery buildings, such as Moroni and Oak City, were constructed specifically for that purpose, though some were installed in existing buildings. One example of the latter was in Vernal, where the cannery was set up “in the old central school building.”⁴⁴

Most Utah canneries started operation in the mid-to-late 1940s, though the Pleasant Grove cannery opened several years earlier in 1938.⁴⁵ All were associated with local school districts, though to varying degrees, with some apparently focusing heavily on providing canned goods for school lunch programs and others providing more limited services to schools.⁴⁶

The canneries operated primarily in just the fruit-and-vegetable harvest months of summer and fall. The long months of idleness each year likely contributed to their early demise as viable enterprises. This was probably especially true for the canneries that had investors or stockholders who may have had hopes for a financial return.

⁴² Moroni Historical Committee, *History of Moroni City*, p.422.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 419, 482.

⁴⁴ “Community Cannery Now In Operation,” *Vernal Express*, Aug. 8, 1944, p.1.

⁴⁵ “Community Packing Plant is Operating,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, Aug. 2, 1938, p.8.

⁴⁶ A number of Utah newspaper articles related to this issue were identified through “community cannery” and “cannery” word searches in *Utah Digital Newspapers*.

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As noted previously, community canneries also provided their equipment and services to citizens for their personal canning need, typically on pre-appointed days and times each week during the canning season or by making arrangements with the cannery managers. Patrons of the Moroni Cannery were advised in a local newspaper article in September 1946 that they could purchase fruit at the cannery or bring their own, and that "Cans will be available if desired [for a small fee]. However, it is preferable that fruit be put in your own bottles." The article went on to state that "The Cannery has been built for the use of the people, and it is hoped that many will take advantage of the opportunity." It also noted that "330...families have used the Cannery up to date."⁴⁷

Providing canning services to individuals and families was probably not a very profitable part of cannery operations, given that canning at home was—and still is—a common and affordable option for many families. Women tended to be the ones in the family most responsible for food preservation and preparation—and for child rearing—so it may be that canning at home allowed them to process foods and look after their children at the same time rather than going to the community cannery where, for safety reasons, children were not allowed.

Other communities took notice of Moroni's efforts. At least one town, Oak City, some 60 miles to the west, followed up by supporting the construction of a cannery there a few years later. After investigating the Moroni Cannery, a local resident, Melvin J. Roper, initiated the effort and secured at least some of the funding for the building from local-resident stockholders.⁴⁸ The concrete block cannery was completed at a cost of \$8,000 in the summer of 1948.⁴⁹ It was built on Mr. Roper's large residential town lot located at approximately 140 E. Center. The local newspaper made note of the new facility in July 1948:

The cannery is a cooperative with most of Oak City's residents having an interest... The cannery is the first in Millard County, and among the first in the state, and is patterned after the one in Moroni, now in its third year of operation.⁵⁰

The Moroni Cannery may have served as inspiration for the Oak City Cannery, but the two differ architecturally. The Moroni building is rectangular (approximately 30x100) with a gable roof, while the Oak City structure is much squarer and has a hip roof with gablets on the north and south. Both, however, were constructed of concrete block.

The Oak City Cannery was in operation for only about five years. According to the owner, the cannery "was not paying its way."⁵¹ He converted it to multi-purpose shop use soon after closing the cannery operation. The building is still standing, though it has been expanded and altered over the years and would not be considered eligible for National Register listing under the cannery context.

⁴⁷ "Sugar Available for Canning Fruit: Moroni Cannery Is Ready to Serve The People of Sanpete," *Mt. Pleasant Pyramid*, September 13, 1946, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Margaret Roper, *Echoes of the Sage and Cedars*, p. 71.

⁴⁹ "Oak City Cannery Is Ready for Fall Season," *Millard County Chronicle*, July 29, 1948, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Margaret Roper, *Echoes of the Sage and Cedars*, p. 71.

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Beginning 9 rods 6 feet W of the SE corner of Lot 1, Block 17, Plat A, Moroni City Survey. North 10 rods, West 60 feet, South 10 rods, E 60 feet to the beginning. See map for boundary detail.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the current and historical parcel on which the building has been located since its construction in 1946.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Roger Roper & Jackson Chapman, Preservation Consultants
organization: _____
street & number: PO Box 762
city or town: Spring City state: Utah zip code: 84662
email: rogervroper@gmail.com
telephone: (801) 505-8136
date: May 21, 2026

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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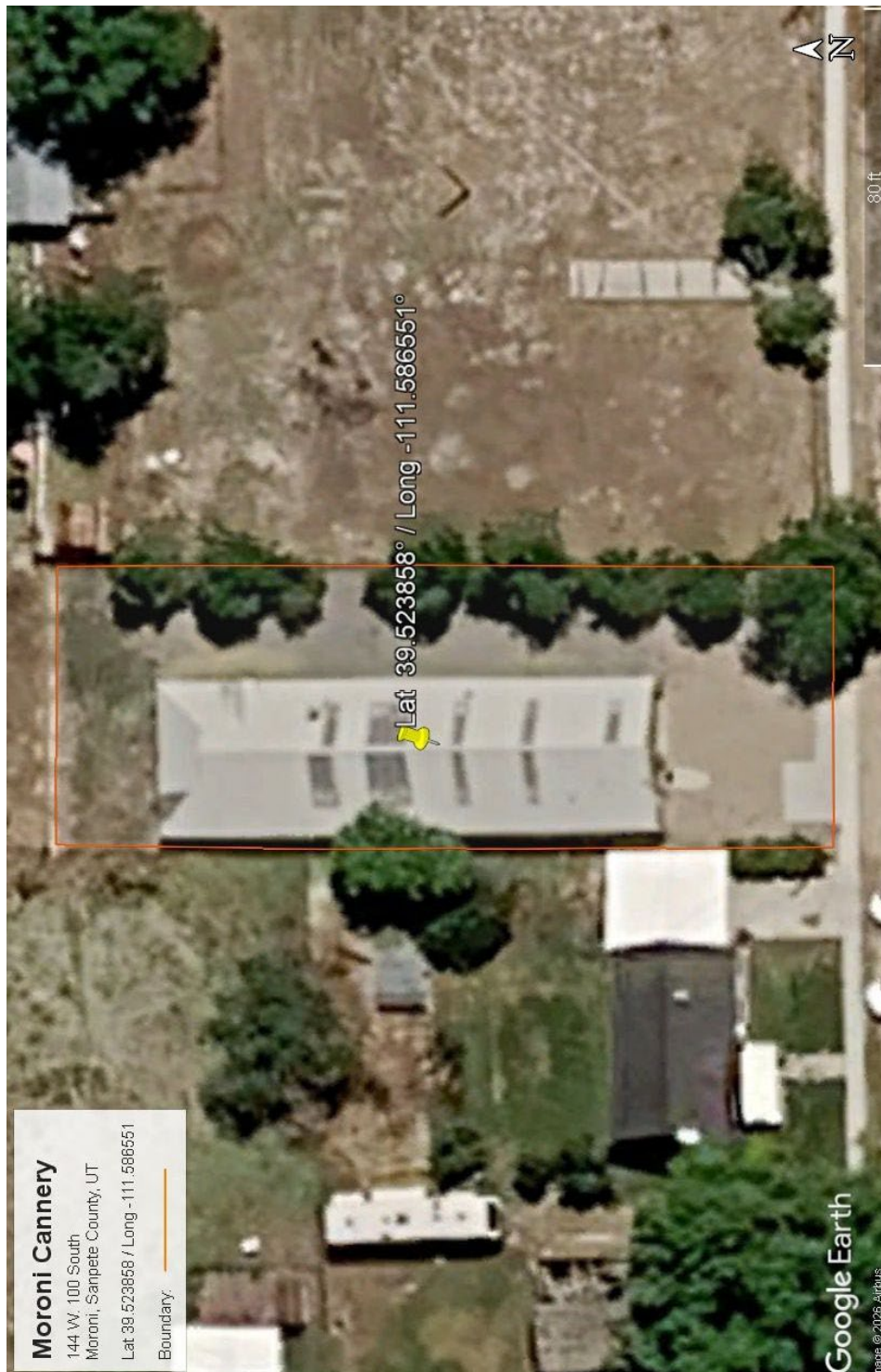
Maps



Map 1

Moroni Cannery
Name of Property

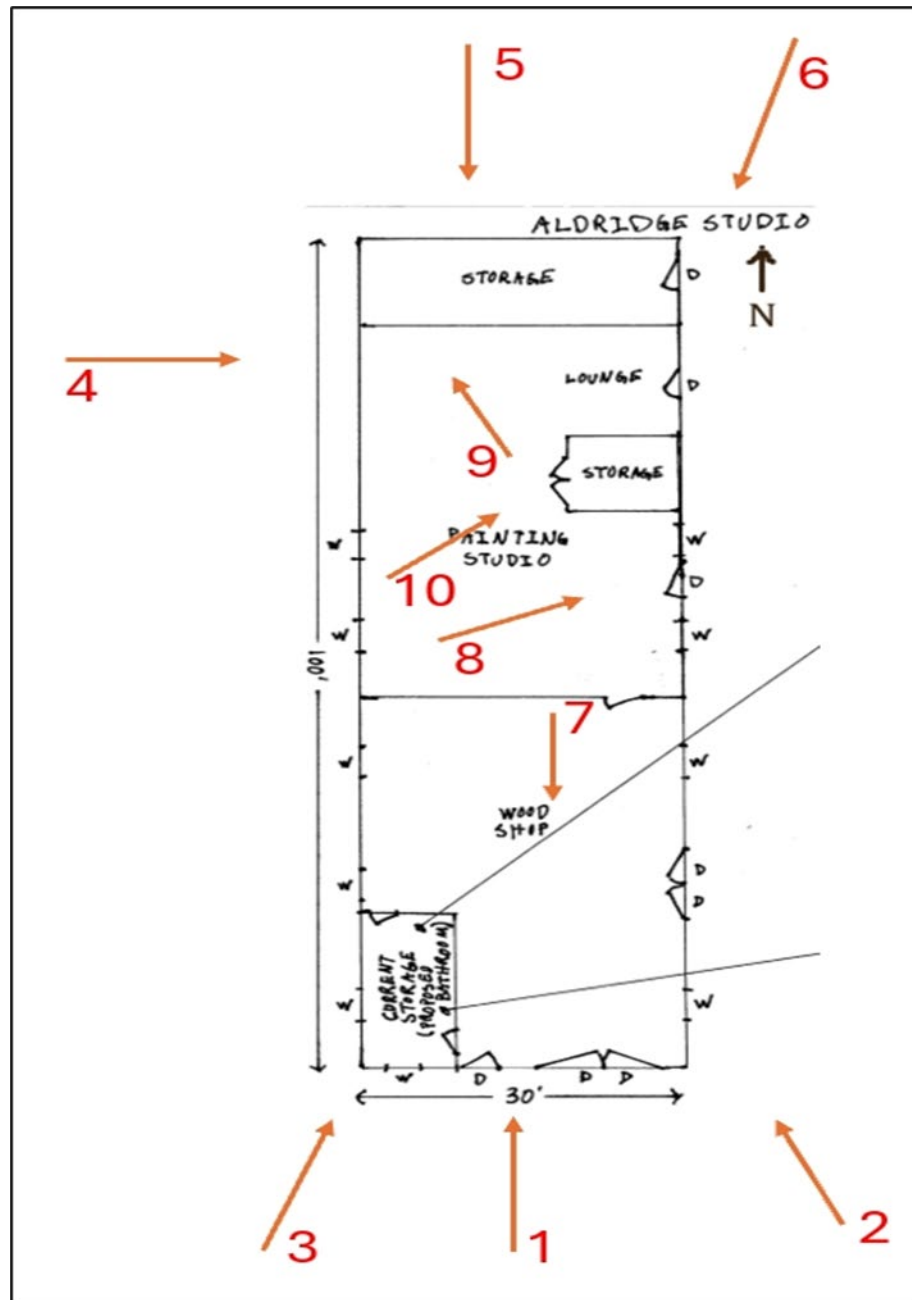
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Map 2

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Map 3, Photograph Key

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: *Moroni Cannery*

City or Vicinity: *Moroni*

County: *Sanpete* State: *Utah*

Photographer: *Roger Roper*

Date Photographed: *October 2025, except as otherwise noted.*

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

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Photographs



Photo 1 of 10. South elevation. Camera facing north.



Photo 2 of 10. Southeast corner. Camera facing northwest.

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Photo 3 of 10. Southwest corner. Camera facing northeast. Photo taken 3-11-26.



Photo 4 of 10. West elevation. Camera facing east.

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Photo 5 of 10. North elevation. Camera facing south/southeast.



Photo 6 of 10. East elevation. Camera facing southwest. Photo taken 3-11-26.

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Photo 7 of 10. Frame/wood shop. Camera facing south. Restroom/storage enclosure on the right.



Photo 8 of 10. Art studio. Camera facing east/northeast.

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Photo 9 of 10. Art studio. Camera facing northwest.



Photo 10 of 10. Art studio. Camera facing northeast.

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Figures

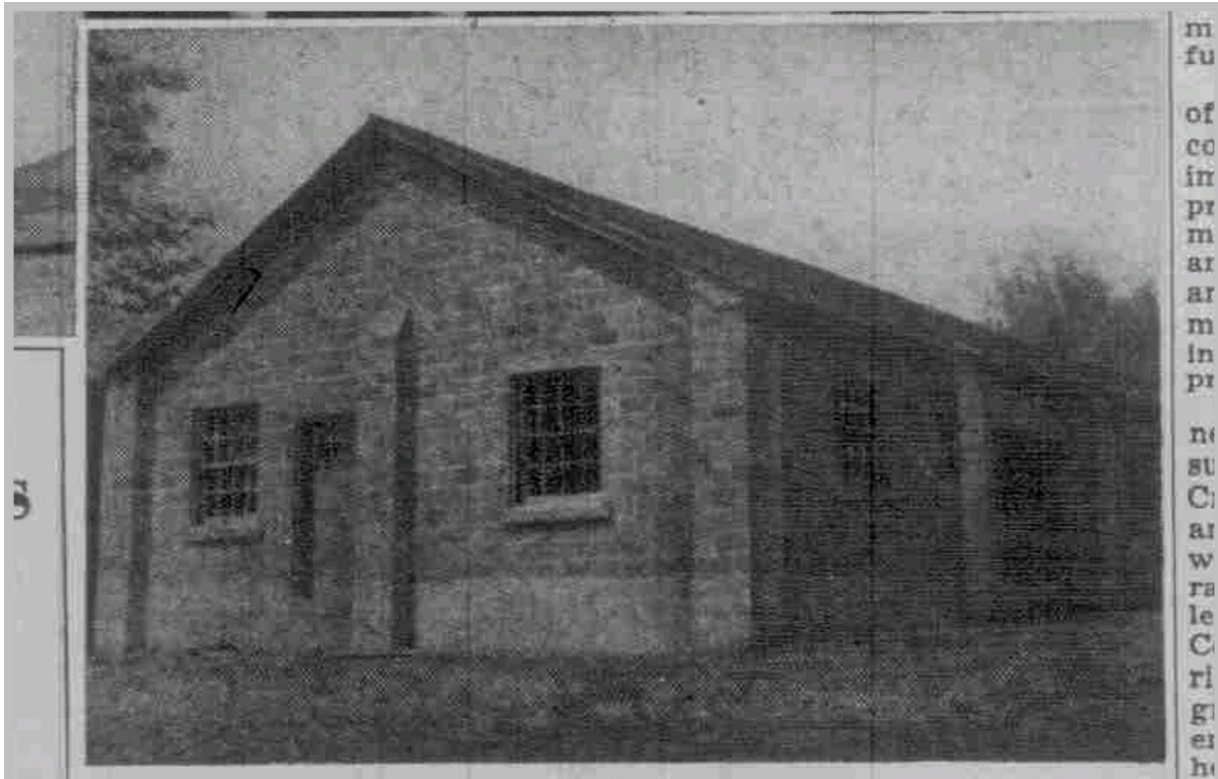


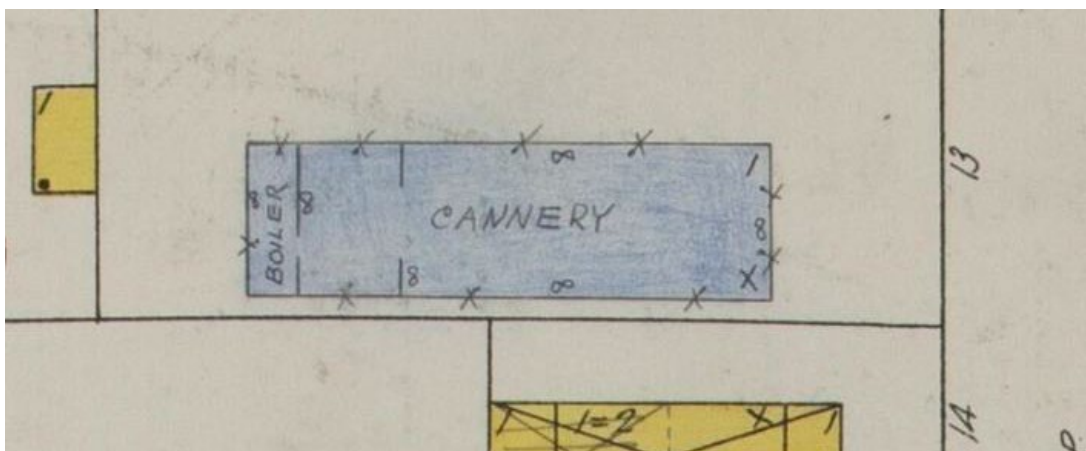
Figure 1: Photo of the cannery as part of a newspaper article, "Moroni Waits Opening of Canning Unit," *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 26, 1945, p.12A (see Bibliography). The cannery appears to be largely complete on the exterior, but the interior equipment wouldn't be fully operational until August 1946.

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Figure 2 (above) & Figure 3 (close-up below): Sanborn Map, Moroni, Utah, 1924, updated through c.1945 in draft form that includes various marked up changes after 1924. Figure 2 shows the city hall and fire house on the town lot where the cannery was added in 1945-46.



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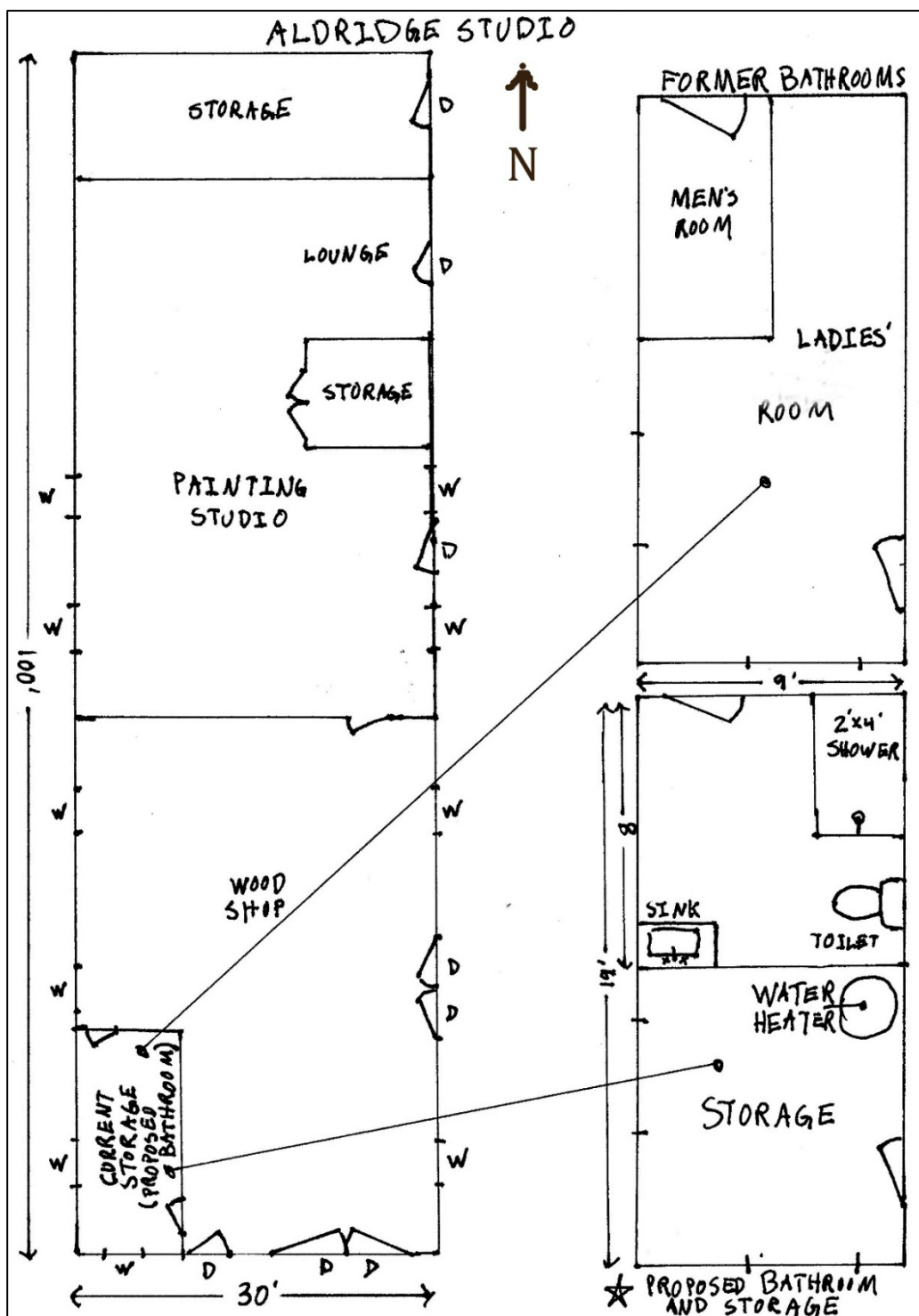


Figure 5: Cannery/Studio floorplan (2024 drawing). Proposed changes to the restroom/storage area were completed in 2025 as a federal tax credit project

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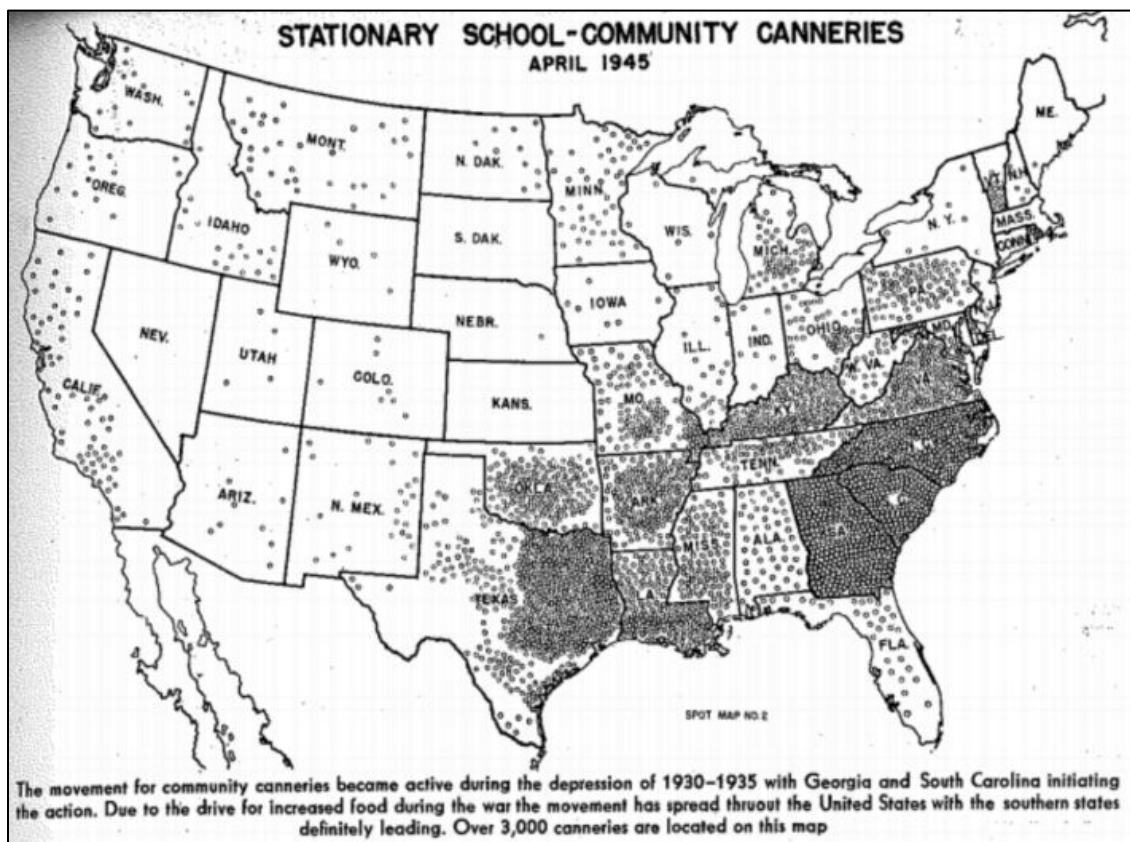


Figure 6: School canneries were found in nearly every state, but primarily in the South. The map shows locations of school canneries as of April 1945 (Naugher, 1946).

Property Owner information:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name Bradley and Julia Aldridge
Address PO Box 68
City or Town Moroni State UT Zip code 84646
Telephone/email 435-469-1649 aldridgefineart@gmail.com

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