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IN THIS ISSUE



With this issue of the *Utah Historical Quarterly* we celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Denver and Rio Grande Depot—home of the Utah State Historical Society for the last thirty years. As we commemorate the centennial of our beloved D&RG Depot in the first two articles in this issue, we also acknowledge the heritage of all of Utah's historic buildings with articles on three other buildings: the Provo Union Depot, Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage in Salt Lake City, and the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle in Heber City.

Three of the four buildings continue to be integral and valued assets to their respective communities although not for the same use as when constructed. One, sadly, was quietly demolished in 1986 without recognition of its potential to help meet the transportation needs of the twenty-first century.

When the first trains departed from the new Denver and Rio Grande Depot in mid- August 1910, they helped usher in a new phase in Utah's development and demonstrated Salt Lake City's emergence as a progressive, modern

FRONT COVER: *Watercolor of the Denver and Rio Grande Depot, ca. 2009, by artist Ian M. Ramsay. BACK COVER:* *Artist Elva E. Malin painted the Denver and Rio Grande Depot as it appeared in about 1910. This oil on canvas work was painted in the 1980s. BOTH PAINTINGS ARE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE UTAH DIVISION OF STATE HISTORY.*

IN THIS ISSUE: *Construction workers on the northwest corner of the Salt Lake City Denver and Rio Grande Depot.* UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

American city. Indeed, the construction of one new train station was cause for pride in any community—but Salt Lake City could now boast two magnificent stations with the completion the previous year of the Union Pacific Station at the west end of South Temple Street three blocks north and one block east of the D&RG Station. Our first article recalls the individuals involved in making the depot a reality, the challenges they faced, the competition between the Denver and Rio Grande and Union Pacific railroads, and how the building has served the community during the last one hundred years. Our second article, a companion to the first, is a photographic essay using images from the Utah State Historical Society collection. The twenty photographs illustrate the construction, use, and magnificence of the Denver and Rio Grande Depot.

Less than five months after the first trains left the newly completed Salt Lake City Denver and Rio Grande Depot, forty-five miles to the south in Utah Valley, the first trains left the newly completed Provo Union Station on January 2, 1911. Our third article in this issue examines the intense and bitter battle between Provo east and west side residents over the location of the new station.

While the construction of new railroad stations in Salt Lake City and Provo demonstrated Utah's emergence as an urban society, another building, the Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage completed in 1900 at Twenty-first South and Fifth East in Salt Lake City, reminds us that one consequence of urbanization was the need for community institutions to care for children. Our fourth article demonstrates how this was accomplished in Salt Lake City by the Sisters of the Holy Cross at the Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage from 1891 until 1953. Two years later, in 1955, St. Ann's School opened in the former orphanage building. During the 1990s the building underwent a ten-year renovation and continues to function today as a school for preschool through the eighth grade.

In 1966 the United States Congress passed the landmark National Historic Preservation Act, expanding the National Register of Historic Places and providing a federal/state partnership for the nation's historic preservation program and the establishment of state historic preservation offices in each of the fifty states. One event that helped pave the way for the establishment of Utah's Historic Preservation Office, the Utah Heritage Foundation, and an invigorated historic preservation awareness in Utah was the 1964-1965 fight to prevent the demolition of the historic Wasatch Stake Tabernacle constructed in 1889. That struggle and the story of the building's subsequent preservation and adaptation is the concluding article in our 2010 Summer issue.

As future historians access the accomplishments and shortcomings of the last decades of the twentieth century, surely one of the positive aspects that should be recognized and praised is the emergence of a preservation ethic. That commitment has helped halt the destruction of many of the state's historic buildings and homes while giving them new life through restoration and adaptive renovation. As a consequence, many Utah historic buildings which might have been destroyed have been preserved and utilized for new purposes by which they will continue to serve, educate, and inspire present and future generations.



One Building's Life: A History of Salt Lake City's Denver and Rio Grande Depot

BY BRANDON JOHNSON

In 1910, workmen finished construction on Salt Lake City's Denver and Rio Grande Depot. The project had been long and exceedingly complicated, fraught with interpersonal friction, false starts, and epistolary scuffles. Now the station was finally done, and the man who had seen it to fruition, architect Henry Schlacks of Chicago, no doubt was relieved to be able to write J. G. Gwyn, Chief Engineer for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, and say that "the Salt Lake Depot construction has all been completed so far as I am concerned." What remained, Schlacks pointed out, were a few simple tasks—mainly work on the ventilation and lighting systems—that he would stay on to help out with, though the architect reminded Gwyn that such work was "not part of [his] contract." Beyond these finishing touches, little remained to be done: in effect, the Rio Grande Depot was born in 1910.¹

To write of a railroad depot's "birth" might seem like an odd, overly strained conceit. Buildings, after all, are not a living species. In *The Salt Lake City Denver and Rio Grande Depot, completed in 1910*.

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¹ Henry J. Schlacks to J. G. Gwyn, October 29, 1910, Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Records, 1907–1947, MSS B 294, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter referred to as D&RGRR).

the words of cultural historian Neil Harris, they cannot “assume moral responsibility, speak, write, or perform in the manner of human beings.” Nevertheless, buildings do possess life cycles, marked by celebrations of birth and christening—such as cornerstone-laying and ribbon-cuttings—and rites of death—such as public demolitions. What is more, built structures are animated by the people who use and inhabit them; they demonstrate “signs of life” (to borrow a phrase from Harris). Certainly, buildings deserve attention for their unique architectural qualities—the Rio Grande Depot definitely has its aesthetic and formal idiosyncrasies—but, ultimately structures are built to discharge a purpose, and in the case of the depot it was to act early on as a functional interface between the city and an increasingly sophisticated national industrial complex of trains, tracks, and people, particularly workers and passengers, then later as home to several offices of Utah’s government. The building has lived a life, and to understand fully its place in Salt Lake City’s contemporary built environment we have to acknowledge that life; it was born, reached maturity, cheated death, and, ultimately, was reborn. To tell the story of that life in a comprehensive way would require a book-length study; here, readers will find a more impressionistic portrait of the building, one that illuminates the station’s relationship to its neighborhood and that highlights, in particular, lesser-known stories of its construction.²

That the Rio Grande Depot was conceived at all was something of a small miracle, considering the fact that the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (or D&RG), the company at the forefront of the effort to build the depot, never actually intended to move into Utah from its Colorado stronghold. The railroad’s founder, William Jackson Palmer, originally meant to build and operate a railroad on a north-south axis, sticking close to the eastern slopes of the Centennial State’s mountainous spine in order to connect Denver with El Paso, and perhaps, in time, even Mexico City. But brutal competition and an adverse out-of-court settlement with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé Railroad forced the D&RG to abandon Palmer’s “southern vision” and look further west for new opportunities, which in this case meant hauling coal and other minerals from Rocky Mountain mines, as well as giving the Union Pacific a run for its money by breaking into the Salt Lake City freight and passenger market.³

It was not until 1883 that the Denver and Rio Grande became an official part of Utah railroad history, when its crews and crews from a related company, the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway (known as the RGW, or simply as “the Western”), met near Green River, Utah, after laying track eastward from Salt Lake City and westward from Denver. (The RGW had been leased by the Denver and Rio Grande in 1882 and it

² Neil Harris, *Building Lives: Constructing Rites and Passages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 3.

³ Robert G. Athearn, “Utah and the Coming of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 27 (April 1959): 129-31.



**William Jackson Palmer, founder
of the Denver and Rio Grande
Railroad.**

shared a general manager and several board members, including Palmer, with the D&RG, effectively making it an informal subsidiary of the Denver and Rio Grande. By 1901, the D&RG would buy the Western outright.)⁴

The building that originally served the Denver and Rio Grande in Utah's capital city in the late nineteenth century turned out not to be much of a conversation piece, at least when compared to the Rio Grande Depot most Utahns are familiar with today. It never seemed to seize the attention of Salt Lake City's populace, despite being a key entrepôt for railroad traffic and the site of several large send-offs of troops leaving for action in the Spanish-American War.⁵ Indeed, by the late 1890s, railroad boosters and officials of the D&RG were already calling for a "union depot" that would serve as a transcontinental connection point between the Western Pacific (WP) and the Denver and Rio Grande (both of which were now effectively controlled by one man: railroad magnate George Gould).⁶ In the early twentieth century, "union stations" or "union depots" had become a popular means of sharing the burdensome expense of constructing a building to house trains and offices. Some cities and towns (Salt Lake City among them) had to contend with multiple railroad lines stretching into their business centers. If each railroad had its own station, the field could quickly become overcrowded and competing companies would be forced to gobble up huge tracts of increasingly scarce urban land. Union depots were a collaborative solution to this problem, though as one student of historic railroad stations has pointed out, getting former rivals to cooperate could be a difficult endeavor. (Charles Mellon's Northern Pacific and James J. Hill's Great Northern, for example, quarreled bitterly over the site and plans for Seattle's joint depot.)⁷

To think of the construction of the present-day Rio Grande Depot, however, solely as a practical decision to share resources is to ignore the highly competitive forces, both organizational and personal, that powered American railroads in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For the Denver and Rio Grande and the Union Pacific (UP)—and the men

⁴ Robert G. Athearn, *The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad: Rebel of the Rockies* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), 115–22.

⁵ *Deseret News*, May 24, 1898, and July 22, 1899.

⁶ "Denver and Rio Grande Station, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," State Historic Preservation Office file, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter referred to as SHPO).

⁷ Janet Greenstein Potter, *Great American Railroad Stations* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1996), 39.

who ran the companies, George Gould and Edward Harriman—Utah was a key battleground for determining whose transcontinental railroad network would ultimately win out; both men were willing to engage in a no-holds-barred contest to decide the question. The D&RG had come to Salt Lake City in part to break the UP's monopoly on the Utah market, a move that greatly irritated Harriman and his subordinates. But the Colorado company was also being positioned as a pawn, along with the Western Pacific line (which was completed in 1909, the year before the new depot was finished), in helping to fulfill Gould's vision of a second transcontinental line connecting the Mountain West with the Pacific Coast, one that might be able to out-compete the old Union Pacific–Central Pacific route completed in 1869. (This new line was made necessary by the Union Pacific's 1899 purchase of the Central Pacific which prevented the UP's competitors from exchanging passengers and freight hauled on the old line from California to Utah.) In this context, the construction of a sparkingly new, regal station would signal something more than the culmination of a cooperative campaign: it would signify transcontinental mastery of the rails.⁸

The Union Pacific had a healthy head start on the D&RG in Utah. The UP had been in the territory since meeting the Central Pacific at Promontory Summit in 1869, more than a decade before the arrival of the Colorado railroad. The Union Pacific's relationship with leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, however, was a difficult one, complicated by the UP's broken labor contract with the church, agreed to in May 1868 by Brigham Young and Samuel Reed of the railroad. The contract was for Utah's Mormons to grade, bridge, and tunnel the railroad's planned route from Echo Canyon, down Weber Canyon, to the Great Salt Lake, a project that not only would provide work to thousands of under-employed Utah men, but was also estimated to put more than \$2,000,000 in the church's coffers. When work on the route wrapped up in the spring of 1869, the Mormons had received about a million dollars of the more than two million promised, but then the funds dried up thanks to scandalous financial activities by the UP, followed by bankruptcy. According to historian Leonard Arrington, when the church finally reached a settlement with the UP, it received only about \$530,000, most (if not all) of it in iron and rolling stock.⁹

Much of this in-kind payment ended up being used by the Mormons on the construction of the Utah Central Railroad, a spur line designed to connect Salt Lake City with Ogden and the transcontinental line. LDS

⁸ Athearn, *Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad*, 196–97.

⁹ Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 258–70, and David Haward Bain, *Empire Express: Building the First Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 660. Also see Athearn, "Opening the Gates of Zion: Utah and the Coming of the Union Pacific Railroad," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 36 (Fall 1968): 307.

church authorities, including Brigham Young, bought early subscriptions of Utah Central stock and volunteer laborers lined up to grade and bridge the road. Work began in the summer of 1869 and wrapped up in January with a “last spike” ceremony, attended by local citizens, church authorities, and at least one representative of the Union Pacific; Young drove the spike, made of native Utah iron and engraved with a beehive, with a steel mallet fashioned by the men in the church’s public works department. The Mormon venture appeared to be a resounding success. Once the Utah Central was completed, however, the church turned around and sold a controlling interest in it to the UP, effectively opening Salt Lake City’s northern door to the much larger railroad from the east.¹⁰ The Union Pacific would also acquire controlling interest in at least three other Utah railroads—the Utah Southern (and its extensions), the Utah Northern, and the Summit County—effectively transforming the UP into a regional cartel.¹¹

It was onto this stage—dominated by a virtual UP monopoly—that the Denver and Rio Grande strode. To Union Pacific administrators, the D&RG was a late-coming intruder that had to be kept at bay. In Ogden, the UP won an injunction against its upstart competitor, barring the Rio Grande from completing a route into the city. According to historian Robert Athearn, D&RG employees “took matters into their own hands” cobbling together units of ties and rails and then spiriting them into the forbidden city under the cover of a rainstorm. They had been able to complete nearly 200 feet of track before Union Pacific watchmen discovered the scheme and dispatched an engine to rip up the illegal tracks with a chain.¹²

The competition between the two railroads may have been less physical in Utah’s capital city, but it was no less serious. In describing the rivalry, the *Salt Lake Tribune* referred to it as a “freight war” and reported a “good deal of trouble brewing” between the competing railroads. Tactics were cutthroat. When the UP reduced fares into Salt Lake City in an attempt to “freeze out its rival,” the Denver and Rio Grande countered with free rides between the capital and Ogden.¹³ Not surprisingly, Utahns heartily welcomed the interloper railroad and cheered the likely profits for them that would accrue from the D&RG’s competition with the UP. The *Tribune* summed up the typical Utahn’s sentiments by stating that the Rio Grande would be a “new outlet for Utah to the whole East” and, more grandly, a “new artery of commerce.” And who would benefit most from this new commercial “artery”? One correspondent for the *Tribune* argued that it would be “the mining interests of the Territory,” because the Colorado railroad had driven down the price of coke from twenty dollars a ton to ten dollars and allowed many closed mines “to resume work.” Similarly,

¹⁰ *Deseret News*, January 12, 1870, Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 270–75.

¹¹ Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 275–89.

¹² Athearn, *Denver and Rio Grande Western*, 125.

¹³ *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 24, 1883; Athearn, *Denver and Rio Grande Western*, 125.



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passengers, farmers and consumers would also gain from the D&RG's entry into the fray, as fares and shipping rates for staples dropped with the Rio Grande's coming.¹⁴

Workers digging a trench for the foundation of the Denver and Rio Grande Depot.

By the early twentieth century, the escalating rivalry between the Union Pacific and the Denver and Rio Grande played itself out in a new way: building construction. This was especially the case in Salt Lake City. In 1909, the Union Pacific completed its imposing mansard-roofed station at South Temple and Fourth West (now a prominent fixture in the Gateway shopping center). Designed by D. J. Patterson, the station was eye-catching in its grandiosity. A striking pair of towers guarded the front of the structure, while the rest of the building was ornamented with domed ceilings, stained glass windows, and ornate carved gargoyles.¹⁵

Not far behind the UP was the Denver and Rio Grande. The railroad and its allies were calling for a "union depot" on the city's west side as early as 1899. But it was a difficult sell at first, convincing the city council to allow the D&RG to build its depot. Streets would have to be closed and new tracks would need to be laid, significant modifications that some citizens living in the area strenuously opposed. They claimed, according to an article in the *Deseret News*, that their property would depreciate in value because of the closed roads, construction would "interfere with traffic," and "the laying of additional tracks would endanger the lives of persons crossing them." Residents of Salt Lake City's west side wanted the railroads to

¹⁴ *Salt Lake Tribune* March 29, 1883, and November 24, 1883.

¹⁵ John S. McCormick, *The Historic Buildings of Downtown Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1982), 122.



HENRY SCHLACKS SOCIETY

Henry Schlacks (1867-1938)
commissioned architect for the
Salt Lake City Denver and Rio
Grande Depot in 1906.

have “ample facilities,” explained one man in an 1899 public hearing, “but not at the expense of the residents along their lines. We also desire to have the privilege of crossing our streets without being blocked by waiting trains. What is needed is a proper number of viaducts.” It was his final comment, though, that best outlined the sociopolitical stakes of the issue. “It has been charged that the railroads were on the west side before the people were there,” he declared. “This is not true. Many people resided over there long before the railroads came.” The railroad’s corporate boosters were trying to minimize the opinions of people on the west side by writing residents out of their own neighborhood’s history, the outspoken man at the meeting seemed to be saying, and he was simply making sure not only that their concerns were properly validated, but that they also remained a part of the area’s story.¹⁶

Allies of the railroad were equally resolute in their arguments *for* the depot. At the same public hearing where detractors of the proposed building aired their views, a few businessmen, representing more than a hundred of their fellow entrepreneurs, rose in defense of the depot plan. One of the businessmen, F. J. Fabian, argued that the “whole city should not be made to suffer for one locality.” Other interests stood to benefit greatly from the station. Indeed, “a number of large business concerns were interested in the building of a union depot,” Fabian declared, leaving to people’s imaginations exactly what those business concerns were. Another businessman called on citizens to think about what would be best for the entire city, and asserted that the greatest good could only be realized by building the depot.¹⁷

In the end, the depot’s partisans won out, though delays meant that advanced planning for the project would not begin in earnest until 1906, with the choice of an architect. Indeed, by the new century’s first decade, it appears that little progress had been made on the project. When the city council began dragging its feet in 1902, the D&RG was forced to post a bond worth one-hundred thousand dollars as a show of good faith and to guarantee its part in the project.¹⁸

Conceiving the station appears to have been the easy part: the depot’s gestation would be long and its birth hard. While the planning process for

¹⁶ *Desert News*, November 28, 1899.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, April 9, 1902.

the building was not the task of a single person, Chicago architect Henry Schlacks probably wished by the end that it had been. Best known as a designer of religious buildings, including St. Paul's Church on Chicago's Hoyne Avenue, Schlacks was born to German parents who immigrated to the United States following their home country's botched 1848 democratic revolution. After finishing his secondary school education in Chicago, Schlacks secured a place as an apprentice in the renowned architectural firm of Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan, where he learned the basics of the architect's craft, and then polished off his training with a two-year stint at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Schlacks did not follow in the modernist footsteps of his tutors, however, choosing instead to inject his commissions with a Gothic flavor that seemed more in step with the sensibilities of thirteenth-century Europeans than nineteenth- and twentieth-century Americans. (On St. Paul's in Chicago, Schlacks worked as his own contractor, enlisting, in time-honored pre-modern fashion, the labor of the local parish's German Catholics.)¹⁹

It is intriguing to contemplate what motivated Henry Schlacks, a designer of Gothic Midwestern churches, to compete for the commission on Salt Lake City's Rio Grande Depot. The short answer may have been money; perhaps Schlacks surmised there was more cash to be made further west, especially from deep-pocketed railroads, than what could be had in Chicago's increasingly competitive architectural market. And it was not as though the depot commission would be something entirely new for the Chicagoan. He had designed at least one other railroad station, namely the Denver and Rio Grande Depot in Grand Junction, Colorado. (The plans for the Grand Junction station demonstrate just how versatile Schlacks was as an architect; the depot, constructed in 1905, had a terra cotta veneer and was also decorated with Italianate Renaissance revival features.)²⁰

Schlacks' relationship with the Denver and Rio Grande over the Salt Lake City depot was a complicated one, and sometimes devolved into full-blown antagonism, particularly when the subject turned to money. Not surprisingly, this unfortunate reality retarded not only the architect's submission of his plans, but the depot's construction as well. Early in the relationship, things seemed to go smoothly. In an April 1906 letter to the D&RG's chief engineer at the time, E. J. Yard, general manager A. C. Ridgway entreated Yard to "kindly render [Schlacks] all assistance you can and furnish whatever data you have if called upon regarding the new passenger depot at Salt Lake City." Ridgway also pointed out to Yard that the architect was "to take entire charge of the work, drawings, plans, superintendence, etc.," and he charged the engineer with going over the "matter thoroughly and fully as to what his [Schlacks'] duties will be in

¹⁹ Roula Mouroudellis Geraniotis, "German Architectural Theory and Practice in Chicago, 1850-1900," *Winterthur Portfolio* 21 (Winter 1986): 293, 302-303.

²⁰ Denver and Rio Grande Station, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, SHPO.

connection with the compensation he receives and suggest that proper contract be drawn up.”²¹ By May of 1906, Schlacks had completed his initial plans for the depot and submitted a bill of \$2,500 to the D&RG for his services.²²

The architect learned rather quickly how communication regarding a complicated project can break down—and how reluctant the railroad was to part with its money. The first instance of miscommunication had to do with the scope of the project and Schlacks’ payment for it. D&RG officials claimed it was their understanding that Schlacks would take care of the entire project—from drawing up plans to the final supervision of the project—for 3 percent of the project’s total cost. But in a letter to then-assistant engineer J. G. Gwyn, Yard alluded to the fact that Schlacks did not have the same understanding, and the two parties ended up having to hash out a deal whereby the architect would be paid 3½ percent of the cost of the project for supervising the entire venture. That figure, complained Schlacks, was “so narrow a margin that it depends upon the time required to put up the building whether there will be any profit in it.”²³

Schlacks complained a lot about the depot project, but he had legitimate reason to grouse. Railroad officials next rejected his initial architectural drawings, saying that his plans called for a building that was too “elaborate and expensive” for the company’s tastes. “The intention now is to prepare other designs for a less expensive structure,” J. G. Gwyn wrote to E. N. Clark, a D&RG attorney.²⁴ As if that were not enough, the company also questioned Schlacks’ expected payment for the rejected plans, saying he was only entitled to \$7,500 instead of an anticipated \$14,720.50. The architect stuck to his guns, claiming he was only adhering to the widely-held custom that architects be paid 2½ percent of the lowest bid they receive for their plans; in the case of the depot, the lowest bid was \$589,700. Gwyn seemed resigned to the idea of paying Schlacks what he asked. “In absence of other agreement,” he wrote, “it seems we will have to abide by custom if unable to prevail upon Mr. Schlacks to compromise upon lower figures upon the ground the railroad company receives practically no benefit from the plans.” A later letter from Gwyn, however, suggests that the assistant engineer’s acquiescence was premature. “My opinion that the amount of compensation claimed by Mr. Schlacks for his services in the preparation of rejected plans for the new Salt Lake station is unreasonably great,” he wrote. “It does not seem probable Mr. Schlacks will resort to legal proceedings to recover the sum which he claims, but that when he feels he has exhausted every other means to obtain the full amount of his claims he

²¹ A. C. Ridgway to E. J. Yard, April 28, 1906, D&RGRR.

²² E. J. Yard to A. C. Ridgway, October 29, 1906, D&RGRR.

²³ E. J. Yard to J. G. Gwyn, November 10, 1906, and A. C. Ridgway to E. L. Yard, December 2, 1906, D&RGRR. Gwyn would later succeed Yard as the railroad’s chief engineer.

²⁴ J. G. Gwyn to E. N. Clark, April 5, 1907, D&RGRR.



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will be willing to compromise upon a smaller sum.”²⁵ The matter eventually ended up on the desk of Joel F. Vaile, the railroad’s general counsel, to whom Schlacks was forced to plead directly. “I see there is nothing to be gained by correspondence,” he grumbled. “I am completing my record of the case which I wish to go over with you personally and I will submit to your judgment in the matter, for I am positive that when you know the facts as they are, you will see the absolute justice of my position.” Continuing, he wrote that he was “not a man of means,” and therefore he “respectfully request[ed] a payment on account of at least \$2500 to enable me to meet my obligations with respect to this work, for I am at the end of my resources and am proceeding with considerable difficulty to carry the work through because of the expenditures involved.”²⁶

Construction on the west side of the depot December 16, 1909.

This pattern of wheedling, nagging, and dickering continued through the end of Schlacks’ contract with the D&RG, a bitter cycle that put Edward Jeffrey, the Rio Grande’s president, on edge. “The way the preliminaries of this Union Depot enterprise have been conducted is distasteful, inconsiderate and annoying, and while we are willing to pay the Architect what is fair and right, we should not go beyond this,” Jeffery angrily wrote to general counsel Vaile.²⁷ (Jeffrey was a highly conservative administrator who had been given the reins of the D&RG to curb some of the more profligate management practices of his predecessor David Moffat and, according to Robert Athearn, ultimately “make the property pay.” No doubt he thought he was doing that by keeping Schlacks on a short financial leash.) The relationship remained strained, with Schlacks often writing to railroad officials, begging for money he believed he was owed. In April 1909, for instance, the architect wrote to Gwyn requesting “a payment of at least \$5000.00 on account, which I trust will be acted upon soon, for I

²⁵ J. G. Gwyn to A. C. Ridgway, October 14, 1907, and J. G. Gwyn to A. C. Ridgway, February 6, 1908, D&RGRR.

²⁶ Henry J. Schlacks to Joel F. Vaile, February 22, 1909, D&RGRR.

²⁷ E. T. Jeffery to J. F. Vaile, February 23, 1909, D&RGRR.

[am] carrying on this work at practically cost and I need the money.” Later that year, his prose turned even more imploring. Writing to Gwyn, he importuned the railroad man to get him his money. “I enclose an expense account,” he wrote. “Owing to the manner in which I have been treated I sincerely trust that you will do what you can towards paying this account soon, for I am unable to collect my just fees now long past due and am put to considerable hardship to carry on the work.”²⁸

Henry Schlacks’ fraught relationship with the D&RG contained within it a deliciously intriguing irony: his brother was Charles Schlacks, the railroad’s vice president.²⁹ It is possible—even likely—that Charles intervened to secure the depot commission for his brother. This, of course, makes Henry’s nearly incessant clashes with the railroad over even the smallest payments all the more puzzling. (Jeffrey went so far as to contest \$105 for watercolors slated for use on the building’s interior.) Could it be that Charles Schlacks had just enough clout in the D&RG’s upper circles to get Henry the design assignment, but not enough to shield him from Jeffrey? Possibly. The fact that Charles Schlacks had left the Rio Grande by at least mid-1910 to work for the Western Pacific, and then resigned from the WP in protest when railroad higher-ups floated a plan to combine the WP, the D&RG, and the Missouri Pacific into a single unit, raises the tantalizing prospect that he had been marginalized within the Rio Grande and that he had no intention of falling back into its orbit.³⁰

As work on the depot neared completion in 1909 and 1910, Henry Schlacks undoubtedly looked forward to getting paid and finally being liberated from what he surely regarded as a difficult project. But those dreams of a speedy payment, if he had them, went unrealized; the railroad continued to hold out on him. Writing to Gwyn, he advised the company that he could not “furnish inspection” on the depot “owing to the fact that I have not the means,” a not so subtle dig at the company’s parsimoniousness now coming full circle and hamstringing work on the station. What is more, the company’s seemingly lackadaisical response to his pleas for payment forced him to secure a loan to cover his expenses on the project. “You will

²⁸ Athearn, *Denver and Rio Grande Western*, 178; Henry J. Schlacks to J. G. Gwyn, April 8, 1909, and Henry J. Schlacks to J. G. Gwyn, October 25, 1909, D&RGRR.

²⁹ Correspondence between J. G. Gwyn, Henry Schlacks, and Edward Jeffrey bears out the fact that Vice President Charles Schlacks was indeed the architect’s brother, as does an article in the *Salt Lake Telegram*, after Charles had left the Rio Grande for the Western Pacific (see *Salt Lake Telegram*, May 16, 1910). The first communiqué in the series, a telegram addressed to Henry Schlacks and dated November 8, 1909, refers to asking Edward Jeffrey for “authority before paying your bill for expenses” on “account of absence of your brother and Mr. Vaile not caring to pass upon such matter” (my emphasis). Then a letter, dated November 9, 1909, and written to Jeffrey, reveals the identity of the “brother” in the previous letter when it refers to “Mr. Schlacks [being] absent” and “Mr. Vaile” hesitating “about authorizing the payment of so large a sum without first obtaining your approval.” A third piece of correspondence—again addressed to Henry Schlacks and dated November 9, 1909, reveals the same information in this passage: “I have wired you today on account of absence of Vice President Schlacks and disinclination of Mr. Vaile to pass on a question concerning expense account I have had to ask authority from President Jeffrey to make the payment of \$700.61 requested by you.” See D&RGRR.

³⁰ Athearn, *Denver and Rio Grande Western*, 220. See also *Salt Lake Telegram*, May 16, 1910.



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appreciate that the splendid progress made on the building ... has entailed considerable and expensive work for me," he wrote. "The large force of men employed on the building has piled up the work tremendously for me at my office so that it was necessary for me to borrow a thousand dollars to carry me through December." Willing to negotiate his already "low" bill, Schlacks told Gwyn that if there was "any way in which the matter can be adjusted so as to enable me to go ahead with the work in which I have taken so much pride, I will be glad to make such concession as you yourself or those who have the actual knowledge of really what work I did, would think justice."³¹ A telegram—unpunctuated and in all capital letters—was more pleading in its tone: "I DO NOT CONSIDER IT FAIR TREATMENT TO WITHOLD MY MONEY AS YOU KNOW I AM DOING A LOT OF WORK IN CONNECTION WITH THIS JOB WHICH IS NOT IN MY CONTRACT AND FOR WHICH I AM MAKING NO CHARGE AND WHICH WORK I AM DOING JUST TO HELP MATTERS ALONG AND I FEEL I AM ENTITLED TO SOME CONSIDERATION I EXPECT AT LEAST A PART OF MY MONEY IF NOT ALL."³²

Amazingly, work continued on the depot even as Schlacks carried on

Workers at the depot install ornamental iron made by Indiana's Noelke-Richards Iron Works.

³¹ Henry J. Schlacks to J. G. Gwyn, November 9, 1909, D&RGRR.

³² Henry J. Schlacks to J. G. Gwyn, undated, D&RGRR.

pressing his case. Furnishings for the depot came in from all over the United States. The station's boilers, built by the Kewanee Boiler Works of Kewanee, Illinois, were installed; workers also put in the building's ornamental iron, fashioned by Indiana's Noelke-Richards Iron Works, and the interior marble fixtures, furnished by Voska, Foelsch & Sidlo of Kansas City. Utah contractors were also involved in the depot's construction and finishing. Salt Laker George Curley, for instance, a subcontractor for H. Eilenberger and Company, furnished the masonry work and fireproofing.³³

As work on the depot neared an end, flaws in the building's construction also began to appear. This probably did not surprise either the architect or the D&RG; both parties would have expected issues to crop up, having experienced glitches on past construction projects. Still, J. G. Gwyn was careful to note them on a trip to Salt Lake City. The biggest problem he noticed was a cornice in the north wing that was "leaking quite badly from some unexplained cause, although the weather was comparatively dry." He also took note of a host of other less serious issues: a transom in one of the depot's many rooms had to be replaced, condensation from a pipe was dripping onto the ceiling of the onsite barber shop, one of the umbrella sheds leaked, two chandeliers were broken (because they had been shipped with weak chains and had promptly plunged to the floor when hoisted), and the four chandeliers in the main waiting room that were still intact, while "handsome," did not work well. (The "effect of the light" from the chandeliers, Gwyn explained, "is deadened by the style of globes used, so that the Main Waiting Room seems to be very poorly lighted. It is impossible, with all the lights burning, for the ordinary person to read." He hoped to rectify the problem with "some high power Tungsten lamps.")³⁴

By the summer of 1911, the issue of payment finally seemed to be moving toward resolution. Gwyn wrote Schlacks in August that he was drawing up a voucher for \$1,004.66, which the company understood "to be all that is now due in final settlement of your account."³⁵ For a brief time, it looked like things would stall when the final check was delayed in New York. But the working relationship Schlacks and Gwyn had built over the years—though sometimes tense—carried the transaction through to a successful conclusion. Schlacks joked that he did not "know whether to go fishing to escape my creditors, or to bring them all out to you to have you stand them off," and in a postscript he added that "a wire [telegram] at my expense will relieve the tension, and I think I could go and see a ball game and not have my mind on my troubles."³⁶ By late September, Schlacks was writing Gwyn, confirming that he had been "paid in full for [his] services" and, in a fit of seeming amnesia, promising the engineer that "if I can be of

³³ Henry J. Schlacks to J. G. Gwyn, January 7, 1910, and October 26, 1910, D&RGRR.

³⁴ J. G. Gwyn to Henry J. Schlacks, December 6, 1910, D&RGRR.

³⁵ J. G. Gwyn to Henry J. Schlacks, August 11, 1911, D&RGRR.

³⁶ Henry J. Schlacks to J. G. Gwyn, August 26, 1911, D&RGRR.



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any service in connection with this building I will be glad to do what I can gratis.” One has to wonder if Schlacks was simply being polite. Only a few months before, he had been hounding Gwyn and other Rio Grande officials for money; now he was saying he would work for free.³⁷

The interior of the depot during construction April 1910.

In the end, the efforts of Schlacks, Gwyn, various railroad officials and contractors, the depot work crews, and others involved in the construction process produced an attractive, imposing structure by any measure. But it had been a costly endeavor. According to one Salt Lake newspaper, the bill for the entire project had run close to \$800,000. For the Denver and Rio Grande (which was only just emerging from lean financial times and fallout from a rash of highly-publicized train accidents) and the Western Pacific, still a mere babe of a railroad, this was a hefty outlay, and may explain why some of the more elaborate plans for the building, such as a set of murals, were never executed.³⁸ Nevertheless, the Salt Lake depot was an impressive structure. More than four hundred feet long and nearly one hundred feet wide, the finished station sported a very large waiting room—about a third of the building’s total size—while elements drawn from several classical styles, including Renaissance Revival and Beaux Arts styles, gave the

³⁷ Henry J. Schlacks to J. G. Gwyn, September 22, 1911, D&RGRR.

³⁸ *Salt Lake Telegram*, August 20, 1910; Athearn, *Denver and Rio Grande Western*, 210–15.

structure an aesthetic flair. According to the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, one of the station's most striking features was the "green opalescent glass" housed in the "three immense arched windows" that filtered light into the waiting room. The large room was also decorated using a color scheme of "brownish red and gray for the walls, with a deep brown for the ceilings." Such a combination of light and color concluded the *Herald-Republican*, "gives the room a dignified quietness." Colorado-Yule marble formed a five-foot-high base around the building's exterior, with terra cotta and "red New Jersey washed brick" covering the rest of the outside walls. Red tile formed the roof.³⁹

The depot was laid out to make it useful to both railroad staff and passengers. In one wing of the building were the baggage, express, and parcel rooms, while in the other, the *Herald-Republican* explained, was "everything necessary for the comfort of travelers, including men's smoking room, women's retiring room, restaurant, etc." At the center of the station, in the waiting room, were "the ticket offices, news stand, telegraph and telephone offices, and other conveniences for the traveling public." The company's offices were all on the second floor.⁴⁰

Evidence suggests that there was no special ceremony to celebrate the station's "christening." Rather, the "new Gould Station" simply opened its doors to the public and Thomas "Tommie" Hughes, who had worked in the depot's now obsolete, "ramshackle" predecessor, began calling out train departures. The first two trains to leave the station were bound for points in Utah—Marysville in Piute County and Bingham—but the third, a "full vestibuled train" bursting with passengers from the West, left the depot heading toward the Midwest and East Coast. A few workers indulged in some nostalgic reminiscences about the "little old frame building," now abandoned, that had "done service for over a score of years," reported the *Salt Lake Telegram*, but there were "few regrets." Instead, most employees were sure to be awed by the new building. "If there is any man in the new station today who cannot be found at his desk," the *Telegram* playfully warned, "please don't blame him. He has probably wandered some ten or twelve feet away, and may need a guide to get back to it. He has so much more room this morning than he has been accustomed to that he might get lost."⁴¹

The neighborhood around the new railroad station immediately began to boom. Rumors about plans for a brewery and a pair of hotels in the area, one to be financed by A. H. Vogeler and another by a consortium of wealthy Denverites, began circulating before the depot was even finished. According to one source, the Vogeler hotel was slated to be "four stories high and thoroughly modern," while the Denver investors' establishment

³⁹ *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, August 14, 1910.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Salt Lake Telegram*, August 20, 1910.

might rise as high as five stories and included spaces for stores. The expected increase in travelers making their way through Salt Lake City and residents coming to stay would necessitate new infrastructure—hotels, restaurants, stores, and local transportation options—and the city’s capitalists were happy to oblige by investing in this new future. Some may have been deterred by the “remarkable rise” in property values brought on by the depot’s construction, but many were unwilling to miss the opportunity for big profits and snatched up the most desirable lots quickly. “People with money are after locations, and in many cases are paying unusually large prices,” reported the *Telegram*. Even property on Main Street several blocks away rose in value with the station’s opening.⁴²

Of course, the west side neighborhood that became the Rio Grande Depot’s home was not a geographical *tabula rasa* on which real estate developers and speculators made their mark free of social disruptions and political ramifications. The area was already occupied and contained a community that grew and diversified as immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe (and other world regions) rode the rails to Salt Lake City in search of work. For these immigrants, the city’s railroad stations became “gateways” to the neighborhood, and many newcomers settled quickly in the vicinity of the D&RG station. Greeks, Italians, Japanese, Armenians and Syrians all made their homes near the depot. Greek Town clustered along 200 South Street between 500 and 600 West, while the Armenians and Syrians tended to live directly behind the station near the intersection of 300 South and 500 West; Japanese immigrants carved out a community further away, near where the Salt Palace now stands.⁴³ With so many ethnicities represented in such a small district, the area around the depot must have been a vibrant place, with the smells of a thousand kitchens, coffeehouses, grocery stores, and saloons mixing in the crisp Utah air; walking around the depot, one could have taken in the pleasing aroma of savory roasted lamb, udon noodles, souvlaki, gnocchi, and boeregs (Armenian cheese-and-spinach pies) in the space of only a few blocks.⁴⁴ Later, in the 1920s, a new set of immigrants—this time from Mexico—moved north to work on the railroads, and many ended up settling near the Rio Grande Depot. Maria Delores Lopez, a native of Chihuahua, remembered living in the station’s shadow. The Denver and Rio Grande employed not only her father, who worked at the depot until his retirement, but all of her brothers as well. Lopez characterized the neighborhood she lived in as “mixed,” with African Americans, Greeks, Mexicans, and Italians all living

⁴² Ibid., June 18, 1910.

⁴³ See the chapters on the Italian, Japanese, South Slavic, Middle Eastern, and Greek communities in Utah in Helen Z. Papanikolas, ed., *The Peoples of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1976), 303–468.

⁴⁴ “Denver and Rio Grande Depot Tour” and “Creating an Urban Neighborhood: Gateway District Land Use and Development Master Plan,” SHPO.

near each other and working together.⁴⁵

Interestingly, the neighborhood near the depot was also home to a major vice district. In the late nineteenth century, the city's prostitutes traditionally bunched around Commercial Street in the city's central business district, a trend that did not sit well with Mayor John Bransford. He hoped to make Salt Lake City's prostitution trade less conspicuous by moving it west to Greek Town, limiting it to a complex of small apartments or "cribs," and surrounding it with a high stockade. The compound, which would cover the area between 500 and 600 West and 100 and 200 South, would be regulated by the city and prostitutes would enjoy police protection as long as they stayed put. Bransford called on well-known Ogden Madame Dora Topham, otherwise known as Belle London, to head the venture. In 1908, Topham formed the Citizen's Investment Company and began construction on the stockade; three months later, the building was finished. (Bransford apparently stood to gain from the red light district's move to the west side. He owned property across the street from the stockade and constructed a two-story building on the lot to house prostitutes moving into the area from downtown.) When the stockade closed in 1911, shortly after the completion of the Rio Grande Depot, prostitution continued as a fixture in the neighborhood. In the 1940s, at the height of World War II, one observer who worked for the railroad remembered prostitutes hanging around the depot waiting for troop trains. "We had prostitutes over on the streets ... that was [sic] going up and down propositioning these soldiers while they were waiting here in the depot for the train to be serviced," the rail employee recalled.⁴⁶

The depot quickly became a true transcontinental hub with the Western Pacific and the Denver and Rio Grande trading an increasing number of passengers and railcars in its yard. People from all over the United States were passing through the depot. A sampling of accident reports filed by passengers injured at the depot gives us a rough sense of the geographical diversity of the people who crossed the threshold of the station's waiting room. (The reports also remind us that the station was more than just a gateway to the city for travelers; it was also an industrial space where life and limb were often in danger.) Passengers came from as far away as New York City, Kentucky, California, Illinois, Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. In some cases, they were traveling in near indigent circumstances. One woman, an African American resident of Bastrup, Louisiana, named Easter Givins, was on her way to Berkeley, California. She

⁴⁵ Maria Delores Lopez, interview by Leslie Kelen, 1984, in Salt Lake City, transcript, Hispanic Oral Histories, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁴⁶ John S. McCormick, "Red Lights in Zion: Salt Lake City's Stockade, 1908-1911," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 50 (Spring 1982): 292-319; Linda Sillitoe, *A History of Salt Lake County* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society and Salt Lake County Commission, 1996), 137-38; Charles R. Whitney, interview by Kent Powell, February 23, 1990, in Salt Lake City, transcript, Kent Powell World War II Research Collection, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah, 15.



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had barely arrived in Salt Lake City when she collapsed walking from her train into the depot. A Rio Grande staffer named Gordon B. Hinckley (who would later lead the LDS church as its president) called a doctor and had Givins carried into the baggage room on a stretcher. When the woman regained consciousness, she reported that she had only had an orange for supper. “I called the County Hospital,” wrote Hinckley, “telling them that I thought she had very little money and the Supervisor agreed to take her. She accordingly took a cab at her own expense to the hospital.”⁴⁷

Economic depression and global war were ultimately what seasoned the depot and marked the building’s final ascent from a sort of early-twentieth-century adolescence to an experienced maturity. The dreary days of the Great Depression took their toll on the nation’s railroads and depots. As Janet Greenstein Potter has pointed out, more than a few railroad stations fell victim to “deferred maintenance and demolition by neglect” during the Depression. The Rio Grande Depot may have been especially vulnerable in the 1930s. Previous decades had not been kind to the D&RG. Financial difficulties in the 1910s brought on by George Gould’s meddling had forced the railroad into receivership. By the time it was sold in 1920 and

Construction on the 400 South Viaduct October 1913. The viaduct here and five blocks to the north on North Temple Street permitted traffic from the Westside and downtown areas to move unimpeded by trains.

⁴⁷ Accident Reports File and G. B. Hinckley to A. L. Moriarty, March 1, 1944, D&RGRR. On Hinckley’s career with the D&RG, see Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward With Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1996), 128–35.

reorganized to become the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company, otherwise known as the D&RGW (not to be confused with the earlier Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway or RGW), the physical condition of the company's assets had deteriorated to an unsafe level, and the pace of its recovery in the 1920s hovered somewhere between glacial and nonexistent. Then the Great Depression hit and operating revenues fell precipitously. Following America's declaration of war on the Japanese, Germans, and Italians in 1941, however, the railroads seemed to spring back to life, and depots were forced to deal with a burgeoning wartime ridership. In the case of Salt Lake City's Rio Grande Depot, the station soon was servicing as many as fifteen or twenty trains, full of military personnel, a day. Added to these passengers were civilians who had been forced to garage their cars due to wartime tire and gasoline rationing. The building sometimes became so crowded with traffic that railroad employees made incoming trains wait for hours beyond 400 South before letting them in to disgorge their passengers. Added to these troop trains were the grim "Mortuary Specials" bringing the war dead back from distant battlefields. Such trains invested the work that went on in and around the depot with new gravity. "These Mortuary Trains," remembered one D&RGW station master, "were all like 25, 30 cars and they were all painted gray, all sealed up and it just gave everybody a funny feeling."⁴⁸

The wartime renaissance would not last, and the postwar era was marked by a steady decline for the D&RGW and the Rio Grande Depot, as well as hundreds of other railroads and stations. A variety of social and cultural forces contributed to this downward spiral, including America's wholesale return to its automobiles following the war, the passage of the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 which spurred extensive road-building across the United States, the movement of people out of the cities and into new suburbs not serviced by trains, and the rise of commercial aviation. In this context, cash-strapped railroads could not keep their depots in good repair, and some decided simply to tear them down and replace them, in Potter's words, with "dreary, nondescript boxes." Even some municipalities got in on the action by using decrepit stations in firefighting exercises: they set them alight to train firefighter cadets in rescue and fire suppression techniques.⁴⁹

Over time, the Rio Grande Depot fell into disrepair and appeared, like other railroad stations around the nation, to be on its way toward death and obliteration. Passengers had become a financial burden on the D&RGW; they cost too much to transport. More money could be made by shifting to freight-only operations. As a consequence, the company cut back on passenger service, and thus felt less and less motivated to maintain its Salt Lake City hub. Eventually, the railroad faced an historic decision: either tear

⁴⁸ Potter, *Railroad Stations*, 43-44; Athearn, *Denver and Rio Grande Western*, 217-56 and 293-305; Whitney, Interview, 6-7

⁴⁹ Potter, *Railroad Stations*, 45.



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the station down (in order to avoid liability in the case of an accident) or sell it. The D&RGW chose the latter, and in 1977, it sold the depot to the State of Utah for a dollar.⁵⁰ Two years earlier, Melvin Smith, the state historic preservation officer, had submitted a nomination form for the depot to be included on the National Register of Historic Places, which may have forced the railroad's hand and tipped it toward selling; listing on the Register would have given the depot greater protection against demolition.⁵¹ Still, the building would require a lot of work to make it usable again. According to one historian, the station had, by this time, "long been unoccupied except by transients, and it was almost unbelievably filthy and run down."⁵²

Passengers on platform west of the Denver and Rio Grande Building in 1910.

The depot's rebirth came in the form of a decision by Utah government authorities to make it the new home of the Utah State Historical Society (USHS), the office of state government tasked with studying and preserving Utah's history. Over the years, the Society had been forced to live an itinerant existence, lacking a truly permanent home until the depot's purchase in 1977. For a while, USHS had found a temporary home in the Kearns Mansion, which the Kearns family gave to the state to house Utah's governors; chief executives George Clyde and Calvin Rampton, however, had lived elsewhere leaving the mansion available for the Society's use. It was only in 1976, with the election of Scott Matheson, that the Utah State

⁵⁰ "Denver and Rio Grande Depot Tour," SHPO.

⁵¹ National Register of Historic Places Inventory–Nomination Form for the Denver and Rio Grande Depot, SHPO.

⁵² Gary Topping, "One Hundred Years at the Utah State Historical Society," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 65 (Summer 1997), 289.

Historical Society was forced to move. Its new home was the Crane Building, by all accounts an inadequate space for the Society. According to one observer, “the Society occupied the entire first floor and most of the basement, fitting into both spaces about as well as a size ten foot in a size seven shoe.”⁵³

Restoration work was necessary in order to give the old station new life and remake it into a building that satisfied the unique needs of a state historical society, but such work was slow going. (It was not until August 1981 when the restored building was formally dedicated following remarks by Salt Lake City Mayor Ted Wilson and Governor Scott Matheson.) The campaign to preserve the depot, however, had generated enough political will in Utah that the project ended up a success. This was partly due to the growing influence of the historic preservation movement nationwide. The 1960s and 1970s were decades of unprecedented growth for the movement, especially among friends of historic railroad depots. Many had watched in horror as New York’s Pennsylvania Station was razed in 1963, and had vowed never to let such a thing happen again. Luckily, the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 provided the tools (including the process of review) for preserving what they felt were significant symbols of the country’s transportation history.⁵⁴

Another boon to the railroad depot preservationist cause was the advent of Amtrak in the early 1970s. As railroads, including the D&RGW, jettisoned their passenger business in favor of hauling freight exclusively, Amtrak, with its heavy federal subsidy, was able to pick up the new passenger trade and provide an incentive for preserving and restoring historic railroad stations.⁵⁵ In Salt Lake City, though, it did not exactly work that way. Preservation of the depot was already a priority of the state government; it did not need Amtrak’s presence to justify the Rio Grande Depot’s continued existence. What is more, Utah State Historical Society employees resisted a move by Amtrak into the depot, arguing it would take away much needed space from the Society; no doubt memories of the Society’s cramped quarters in the Crane Building were still fresh in their minds. In the end, though, then-Governor Norman Bangerter made the call and Amtrak was given a slice of the depot. (Later, Amtrak gave the space up and it reverted back to the state.)⁵⁶

With the railroad station’s revival in the 1980s came a sad goodbye. For a century, the D&RGW had been running passenger trains between Salt

⁵³ Ibid., 289–90.

⁵⁴ Building Dedication Program, August 21, 1981, SHPO; Potter, *Railroad Stations*, 49–51; Diane Lea, “America’s Preservation Ethos: A Tribute to Enduring Ideals,” in Robert E. Stipe, ed., *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 10–15.

⁵⁵ Potter, *Railroad Stations*, 51–54.

⁵⁶ See *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 25, 1986; *Deseret News*, October 26, 1986; *Provo Daily Herald*, October 27, 1986, clippings in SHPO.

Lake City and Denver, but on April 24, 1983, the railroad finally ended the Salt Lake City to Denver passenger run because it no longer turned a profit. (Amtrak later picked up the route.) The train that made the final run was the Rio Grande Zephyr, the last private long-distance passenger train in the United States. No doubt the giant mudslide in Spanish Fork Canyon earlier in the month that sealed off the canyon, dammed the Spanish Fork River, and buried nearly 1,500 feet of track near Thistle was the final nail in the Zephyr's coffin.⁵⁷

Salt Lake City's bid to host the Winter Olympics in 2002 promised to breathe new life into the city's urban landscape, including neighborhoods on the west side. As preparation for the Olympics, the district around the depot was slated to receive a facelift in the form of the "Gateway Project," which opened "650 acres of west downtown to redevelopment" and which referred to the neighborhood's nature as a sort of "gateway" in welcoming immigrants to the city. One of the driving forces behind the Gateway Project was Deedee Corradini, Salt Lake City's mayor from 1992 to 2000. She took pride in having miles of railroad track removed from the neighborhood to make way for the area's redevelopment. This, of course, changed the nature of the district, which for decades had been tied, economically and culturally, to the UP and D&RGW railroads and their depots. Public opinion quickly divided on the issue of removing the tracks, though more than one observer realized that taking up the tracks would obliterate a physical barrier between the city's east side and neighborhoods downtown and on the west side. Whether or not removal has actually done anything to lubricate social relationships between Salt Lake City's disparate neighborhoods is a good question for urban sociologists.⁵⁸

Since the 1980s, the Rio Grande Depot has continued to face changes and challenges, but it has also come into its own as something more than a railroad station. Adaptive reuse has extended the depot's life indefinitely. The Rio Grande Café, which takes up the first floor of the building's north wing, has become something of a culinary fixture on the city's west side and is a lunchtime beacon to hungry patrons from around the city. Other state government agencies—including the Utah Arts Council—have joined the Utah State Historical Society in the building, and the Utah State Archives and Records Service, which moved into a new state-of-the-art building just south of the depot in 2004, chose to partner with the Utah State Historical Society in opening a joint research center in the depot's south wing. While it is impossible to tell how long this new phase of life for the Rio Grande Depot will last, it will no doubt be interesting. Who knows what will be written about the building in another hundred years.

⁵⁷ *Deseret News*, February 6, 1983; March 22, 1983; April 15, 1983.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, November 13, 2001.

At the turn of the twentieth-century, fierce competition in the railroad industry facilitated the construction of increasingly impressive infrastructure and services for various railway lines. In this context, Salt Lake City became a battleground for the competing Denver and Rio Grande and the Union Pacific to showcase the superiority of their lines.

By 1906, D&RG tycoons decided that a new structure was necessary to demonstrate the company's dominance, and the plans for the Denver and Rio Grande Depot were born.

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1910-2010



The Denver and Rio Grande Depot: A Century of Change

By KIRSTEN ALLEN



Despite controversy over the effect a new depot would have on the lives of downtown residents, business interests won out and construction began. At the time of this photograph in 1909 of the depot's foundation, architect Henry Schlacks was in continual discussion with the operators of D&RG over the construction budget for the structure. The parsimonious behavior of the company, however, did not stop progress on the building from being made under Schlacks' management.



Construction of the depot continued through the winter of 1909. This photograph of the east side of the depot shows the arches for the grand windows.

Although architect Henry Schlacks used companies from all over the United States to complete his project, many of the contractors were from Utah.



The construction of the D&RG Depot was considered complete in 1910. Work on lighting and ventilation, however, continued. The lighting for the Grand Lobby, pictured here on April 25, 1910, was particularly problematic. Two of the chandeliers for the room were broken during installation, and the intended style of light fixture did not adequately brighten the space.



Voska, Foelsch & Sidlo of Kansas City furnished the marble interior of the depot. This photo taken on April 25, 1910, of the ground floor north wing depicts the impressive and elegant areas for the comfort of travelers. This included gender segregated smoking or retiring rooms and a restaurant.



The D&RG Depot was finished in 1910 at a reported cost of about eight hundred thousand dollars.

Larger than 100 feet wide and 400 feet long, the completed structure was impressive for its scale and elegance and became an impetus for business development in the neighborhood.

Shortly after the depot's construction the Park Hotel on 300 South along with numerous shops and restaurants sprung up to the east of the building.



This postcard of the Denver and Rio Grande Depot captures the arched glass of the windows of the Grand Lobby. This combined beautifully with the building's five foot tall marble base exterior. A red tile roof topped the terra cotta and "red New Jersey" brick of the outside walls.



Little pomp and circumstance surrounded the opening of the new station in 1910. This photograph of the first train to the D&RG Depot in August of that year shows that service and overall grandeur of the depot were left to speak for themselves. Newspaper reports on the new building teasingly declared that the new facilities were so large that employees could get lost if they wandered away from their desks.



The Grand Lobby, captured here in September 1910, was an elegant waiting area for passengers bound for destinations within Utah and to both the East and West Coasts. The second floor wings of the depot mainly housed railroad employee offices.



(TOP) The interior of the D&RG Depot underwent changes of décor during early decades of the twentieth-century.

Photographed in March 1939, the central lobby of the depot contains elaborate chandeliers and display cases along with the practical features of ticket offices and waiting areas.



The depot building today is home to the Rio Grande Café, but the depot has always housed a restaurant for travelers.

This photograph of the kitchen of the D&RG Depot in 1910, shows some of the period appliances that were utilized to serve railroad passengers.



Travelers from across the United States as shown here in August 1910, contributed to the growing prosperity of Salt Lake City's downtown commercial district.

Restaurants, hotels, and stores were a burgeoning enterprise for the city's entrepreneurs. On the east side of the station property values rose and business grew after the opening of the D&RG Depot.

However, the depot and railroad tracks became a geographical divide of economic disparity. Neighborhoods to the west of the depot became a melting pot of immigrants and home to the city's red light district.



The district near the depot housed a community of Greek, Italian, Japanese, Armenian, Mexican, and Syrian immigrants. Many of them worked for the railroad or in related industries. This photograph, from August 1910, looks southeast towards the depot.



After the completion of the depot, the areas near the depot prospered. In 1915, the historic Liberty Bell mounted to a flat-bed train car made a transcontinental journey from Philadelphia to San Francisco. Along the way, the Bell made frequent stops to allow people from across the nation to view a piece of their heritage.

This photograph, taken July 11, 1915, shows a crowd that grew to more than 75,000 people. These Utahns gathered in Salt Lake City to see the Bell when it stopped at Pioneer Park for a five hour long event that featured United States Senator Reed Smoot and Utah Governor William Spry.

Thanks to the railroad, the D&RG Depot seen in the background, Salt Lake City was a convenient and important railway passenger hub.

Soldiers waiting at the D&RG Depot in February 1911, show how railroads came to provide an important means of transportation during the years of both World Wars. Cars full of soldiers and the gloomy 'mortuary trains' filled the station to capacity.

After the hard depression years of the 1930s, the railroads became essential for the transportation of personnel and war materiel during World War II. Wartime rationing of gas and rubber also increased civilian use of railroads.



Troop movements like this one in November 1911, enlivened the area around the D&RG Depot.



Between 1949 and 1970, the famous passenger train the California Zephyr, renamed the Rio Grande Zephyr and operated from 1970 to 1983, crossed most of the country and passed through scenic Utah and the D&RG Depot on its route to California. The journey was marketed as both a quick and efficient way to travel and as a sightseeing adventure.





Travelers in 1930 could relax in a comfortable lounge car before the introduction of the vista dome after World War II.



After World War II, railway passenger service gradually declined. The new Interstate Highway systems and commercial aviation competed to facilitate economic failure for many railroad lines. In consequence, railroad stations, the D&RG Depot included, fell into disrepair and faced the threat of demolition.

Transportation of passengers in this context became less efficient and railways moved to hauling more freight. Maintenance of expensive depot buildings became undesirable by the 1970s, and in 1977, the D&RG sold the depot to the State of Utah for one dollar.



Restoration work and preservation by the state of Utah gave new life to the depot. Although the depot no longer functions as a railroad station, it continues to be a vital part of downtown Salt Lake City. Today, the restored D&RG Depot houses the Utah State Historical Society, the Division of State History, Utah State Archives, the Office of Museum Services, the Utah Arts Council, and the Rio Grande Café.





AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

“One of the Bitterest Fights in Provo History”: The Controversies Over Provo’s Union Depot

By KENNETH L. CANNON II

On August 21, 1912, hundreds of fans and friends thronged Provo’s almost brand-new Union Train Depot at Third West and Sixth South Streets to greet Alma Richards home from the summer Olympic games held in Stockholm. Richards had won the gold medal in the “running high jump” with an Olympic-record setting leap of six feet three and nine-sixteenths inches and was returning as a conquering hero. When the world champion’s train steamed into town at 6:30 p.m., the assembled crowd went wild. Never had a Utah athlete accomplished such a feat and locals celebrated in what one newspaper

Provo’s New Union Depot ca. 1915.

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referred to as a “most brilliant and delightful affair” and another referred to as a “monster celebration.”¹ Following his arrival, “scores of automobiles traversed the business district” from the Union Depot in a gala parade. The festivities ended in a huge banquet in the Hotel Roberts in downtown Provo.²

Residents of the “Garden City” were proud of their new Union Depot just as they were of the BYU student who had so recently been crowned as the best high jumper in the world.³ The station fit the part of an up-and-coming-city’s stately transportation center welcoming a returning national hero. The train depot where Richards was welcomed was totally different from the station where Provo residents greeted U.S. President William Howard Taft less than two years before. President Taft had visited the city in September 1909 and had been met by local dignitaries and hundreds of citizens at one of the two old ramshackle wooden depots built in the 1870s at the corner of Sixth South and Academy Avenue (now University Avenue).⁴

The location and construction of a new depot had caused controversy for years that pitted railroad lines against each other and against the town, the west side of Provo against the east side, prominent residents against one another, and Brigham Young University against West Center Street merchants. The president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Governor of Utah had even been brought into the fray. Provo had been waiting for almost twenty years for a respectable train station befitting its status as a bustling, growing regional center for business, education, government, church, and agriculture. Because the depot provided the first impression to visitors to the city, residents cared deeply both about how Provo’s depot looked and where it was located. The story of the controversies surrounding the “depot question” and of the strong personalities involved in it provides a compelling picture of the developing city and of the growing pains Provo sometimes experienced, and permits glimpses into the political and social fabric of the community.⁵

¹ “Alma W. Richards Given Royal Welcome,” *Provo Herald*, August 23, 1912; “Alma Richards Welcomed Home,” *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, August 28, 1912; “Alma Richards Back Again,” *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, August 20, 1912. As noted below, the new Union Depot opened on January 2, 1911. “Passenger Depot Opened at Provo, Nearly One Thousand Persons Participate in Celebration of the Event,” *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, January 3, 1911.

² “Royal Welcome,” *Provo Herald*, August 23, 1912.

³ Provo was long known as the “Garden City” because of its lovely gardens, but more important, because of the fruit orchards located mostly in the so-called “river bottoms” along the Provo River just south of the mouth of Provo Canyon and on the “Provo Bench,” the current site of Orem.

⁴ “Great Ovation Is Tendered Mr. Taft, President Praises Utah Senators and Representatives at Big Provo Meeting,” *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, September 25, 1909. I will use the then-contemporary Academy Avenue to refer to this street.

⁵ Probably the best discussion of the depot controversies, at least over the location of the depot, is found in a chapter entitled “The 1909 Union Passenger Depot Election: The Epitome of the Knight-Taylor Rivalry for East/West Dominance in Provo,” in Steven A. Hales, “The Effect of the Rivalry Between Jesse Knight and Thomas Nicholls Taylor on Architecture in Provo, Utah: 1896-1915” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1991), 10-21. Other accounts include J. Marinus Jensen, *History of Provo, Utah* (Provo: By the Author, 1924), 333-37, which is useful because Jensen was a city councilman during



Alma Richards (1890-1963), Gold medal winner, 1912 Stockholm, Sweden, Olympic games.

The 1890s and 1900s were part of the golden age of railroads. Rails first came to Provo just a few years after completion of the extraordinary transcontinental railroad in 1869. During the 1890s and after, Provo was on two substantial passenger lines, the Rio Grande Western (referred to herein as the RGW or Rio Grande) and another line variously owned by the Union Pacific, the Oregon Short Line (sometimes referred to herein as the OSL or the Short Line), and the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake line (known variously as

the Salt Lake Route or the Clark Line).⁶ The controversies over the construction and location of a new depot in Provo break down into two periods, the first one lasting from 1891 to 1904, when the two railroads often promised to build new depots and sometimes came close to agreeing on a union depot, and the period from 1904 on, when the controversy centered on the location of a new union depot. During this second period, the local community became deeply divided over the issue, with two local men, Jesse Knight and Thomas N. Taylor, dominating the two sides. This latter controversy became unusually intense in 1908 and 1909 when it “caused so much bitterness and strife among the people.”⁷

the controversies and had first-hand knowledge; Thomas Sterling Taylor and Theron H. Luke, *The Life and Times of T.N.T.: The Story of Thomas Nicholls Taylor* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1959), 61–62, 68–72, which provides insights into the role and views of one of the dominant personalities in the controversies, although Taylor’s recollections of the actual controversies were sometimes slightly inaccurate; and Marilyn McMeen Miller and John Clifton Moffitt, *Provo: A Story of People in Motion* (Provo: BYU Press, 1974), 60–64.

⁶ The Rio Grande Western Railway was at the time a subsidiary of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, running passenger trains from the Utah–Colorado border. The Rio Grande Western was merged into its parent, the Denver & Rio Grande, in 1908.

⁷ “Injunction Suit Up July 17th,” *Provo Enquirer*, July 4, 1908. The *Enquirer* repeated this conclusion a number of times. “No Injunction Trial Today,” *Provo Enquirer*, April 30, 1908; “Judge Lewis Decided Against Knight on Injunction Suit,” *Provo Enquirer*, November 3, 1908. Thomas N. Taylor echoed this sentiment. Taylor and Luke, *The Life and Times of T.N.T.*, 70.

Provo's two passenger lines each had a separate station, located at the foot of Academy Avenue (known until 1902 as J Street) at its intersection with what was then called First Street and later Sixth South (referred to herein as Sixth South). The two depots were across the tracks from each other and on opposite sides of Academy Avenue. From the early days of rail travel to Provo, those arriving in Provo de-trained at one of these stations.⁸

Important to the controversies over the future train depot was the shift of the town center, which took place over a period of decades, from Fifth West (then called E Street), eastward. Originally, Provo had been laid out on a grid as it is now, but the center of town was Pioneer Park on the southwest corner of Fifth West and Center Streets. As the city grew east, Academy Avenue became increasingly important as the tabernacle, government buildings, Brigham Young Academy, and even the elegant Hotel Roberts were built along it.⁹ By 1902, the center of town had moved five blocks east to Academy Avenue, though still on the Center Street axis.¹⁰ Many prominent local residents also began building their homes on the east side.

The frame buildings that served as Provo's railroad stations were often described as substandard or even "cracker boxes."¹¹ Beginning in 1891, residents began campaigning for construction of a modern new depot. In that year, residents expressed their unhappiness about the depot situation to the RGW. Prominent Provo businessmen, including Reed Smoot, confronted the general superintendent of the RGW in a meeting at the Utah County courthouse. The railroad official acknowledged to the assembled businessmen that "a place was usually judged by its station. If nothing but an old hulk of a building existed, the town was rated as a village." He told the assembled businessmen that the RGW had appropriated funds to build a new depot, but with the understanding that Provo would permit it to build the depot literally on Academy Avenue. When the city failed to do that, the RGW used the appropriated funds for other purposes. No new depot emerged from the talks.¹²

⁸ "Provo Stirred by Scandal in Depot Fight," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1908. This article reviewed the history of the depot controversy in Provo and includes a useful map showing the location of the two then-existing depots.

⁹ Center Street was then known as Seventh Street. E Street was sometimes referred to as Main or West Main Street, while J Street (Academy Avenue) came to be known as East Main Street. Jensen, *History of Provo, Utah*, 234-35.

¹⁰ Polk's Directory for Provo in its 1904-05 edition noted that "Since the last edition [of the directory], the streets of Provo have been re-named and an entirely new system of numbering inaugurated. The system now in vogue is similar to that of Salt Lake City. The intersection of Center Street and Academy Avenue forms the initial or diverging center point of the city, from which point" other streets are numbered. *RL Polk & Co's Provo City and Utah County Directory, 1904-05* (Salt Lake City: R.L. Polk & Co., 1904), 17.

¹¹ "Provo Stirred by Scandal in Depot Fight," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1908.

¹² "Big Peace Talk with Rio Grande Western Officials," *Provo Enquirer*, May 6, 1892.

In the spring of 1897, local hopes grew that the RGW and the competing Short Line, which had just emerged from bankruptcy, would jointly agree to build a union station. A citizens' group led by Mayor Lafayette Holbrook presented the RGW's general manager with a proposal for a union depot to be operated by both railways. The RGW claimed that it was ready to participate in a union depot but that the competing Short Line was "not yet prepared to consider the proposition." The citizens' committee hoped that the railroads would build a union depot if the city permitted construction of the building on part of Academy Avenue. The *Salt Lake Tribune* was optimistic and even reported enthusiastically that plans had already been prepared for "a handsome kyune stone building." The parties could not come to agreement, however, and once again, nothing happened.¹³

In 1899, Thomas N. Taylor, a dominant west-side businessman and church leader, was elected mayor of Provo in an unusually close contest. Although he was unsuccessful in enticing the railroads to build a new depot, he became one of the two focal personalities in the sectional depot controversy that continued from 1904 until 1909.¹⁴

In 1902, the RGW again applied for a franchise to construct a new depot encroaching on the west side of Academy Avenue, opposite its old depot. The proposal would have largely closed Academy Avenue off, and, not coincidentally, would have blocked access to the Short Line depot located on Sixth South west of Academy Avenue. The Short Line, for its part, indicated its willingness to contribute to a new fifty thousand dollar union depot in the same location that the RGW wanted to build its independent station but threatened to oppose any franchise for a new non-union RGW station that would encroach on Academy Avenue. The general manager of the Rio Grande informed city fathers that his railroad was not disposed to cooperate with the Short Line on a new union depot even though new Mayor Taylor told him that the city would support such an action.¹⁵

In response, the Short Line made good on its threat to oppose the Rio

¹³ "Provo Union Depot, Movement to Have One Built Likely to Soon Succeed," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 1, 1897.

¹⁴ Taylor owned numerous businesses and a bank on West Center Street and served as bishop of a west-side LDS ward. He played an integral role in shaping Center Street's architecture and constructed a Fifth West mansion in 1908 almost as grand as Jesse Knight's on East Center Street. Hales, "The Effect of the Rivalry Between Jesse Knight and Thomas Nicholls Taylor," 22-52. Taylor's first mayoral victory was by 28 votes out of 1,655 total votes and his reelection in 1901, over prominent businessman and Reed Smoot crony, Colonel C. E. Loose, was by 3 votes out of 1,963 votes cast. The newspapers reported that more than 80 percent of all registered voters in Provo participated in the 1901 election. This election has to be the closest mayoral election in city history. "Mayor Jones Defeated, Thomas N. Taylor Wins at Provo by a Majority of Twenty-Eight," *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 8, 1899; "Provo's Election," *Ogden Standard*, November 6, 1901.

¹⁵ "Provo Depot, Short Line Willing to Join with the Rio Grande Western," *Deseret News*, March 3, 1902; "Provo Depot, General Superintendent Welby Sends Communication to Council," *Deseret News*, March 4, 1902; "Provo Depot, Manager Herbert Said Not to be in Favor of Union Station," *Deseret News*, March 12, 1902.



BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Grande Western's request to use most of Academy Avenue. The Short Line also proposed that Sixth South and Academy Avenue be dedicated in perpetuity for street purposes at their intersection, ensuring that no depot could be built in the intersection. In exchange for the dedication of the street, the Short Line proposed to construct a ten thousand dollar independent train station that did not take up any of Academy Avenue. The city council sided with the Oregon Short Line by a vote of 6-4, blocking the RGW's plans for a new depot.¹⁶ In spite of the city council's positive vote, the OSL did not build a new station but eventually renewed its offer to participate in a union depot.¹⁷ Plans were put on hold in early 1903, however, when the Short Line sold its tracks and equipment south of Salt Lake City to a new railroad, the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad, variously known as the Salt Lake Route or the Clark Line. The new line was owned by Montana Copper King and U.S. Senator W.A. Clark. Provo leaders and residents hoped that the new owner could convince the Rio Grande to cooperate in the construction of a union depot.¹⁸

Parade in downtown Provo in commemoration of Alma Richards' gold medal, August 22, 1912, at Provo's Union Depot.

¹⁶ "Short Line Wins, Provo Council Dedicates Ground to Street Purposes," *Salt Lake Herald*, August 5, 1902. City council votes on depot questions were always close during this period.

¹⁷ "O.S.L. Puts Up \$10,000 Forfeiture Bond to Build Depot," *Deseret News*, April 22, 1902.

¹⁸ "Provo Stirred by Scandal in Depot Fight," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1908. This article recounted much of the history of the depot dispute. "Short Line Sale to San Pedro," *Deseret News*, March 21, 1903. Senator William A. Clark was an extraordinarily successful entrepreneur who was one of Montana's "Copper Kings," a banker, railroad owner, newspaper owner, and, at the time of his acquisition of the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake line, a sitting United States senator. Senator Clark left an estate worth approximately two hundred million dollars when he died in 1925. A.D. Hopkins, "William Andrews Clark (1839-1925), Montana Midas," in A.D. Hopkins and K.J. Evans, *The First 100, Portraits of the Men and*

In early 1904, representatives of the Salt Lake Route and the RGW met with city representatives. For the first time, managers and engineers of the two lines showed an interest in a new site, at the foot of Third West, where it intersected with Sixth South. On their visit, representatives of the two lines met with Provo Mayor Roylance, former Mayor Taylor, and prominent businessmen, and inspected both the Academy Avenue and the Third West sites. The railroads recognized that a new depot could be configured in the middle of Sixth South to permit passengers to enter the north side of the depot and board a train from the platform on the south side of the building. News accounts reported that, while Provo representatives disagreed among themselves about which site should be used, "they realize that this is a matter which will be determined by the railroad companies, and the main point of interest to the Provo people is to get a depot, the location being a minor consideration." Provo wanted a new depot befitting its position, irrespective of where it was constructed.¹⁹ In spite of the apparent good will exhibited, nothing materialized, probably because of an undercurrent of disagreement by prominent east-siders. In early 1905, Thomas N. Taylor developed a plan to help the railroads choose the Third West site they seemed to favor. The Academy Avenue depots had disadvantages – passengers had to walk over many tracks after de-boarding a train and passengers and others sometimes tripped and were injured or even killed as they left the depot for a waiting train.²⁰ Taylor, who lived on Fifth West and whose businesses were all located on West Center Street, took the lead on behalf of West Center interests. Taylor and other west-side businessmen contributed six thousand dollars to buy a substantial parcel at the foot of Third West on Sixth South. East-side businessmen, led by Jesse Knight, were infuriated.²¹

At just this time, the deplorable state of the old stations gave rise to the circulation of a citizen petition to the two railroads proposing a union

Women Who Shaped Las Vegas (Las Vegas: Huntington Press, 1999). In 1905, E.H. Harriman's Union Pacific obtained 50 percent of the control of the Salt Lake Line to settle disputes over rights of way and to facilitate completion of the line to the West Coast. "San Pedro Directors," *Ogden Standard*, February 16, 1905. Clark was also the majority owner of the *Salt Lake Herald* from 1901 to 1909, and the *Herald's* articles must be viewed with this in mind. "Utah," *Encyclopaedia Britannica, A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*, 11th ed., 29 vols. (New York: Encyclopaedia Britannica Co., 1911), 19:572; "Lannan and the Herald," *Salt Lake Herald*, July 4, 1901.

¹⁹ "Provo Union Depot: Salt Lake Route and Rio Grande Officials Inspect Site," *Deseret News*, March 4, 1904; "For Union Depot, Railroad Officials Looking Over Sites for Its Location," *Salt Lake Herald*, March 5, 1904. After city and railroad officials enjoyed a dinner at the Hotel Roberts, the railroad men returned to Salt Lake City together in "No. 1," a private car owned by the Salt Lake Route.

²⁰ For example, in September 1906, a woman sued the Salt Lake Line after she stumbled on tracks and broke her arm. The railroad had failed to "plank the crossing in the street and to light the place." "Provo News Notes," *Salt Lake Herald*, September 30, 1906. Later, a young woman was killed when she was knocked down in front of a moving engine by a crowd along the tracks near the depot. "Union Depot Plan for Provo: Salt Lake Route and Rio Grande Western Want to Build One at Once," *Salt Lake Herald*, April 14, 1908.

²¹ "Provo Depot, Property Owners Are Raising \$6,000 to Purchase A Site," *Deseret News*, January 10, 1905.

depot. Almost seventeen hundred Provo residents signed the petition in a single day, which sought to convince the roads to build a depot and even waived “any preference for a site.”²² The high number signing the petition demonstrates the likelihood that many city residents did not care about the location of a depot. It was prominent Provo men led by Thomas Taylor and Jesse Knight who fomented the sectional controversy and devoted so many resources to the dispute.

The two railroad lines liked the offer from the west-side businessmen and made a tentative agreement to build a union station on Third West. In early 1905, subcommittees from Provo’s Commercial Club, including Thomas Taylor, and from the city council, together with Mayor William Roylance, met with the general managers of the Salt Lake Route and RGW to discuss the possibilities. Following the meeting, the Salt Lake Route and the Rio Grande agreed to expend \$20,000 on a new union depot. Local citizens had “a great satisfaction . . . generally to learn that a union depot will be built . . .”²³ Even though the recently-submitted petition signed by so many local residents had expressly left to the railroads the choice of a location for a depot, it was soon clear that east-side leaders were alarmed to learn that the passenger lines in fact intended to construct the new depot on Third West.²⁴

East-side partisans believed that a Third West depot would have several serious problems, but the most important was that the site was three blocks farther away from east-side locations. The controversy exposed a continuing, festering unrest between the developing east side and the older west side, which was losing its place as the hub of downtown Provo.²⁵ The city had recently expended a substantial sum paving sidewalks on both sides of Academy Avenue to ensure that arriving railroad passengers could walk the few blocks from the old depots to church or college or the courthouse

²² “Provo Stirred by Scandal in Depot Fight,” *Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1908.

²³ “Fight Over the Site, Provo People Have Been Assured of a Union Depot for Their City,” *Salt Lake Herald*, January 9, 1905. It is likely that it was at this time that the RGW commissioned Walter Ware, a prominent Salt Lake City architect, to design a new depot. Ware’s plans contemplated a handsome Spanish Colonial Revival building with a large clock tower. A copy of the rendering of the design is found in W.E. Ware, “R.G.W. Depot, Provo City,” Walter E. Ware Collection, Photo Collection, Utah State Historical Society. The design shows “R.G.W.” on its façade rather than “D.R.G.W.,” indicating the design was commissioned before 1908. Even better evidence of dating the design to 1905 or before is that a *Salt Lake Tribune* article on the proposed depot which included Ware’s rendering refers to “resident Engineer Baxter,” who was the Rio Grande Western’s chief local engineer only until October 1905, being given the authority to have Ware prepare the plans. Unfortunately, the only copy of the *Tribune* article I have located to date is a clipping kept by Thomas Taylor’s wife, a copy of which is included in Hales, “The Effect of the Rivalry between Jesse Knight and Thomas Nicholls Taylor,” 95. The *Tribune*’s view of Ware’s plans was that “Provo will have the handsomest station in the state” if it constructed this design and reported that “The building will be built at once and finished this fall.”

²⁴ “Fight Over the Site,” *Salt Lake Herald*, January 9, 1905.

²⁵ Other east side-west side controversies included the location of a Carnegie-funded public library and a new federal building, both of which were ultimately constructed on the east side. The library was constructed on land donated to the city by Jesse Knight. Interestingly, Mrs. Thomas N. Taylor was on the board of the library. “Provo’s Public Library Building,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, July 18, 1908; “Federal Building on Court House Block,” *Provo Enquirer*, January 5, 1907.

without having to walk in the dusty street. Led by mining and business magnate Jesse Knight, east-siders opposed the Third West site and vowed to fight fiercely against such a move.²⁶

The location of a new depot shaped up as the major campaign issue in the 1905 municipal elections. The dispute over the issue also stifled the railroads' plans to build a union depot. To attract west-side support, Democratic Mayor William Roylance, an east-sider who was elected in 1903 when Thomas Taylor did not run again, tried to focus on his record of progressive leadership. Joseph Frisby, a west-sider, was the Republican mayoral candidate, even though he was nominated to run largely with the support of Democrat Thomas Taylor. Political party became meaningless as the real divisions in the electorate broke down by section of the city. East-side Republicans voted to re-elect Mayor Roylance while west-side Democrats supported Republican Frisby. Salt Lake's Democratic *Herald* noted that "There is an element of uncertainty in the campaign – the East and West end fight – which cannot be estimated . . ."²⁷ In the end, in another unusually close election, Frisby defeated Roylance by a difference of 40 votes out of 2,048 ballots cast. The ten city councilmen from five municipal wards were evenly divided between east and west sides.²⁸

Things seemed, as they had for some time, tense, but there also appeared reason for hope. Mayor Frisby announced in his initial message to the city his understanding that "the railroad companies have in contemplation the erection of a union passenger depot for the city."²⁹ Reports continued to circulate that senior officers of the two railroads were visiting Provo and meeting with each other regarding the proposed depot. By June 1906, the *Salt Lake Herald* announced that the two railroads had reached agreement on a joint depot and "maps and plans will be drawn as soon as preliminary arrangements can be commissioned and specifications mapped out." The companies were not ready to provide "detailed information about the

²⁶ Jesse Knight was an extraordinarily successful mining magnate, with properties initially in the Tintic district of Utah and later in many western states. He owned farms and ran cattle in southern Alberta, owned the Provo Woolen Mills, and was the dominant businessman in Provo, and no doubt the richest. He was unusual for an industrialist, showing substantial interest in the physical welfare of many who worked for him. He was extremely generous and likely donated more to Brigham Young University than any other donor. As noted below, he was affectionately referred to as "Uncle" Jesse and was almost universally admired and respected in Provo and in Utah. Richard H. Peterson, "Jesse Knight," in Allan Kent Powell, *Utah History Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 305; Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1892-1904), 4:682-86.

²⁷ "Roylance for Mayor, Indications that the People of Provo Cannot Be Hoodwinked by Apostle Smoot," *Salt Lake Herald*, November 6, 1905.

²⁸ "Roylance is Beaten, Sectional Struggle Results in Defeat in Provo's Mayor," *Salt Lake Herald*, November 8, 1905. In the four mayoral elections between 1899 and 1905, victory was earned by a total of 167 votes out of 7,908 votes cast. "Mayor Jones Defeated," *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 8, 1899; "Provo's Elections," *Ogden Standard*, November 6, 1901; "Roylance Carries Provo," *Ogden Standard*, November 4, 1903. Other important issues facing Provo at the time were bonding for a new water system and for electric generating capacity. See, for example, "City Council Session," *Deseret News*, June 12, 1906; "Provo Votes Bonds for Water and Light," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 25, 1910.

²⁹ "City Council Organized," *Deseret News*, January 3, 1906.



BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

proposed building” (such as the location), but they did seek to rally Provo support by disclosing “that a large sum will be expended in making the depot and necessary buildings, as neat and complete as any in this state or in any city of Provo’s size in the western territory.”³⁰ In August 1906, the Rio Grande’s vice president visited Mayor Frisby and inspected both sites. The mayor “impressed on [the RGW official] that the important thing was to get improved depot facilities and that the matter of location was a secondary consideration, and one for the railroad officials to decide upon.”³¹ The Rio Grande officer then met with the Salt Lake Route’s general manager and the two agreed “to build at once” and to settle “their respective rights and liabilities in the matter.”³²

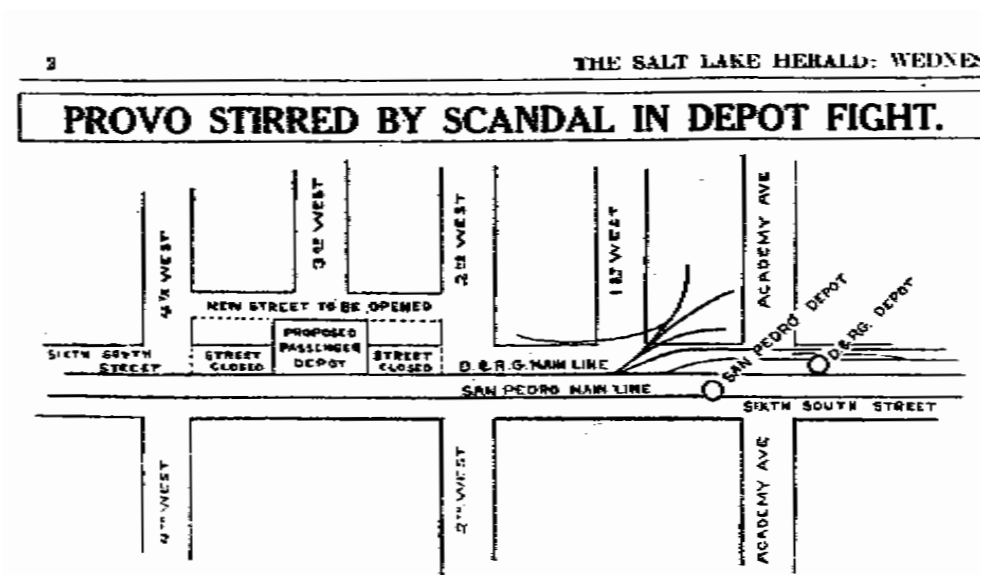
Momentum was lost after senior managers of the railroads met in Provo in November 1906 with Senator Reed Smoot, State Senator C.E. Loose, BYU President George H. Brimhall, former mayor William H. Roylance

Crowds at Provo’s old Denver and Rio Grande Depot greet President William Howard Taft, September 24, 1909.

³⁰ “Spike and Rail,” *Deseret News*, February 18, 1906; “Provo Will Get a Joint Depot. Rio Grande and Salt Lake Route Agree to Build Handsome Structure,” *Salt Lake Herald*, June 16, 1906.

³¹ “City Council Session,” *Deseret News*, August 21, 1906; “Provo News Notes,” *Salt Lake Herald*, August 21, 1906.

³² “Provo News Notes,” *Salt Lake Herald*, August 23, 1906; “Provo Union Depot, Denver & Rio Grande and Clark Road Come to Agreement,” *Deseret News*, August 22, 1906.



(all of whom supported the east side location), and Mayor Frisby and former mayor Thomas Taylor (who supported the Third West site). The powerful east-side personalities apparently gave pause to the railway companies, who had tentatively decided on Third West, and slowed plans to proceed with the Third West site.³³

This map from the May 6, 1908, issue of the Salt Lake Herald shows the location of the San Pedro and Denver and Rio Grande Depots on Academy (University) Avenue and the proposed Union Station on 300 West.

Mayor Frisby, who had been elected in 1905 by the west-siders to pursue a Third West depot, could do nothing with an equally-divided city council. Although some prominent citizens and an apparent majority of Provo's electorate seem to have cared more that a new depot be constructed than where, a few powerful men continued to press for the Academy Avenue location for the new depot. The city administration was gridlocked on the depot issue. The railroads were frustrated by the inability of the city to approve a new "franchise" to permit the construction of any new depot, let alone the desired union depot.

With the strong sentiments voiced by some of Provo's most powerful citizens, no serious progress was made on the depot question by the time of the 1907 municipal elections. In that election, Democrat Charles Decker, an east-sider who was neutral on the depot question, was elected over incumbent mayor Joseph Frisby by another small majority.³⁴ It was the second straight time an incumbent mayor had been turned out of office

³³ "Inspect New Depot Site: Railroad Officials Listen to Arguments of Provo Citizens Regarding Locations," *Salt Lake Herald*, November 23, 1906.

³⁴ "Provo's Official Canvass," *Salt Lake Herald*, November 14, 1907.

because of his inability to solve the union depot issue. Apparently, the railroads liked the change in administration because soon the RGW submitted a franchise request to construct a union depot with the Salt Lake Route on the Third West site purchased by the west-side merchants.³⁵

Jesse Knight enjoyed extraordinary influence in Utah and the LDS church during this time period.³⁶ Knight began exercising this influence in the depot controversy by bringing powerful allies in to fight the proposed Third West franchise. At the city council meeting on April 14, 1908, where the RGW request for the Third West franchise was presented, the council considered petitions in opposition to the request presented by, among others, BYU President George H. Brimhall on behalf of BYU, local LDS Stake President Joseph B. Keeler, LDS Church President Joseph F. Smith on behalf of ZCMI, Utah Governor John C. Cutler on behalf of the State Mental Hospital, and, finally, Jesse Knight on behalf of BYU's board of trustees. President Brimhall also presented petitions from various cities in the county. Joseph F. Smith reportedly also joined in the BYU trustees' petition and still another petition was filed by LDS Apostle and former Provo resident, John Henry Smith. In response, west-siders complained about outsiders trying to participate in the local dispute. The petitions by the church president and the governor were almost certainly engineered by Jesse Knight. About one hundred "prominent citizens" attended the meeting, many of whom objected "to the removal of the depot from its present location." Having heard that Salt Lake Route owner Senator William Clark had announced that this might be the last chance for Provo to get a union depot, the city council passed a resolution that the current facilities were inadequate and dangerous and that the Third West site was preferable, and granted the requested franchise, but, troubled by the east-side opposition, the council tabled for a week the grant pending legal consideration by the city attorney, an east-side partisan.³⁷

At this point, the railroads formally weighed in. The same day that the

³⁵ "Depot Question Before Council, The Rio Grande Western Asked for a Franchise, Third West Is the Location Wanted by the Railroads," *Provo Enquirer*, April 14, 1908; "Provo, Depot Franchise Question," *Deseret News*, April 14, 1908.

³⁶ Knight's influence was such that Church President Joseph F. Smith dedicated Knight's Center Street mansion when it was completed in 1906 and he was nominated as the Democratic candidate for governor in 1908, even though he did not seek the nomination and made it clear he would not run. "Dedication of Knight Home," *Provo Enquirer*, March 2, 1906; "Knight Refuses Governorship," *Provo Enquirer*, September 22, 1908. "Provo Man Sure of Nomination, 'Uncle Jesse' First Choice and No Second Choice with Many Delegates," *Salt Lake Herald*, September 21, 1908.

³⁷ "Depot Question Before Council," *Provo Enquirer*, April 14, 1908; "Provo, Depot Franchise Question," *Deseret News*, April 14, 1908; "Provo Council Session, City Fathers Pledge Moral Support to Civic Improvement Association," *Salt Lake Herald*, March 18, 1908; "Union Depot Plan for Provo: Salt Lake Route and Rio Grande Western Want to Build One at Once," *Salt Lake Herald*, April 14, 1908; "Provo Stirred by Scandal in Depot Fight," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1908. City attorney D.H. Thomas consistently attempted to postpone consideration of the RGW request. The *Salt Lake Tribune*, always ready to criticize leaders of the Mormon church, found the participation by the prominent out-of-town parties, particularly President Smith, to be inappropriate. See "The Fight at Provo," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 25, 1909.

petitions protesting the Third West site were considered by the city council, the general manager of the Salt Lake Route and the general superintendent of the RGW delivered a letter to Provo city officers, affirming Senator Clark's views. The letter stated that if the Third West franchise were not granted, the railroads would not agree to build a union depot on Academy Avenue. It was not a question of choosing between the two locations – there simply “would be no union station” if the Third West franchise were not granted because the railroads had “definitely decided upon [that] site.”³⁸

As might be expected, it was widely thought that the city council, faced with the difficult choice of granting the Third West franchise or having no new depot, would vote to approve the rail lines' request for a franchise to build a union station on Third West. A report circulated among local residents that six city council members would vote to grant the franchise while four would vote against the franchise. Mayor Decker abandoned his neutral course, by stating he was “willing to sign the franchise ordinance when passed.”³⁹

On Saturday morning, April 18, 1908, just a few days after the council meeting, John E. Booth, a strong east-side adherent, former mayor, and long-time participant in Provo politics, approached Republican Councilman Andrew Knudsen from the Second Ward to try to convince him to vote against the franchise. Both the South Academy Avenue and the Third West locations were located in Knudsen's Second Ward and the district had many adherents on both sides of the depot location issue. Knudsen was reputed to be leaning toward approving the Third West site. As Booth later told the press, “It's true. I did go to see Mr. Knudsen. I am a property owner in Provo and had a right to speak to him on the subject.” Unfortunately, John E. Booth was also the only state district court judge in Utah County and he should have avoided participating in political issues that could eventually come before him for resolution, like attacks on city council decisions.⁴⁰

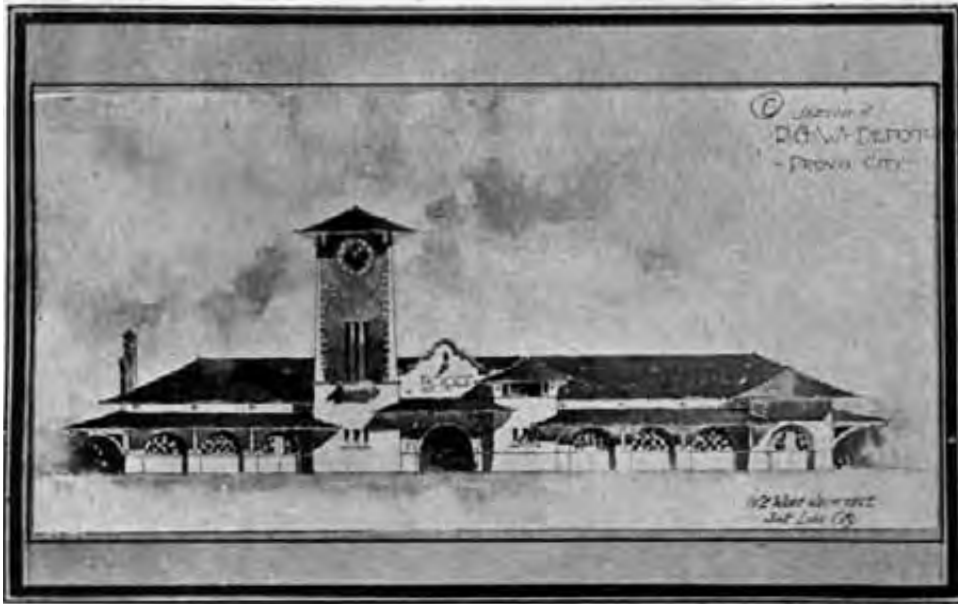
Only two days after Judge Booth's conversation with Councilman Knudsen, the good judge was presented with a motion for a “temporary injunction” against the city council voting on the railroads' request for a franchise to build a union depot on Third West and Sixth South. On Monday morning, April 20, 1908, J.W.N. Whitecotton, representing Jesse Knight, asked Judge Booth to enjoin the vote by the city council. Interestingly, Counselor Whitecotton often represented railroads and may have faced a conflict representing Knight against the interests of the railroads.⁴¹

³⁸ “Provo Stirred by Scandal,” *Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1908.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*; “Provo People Indignant, Tired After Twenty-Five Year Wait for Good Depot,” *Salt Lake Herald*, May 9, 1908.

⁴¹ Whitecotton was prominent in Provo and Utah legal circles for many years. C.C. Goodwin, *History of the Bench and Bar of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Interstate Press Association, 1913), 216–17. He had attempted to speak at the City Council meeting the week before against the Third West site (not disclosing he had been retained by Jesse Knight), and acknowledged there that, though he sometimes represented “one of the



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At the injunction hearing, Judge Booth failed to acknowledge his partisan opposition to the Third West site and granted the injunction. He later admitted that he intended “at the time to ask some other judge to hear this case, knowing that the matter could not properly come before [him] as [he] had not only spoken with Councilman Knudsen, but had signed a protest against the Third West street location.” Even after Judge Booth granted the injunction, he did not immediately request a judge from the Third Judicial District in Salt Lake to hear the request.⁴²

Architectural rendering by Salt Lake City architect Walter E. Ware for the Provo Depot was not adopted.

When the city council met on April 20, each member had been served with Judge Booth’s injunction. The council tabled the franchise request pending the court’s full consideration of the question of whether the city council could grant the requested franchise.⁴³

For his part, Jesse Knight openly admitted that he sought the injunction because he knew the city council was going to vote for the Third West franchise, which he desperately opposed:

I learned that the council stood 6 to 4 in favor of the franchise. . . . The Third West street depot site is a selfish proposition. My appearance in the dispute is due solely to

railroads, [he] was not bought body and soul by them.” The City Council did not let him speak, however, because of the acrimony that had developed in the meeting. In seeking the injunction, Whitecotton openly disclosed his representation of Knight in the dispute. “Provo Depot Franchise Question,” *Deseret News*, April 14, 1908; “Provo Stirred by Scandal,” *Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1908.

⁴² “Provo Depot Franchise Question,” *Deseret News*, April 14, 1908; “Provo Stirred by Scandal,” *Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1908.

⁴³ “The Depot Question is Taken into Court, the Councilmen are Served with an Order to Prevent Them from Taking Action,” *Provo Enquirer*, April 21, 1908.



BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Jesse Knight, powerful Provo businessman and contributor to Brigham Young University, led east-side forces in the controversy over the location of the proposed union depot.

my interests in the Brigham Young University and to my desire to see fair play to property owners in Provo. If there is a row between the east side and the west side, it was certainly begun by the west side.

In response, an unnamed west-sider took issue with Knight by writing that "The franchise asked for is fair and reasonable alike to the citizens and railroads" and continuing, "There is not a fair-minded citizen in Provo who will say that the location of the depot on Third West street will work the least hardship on the university. Mr. Knight himself cannot show wherein the university will suffer in the slightest degree."⁴⁴

Judge Booth's injunction caused consternation that turned into west-side fury two weeks later when his political activities against the Third West site, which had not been public, came to light. Lawyer Samuel R. Thurman, who regularly represented the Rio Grande and was appearing for the city council, announced that Judge Booth not only had not disclosed his conflict, he had not yet requested a Salt Lake City judge to hear the matter.⁴⁵ According to the *Salt Lake Herald* (which shared ownership with the Salt Lake Route and clearly supported the Third West location), "The grumbling grew louder and louder until steps were taken for calling an indignation meeting to discuss the depot situation and to expose Judge Booth's attitude in the matter." Judge Booth short-circuited this, however, by asking "Judge Morse of Salt Lake to hear the arguments in favor of and against making the injunction permanent." Based on Judge Booth's recusal, the indignation meeting was called off, though "tongues still wag and feeling runs high in Provo."⁴⁶

Judges in Salt Lake City did not seem particularly interested in becoming involved in the divisive sectional issue in Provo. The *Provo Enquirer* reported that "owing to the impossibility of the court to get a judge to hear the injunction against the city council by Jesse Knight, the case has been

⁴⁴ "Provo Stirred by Scandal," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1908; "Provo People Indignant," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 9, 1908.

⁴⁵ Thurman, at the time a Provo resident, regularly represented the RGW and had previously been a law partner in Provo with George Sutherland and William H. King (both of whom became U.S. Senators and one, Sutherland, served as Utah's only U.S. Supreme Court Justice). Thurman was later appointed as Chief Justice of Utah's Supreme Court. Goodwin, *History of the Bench and Bar of Utah*, 211-12; Stephen W. Julian, "The Utah State Supreme Court and Its Justices, 1896-1976," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 44 (Summer 1976), 280, 284.

⁴⁶ "Provo Stirred by Scandal," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 6, 1908.

postponed indefinitely, and from present indications the trouble will be continued for some time." The paper also expressed its concern that the dispute was challenging the city's progress: "The depot fight has caused one of the bitterest factional fights ever engendered in Provo city and is doing much to retard the growth of the community. Both parties should work for a speedy hearing and a settlement at the earliest possible date."⁴⁷

Finally, in July, Salt Lake City Judge Thomas D. Lewis was assigned to the lawsuit in place of Judge Booth and heard arguments on whether the injunction should not be made permanent.⁴⁸ Many residents hoped for "speedy settlement of the case, as it has engendered so much bitterness in town." On July 17, 1908, Judge Lewis heard arguments from J.W.N. Whitecotton on behalf of Jesse Knight, and Samuel R. Thurman and Salt Lake attorney Waldemar Van Cott, representing the city council.⁴⁹ Whitecotton spoke eloquently for almost three hours handling "the city council without gloves." Thurman "then criticized Whitecotton's arguments severely." "A large crowd" of excited partisans witnessed the entire proceedings. The technical legal arguments in the controversy first came into public view at this point – the city council argued that considering and granting the franchise was part of its proper legislative function and if anyone, such as Jesse Knight, were injured by the ordinance, he could appeal the council's decision to district court. On the other hand, Knight's attorneys argued that the city council lacked authority to condemn streets for private purposes unless the issue were put before the electorate in a special election. At the conclusion of the hearing, Judge Lewis took the matter under advisement.⁵⁰ East-siders and west-siders waited impatiently for the court's decision. In the meantime, Jesse Knight, the plaintiff in the injunction action, whose popularity in Provo and Utah was at its zenith at this point, was almost unanimously drafted to run as the Democratic candidate for governor in 1908 even though he announced on the day of the state convention in Logan that he would not accept the nomination and he did not, in fact, run.⁵¹

⁴⁷ "No Injunction Trial Today," *Provo Enquirer*, April 30, 1908.

⁴⁸ "Injunction Suit Up July 17th," *Provo Enquirer*, July 4, 1908; "Judge Lewis Will Preside, Injunction Suit Affecting Union Depot Location Set for July 17," *Salt Lake Herald*, July 4, 1908. The *Enquirer* continued to express its concern that "no fight has ever done Provo so much damage."

⁴⁹ Van Cott was a well-known Salt Lake attorney who, like Thurman, had served as a law partner of George Sutherland. Goodwin, *History of the Bench and Bar of Utah*, 212.

⁵⁰ "Injunction Suit Tried in Court," *Provo Enquirer*, July 18, 1908; "Depot Site Case is Heard," *Salt Lake Herald*, July 18, 1908.

⁵¹ "Office Seekers Are Appearing, Candidates on Both Tickets Are Investigating Chances for Political Success," *Salt Lake Herald*, July 28, 1908; "Provo Man Sure of Nomination, 'Uncle Jesse' First Choice and No Second with Many Delegates," *Salt Lake Herald*, September 21, 1908; "Knight Refuses Governorship," *Provo Enquirer*, September 22, 1908; "Record-Breaking Convention Nominates Jesse Knight After Great Demonstration, Democracy of Utah Names Wizard of Tintic for Governor Despite His Determination Not to Accept," *Salt Lake Herald*, September 23, 1908; "Jesse Knight Expresses Regret at Being Unable to Accept Honor," *Salt Lake Herald*, September 23, 1908. When it became clear that the senior Knight would not run, his son, J. William Knight, for once referred to as "Jesse William Knight" was nominated to run for governor on the Democratic ticket. Will Knight lost in a Republican landslide to William Spry, Reed

On November 3, 1908, Judge Lewis issued his ruling. He found that the city council had the authority to approve the railroads' request for a franchise on the Third West location, leaving the council free to act. At its next meeting, on November 9, the city council voted 6-3, with Councilman VanWagenen being absent, to grant the franchise on the following terms and conditions: the railroads would have the right to use Sixth South between Second and Fourth West for one hundred years so long as construction on a depot costing at least \$15,000 would commence within one year and be completed within two years. The *Enquirer's* extended headline said it all: "Judge Lewis Decided Against Knight on Injunction Suit, the Verdict Gives the City Council the Right to Pass the Railroad Franchise for Third West Street Site. Jesse Knight May Appeal the Case. The Fight has been Long and Bitter, But it is now Ended, Unless the Case is Taken to the Supreme Court."⁵²

Several days later, Mayor Decker signed the ordinance granting the franchise. Given the controversies, he released a statement setting forth the reasons for his decision:

The depot question has had our attention . . . for the past seven years, and we have never been able to agree, either with the railroad companies or among ourselves. Hence the very poor facilities we have for handling freight and the disgraceful accommodations. I think it is time now we were doing something. The railroad companies are ready and willing to build us a passenger building that will be a credit to our city and a great convenience to the public. . . . [W]hile I realize that the citizens are more or less [equally] divided on the question, I am thoroughly convinced . . . that granting the railroad companies the franchise is the best thing we can do for the good of our citizens and city.⁵³

Jesse Knight had other ideas, and the news article in which Mayor Decker was quoted concluded by stating that J.W.N. Whitecotton, on behalf of Jesse Knight, had already appealed Judge Lewis's decision to the Utah Supreme Court. The appeal would be heard in February 1909. The local newspaper editorialized that "A large majority of the people all over town are in favor of allowing the railroads to go ahead and build the depot" and worried that the furor caused the "danger" that no new depot

Smoot's choice. "Will Knight to Lead Democrats, Was Last Forlorn Hope of the Democracy," *Provo Enquirer*, October 3, 1908; "'Cousin Jesse' Notified Amid Wild Enthusiasm, Next Governor of Utah is Cheered to the Echo by Marching thousands in Torchlight Procession," *Salt Lake Herald*, October 11, 1908; "Taft has 16,000 Utah Plurality, Spry for Governor Has About 12,000 Plurality over Knight," *Salt Lake Herald*, November 5, 1908.

⁵² *Provo Enquirer*, November 3, 1908; "Union Depot for Provo, City Council Passes Ordinance Granting Franchise for Its Construction," *Salt Lake Herald*, November 12, 1908. VanWagenen was a decided opponent of the Third West site and would have certainly voted against the franchise, meaning the vote would have been 6-4 if he had been present. "The Depot Question Before Council," *Provo Enquirer*, April 14, 1908.

⁵³ "Mayor Signs Ordinance, Believes It Is for the Good of the City and Its Citizens," *Salt Lake Herald*, November 13, 1908; "Mayor Decker Signs the Hard-Fought Depot Franchise . . . Let Us Now Have Peace in Provo," *Provo Enquirer*, November 12, 1908. The *Enquirer* noted that "the question of location has been the factor that has kept it [a new depot] out." Ibid.

would be built.⁵⁴ It is noteworthy that west-side advocates, led by Thomas N. Taylor, so strongly stood up to powerful Jesse Knight on the depot controversies during this period of Provo's history.

The Utah Supreme Court issued its opinion in April 1909. The high court reversed Judge Lewis's decision by holding that the city council could not grant a private entity such as a railroad a franchise in a city street that had already been dedicated as a street. Only a special election of city voters could approve such an action under the governing statute.⁵⁵ The city council responded by scheduling a special election for July 27, 1909, at which Provo voters would decide the question once and for all. Provo's city attorney, an east-side advocate to the end, continued to raise technical issues to try to postpone the special election. He was, however, shouted (and voted) down by a 7-3 majority of the city council.⁵⁶

The fight had barely begun. The *Salt Lake Herald* wrote, with some understatement, that "The matter is of great interest to the people. Those on the west side of the city want the railroad companies to have the site while those on the east side do not."⁵⁷ Jesse Knight was clearly worried that he might lose this battle and issued a pamphlet setting forth his views on the matter. In a pertinent part, "Uncle Jesse" wrote,

The Provo city council is about to give away to the two railroads . . . considerable property . . . if the citizens shall vote "yes" on the proposition. As a taxpayer, I am not in favor of giving away to wealthy railroad corporations the city's property (the streets) and other valuable rights. So far as this "East and West Side fight" is concerned it is certainly a disgrace to Provo. Every fair-minded and un-biased person knows where this fight originated. It originated by a few people holding secret meetings with the railroad people. Six thousand dollars were raised and donated to the railroads by a few persons who are located on the West side of town, and who imagined it would benefit their business to have the depot removed, regardless of the public good. It certainly looks foolish to me . . . to satisfy the individual desire of a few persons who have been pushing this fight with the bitterness that has characterized it all along. Let us get into our right minds for once and do the right thing.⁵⁸

The LDS Utah Stake Presidency also sent a flyer to all stake members.

⁵⁴ "City Council Passed the Depot Franchise, Union Depot will be Built on Third West Street," *Provo Enquirer*, November 10, 1908.

⁵⁵ *Knight v. Thomas*, 35 Utah 470, 101 P. 383 (Utah Supreme Court 1909); "The Supreme Court Decides Against Provo's Union Depot," *Provo Enquirer*, April 10, 1909.

⁵⁶ "Provo Electors to Determine, The Supreme Court Says They Must Vote on Granting the Street to Railroad Uses," *Salt Lake Herald*, April 10, 1909; "Case Virtually Settled, Provo Citizens Will Now Vote on the Giving of New Depot Site," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 3, 1909; "Special Election for Depot Site," *Provo Enquirer*, June 3, 1909; "City Attorney Against Ordinance, Decides People Cannot Vote on Depot Question," *Provo Enquirer*, June 5, 1909; "The People Will Have Vote on the Depot Franchise, the City Council Thrashed the Special Election Question Over Last Night and Decided for It," *Provo Enquirer*, June 12, 1909. Not surprisingly, the *Tribune* believed that the City Attorney acted at the "dictation of church leaders." "The Fight at Provo," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 25, 1909.

⁵⁷ "People to Vote on Depot Site, Vexing Problem of Long Standing in Provo at Last to Be Settled," *Salt Lake Herald*, July 14, 1909.

⁵⁸ "Depot Question Discussed," *Provo Enquirer*, July 13, 1909; "People to Vote on Depot Site, Vexing Problem of Long Standing in Provo at Last to Be Settled," *Salt Lake Herald*, July 14, 1909.

The stake presidency published the pamphlet in response to people “busying themselves in an attempt to discredit the right and sincerity of President Joseph F. Smith on the ‘Depot Question’” and in response to “vicious” attacks against him by the *Salt Lake Tribune*. Included in the pamphlet was an appeal from LDS Church President Joseph F. Smith and others representing BYU in opposition to the Third West location. President Smith recounted how Brigham Young had “located the present depot site” and it needed to remain there. It would “work a hardship on students and patrons” if a new depot were even farther away from campus than it already was. Finally, President Smith urged “all . . . who have the right to speak at the coming election to vote NO.”⁵⁹

The stake presidency also included its own statement in the circular. The presidency, who were all east-siders (and included Jesse Knight’s son, Will), wrote that they believed that the “public weal” would best be served by a vote against the Third West franchise. This was a “public question” and they had the right to take it up “in a public way.” The presidency criticized the division between local residents “brought about through allowing personal interests to enter too largely into what should have been a loyal public policy.” Having taken sides on the volatile issue, the stake president and his counselors ironically advised, “At any rate, we feel that it is wholly within our province to advise the people to be at peace with their neighbors, and not to stir up strife or act in such a way as to engender bad feelings.”⁶⁰ BYU President George H. Brimhall issued a condescending “open letter” to the city stating that those who had paid the most in taxes and provided the greatest gifts to the city opposed the Third West site and city residents should do the same “in remembrance of what” these men had done for the city. Later, he gave an impassioned speech in the Opera House in which he criticized all who questioned President Smith’s role in the controversy, advised everyone that the church did, in fact, oppose the Third West site, and ordered “the people to vote against the railroads.”⁶¹

The church leaders’ involvement in the fray made an easy target for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, which offered the opinion that “The fact that President Joseph F. Smith of the Mormon church, has ‘butted in,’ . . . in the fight against the granting of the franchise . . . for a depot site, will not do the opponents of the matter any good. In fact, it is believed that the act of Smith will in all probability help the other side.” In the *Tribune*’s view, “the Mormon Church had been brought into the fight” as a last resort

⁵⁹ “An Explanation, An Appeal,” flyer issued by Utah Stake Presidency in July 1909, a copy of which is included in Hales, “The Effect of the Rivalry Between Jesse Knight and Thomas Nicholls Taylor,” 86.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “An Open Letter,” *Provo Enquirer*, July 15, 1909; *Provo Post*, July 20, 1909; “Brimhall Defends Mormon President, Declares Joseph F. Smith Was Justified in Opposing Depot Franchise,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 23, 1909; “Depot Franchise Carries at Provo, West Side Wins Out in Long and Bitterly Contested Struggle, Result Means Splendid Union Depot for Town, Outcome Is Blow to Church Domination and Victory for Progressiveness,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 28, 1909.

to try to sway the vote.⁶²

Lest biased allegations by the *Tribune* of church influence be discounted too much, Thomas Taylor's experience is important. Taylor, at the time bishop of the west-side Third Ward and later the successor to Joseph B. Keeler as president of the Utah Stake, described the treatment he received as follows:

Brother Keeler [the Utah Stake President] and Brother Brimhall called on my mother and wanted me to give up the fight. They told her I was going against the church authorities. President Keeler called me in and wanted me to ask the people to vote against it, even though I had been selected to lead the fight for the depot. . . . I was then bishop of the Third Ward. Brother Keeler made some statements I did not think he should have made. I told him if I was what he claimed me to be, I had no right to be a bishop, and if he would request it I would immediately resign my bishopric. But I would not throw down the people who looked to me to carry on the fight.⁶³

Others recognized that this was simply a turf war and that religion should have little to do with the question.⁶⁴

Public meetings were held by both factions. The *Salt Lake Tribune* alleged that "money galore was employed by this [Knight-east side] clique. Bands were hired and nightly meetings were held, and J.W. Whitecotton and other attorneys employed to speak against the railroads." Reed Smoot's older half brother, Owen, rallied west-siders at the Opera House.⁶⁵

Thomas N. Taylor refused to grace east-side allegations of unholy pacts between the railroads and him with a response.⁶⁶ At a city council meeting the Friday before the special election, things had so warmed "up in Provo preparatory to the depot site election" that "partisans of the East and West Sides almost indulged in a fist-fight."⁶⁷

At the end of all the debates and politicking, the attempted church influence, and the Utah Supreme Court's decision, the question of the location of the Union Depot was put to the voters of Provo in a special election held on July 27, 1909. The *Salt Lake Herald* simply concluded that

⁶² "Joseph F. Smith's Action Will Prove Boomerang," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 19, 1909; "Depot Franchise Carries at Provo," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 28, 1909.

⁶³ Taylor and Luke, *The Life and Times of T.N.T.*, 71.

⁶⁴ "Two Letters About the Provo Depot Controversy," *Salt Lake Herald*, July 26, 1909; "Craig Strikes from Shoulder in Depot Franchise Matter," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 26, 1909.

⁶⁵ "Depot Franchise Carries at Provo, West Side Wins Out in Long and Bitterly Contested Struggle, Result Means Splendid Union Depot for Town, Outcome Is Blow to Church Domination and Victory for Progressiveness," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 28, 1909. Abraham Owen Smoot (known as Owen) was the namesake of his more famous father, A.O. Smoot. Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1892-1904), 4:98-102; Andrew Jensen, ed., *Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History, 1901-36), 1:485-88; Family Group Records of Abraham Owen Smoot and Diana Eldredge, www.familysearch.org (accessed July 2009). The Provo Opera House was located on First West just north of Center Street.

⁶⁶ Taylor did let others respond to these allegations on his behalf, however. Thomas Nicholls Taylor, "Manuscript History," unpublished document, 63-66, as quoted in Hales, "The Effect of the Rivalry Between Jesse Knight and Thomas Nicholls Taylor," 16, 20.

⁶⁷ "The Fight at Provo," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 25, 1909.

“there never was an election in Provo that created half the interest that was manifested in today’s ballot casting. The vote was remarkably large.”⁶⁸ Eighty-three percent of voters in west-side districts voted for the Third West franchise while eighty-six percent of voters in east-side districts voted against it. The real difference in the vote was that 1,307 west-side voters had participated in the election while only 1,086 east-siders had exercised their voting rights. The west-side faction won, approving the Third West depot, by a total vote of 1,307 to 1,161.⁶⁹ Jesse Knight, who had led and funded the opposition to the Third West site for so long, was resigned but not contrite. “I fought the proposition, as I thought, in the interest of Provo in general and the B.Y. university in particular. It appears that the people do not give a d—— for the university, but prefer to work for the railroad interests. So far as I am concerned I am through with the matter.”⁷⁰ Almost relieved, the LDS church-owned newspaper, the *Deseret News*, noted that “the depot question is now over and the people can again devote themselves to less exciting affairs.” Though “considerable discussion on the streets followed the election, . . . most of it was of a good natured character.”⁷¹

A week later, the city council reviewed the vote of the special election and voted 7 to 3 to convey the property to the railroads as soon as they accepted the franchise. Three east-side councilmen, true to the end, voted against conveying the property in spite of the outcome of the special election.⁷² A new design for the Union Depot was soon completed, likely by the Salt Lake City architectural firm of Ware & Treganza. The building as constructed was similar in massing and had some design similarities to the earlier plan prepared by Walter Ware, though without the comely clock tower.⁷³

The railroads did not begin building the lovely Prairie-Style influenced Union Depot until June 1910, but it was ready for business by the end of

⁶⁸ “Provo People Vote to Grant Site for Depot,” *Salt Lake Herald*, July 28, 1909. By comparison, in special elections on approval of important bonds to build a new water system and electric plant, a very low percentage of the electorate voted. “City Council Session,” *Deseret News*, June 12, 1906, (total of 175 votes cast); “Provo Votes Bonds for Water and Light,” *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, May 25, 1910, (total of 311 votes cast).

⁶⁹ “Depot Franchise Carries at Provo,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 28, 1909; “Provo People Vote to Grant Site for Depot, Advocates of New Railroad Station Win Victory at Special Election, Franchise Majority Hundred Forty-Six, Intense Interest Taken in Balloting and Heavy Vote is Told,” *Salt Lake Herald*, July 28, 1909.

⁷⁰ “Depot Franchise Carries at Provo,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 28, 1909.

⁷¹ “Provo Votes for Depot Franchise,” *Deseret News*, July 28, 1909.

⁷² “Provo Council Passes on Depot Election, Mayor and City Recorder to Turn Ground Over to Railroad on Acceptance of Franchise,” *Salt Lake Herald*, August 4, 1909.

⁷³ Steven Hales suggests in his excellent masters thesis that the depot was designed by Ware and Treganza. Hales, “The Effect of the Rivalry Between Jesse Knight and Thomas Nicholls Taylor,” 17, 96, 97. No plans for the building are found in the collections of that firm archived at the University of Utah and the Utah State Historical Society. If it was Walter Ware who ultimately designed the Provo Union Depot, Jesse Knight got one last lick in because Ware was his architect of choice at the time, while Utah County resident Richard C. Watkins was the architect preferred by Thomas Taylor. Hales, “The Effect of the Rivalry Between Jesse Knight and Thomas Nicholls Taylor,” 36–43.

1910. Most histories have reported that the grand opening of the Depot was on New Year's Day 1911. Those who know Provo best, however, know that that would not have been the case because January 1, 1911, fell on a Sunday. Instead, the huge celebration took place on a bitter-cold Monday, January 2, 1911.⁷⁴

More than one thousand people turned out on a day when the high temperature was 18 degrees and the low was 5 degrees Fahrenheit. Appropriately, Thomas N. Taylor officiated as chairman of the celebration. Senior railroad officials from seven major railroads, including the RGW and the Salt Lake Route, traveled to Provo together for the event in the RGW general superintendent's private car. It was reported that visitors and townspeople alike were all "pleased with the appearance of the new building." Public officials, including still another new Provo mayor, W.H. Ray, railroad officials, Chamber of Commerce officials, and journalist and Utah booster R.W. Sloan, all expressed enthusiasm in their speeches for Provo, its prospects, and its new Union Depot. At the banquet in the Hotel Roberts after the celebration at the Depot, toasts were offered by Judge John E. Booth, J. William Knight, and many others, who had been on opposite sides of the dispute. Whatever differences had caused dissension over the past seven or eight years on the issue, all seemed forgotten, though there is no record of Jesse Knight having attended the celebration or the banquet.⁷⁵

Everyone in the city wanted a new depot beginning in 1891, but the controversies held up construction for years. One of the telling aspects of the sectional dispute is that it had nothing to do with Republicans and Democrats but had to do with the maintenance of or ascension to power – either in section of the city or in dominant individuals. East-sider Jesse Knight was chosen as the Democratic candidate for governor in 1908, though he refused to run. West-sider Thomas N. Taylor was also nominated as the Democratic candidate for governor in 1920, running unsuccessfully against Salt Lake City Republican Charles Mabey.⁷⁶ Knight and Taylor, the



AUTHORS COLLECTION

Thomas N. Taylor, Provo mayor and leader of the west-side faction in the Union Depot controversy.

⁷⁴ "Depot Celebration," *Deseret News*, December 24, 1910; "Passenger Depot Opened at Provo," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, January 3, 1911.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Taylor and Luke, *The Life and Times of T.N.T.*, 60–61; "Knight Refuses Governorship," *Provo Enquirer*, September 22, 1908; "Republican Lead in Utah Gaining Fast," *Deseret News*, November 4, 1920; "State Returns Nearly Compiled," *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 4, 1920.



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The Provo Union Depot.

two most dominant personalities, were before and after the controversies close friends, political allies, fellow churchmen, and sometimes even business associates.

After completion of the depot, as the 1911 municipal elections approached, a local newspaper optimistically looked forward to the November elections. By new state law, firmly in the

Progressive tradition, city elections would no longer be partisan. Rather than having a city council of ten from five municipal wards in Provo, the city would elect two at-large commissioners to serve with the mayor. Provo had had enough of sectional strife that had caused dissension over the depot question: “‘east and west-endism’ . . . have no place in this election.”⁷⁷ For their part, “the two old friends, Uncle Jesse Knight and Uncle Tom Taylor were busy planning to make a success of the Knight Woolen Mills.”⁷⁸ It is difficult to understand, in retrospect, what all the fuss over the two rival depot sites had been about.

As for Provo’s stately Union Depot, it inevitably went into decline as passenger trains lost importance. Imposing train stations that had been built around the country with such community pride soon had no real function other than as reminders of an earlier, grand era, and the depot on Third West did not fare well. Ultimately, the location of Provo’s Depot was a bit obscure, away from the center of downtown, in a relatively run-down area. The site of the Academy Avenue depots under what is now the viaduct on south University Avenue, may have been worse. After years of neglect and deferred maintenance, the Union Depot, born of such vital interest and long-term controversy, was quietly demolished in 1986.⁷⁹ Ironically, for fifteen years afterward, passengers awaiting the arrival of the California Zephyr going west to San Francisco or east to Chicago had to wait in what was derisively referred to as “Amshak,” “a plexiglass structure with metal

⁷⁷ “Common Sense in the Election,” *Provo Herald*, August 24, 1911.

⁷⁸ Jensen, *History of Provo*, 337.

⁷⁹ Kenneth L. Cannon II, *A Very Eligible Place: Provo and Orem, An Illustrated History* (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, 1987), 43.



framing, no lighting, and a gravel parking lot” on the site of the former Union Depot. In the twenty-first century, Provo and the Union Pacific replaced Amshak with a simple though attractive “waiting facility that provides shelter, heat, period lighting, paved parking and attractive landscaping.” It was completed in February 2002, just in time for the Winter Olympics.⁸⁰ The new “waiting facility” is grossly inferior to the proud Union Depot that once represented the all-important first glimpse of Provo for thousands of railroad passengers.

A twenty-first century replacement for the historic Provo Union Depot.

The story of the controversies over the construction and location of the Union Depot — the civic pride, the sectional strife, the bigger-than-life personalities and egos, the politics, the litigation, and the allegations of church influence — provides a compelling picture of the growing city of Provo and of the pains it sometimes experienced. After a wait of twenty years, Provo citizens finally got the handsome depot they wanted and it proudly served for several decades as a lovely gateway to the city. The bitterest fight in Provo’s political history is today almost never remembered, just as the object of that fight, the lovely Union Depot, is mostly forgotten. And yet, the vitality, the pride, the ambitions, the institutions, the personalities, and the ability, ultimately, to resolve disputes continue in Provo in much the same way they did during the controversies over the Union Depot.

⁸⁰ Vern Keeslar, AICP, “Planner Spotlight,” *Utah Planner* 31 (December 2005), 7.



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SALT LAKE CITY ARCHIVES

Sisters of the Holy Cross and Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage

By KATHRYN CALLAHAN

The parents of Ted Nagata and his sister, after being released from the Topaz Relocation Center following World War II and facing difficulties while living near the present-day Salt Palace in Salt Lake City, decided to send their two young children to Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage for a year. Located on the southern outskirts of Salt Lake City, St. Ann's Orphanage was managed by the Sisters of the Holy Cross since 1891. Ted Nagata remembered the imposing multi-story building with a large playground and garden, as having "a very good experience from what we came from."¹

This paper reviews the history of Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage and the Sisters of the Holy Cross who managed and taught orphaned and day students there.²

Kearns-St Ann's Orphanage was established in 1891 by Rev. Lawrence Scanlan, Pastor of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, in Salt Lake City. Sixteen years earlier, Rev. Scanlan made an earnest appeal to the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Saint Mary's, Notre Dame, Indiana, to secure Sisters for Utah to teach at the newly

***The Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage
shortly after construction in 1900.***

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¹ Ted Nagata interview in "Utah World War II Stories: Part 4 'The Home Front'" KUED-7.

² A plaque located near the front door of Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage reads: "To the Sisters Of The Holy Cross Whose Devotion To St. Ann's Inspired In Little Children The One and Only Hope-AMDG-Placed Here By The Descendents Of The Late Senator and Mrs. Thomas Kearns."

established St. Mary's Academy located where the Salt Palace stands today.³ The request was granted and Sister M. Augusta (Amanda Anderson) who was the Stewardess at St. Mary's and Sister M. Raymond (Mary Sullivan) were assigned to the new foundation and arrived in Salt Lake City on June 6, 1875. They were met at the railroad depot by Rev. Scanlan, who had arranged for their hospitality at the home of a Mrs. Marshall until permanent arrangements were established.⁴

The story of the Sisters of the Holy Cross and their presence in Utah begins much earlier. The Order was founded by Rev. Basil Anthony Moreau in 1841 in Le Mans, France. Several years earlier Father Moreau had brought together a group of priests and brothers to form the Congregation of Holy Cross, named for the surrounding area of Le Mans. He began a school that he named Notre Dame de St. Croix. The Sisters were initially founded to provide ancillary services at this school.

The original purpose of the Sisters began to change almost immediately. In August 1841, one of the priests, Rev. Edward Sorin, CSC, and six Brothers of Holy Cross left Le Mans for Indiana where the bishop had requested brothers to educate the boys of his diocese. After some months in southern Indiana, these men moved north and settled on land in the northern part of the state. Here Sorin immediately made plans to establish a great American Catholic university, which he named Notre Dame du Lac. Sorin wrote for Sisters and told Moreau that when they came they should also be prepared to open schools.

The first four Sisters arrived at Notre Dame in 1843. Women from the area asked to join them and their numbers grew. The people of the area asked the Sisters to open a school for their daughters, which they did almost immediately. That small school, the first of many, became the well-known St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana. The Sisters also began to teach some local orphans and deaf children, as well as some Potawatomi children.

An additional request for their services was made in October 1861, six months after the outbreak of the Civil War, when Governor Oliver P. Morton asked Father Sorin to send Sisters to care for his Indiana troops then serving in Kentucky. Before the war ended, approximately 65 of the 160 Sisters of the Holy Cross in the United States served in the western theater of the war. Four of these Sisters who served on *The Red Rover*, the first navy hospital ship, have been recognized as the forerunners of the Navy Nurse Corps.⁵ This wartime nursing was the beginning of the Sisters' ministry in health care. Their original purpose had truly broadened

³ St. Mary's of the Wasatch was known by several different names: College of St. Mary's of the Wasatch (1926-59), and St. Mary's Academy (1875-1926 and 1959-1970). See Bernice Maher Mooney, *Salt of the Earth: the History of the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, 1776-1887* (Salt Lake City: Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, 1987), various pages.

⁴ St. Mary-of-the-Wasatch Archive Narratives, p. 3, Box SS 1.4, Congregational Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Saint Mary's, Notre Dame, Indiana. Hereinafter cited as Congregational Archives.

⁵ Sesquicentennial 1991, Sister Cecilia's Complete Record, Box F 5.7, Congregational Archives.

considerably in response to the needs of the time and place.⁶

Prior to the establishment of St. Mary's Academy in Salt Lake City in 1875, no institutions conducted by the Sisters of the Holy Cross existed in the West. The East and the South, as well as the middle states, had offered ample fields of labor and their offers had been accepted. The Catholic population in Salt Lake City and the territory was small; however, the non-Catholic patronage was so generous that at the end of the first week of school in September 1875 there were one hundred day pupils and six boarders.

The second institution opened in Salt Lake City under the sponsorship of the Sisters of the Holy Cross was the Holy Cross Hospital. It opened in October 1875, at the request of Reverend Lawrence Scanlan, who realized the need for a hospital in the area to care for the miners.⁷ The first Sisters assigned at the hospital were Sister M. Holy Cross (Welsh), CSC, Director and Sister M. Bartholomew (Darnell), nurse. The Sisters rented a two story brick house on Fifth East at the cost of fifty dollars per month, which was equipped for hospital purposes to accommodate from twelve to thirteen patients. The establishment was financed by subscription at the rate of one dollar per month paid regularly while in health which entitled the patrons to free care. Non-subscribers were charged ten dollars per week for care. The first physicians were Dr Allan Fowler and Drs. D. and J.M Benedict who offered their services gratis.

By the end of the nineteenth century, twelve Sisters were assigned to a number of institutions in the state. In addition to those mentioned above the others included Sacred Heart Academy, Ogden; St. John's Hospital, Silver Reef; St. Mary's School, Park City; St. Laurence Hospital, Ogden; St. Joseph's School, Eureka; and St. Joseph School, Ogden.⁸

Care of orphans has been part of the ministry of the Sisters of the Holy Cross from the earliest days of their foundation. Beginning in the 1840s in the United States, the Sisters worked with the Holy Cross priests and brothers caring for orphans in Indiana, Michigan, and Louisiana. It wasn't long before their service in caring for orphans extended eastward to Maryland and Washington, D.C., and in 1891, westward to Salt Lake City.⁹

⁶ For more on the history of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, see Sister M. Campion Kuhn, CSC, *The Journey Continues...A history of the Sisters of the Holy Cross*, Sister M. Campion, notebook, Z 1.2, Congregational Archives.

⁷ Blue binder, Box SR 1.5, Congregational Archives.

⁸ For more on the histories of these institutions and others established after 1895 see <http://www.holycrossministries.org/History/History.html>. According to Rev. Scanlan's report to the Vicariate Apostolic of Colorado and Utah in 1880, there were 150 Catholic and 250 non-Catholic children being taught in Catholic schools in Utah. See Francis J. Weber, "Lawrence Scanlan's Report of Catholicism in Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 34 (Fall 1966): 286.

⁹ According to Timothy H. Hacsí, *Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), the first Catholic orphanage in North America was established by the Ursuline Convent in New Orleans in 1727. By 1890 there were about six hundred orphanages in the United States of which the Catholic Church operated 173 caring for 23,000 children. See also LeRoy Ashby, *Endangered Children: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse in American History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 55, 64.



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Most of the orphanages operated by the Catholic Church and others were centered in industrial cities by the end of the nineteenth century. However, cities such as San Francisco and Denver in the West also had orphanages and children asylums.

A Holy Cross Sister and two young ladies at the orphanage.

Parts of Utah by the end of the nineteenth century were also becoming “industrialized” with hard rock mining in the mining districts of Park City, Tintic, Bingham Canyon, and American Fork; smelting in Murray, Midvale, Sandy, and Tooele County; and coal mining in Eastern Utah. This industrial activity was spurred on by a network of railroads in these areas and elsewhere. “The accidents and deaths inseparable from the hazardous occupation of men engaged in mining threw upon the hands of the charitably disposed many helpless orphans. Touched by the spectacle of these fatherless children, Bishop Lawrence Scanlan... resolved to make provision for their maintenance and education. He decided to open an orphans’ home and he appealed once more to the Sisters of the Holy Cross....”¹⁰

In responding to his request the Sisters of the Holy Cross General Council minutes of June 9, 1891, simply stated, “a special meeting of the Council was held.... Right Reverend Bishop Scanlan’s request for Sisters for Eureka and Orphan Asylum in Salt Lake next considered. Unanimously accept.... Sisters to be there Sept 1st, 1891. Signed by Sister Augusta [Superior General].”¹¹

Bishop Scanlan’s concern was magnified nine years later when a horrific coal mine explosion took place at Winter Quarters, Utah, where two-hundred miners were killed leaving many widows and fatherless children.

¹⁰ UTAH Salt Lake City St. Ann’s Orphanage, Archive Narratives 1891-1953, Newspaper Clippings, Box SQ 5.6, Congregational Archives.

¹¹ Council Minutes, June 9, 1891 Box C1.1, Congregational Archives.

Bishop Scanlan in a letter to those at Winter Quarters offered the church's orphanage to those who needed it.

It is very probable that this disaster at Scofield has left some orphans or otherwise homeless children. If so, I wish to inform the people of Scofield that the doors of St. Ann's institution, however small at present, are wide open to all such to the full extent of its capacity, and that, in the course of a few weeks, the new Kearns-St. Ann's providentially founded by a noble lady to meet such contingencies, will be ready for occupancy, and then there will be room, comfort, and welcome for all¹²

Thus began the ministry of the Sisters of the Holy Cross at St. Ann's Orphanage. This service continued until 1953, when St. Ann's became a parish school under the care of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word from Austin, Texas. The Incarnate Word Sisters already had another facility, St. Joseph's Villa in Salt Lake City, and so were well-known to the Bishop as well as to the Holy Cross Sisters. The Sisters of the Incarnate Word operated the school until 1993, when the Sisters left and St. Ann's parish took full charge of it. The school continues to this day as a very fine educational institution. St. Ann's orphanage had very humble beginnings. More than a year before the orphanage opened its doors Rev. Bishop Scanlan planned for such a children's institution. He appealed for funds personally "canvas[ing] from house to house throughout the entire Territory," reported Mrs. W. S. McCornick.¹³ In 1891, the orphanage, which opened in a house formerly occupied by the bishop and his priests, was located on the northeast corner of 300 East and 100 South. The first three Sisters of the Holy Cross assigned to the orphanage were Sisters M. Belinda, Jovita and Alonzo.¹⁴

According to Mrs. W. S. McCornick, the objectives of St. Ann's orphanage were

to house, clothe, and feed children who are either orphans, half orphans, viz, such who have one parent living, those who have been abandoned by their parents, or those whose parents are, by sickness, poverty, or any other cause, rendered undoable or unfit to properly provide for them. To impart to such children sufficient education and morality to enable them to earn an honest and honorable livelihood and to become useful and worthy members of society; and to procure for them, when sufficiently advanced in age and education, suitable employment whereby they may support themselves.¹⁵

In a contemporary newspaper, it reported:

The prejudiced idea entertained by many that the inmates of orphanages are sad objects

¹² *The Intermountain Catholic* (Salt Lake City), May 5, 1900.

¹³ Mrs. W. S. McCornick, "Catholic Charities in Utah" in Emmeline B. Wells, *Charities and Philanthropies: Women's Work in Utah* (Salt Lake City: G. Q. Cannon, 1893), 33.

¹⁴ *Our Provinces: Centenary Chronicles of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, 1841-1941* (Notre Dame Holy Cross, IN: Saint Mary's of the Immaculate Conception, 1941), 571.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 33-34. It should also be noted that a second, non-Catholic institution, Orphans Home & Day Nursery Association, was established in Salt Lake City by a Mrs. Harriet Travis in 1883. See Children's Service Society, "Orphans Home & Day Nursery Association," MSS A 1594, Utah State Historical Society Library.



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of charity would be dismissed by a view of St. Ann's children at class, at play, on an outing, or when presenting a program in their school hall. Healthy, happy, talented, well-trained, and with a carefree joyous air, they show the homelike atmosphere in which they live, and that the benefactions they receive are given with that spirit of charity which proves the donors have heeded the Divine counsel... "Amen, I say to you that whatsoever you do to the least of these, My little ones, you do it unto Me."¹⁶

A Holy Cross Sister with two boys in the orphanage kitchen.

The number of children needing admission increased so rapidly that additions to the old building were made on two different occasions in order to meet the demands. When the numbers precluded further enlargement of the building the bishop realized that a new orphanage building was necessary.

Bishop Scanlan and the Sisters of the Holy Cross set to work to raise the necessary funds to build a larger orphanage. Before Christmas in 1895, a bazaar or fair was held in one of the commercial establishments on Main Street. More than 220 people participated, reported the *Salt Lake Tribune* on December 18, 1895. There were flower and candy booths as well as Rebecca's Well where punch and lemonade was served by Miss Katherine Judge, a Miss Wall, and a Miss O'Meara, who were dressed in country costumes.

For the next several years other annual fairs were held to raise funds for the new orphanage. At the 1897 fair held in December, more than four

¹⁶ "Three Holy Cross Nuns Answered Appeal of Bishop Scanlan to Open Orphanage," undated (sometime between August 1938 and August 1942), and unnamed Salt Lake City newspaper, UTAH Salt Lake City St. Ann's Orphanage 1891-1953, Newspaper Clippings, Album A, p. 1 Box SQ 5.6, Congregational Archives.

hundred “prominent businessmen” participated.¹⁷

In 1898, fifteen acres of good agricultural land south of the city became available. Bishop Scanlan had only sufficient funds to make the first payment. The land would provide the Sisters and children the opportunity to grow their own vegetables, raise a few chickens, and a cow or two. It was quite remarkable that Bishop Scanlan and the Sisters of the Holy Cross were even able to raise the necessary funds to make the first payment. Utah and the rest of the nation for several years in the mid-1890s struggled through a severe economic depression. As high as 48 percent of Salt Lake City’s employable work force was unemployed sometime during this period of time. While Bishop Scanlan was trying to figure out how to raise the balance needed to purchase the property and build the orphanage, an unexpected event took place. In May 1899, Mrs. Thomas Kearns, wife of Park City mining millionaire and Irish immigrant Thomas Kearns, told the Bishop that fifty-thousand dollars was at his disposal with which to build a new orphanage.

Plans were immediately prepared and the work started. Bishop Scanlan selected Carl M. Neuhausen to design St. Ann’s orphanage. Neuhausen was also the architect for the Cathedral of the Madeleine, All Hallows College, Holy Cross Hospital, and the Thomas Kearns residence located a few blocks from the Holy Cross Hospital on South Temple Street.

Neuhausen specified the orphanage building to be made out of red brick. The building was roughly symmetrical with an octagonal tower over the central entrance. Neuhausen’s design included two playrooms, a dining room, kitchen with pantries, and storage area in the basement. The first floor housed four classrooms, two offices, a parlor, music and mechanical drawing rooms, a large hallway and front porch. Two dormitories, a wardrobe room for girls and one for boys as well as two nurseries, four rooms for the Sisters, an infirmary, hallway and front balcony occupied the second floor. The attic housed the chapel and additional sleeping quarters.¹⁸

The cornerstone for the new Kearns-St. Ann’s Orphanage was laid on Sunday, August 27, 1899, and the building was completed the following year. For the cornerstone ceremony of the orphanage, Superintendent Walter Read of the Salt Lake Railroad Company, which operated the Waterloo Streetcar Line that ran near the northwest corner of the property, made special arrangements to accommodate the children and a large crowd of city folks to the program. Read remarked about the orphanage site: “It will be a godsend to have the children realize that they will soon be transferred from the dry and contracted space they now enjoy to the broad and beautiful space being prepared for them.”¹⁹ Between eighteen hundred and two thousand people attended the cornerstone ceremony. Music for

¹⁷ *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 15, 1897.

¹⁸ *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 1, 1899.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, August 29, 1899.



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the program was provided by a fifty-voice children's choir. Bishop Scanlan laid the cornerstone, which contained copies of the major newspapers of the city, a copy of the cornerstone program, U. S. coins: one penny, a nickel, a dime, a quarter, half-dollar, and dollar, a photograph of Scanlan, a photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Kearns and their children, and printed matter from All Hallows College and St. Mary's Academy.

A Holy Cross Sister washing the ears of a young boy as four other boys look on.

Bishop Scanlan spoke at some length wherein he recognized the contribution of Thomas and Jenny Kearns, calling Mrs. Kearns a "noble lady to whom we are all indebted, [and] offer our most profound gratitude...in the name of God, the father and protector of the weak and helpless." Bishop Scanlan continued speaking for the need of love of fellow-beings because "they are representatives of Jesus Christ and hold an order from Him on us, but we must love them as ourselves."²⁰

Thomas Kearns offered some remarks recognizing his "noble wife, [who] shows daily dream and thoughts were ever devoted to the welfare and comfort of those little orphans, who have forever been deprived of a single moment of a parent's love." He also recognized the other "noble women," those Sisters who are the "very example the world over has been a credit to the name." He continued that "if it were not for such kind and generous heart[s] as those, the world forever would have been dark to the orphan." He concluded his brief remarks stating that "while we enjoy the luxuries of this world that beneath this roof, the Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage, must

²⁰ For a full coverage of Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage cornerstone program and the several speeches made, see *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 28, 1899, and the *Deseret News*, August 27, 1899.

never sleep a hungry child.”²¹

Utah Governor Heber M. Wells took to the podium where he recognized the significant contribution the orphanage is making “to the progress of the state.” The laying of the cornerstone, Wells concluded, “is laying the cornerstone of a new and greater charity in our midst.” A memorial silver trowel was then given to Mr. and Mrs. Kearns by former U. S. Attorney C. S. Varian. In his remarks, Varian said the trowel “symbolize to the gracious and Christian patrons of this orphanage the spreading together of that cement of heavenly love and Christian charity which may yet unite all peoples and all nations of the earth.” The last to speak was Senator Joseph Rawlins who spoke of the great nobility of mankind as shown in St. Ann’s orphanage.²²

The following day the *Deseret News* editors wrote: “Whether in Catholic or Protestant, in Jew or gentile, in St. or sinner, the love that prompts such deeds as those that establish institutions [such as St. Ann’s orphanage] for the benefit of our race, is divine in its nature and splendid in its display.”²³

By the end of October 1900 and within months of opening, Kearns-St. Ann’s Orphanage housed as many as ninety-two children, ages five to fourteen, under the supervision of five Sisters of the Holy Cross.²⁴

Bishop Scanlan and his successors as well as the citizens of Utah were always very supportive of the Sisters and the orphanage throughout the entire time the Sisters of the Holy Cross served there. From the beginning, it was recognized that to conduct this work successfully a large amount of financial support would be needed, Mrs. A. H. Tarbet, for example, donated \$838.50 to help furnish the boys dormitory, and \$844.75 for the girls’ dormitory. Mrs. David Keith donated \$339.75 for the dining room; Neil Gillis donated a total of \$96.25 for the laundry and the boys and girls washrooms. More than four thousand dollars was donated to help furnish and supply the new orphanage when it opened in early October 1900.²⁵ Through the years there were numerous benefactors; among them was Patrick Phelan, a well-known mining man and man of commerce. When he died, being a single man all of his life, Phelan in his will bequeathed a large bequest of one-hundred thousand dollars in favor of St. Ann’s Orphanage.²⁶ In an editorial memorializing Patrick Phelan, the *Salt Lake Tribune* said of him: “But when on the other shore the spirit of those who in childhood were orphans shall tap at the pearly gates then the old longing will cease in the soul of Phelan. He will hear the tapping and will cry out: ‘Let them in, they are mine, all mine...’”²⁷

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ *Deseret News*, August 28, 1899.

²⁴ *Deseret News* and *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 6, 1900.

²⁵ For a list of donors and the amounts donated, see *Deseret News* and *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 6, 1900.

²⁶ While the press reported an estate of about \$100,000, the actual amount included in the Phelan Fund was just over \$78,000. Phelan Account Books, Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City Archive.

Father Scanlan along with Stephen Hays and William C. Hall organized the “Phelan Fund” to fulfill the wishes of Phelan. The fund’s purpose was to establish and maintain “an orphanage wherein orphan children might be maintained, educated and supported free and of charity” from the estate of Patrick Phelan. The Phelan Fund was most helpful in supporting the house through the ensuing years.²⁸

Benefactors through the years were Mrs. Kearns, her husband Thomas, their children and grandchildren. Mrs. Kearns not only made the initial donation for the building, but she continued to support the orphanage, especially by her fund-raising activities and her annual contributions at Thanksgiving and Christmas time. These occasions included a generous supply of turkeys, vegetables, candy, and gifts for the children.

St. Ann’s Sewing Circle, a committee of the Catholic’s Woman’s League, organized by Bishop Glass on March 20, 1916, to serve the unemployed, “caring for the poor, the stranger and those in trouble and sorrow” also contributed generously for many years, both by labor and material for clothing for the orphans.²⁹ The women’s sewing club raised sufficient funds by December 1920 to purchase 110 pairs of stockings and earlier in the year made 50 sheets, 84 pillow cases, 12 quilts, 94 pillow shams, 35 napkins, 40 bath aprons, 24 aprons, 15 petticoats, 15 night gowns, and mended 518 articles of clothing, 17 boys’ suits, 12 pairs of pants, 11 pairs of overalls, 40 scarfs, 10 pairs of bloomers, and 60 dresses for the girls. The



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A Holy Cross Sister sewing the pants of a smiling boy.

²⁷ *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 11, 1901.

²⁸ Patrick Phelan Papers, Salt Lake Diocese Archives, Salt Lake City, and UTAH Salt Lake City St. Ann’s Orphanage 1891–1953, Newspaper clippings, Box SQ 5.6, Congregational Archives. I wish to thank Dr. Gary Topping, archivist for the Salt Lake Diocese for bringing the Patrick Phelan papers and the Catholic Woman’s League papers to my attention.

²⁹ Catholic Woman’s League papers, Salt Lake Diocese Archive.



ST. ANN'S ORPHANAGE. SMALL PHOTO ALBUM. SQ 56. CONGREGATIONAL ARCHIVES

sewing club reported in March 1921, it had made a number of outing flannel petticoats, bath aprons and a large number of linen. Later that year, the sewing club had raised sufficient funds to purchase twenty yards of linoleum and purchased new bedspreads, and donated \$2,543 for the orphanage.³⁰ In August 1930, with the departure of Sister Agnetis from St. Ann's, the Catholic Women's League reported that nearly 1,000 articles of clothing had been mended and 40 new clothes made during Sister Agnetis' time serving at the orphanage.³¹

This 1917 photograph shows children playing volleyball with two Holy Cross Sisters on the grounds of the orphanage.

The ladies of the city held Silver Teas at St. Ann's for the purpose of raising funds for the orphanage; they also donated large supplies of meats, vegetables, and canned goods. Support for the orphanage came from others outside of the Catholic community. Just before Christmas in 1901 an elderly Chinese man who lived near the orphanage and worked as the gardener during the summer months sent his "mite" to help decorate the donated Christmas tree. He also contributed to some of the ornaments for the tree. That same Christmas season, the Jewish Auerbach brothers who owned the large Auerbach Department Store, sent toys and clothing as Christmas gifts. Other wholesale and retail establishments such as O'Reilley Clothing, the Jewish-owned Siegel Clothing, Salt Lake Soda Company, Wood Grocer & Produce Company, the Kahn Brothers Wholesale Grocers, and Schramm Drug made various kinds of gifts and donations as well.

There were numerous fundraisers each year for the orphanage such as the Community Chest drive, cake sales, card parties, rummage sales, and bridge parties. For many years, the Community Chest made significant financial contributions to the orphanage, as much as nine thousand dollars in 1929. Other donations from various individuals or groups included a

³⁰ *The Catholic Monthly* (Salt Lake City), for various months in 1920 and 1921.

³¹ *The Intermountain Catholic* (Salt Lake City), August 2, 1930.

large number of books, mattresses, encyclopedias, canned goods, meats, vegetables, clothing, coal, china, glasses, tablecloths, liturgical vestments, pianos, televisions, Easter baskets, bequests, and playground equipment.

The Knights of Columbus put in three hundred square feet of pavement at the rear of the building without any expense to the orphanage. The Barbers Union offered its services once a month. The children were taken to different barbershops and given haircuts by the best barbers of the city. Other social and fraternal organizations made contributions to the orphanage. Pietro Furano, secretary of the Italian American Civic League, donated one hundred dollars to Sister M. Alice Dorothea in May 1953, shortly after the responsibility for St. Ann's was transferred from Sisters of the Holy Cross to the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. The donation was for clothing lost in the fire at the orphanage the previous October. Fire had started on the third floor of the orphanage at 4:30 p.m. Fortunately, all but one of the children escaped any harm. The one injury was to John, age twelve, who hurt his arm when he fell from the swing while he watched the firefighters from the Sugar House fire station fight the fire.³² Other than this fire, St. Ann's suffered no major loss caused by fires or from other incidents.

It was obvious that the children especially appreciated the generosity of Mrs. Kearns. Also, they must have felt secure in the love and care given them by the Sisters. In the September 1902 issue of *The Intermountain and Colorado Catholic* newspaper we read: "On last Sunday night Senator and Mrs. Thomas Kearns were the guests of honor at the Kearns' St. Ann's orphanage. The children ... entertained their generous benefactors with a very excellent musical and literary programme, which won hearty praise and applause from all present."

The children at the orphanage were fully engaged, attending school during the school year, doing various chores in the laundry, cleaning, gardening in the summer time, and playing. Among the activities appreciated by the children were evening programs arranged and executed entirely by them. For example, eclipsing all the other features was the address of welcome to their benefactress by Martin Glassett, a twelve-year old lad, who spoke on behalf of his associates. He was frequently interrupted in the course of his remarks by a hearty laugh from those who thoroughly enjoyed the childish report of the happenings. Martin showed no favorites, but told of the faults and misdeeds of all. His speech as prepared and delivered by himself follows:

Why are we children happy today? It is so nice to see children with happy, smiling faces. Some may not be happy and there is a reason for that, too. We are happy because after nearly two years' absence our best friend is home again.... But some of us ... are not as happy as we should be. The reason is: When we saw Mrs. Kearns last she asked one little favor of all of us, and that was 'to be good children.' We all said 'yes,' but now we are afraid we did not keep our promise, at least not all of us.

³² *Deseret News*, October 22, 1952, and the *Intermountain Catholic Register* (Salt Lake City), May 22, 1953.

Harry Stevenson fought with a smaller boy. Jim Egan and Tom Brokelbank ran away. Tom Glassett stole apples from the Chinaman and George Jones did not help milk the cows. Owen McDermott would not work in the potato field and Hugh Townley and Tom Swop pulled down the swing and were buying and selling chickens. Willie Parsons and Joe Hodgins stole potatoes and turnips. George Peterson goes into the field and digs for gophers all the time.

The girls, too, were not as good as they promised to be. Rose Pergrosse was too lazy to work.... Clara Stevenson pinched the babies and made them cry. Flossie Patterson and Ellen Townley went over the fence without permission. Georgiana McKay called names and made faces. Edith McCallen whistled and slapped Joe Kesh.

I told those boys and girls to be good, and now they are sorry that they were not. That is the reason we are not so happy as we ought to be. But we are happy, all the same; for even if the Sisters do not tell on us, we tell on ourselves, and we ask to be forgiven, and we promise again to be real good. We know you will forgive the past, and we will promise to study real hard during the year.³³

The children especially enjoyed the annual Christmas parties— dinners, treats and gifts—given by the Kearns' family. At the Christmas party in December 1903, the children enjoyed the festivities of the season. A program featuring Father Keily, Mrs. Kearns and a Miss Wilson was held in the chapel followed by the distribution of gifts from Thomas Kearns who was impersonating Santa Claus. More than 169 children received gifts of candy and nuts, the younger girls received a doll and a chair, the older girls also received dolls, books, handkerchiefs, work boxes, the younger boys each received a rubber ball and the older boys received books, colored chalk, and drawing instruments. David Keith, a close friend and mining partner of Thomas Kearns donated thirty-five turkeys and the other fixings for a Christmas Day dinner. Thomas Kearns also donated a carload of coal to heat the orphanage.³⁴ At Christmas in 1907, students from the Oquirrh elementary school gave St. Ann's children candy, nuts, and apples.

Years later at the Christmas party in 1946, the archival narrative speaks of a minor mishap.

At two-thirty, the big party of the year took place.... After a play presented by the fourth and fifth graders ... the children received the much looked-forward to presents. The gifts were skirts, sweaters, blouses, trousers, candy and nuts.

While the Kearns and relatives were served a luncheon in the ladies' sewing room the children proceeded to the dormitories where they donned their new outfits. After each of the Kearns opened and admired the appropriate gifts presented, they came to the front hall where the children had assembled on the stairs to sing a farewell. They were all adorned in their new clothing. The Sisters had placed the children in a pleasing arrangement with the most becoming skirts and sweaters to the front.

But unfortunately the guests lingered a little too long, and the satisfaction of the donors became slightly fringed with chagrin, for when the charges were sent scurrying to the

³³ UTAH Salt Lake City St. Ann's Orphanage 1891-1953, Archive Narratives, Box SQ 5.5, Congregational Archives. Mrs. Kearns and her three children had just returned from an extended trip to Europe.

³⁴ *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 24, 1903.

dormitories, the less pleasing effects came plainly into view. The little tots in the new gift corduroy pinafores, as they hurried along, were desperately trying, but all in vain, to hold up their much-too-long skirts to make them appear the proper knee length.

The ever-resourceful Sisters explained that a washing and consequent shrinking of the dresses plus two months' growth of the girls would completely remedy the matter. So the long-looked-for day ended with an unexpected laugh.³⁵

All was not fun and games, however, at St. Ann's orphanage. From the earliest days, the Sisters made sure that the educational needs of the children were a high priority. As recorded in 1899, the children were taught Catechism, Bible history, arithmetic, grammar, geography, U.S. history, reading, writing, spelling, and composition. In addition shorthand and type-writing were taught by a gentleman who had kindly offered to help the older orphans get positions as soon as he had taken them through the course. During the ensuing years other subjects were added to the curriculum. These included music, choir, glee club, manual training (shop) for the boys, and sewing for the girls. In the 1930s and 1940s it was recorded that classes in shop and sewing were continued and very creditable displays of the work of both classes were presented at open houses at the orphanage. Many pieces made by the boys were not only displayed, but also sold.

Through the years most of the classes were taught by the Sisters. In 1909, eleven Sisters of the Holy Cross under their Superior Sister Martina were teaching and caring for their charges. Typically, school classes started at 9:00 a.m. and went until 10:45 a.m. From 10:45 to 11:15 was recess when they could play outside. The noon lunch was prepared in the kitchen and served in the dining room and then it was back to the classroom for more instruction from the Sisters. Dinner was at 6 o'clock following time for more recreation. Evening prayer was at 7:15 p.m. and all children had to be in bed by 7:30 p.m. During the summer months the older boys were taught gardening.

At first, classes were taught only to the residents of the orphanage. However, in 1918 day pupils started attending classes. That year St. Ann's had an enrollment of about eighty children of which about twenty-six were day pupils. The combination of children from the orphanage and day students continued until 1949. That year the school at St. Ann's closed. The boarders (formerly referred to as orphans) were sent to the new Cathedral School and Judge Memorial School. A bus was chartered and transported the children morning and night. The bus rate was nine dollars a day and was paid from the orphanage funds and from the day pupils who rode the bus. A fee of two dollars a month was charged the day pupils. Due to the fact that the new Cathedral school did not have a cafeteria it was necessary for the children to carry their lunches. Forty-five to fifty lunches were put

³⁵ UTAH Salt Lake City St. Ann's Orphanage Archive Narratives, 1891-1953, p. 2, Box SQ 5.5, Congregational Archives.

up every day by the Sisters. In addition to teaching, the assignments of the Sisters included care of the children, dormitorian, infirmarian, refectorian, charge of the kitchen, charge of the laundry, charge of sewing, and directress of the orphanage.

As with any group of children, the orphans were not immune to illnesses and accidents. They suffered from the usual childhood illnesses, such as colds, measles, mumps, chicken pox, and the like. The more serious illnesses included diphtheria, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, pneumonia, infantile paralysis, spinal meningitis, tuberculosis, and influenza. On several occasions some of these illnesses such as typhoid fever, polio, and influenza reached epidemic proportions. During the 1917-18 school year an influenza epidemic caused the school to be closed for three months. Through the years some of the children died of diseases. Sometimes the cause was recorded, such as acute blood condition, pneumonia, infantile paralysis, or spinal meningitis. In 1902-03, the narrative reports that there were five deaths due to "sickness in abundance" — such as diphtheria, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, and pneumonia.

On occasion a child had to be taken to the hospital emergency room. Several of these incidents are cited in the archival narrative. During the school year of 1949-50, for example, "Three cases were cared for at emergency at Holy Cross; Danny Garcia had an eraser removed from his ear; Robert Nelmar had an injured arm and Arthur had a lacerated ear." The following school year three cases were cared for at the emergency room at Holy Cross. "Nellie Casados cut her two fingers on a broken bowl and had stitches; Calvin Reading cut his fingers lifting a barrel of dried eggs and stitches were required. Michael O'Malley broke his right arm when he fell from the tricky bar."³⁶

In addition to these less serious accidents, there were a few more serious ones. In 1904 the water jacket in the kitchen stove exploded and shattered everything. Sister Symphorosa, who was in charge of the kitchen as well as two of the girls fortunately were not near the stove, avoiding what might have been serious injuries. However, the shock of the incident was the cause for Sister Symphorosa being in poor health for several months.

The following year Sister Symphorosa's assignment was to be in charge of the laundry. Unfortunately, one daring girl of fifteen years of age met with a very serious accident. She went to help in the laundry and dared to touch the bottom of the wringer with her finger while the machine was in motion, although Sister Symphorosa had forbidden her to touch it. The result was the almost severing of the whole arm. Three of the arteries were twisted and only through the skill of a Dr. Scallon and the kindness of the Sisters at Holy Cross Hospital was the arm saved.

³⁶ UTAH Salt Lake City St. Ann's Orphanage, Archive Narratives, 1949-1950, p. 1, Box SQ 5.5, Congregational Archives.



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A couple of years later another serious accident occurred in the laundry. A girl of ten or twelve years of age, unseen and contrary to instructions went behind the mangle where she put her hand near the machinery and had her fingers caught in the wringer and crushed. A carriage was at once secured and the child taken to Holy Cross Hospital where the surgeons deemed it necessary to amputate the two injured fingers. Fortunately, Sister Symphorosa was no longer at St. Ann's, and when she did return the next year she was placed in charge of the kitchen again.

A Holy Cross Sister preparing for her class at the orphanage.

The Sisters, doctors, and staff at Holy Cross Hospital were particularly helpful to St. Ann's. Several of the archival narratives state: "We are deeply grateful to the Sisters there for the excellent care and kindness shown the orphans." Much of the work was done without charge. The narrative between the years of 1951 and 1953 stated, "Two girls had their eyes straightened and ten of the children had tonsillectomies. All of this was done gratis by Dr. A. E. Callaghan and Dr. Whitney J. Haight...." and "Several of the children were treated at the Emergency at Holy Cross Hospital for cuts and sprains, and four had tonsillectomies."³⁷ Dr. Haight and Dr. Callaghan were on call for any medical situation for St. Ann's.

The Sisters were not immune to illnesses or accidents themselves including illnesses such as typhoid fever, pneumonia, and tuberculosis. Over the course of the years, several of the Sisters at St. Ann's died. In 1898, Sister Marianna (Gookin) died of pneumonia at the age of fifty-four. In 1904, Sister Geraldine died of septic pneumonia and jaundice at the age of fifty. In 1924, the same year she had made final profession, Sister M. Ann Gertrude died of typhoid fever at the age of thirty-four. All three of these

³⁷ UTAH Salt Lake City St. Ann's Orphanage Archive Narratives, 1952-1953, p. 1 Box SQ 5.5, Congregational Archives.

Sisters were buried in Mount Calvary Cemetery in Salt Lake City.

At St. Ann's, there were numerous opportunities for outings and entertainment. The newspaper write-up for one excursion to Saltair in July 1905 gave a good picture of happy times.

Three hundred happy children, two-thirds of whom were inmates of the Kearns St. Ann's orphanage, ruled Saltair Tuesday from mid-forenoon until 7 o'clock in the evening. At 7 o'clock, filled almost to the danger point with the things that appeal with particular force to the juvenile stomach, burdened with more good things to take home and wearied by their long play-day, they were loaded on the train and taken home after one of the brightest days in their existence.

The orphans were everybody's guests of honor. While the chief responsibility fell upon the women in charge of the outing, dozens of other visitors to the resort insisted on sharing the pleasure of entertaining the little ones, and, without invitation, proceeded to take part. The result of this was that nothing escaped. No attraction at the resort was closed to the orphans. Pennies were distributed literally by the pound so that the music and pictures in every slot machine were released. The merry-go-round carried a heavy load almost constantly, the swings were never idle, the candy booths did a thriving business and affairs generally were at high tension.

It was impossible to tell the orphans from their more fortunate playmates. There was no unlovely uniform to mark the inmates of the orphanage, nothing to make them appear different from other little boys and little girls. They were all well-kept, well-clothed, healthy-looking youngsters, exact opposites of the 'charity' boys and girls in Dickens' books....

There were no rules, yet a more orderly gathering of children could not be imagined. Unlike the famed 'newsboys' dinners and similar events, there was no roughness, no slang, no rioting. Childish innocence and ignorance of the world's ways were pictured on each face....³⁸

Other excursions and outings hosted by various organizations included trips to places such as the Liberty Park, Camp Glass, Warm Springs, YWCA, South High School, Kingsbury Hall, Jeanne's Tea Room, Fort Douglas, Hill Field Air Force Base, Lyric Theater, the rodeo, the circus, and on at least two occasions an airplane ride with Salt Lake City Mayor Earl J. Glade. The Knights of Columbus Councils of Salt Lake City and Ogden sponsored an outing at Lagoon amusement park in July 1921. The Knights provided automobiles to transport the children to the Bamberger Interurban Railroad for the short trip to Lagoon. There they enjoyed games and treats and watched a baseball game played between the two Knight councils.³⁹ The Exchange Club of Salt Lake City hosted a day-long outing to Saltair. The children traveled by train to the Great Salt Lake resort. Other children from the Neighborhood House and the Orphan's Home and Day Nursery participated in the activity as well.⁴⁰ (Representatives from various Protestant churches as well as representatives from the Hebrew congregation in Salt Lake City organized the Orphan's Home and Day Nursery a few

³⁸ UTAH Salt Lake City St. Ann's Orphanage Archive Narratives Box SQ 5.5, Congregational Archives.

³⁹ *The Catholic Monthly* (Salt Lake City), August 1921.

⁴⁰ Arthur L. Beeley, *Boys and Girls in Salt Lake City; the results of a survey made for the Rotary Club and the Business and Professional Women's Club of Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City, 1929), 98.

years earlier than St. Ann's Orphanage to provide assistance to mothers who worked for low wages in Salt Lake City.)

It was a special treat to spend up to two weeks at Camp Glass, established by Bishop Joseph Sarsfield Glass, located near Vivian Park in Provo Canyon east of Provo. Camp Glass featured boating, fishing, baseball, tennis, boxing, and hiking. *The Intermountain Catholic* made an appeal to help support what it called a "real vacation" for the children at St. Ann's "What will you do for the little ones of Christ? Won't you aid the Sisters a bit? Not in four years have the Holy Cross nuns asked for you to help them."⁴¹ At one of the special "Boys Day Parade" held during the summer of 1929, the Elks of Salt Lake City sponsored two boys, one from St. Ann's and one from the Orphan's Home and Day Nursery to be in the parade.⁴²

Occasionally, national celebrities visited the orphanage and entertained the children. Among them were baseball star Babe Ruth, popular entertainers Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, child actress Carolyn Lee, actor MacDonald Carey, Ken Maynard and his famous horse, and Roy Rogers who gave each child a Roy Rogers sweater.

Over the course of years, the orphanage building underwent numerous repairs and improvements. In 1927, the Knights of Columbus financed the moving of the kitchen to new and more airy quarters. A year later, Mrs. Jennie Kearns had the heating plant renovated. In 1932, a complete new roof was put on the building and that same year, three classrooms were completely renovated and a sewing room fitted out for the St. Ann's Sewing Circle. In 1934-35, the children's recreation rooms and the boys' lavatory were completely renovated, as was the parlor two years later. The priest's dining room and the Sisters' community room were refurnished. The outside of the main building was reconditioned and painted. A new fence was installed around the playground.

In 1939-40, through the funds from the Phelan Fund Committee the kitchen, dish room and Sisters' refectory were complete renovated as well as a complete overhaul of the plumbing, refurnishing of the Sisters' rooms, and replacement of dressers and chairs in the girls' dormitory. A much needed necessity, an elevator was added in 1948.

A switch from coal to an oil-heating system necessitated a new boiler and on the Feast of St. Blaise, February 3, 1948, the new boiler was fully operational. The archival narrative notes "St. Blaise must surely have been watching over us, for we never before felt such heat — both day and night. For forty-eight hours we nearly roasted, but finally the heat was regulated to make us comfortable."⁴³ A huge heating oil tank that held 7,500 gallons of oil was located in the back of the orphanage.

⁴¹ *The Intermountain Catholic*, August 3, 1929.

⁴² Beeley, *Boys and Girls*, 98, see also "Largest Boys' Parade will be held on Friday," *Salt Lake Telegram*, May 2, 1929.

⁴³ UTAH Salt Lake City, St. Ann's Orphanage Archive Narratives, 1947-1948, p. 5 Box SQ 5.5, Congregational Archives.

Floor damage caused by termites required a new floor for the kitchen, the children's dining room floor, the Sisters' dining room floor, and the dish room floors in the years of 1949 to 1951. The narrative notes that "after waiting for nine months for permission from the Bishop to have the lavatories and the bathrooms and tubs in the girls' and boys' dormitories, permission was finally given and we won't be embarrassed for the Board of Health or anyone else to inspect them. For almost a year we have been trying to manage with one tub and one lavatory for twenty-five boys and the same accommodations for the girls."⁴⁴ And in the early 1950s the barns and outside lavatories were torn down.

The narrative reports that near tragedy struck the orphanage in the afternoon of October 21, 1952, when a fire broke out on the fourth floor in the storeroom. The fifty-two children were just getting into line to go to the chapel for the rosary and were all out of the orphanage. Firefighters from the Sugar House fire station were at the orphanage in five minutes. Two storerooms were badly gutted and much bedding and clothes of the children were destroyed. Fortunately, insurance covered the damage in the two storerooms and the walls and ceilings were repaired and painted. All were very grateful that no one was hurt as a result of the fire.

In the first decades of the twentieth century changes in society called for a reexamination of children's welfare including the role and importance of orphanages. In 1909, a special White House conference on the care of dependent children was held to investigate better ways to deal with dependent children. In Utah, a similar confab, the Utah-White House conference, was organized by Governor George Dern in April 1931 to discuss the health and welfare issues of children in the state.⁴⁵ In 1935, Congress passed the Social Security Act, which included Title IV, "Aid to Dependent Children." Briefly, it stated that by reason of death of a parent, or a parent or parents who were continually absent from the home, financial assistance would be provided. These federal funds for children were to be administered by the states. This federal program along with Dern's earlier conference in which 1,500 people participated, a new Department of Public Welfare was organized to govern adoptions in the state. With greater state and federal government attention to and assistance for children's welfare, a decline in the role of private orphanages such as St. Ann's occurred.

The final year the Sisters of the Holy Cross served at St. Ann's was in 1953. When St. Ann's opened in 1891, three Sisters were assigned to St. Ann's and ironically when the Sisters completed their service there were just three Sisters assigned at the orphanage. Between 1891 and 1953, the numbers of Sisters at St. Ann's ranged from three to eleven at any given

⁴⁴ Utah Salt Lake City St. Ann's Orphanage Archive Narratives, 1947-1948, P. 5 Box SQ 5.5 Congregational Archives.

⁴⁵ For a report of the Utah-White House conference, see *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 7 and 8, 1931.



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time, and the number of children ranged from 20 to 170.

The final notation in the 1953 archival narrative gives us an idea of the sad day the Sisters of the Holy Cross completed their service at Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage.

A priest and several Holy Cross Sisters with boys and girls at St. Ann's Orphanage.

With the closing of school the 62 years of devoted service of the Sisters of the Holy Cross at St. Ann's Orphanage came to an end. It was with a sad heart that the three Sisters of the Holy Cross said goodbye to St. Ann's and their charges.... At three o'clock on Saturday July 25th the Mother General, Mother Elizabeth of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word, Sister Cuthbert and four Sisters came to St. Ann's to take over the work of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. At four Sister Alice Dorothea rang the bell for Litany. The children and Sisters, as was the custom every Saturday at St. Ann's, sang our Lady's Litany, then Sister announced the intention for the Rosary and while the children were saying the Rosary for the Sisters who were leaving and those who were to take over, the three Sisters left St. Ann's.⁴⁶

Despite the fact the Sisters of the Holy Cross left Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage in 1953, the story of St. Ann's continued. The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word went to St. Ann's with the intention of operating the orphanage. Closing it and opening a parish school was not in their original plans. However, within one year of their arrival at St. Ann's, Father Frank Brusatto, director of Catholic Charities for the diocese, announced the closing of the orphanage. He realized that many of the children in the orphanage were not true orphans, most had relatives with whom they

⁴⁶ UTAH Salt Lake City St. Ann's Orphanage Archive Narratives, 1952-1953, p. 5. Congregational Archives.

could live. The remaining few could be placed in foster homes.

The transition from an orphanage to an elementary school took the greater part of a year. On September 19, 1955, St. Ann's School opened with 240 pupils in kindergarten through grade four. An additional grade was added each year. The parish of St. Ann's continued to grow and flourish.

In the summer of 1965 an earthquake centered in Yellowstone National Park reverberated as far as Salt Lake City. The earthquake magnified the signs of an aging building and soon large cracks appeared in the walls of St. Ann's School as the building little by little began to shift. In the 1980s, the city's fire department insisted something needed to be done and suggested a sprinkling system be installed. A decision needed to be made about the future of the building. To raze or preserve the building was the question. Should the school be razed and a new one built, or should money be raised to renovate the existing one? The school had a good enrollment and an excellent reputation. The people of South Salt Lake City, the area in which St. Ann's was located, objected to the razing of the building, which had been listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. After much discussion and financial planning, the decision was made to renovate the existing building.⁴⁷

In anticipation of the school's restoration in the 1990s, and to symbolize its link with the past, it was renamed Kearns-St. Ann's School. In the fall of 1999 the school celebrated its centennial with the completion of a ten-year renovation project that incorporated technological advances while maintaining the building's architectural heritage and grandeur. Today, under the sponsorship of St. Ann's Parish, the school ministers to more than three hundred students from preschool through the eighth grade and serves a diverse student population from varied socio-economic backgrounds.

For more than a half century, Kearns-St. Ann's Orphanage fulfilled Rev. Scanlan's inspiration and that of the mission of the Sisters of the Holy Cross to provide a warm, caring place for orphaned children to be raised and educated regardless of religious beliefs. An editorial in *The Intermountain Catholic* on February 8, 1930, perhaps sums it up best: "The orphan child holds an enviable place in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. So to His Church the parentless boy or girl is a treasure...in the name of the only one whose Love knew no bounds. With incomparable effort the Catholic Church strives to give spiritual and physical care to the toddlers left at Her orphanages."

⁴⁷ Janet Wedl, OSB, *Teaching: A Most Noble Profession, The Ministry in Education of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston, Texas* copy in UTAH Salt Lake City Saint Ann's Orphanage 1891-1953, Archives Narratives, Congregational Archives.

Wasatch Stake Tabernacle — Redefining Pioneers

By LISA OTTESEN FILLERUP



LAVON PROVOST

The Wasatch Stake Tabernacle, completed in 1889, stands today as a monument to the religious devotion of nineteenth-century pioneers, as a symbol of the tenacity of a group of local women nearly a half-century ago who fought to save it from destruction, as well as an example of dedication of a more recent generation to maintain the tabernacle's prominence in the community through its renovation and use as the Heber City Hall.

The fight in the mid-1960s to save the tabernacle from demolition was a turning point in the story of historic preservation in Utah. A few months after the preservation of the tabernacle was assured, a group of individuals involved in the effort met to establish a permanent organization, known as the Utah Heritage Foundation, to be, according to its charter, "...a private voice for preservation, to act when public agencies could not take an active role."¹ Since its establishment, the Utah Heritage Foundation has been the leading non-profit organization in the state to foster the preservation of Utah's important historic buildings and neighborhoods and to educate new generations about the value of historic preservation.

In addition, the effort to preserve the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle, and the unsuccessful fight in 1971 to save Coalville's Summit Stake Tabernacle, helped to foster a stronger preservation ethic among Utah's religious community, including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Greater

The Wasatch Stake Tabernacle mid-1960s. Volunteers Ruth Witt and her son-in-law Lloyd Provost painting the steeple.

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¹ Cited in John S. McCormick, "Utah Heritage Foundation," in Allan Kent Powell, ed., *The Utah History Encyclopedia*, (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1994.), 585-86.

consideration has been given to the possibilities and merits of preserving Utah's historic temples, tabernacles, synagogues, cathedrals, meeting houses, and other places of worship. The struggle in Heber City also helped encourage other communities and cities to consider what buildings were of local value, what should be saved, and how their preservation might be continued. As the pace of modernity quickened, following World War II, Americans looked more and more to their past, to tangibles that were familiar and reassuring. In Heber Valley, no other building was more treasured than the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle. It had come to symbolize the religious and cultural aspirations of those early settlers who came into the valley with a plow and a fist full of dreams.

In the spirit of the cathedrals of Europe, tabernacles were constructed by Mormons to be the primary place of worship and the ecclesiastical center for a geographical area. Where smaller church buildings served local congregations known as "branches," or "wards," the tabernacle was the headquarters for a "stake" which was made up of wards and branches located in a larger geographical area. The hierarchy of local LDS church leadership began with a presiding elder directing a branch, a bishop—ward, and president of a stake, with two councilors and a high council of twelve men to assist the stake president.

Heber Valley was one of many areas that Mormon pioneers settled after the initial settlement of the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Situated on the eastern slopes of the Wasatch Mountains, the valley offered excellent pasture and farm land and an abundant supply of water. Heber Valley farmers became important providers of food stuffs for the nearby Park City Mining District.

In the spring of 1859, Brigham Young called a group of eleven men to settle in what was then called "Provo Valley."² As the men made their way up Provo Canyon, they encountered a snow slide a quarter of a mile wide where they were forced to dismantle their wagons and pack them over the spread of snow, then reassemble on the other side. Upon reaching the valley, each man claimed a portion of land and commenced spring planting and providing shelter for their eighteen families that would brave that first rough winter.

A year later two hundred people, many of whom were converts to the church from Great Britain, were living and farming in what would soon be known as Heber Valley. These church converts named their new community Heber, honoring Heber C. Kimball who, as a missionary, converted many of them and led them to this subsidiary of Zion.³ In 1867, Brigham Young called Abram Hatch from Lehi in Utah Valley to move his family to Heber

² Wm. James Mortimer, *How Beautiful Upon the Mountains* (Heber City: Wasatch County Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1963), 12.

³ Heber C. Kimball at the time of Heber Valley settlement was serving as counselor to President Brigham Young.

and serve as bishop. Hatch, a man of energy and resources, not only farmed but operated a mercantile, and eventually founded Heber Bank. He helped establish a canal system in the valley to improve crop production, all while serving for twenty-three years in the territorial legislature.

In 1872, the territorial legislature authorized the county to erect a county jail on the city block between Main and First West streets and Center and First North streets in Heber. A year later a social hall used for dances, town meetings, and church services was added to the town square. Ten years later a courthouse was built on the block. In 1877, the population growth in the valley necessitated the organization of a church stake, and Hatch was called to serve as the stake president. Ten years later, Hatch realized the need for a tabernacle for the Wasatch Stake, which numbered 2,296 souls in eighteen wards in Summit, Wasatch, and Uintah Counties.

The Wasatch Tabernacle, the “crowning jewel” in the valley, was built in 1887. Hatch solicited church members of all ages to be a part of erecting the tabernacle. The building took two years to complete and was built entirely through donated labor, materials at a cost of thirty-thousand dollars. Hatch himself was superintendent over the project with architect Alex Fortie also supervising the carpentry of the New England type structure. Elisha Averett oversaw masonry; Francis Kirby, the painting; and Frederick Buell, the sheet metal shingles. Nameless others worked in many capacities to help raise the much loved building. The red sandstone for the structure was quarried locally from the east side of town known as the Lake Creek area and hauled by church members in wagons. Children took part in the building process, saving their nickels and dimes and donating them to the cause.⁴ In 1889, Historian Edward W. Tullidge wrote that:

There has been recently erected a large, handsome Stake House. It is built of red sandstone, which can be obtained in any quantities in the immediate vicinity of the town. The building is 50 x 95 feet with a tower extending eight feet. The building is thirty feet in height to the square. It is built on a heavy foundation, which is five feet wide at the bottom, and tapers upward to three feet at the top. The walls are two feet thick....the Stake house is covered with a self-supporting wood and iron roof. The tower is built of rock and extends about ten feet above the ridge of the roof. From this point, the tower will be completed in red wood and metal, extending about twenty-five feet, making it in all about ninety feet high to the top of the weather vane. The tower is fourteen feet square, and has a large entrance door; also two large gothic windows.

It is four feet from the level ground to the first floor of the house. It is lighted by five windows on each side of the building which are five feet six inches by eighteen feet. The walls of the building are strengthened by buttresses on the sides, front and rear making it an immense, massive structure. A large cellar in the rear of the building will contain the heating furnace.

The inside of the stake house is 46 x 91 feet. Galleries are erected on each side and end. The seating capacity is 1,500. The speaker's stand has three elevations. A vestry and council room, etc., are provided in case of danger. There are large doors in each end of

⁴ James Mortimer, *How Beautiful Upon the Mountains*, 47.

the building and four large stairways leading to and from the galleries. Provision is made for a large organ and choir in the east end of the gallery.⁵

The *Wasatch Wave*, the area's local newspaper, reported: "The Stake House is finished and cleaned in beautiful style ready for dedication tomorrow. Conference visitors are expected to clean their feet before entering the building and leave their knives and pencils and tobacco at home." Heber resident John James explained: "The good people of Heber City, so many of whom had toiled and sacrificed to build it, quite naturally took special pains to furnish and maintain their beautiful new Stake House. The floors were scrubbed and bleached with homemade soap; homemade carpets were carefully laid down the aisles, coal oil lamps hanging from the ceiling furnished light."⁶

The original tabernacle's floor plan had a large entrance foyer at the east end with steps leading into the front gallery. The large assembly room contained a stand on the west with three tiers of seating, the highest reserved for the stake presidency, the middle for the high council and the bottom for the bishops. Balconies lined three sides of the hall and were supported by large round posts. During the winter, four pot bellied stoves were located in each corner heating the building and, according to Jesse Bond who served as janitor for thirty years, it made no difference if the fire needed to be stirred or coal added during a sermon, the task was always tolerated.⁷ Interestingly, designated seating not only applied to church leaders but the congregation as well, with men on the south side, women on the north during the cold winter months and mothers with babies sitting close to the stoves and couples in the center. The building also housed a winding staircase that led up to a huge bell tower where for more than seventy years a sturdy bell announced the time for church meetings, alerted the volunteer fire department, notified citizens of town meetings, and rung long and slow for a funeral procession.

The tabernacle, in addition to holding periodic church meetings was also the hub for many community activities, including band concerts, theatrical productions, and high school graduations. According to John Bessendorfer whose grandparents settled in the valley in 1888, "Everything big that happened in Heber, happened in the Tabernacle."⁸ The tabernacle also served the educational needs of students, housing the Wasatch Academy

⁵ Edward W. Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories (Volume II.) Containing the History of all the Northern, Eastern and Western Counties of Utah; Also the Counties of Southern Idaho*, (Salt Lake City: The Press of the Juvenile Instructor, 1889), 153-54.

⁶ *Wasatch Wave* (Heber City), May 11, 1889; John James, "Wasatch Stake Tabernacle Program," May 5, 1989, 2.

⁷ Mortimer, *How Beautiful Upon the Mountains*, 49. Jesse Bond had been a professional bell-ringer who had emigrated from England to become the Tabernacle bell toller for "all Sunday meetings and special occasions." Leslie S. Raty, *Under Wasatch Skies, A History of Wasatch County 1858-1900* (repr. Lindon, Utah: Alexander's Digital Printing, 2001), 63.

⁸ John Bessendorfer interview with author, August 27, 2009, Heber City, Utah.

until 1912 when the first high school was built a few blocks south on Main Street. Ninety year old Don Hicken, a lifelong resident of the valley, recalled when colorful LDS leader, J. Golden Kimball, entertained a congregation in the tabernacle: “there were so many people eager to hear him they even sat two and three to a window sill.” One story from early tabernacle days is told by Della Murdock, granddaughter of Joseph S. Murdock, the first bishop of the Heber ward, “I guess I was about 20 . . . old enough to know I shouldn’t make any noise. I was wearing a long, full skirt, and suddenly a mouse ran up my leg. What did I do—the only decorous thing—I brushed him off without a sound. ***The Wasatch Stake Tabernacle.***



UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

But after that I knew that the term ‘church mouse’ was more than just an expression.”⁹ In the summer people flocked to the tabernacle property to hear the high school band play every Friday night during the 1920s, ‘30s and ‘40s. For a few years, the inviting stretch of grass and established trees also became home to the county fair, as people gathered to celebrate on what was “one of the most used city blocks in the valley.”¹⁰

But the many years of heavy use began to take a toll on the once majestic landmark. By the early 1960s the seventy-five-year old structure was slipping into a derelict condition. During stake conferences many people in the congregation dodged drips from the ceiling during rainstorms. For the leadership of the church in the valley it was yet another stinging reminder that something needed to be done. The tabernacle was not only in disrepair, it was impractical. The tabernacle had no office space for the stake presidency. Then stake president J. Harold Call and his counselors Wayne

⁹ Jan Padfield, “Extend Tabernacle Deadline,” *Deseret News*, October 20, 1964.

¹⁰ Don Hicken interview with author, August 24, 2007, Heber City, Utah.

Whiting and Ralph Carlile had their offices in the seminary building several blocks south of the tabernacle. Call, after being made stake president in 1958, looked at renovating the tabernacle but when the bid came in at seventy-thousand dollars, the idea was scrapped. When news broke in 1961 that the stake leaders were considering tearing the tabernacle down and replacing it with a new stake center, Clark Crook headed an effort to derail the plan. Crook, a dairy farmer who served as stake clerk to President Call, gathered a petition of 250 signatures and succeeded in delaying the decision for three years. But by 1964, Call had become convinced that the tabernacle should be torn down and replaced with a new building.¹¹

At a Sunday morning session of stake conference on June 21, 1964, President Call announced his decision to replace the aging tabernacle with a new, modern stake center. Call carefully laid out the history leading to his decision, emphasizing it had involved years of careful study and consultations with the church's general authorities. But after the announcement, it soon became clear that local church leaders had underestimated the tidal wave that would follow. Almost immediately, a flood of letters poured in to Call, as well as to the secretary to the First Presidency of the church, urging church leaders to reconsider. Everett L. Cooley, Director of the Utah State Historical Society, voiced what many felt was a plea "for stake authorities to reconsider. . . the destruction of one of Heber City's proudest structures."¹²

Before the scheduled demolition on August 11, 1964, a small group of women led by Heber resident Ruth Witt met to see what they could do. Witt, a woman of abundant energy and determination, would prove to be the driving force behind what would be a long struggle to save the tabernacle. Recently widowed, Witt had married into one of the oldest families in the valley and felt passionate about saving the building she felt symbolized her pioneer heritage. Witt had managed a farm with her husband for many years, and knew how to lead. As a young woman she had served a LDS mission in the days when female missionaries were rare and more recently, she held the position of Stake Relief Society president. Barbara McDonald, a mother of six small children, suspended giving afternoon piano lessons to serve as secretary of a newly organized committee to save the tabernacle. Inspired by a profound reverence she felt for her hometown tabernacle in St. George, McDonald described the experience as "the defining moment" of her life. When McDonald wrote her mother asking advice on whether or not to get involved, her mother, whom

¹¹ "Stake Presidency Issues Statement," *Wasatch Wave*, July 30, 1964. Call pointed out that seventy-thousand dollars could "build two small chapels in the mission field."

¹² Everett L. Cooley to J. Harold Call, July 15, 1964, photocopy, Wasatch Stake Tabernacle and Amusement Hall files, State Historic Preservation Office, Division of State History, Salt Lake City. Ruth Witt kept copies of correspondence, notes of meetings and discussions, newspaper clippings, and other documents related to the saving of the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle. Photocopies of this collection and the diary that Ruth Witt kept at the time are found in the files of the State Historic Preservation Office. Herein cited as Ruth Witt file, SHPO and Ruth Witt diary, SHPO.

McDonald considered “an example of unwavering faith and commitment to the church,” shot back “If not you, then who?”¹³ Along with Witt and McDonald, Hope Mohr and Beth Ritchie, sisters whose heritage was linked with the Murdoch family from Heber’s earliest days, formed the committee’s foundation.

Witt and her committee began by firing off a letter to the First Presidency of the church as well as meeting with Kate Carter, president of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, who had arranged a meeting with Presiding Bishop Robert L. Simpson. As the women filed into Simpson’s office he asked “where are your husbands?” With a mild reprimand he said: “Women shouldn’t be trying to do these things on their own. They should have their husbands beside them.”¹⁴ Nonetheless, he did make two suggestions to Witt and the

others: Request a thirty day extension of the demolition date, and then get a petition circulating with President Call’s name on the list.

By July, the issue had caused such a commotion that the stake presidency published a statement in the *Wasatch Wave* explaining their position. The article pointed out the problems of funding, the possible structural instability of the building, the question of use, and maintenance of the tabernacle. Also, the stake presidency explained that several votes had been taken on both ward and stake levels and “the majority voted to raze the Tabernacle.”¹⁵ But the voting had taken place among only the male church membership in the valley and was couched “whether those in the congregation would accept the recommendation of their Stake Presidency for a new Stake Center” not whether to tear the tabernacle down.¹⁶ Assuring they “condemn no one who loves the building and fights for its preservation” the stake presidency made a plea for those fighting to save the building to find a “feasible, worthwhile proposal” soon or fall in line with their proposed plan.¹⁷

Witt by then had received an answer from the First Presidency diplomatically directing her back to her stake president. When she called to make an appointment, Call was out of town so Witt met with Wayne



LAVON PROVOST

Ruth Witt: Leader of the successful effort to save the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle.

¹³ Barbara McDonald, interview with author, August 20, 2008, Heber City, Utah.

¹⁴ Ruth Witt diary, July 27, 1964, SHPO.

¹⁵ “Stake Presidency Issues Statement,” *Wasatch Wave*, July 30, 1964.

¹⁶ Guy McDonald interview with author, September 18, 2009, Heber City, Utah.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Whiting, first counselor in the stake presidency. Whiting was conciliatory and sympathetic to the cause, and had once described the tabernacle as an “old hallowed building, so dear to the hearts of so many in the Stake.”¹⁸ But any affinity Whiting felt for the tabernacle was immaterial. If the money couldn’t be raised by August 11, he reminded Witt, the structure would come down.

The first week of August a Committee for the Preservation of the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle was organized with Ruth Witt as chair, Hope Mohr as vice chair and Barbara McDonald as secretary. Within a matter of twenty-four hours the committee had gathered 657 signatures from residents, including Harold Call’s, who hoped to save the tabernacle. With the petition as proof there was support in the valley for keeping the tabernacle, a second extension was given until September 12th.

Among the letters that piled on President Call’s desk that summer, he felt Cooley’s deserved an answer. Call wrote back stating the same concerns he had voiced in the *Wave* and added a personal note that the community was already supporting two large scale building projects which included a new seminary building, and two new chapels. Call worried that the people were already feeling financially strapped: “We are not a wealthy community and all such building is done at great sacrifice on the part of the people.”¹⁹ Further, the spirit of expansion and modernity was seeping into the valley. Just a year earlier in 1963, “a very good year for Heber,” the airport had been enlarged, a new high school completed, and post office built. Plans for a new hospital were also in the works.²⁰

By the end of August the movement to save the tabernacle was gaining both backing and backlash. Witt and her committee met with the city council, the county commission, and the Utah State Historical Society and obtained a written resolution of support from the county commissioners, city councilmen, and the Midway board of trustees. These organizations in turn urged the citizens of the valley to support the saving of the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle. But the issue grew more heated when in a letter to Aldin Hayward, Director of the State Park and Recreation Commission, Call played down the impact the committee was having on trying to save the tabernacle. “A short time ago” Call wrote, “a group of ladies in the community organized to save the building, feeling we had not done all we could.”²¹ Call went on to question the support of the community noting the committee had been turned down by the city, the county, as well as church headquarters in Salt Lake City. Whether Call was aware of the resolution signed by county and city officials is unclear. With battle lines

¹⁸ Wayne C. Whiting, History, LDS Church Archives Historical Arts Program, 1976, quoted in Jessie L. Embry, *A History of Wasatch County*, (Utah State Historical Society and Wasatch County Commission, Salt Lake City, 1996), 249.

¹⁹ Harold Call to Everett Cooley, July 15, 1964, Ruth Witt file, SHPO.

²⁰ Martin Lee Van Roosendaal II, “Undeclared,” Supplement to *Wasatch Wave*, August 26, 2009, 16.

²¹ J. Harold Call to Aldin O. Hayward, August 18, 1964, Ruth Witt file, SHPO.

clearly drawn, Barbara McDonald wrote her mother, “we have stirred up a big enough stink that I’ll bet if you hold your nose to the wind in Overton [Nevada eighty miles southwest of St. George] you can detect the odor.”²²

Knowing publicity was vital to their success, Witt’s committee planned a full page spread in the *Wasatch Wave*. They also arranged a meeting with Theron Luke of the *Provo Herald* and managed a spot on the Channel 4 news in Salt Lake City. Local service groups in the valley were also solicited for support. In an effort to save the tabernacle, it was believed that George Higgs had offered to buy the tabernacle and President Call had given him the price of thirty-thousand dollars. Higgs apparently went to California where he raised the money, but when he returned with the funds, Call said the price had increased to \$150,000. Call never confirmed the truth of this story, but it is not surprising that stories and exaggerations were used to ignite passions on both sides.

As the press became more involved, Call became increasingly pressured. In an effort to quell some of the heat, he paid a visit to Cooley’s office, telling him that the Utah State Historical Society had no business getting involved in what he felt was a local matter. The confrontation sent Cooley straight to Grant Iverson, president of the state historical society and a neighbor and friend of Hugh B. Brown, who was serving as counselor to David O. McKay, President of the LDS church. Brown was a problem solver, having coordinated more than one hundred thousand LDS servicemen in Europe during World War II. As the tabernacle debate heated up he found himself fielding phone calls from both Call and members of Witt’s Save the Tabernacle Committee. Even-tempered, but no pushover, Brown would bring the tabernacle issue to the table in the highest circles of the church.

At a meeting between Cooley and Brown, Brown was informed that a second petition was being circulated to save the tabernacle. Brown suggested that it be delivered to him as soon as possible before the September 12 deadline. The committee then wrote a letter to Brown, asking for an impartial investigation on the matter from church authorities in Salt Lake City. “[W]e do not feel [that] our stake presidency is impartial,” the committee wrote, “and neither do we feel we are.”²³ The committee defended the sincerity of President Call, as well as their own position affirming that the tabernacle “is a temporal matter on which we have much at stake and should have the right as members of the Church to express our opinions and work for what we believe.”²⁴ In a follow up letter to Brown a week later the committee assured him that “There has been no feeling of malice, antagonism or disrespect on the part of the group who is working with us

²² Ruth Witt diary, August 11, 1964, SHPO.

²³ Chairman of the Community Committee to Save the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle to President Hugh B. Brown, August 30, 1964, Ruth Witt File, SHPO.

²⁴ Ibid.

towards the leadership of this stake. We have done what we have done out of our desire to preserve our Stake House.”²⁵

Four days before the September 12 deadline, Witt, McDonald, Mohr, and Ritchie showed up in President Brown’s office with a petition of 1,366 signatures and a letter of explanation. In a county whose population totaled 5,308, Brown could not help but be impressed. Brown offered the three women two suggestions: find an alternate site for the new stake center and, “get some responsible people here to talk it over and make arrangements.”²⁶ The women clearly understood what Brown meant: put some men in charge.

After the meeting with Brown, Witt, McDonald and Mohr paid a visit to President Call informing him of their plans to organize a new committee of men and asked if he would suggest some names to help fill positions. But Call was in no mood at that point to give assistance. He reasoned he didn’t approve of what they were doing, so why help. Call’s dander was up and for good reason, newspaper articles and editorials were firing off all ammo urging the saving of the tabernacle and portraying Call as the villain in the drama.

Even though Call had lived in the valley eight years and served as stake president for six, he was still seen by many as a newcomer in a town where blood ties ran deep. He was also considered young when he was called at age forty-one to be a stake president, a position traditionally held by older, and more experienced men. Call, an attorney by profession, had a reputation of being forthright and candid which sometimes worked against him. As one close friend suggested, Call was “a little short on tact and diplomacy.”²⁷ Although there were those who bristled at times at Call’s manner, youth, and status as an outsider, many people who came to know the man describe him as dedicated and honest, determined to provide a beautiful and practical place to worship.

Following the uncomfortable meeting with Call, Beth Ritchie called President Brown at his home and relayed what had happened. Interestingly, Brown had just hung up the phone after talking to President Call who had referred to the women on the committee as “fanatics” who were trying to overthrow priesthood authority in the valley.²⁸ Ritchie pressed for another extension of the deadline and was twice told no before Brown relented and gave the committee one more week. Two days later, on Sunday, September 13, Witt, McDonald, and Mohr were summoned to the stake’s High Council room. After kneeling in prayer, President Call scolded the women, reminding them that petitions were not the way “things were handled in

²⁵ Ruth Witt, Hope Mahr, Barbara McDonald, Community Committee to Save the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle to President Hugh B. Brown, September 7, 1964, Ruth Witt file, SHPO. Heber Committee Gains, May Save Tabernacle,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, Sept 10, 1964.

²⁶ Ruth Witt diary, September 8, 1964, SHPO.

²⁷ Bob Clyde interview with author, June 27, 2007, Mt. Pleasant, Utah.

²⁸ Ruth Witt diary, September 11, 1964, SHPO.

the church” but that disagreements were to be taken to priesthood leaders.²⁹ Call asked that all communication with the media stop, then requested that when the tabernacle comes down he expected their “full support” for the new stake center.³⁰ As the meeting came to a close, Call asked McDonald why the committee had gone to general authorities in Salt Lake City instead of coming to him. McDonald, fighting back tears said, “You have not inspired that kind of confidence in me.”³¹

Acting on President Brown’s suggestion, Witt enlisted a group of businessmen to head the committee, but she didn’t let go of the reins. Glen Hatch, great grandson of Heber’s first stake president, Abram Hatch, accepted the title of chairman. Hatch, a lawyer and former state senator as well as alumni president at the University of Utah, fit the “responsible” role every inch. Lowe Ashton Jr. and Tom Baum served as vice chairmen, and Don Barker served as secretary.³² The following day Call agreed to go with Glen Hatch and Guy McDonald to eye possible sites for the new building.

Though Witt and her committee followed Brown’s counsel to find “responsible people” to help, and the new committee added strength to the fight, the women continued to power the movement to save the tabernacle. But their involvement had without doubt created a stir locally and elsewhere in the state. A local Mormon adage of unknown origin circulated in the valley that the “petticoats were ruling the priesthood” implying that women were overstepping their bounds in challenging church authorities. Guy Olpin, a local mortician, compared the feeling in town to a “battle-field” recalling when his neighbor Mark Rasband pacing up and down his lawn, hotter than a stove, said: “Have you heard. . . everyone is talking about how the petticoats are ruling the priesthood?”³³ In many ways the women found themselves nose to nose with church hierarchy in ways they had



BARBARA McDONALD

The Guy and Barbara McDonald family, Fall 1960. Mrs. McDonald served as secretary for the Committee to Save the Wasatch Tabernacle.

²⁹ Ibid., September 13, 1964.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Other committee members included Walter Montgomery, Walter Geisman, Clyde Ritchie, Larry Duke, Wayne Murdock, and Guy McDonald (Barbara McDonald’s husband).

³³ Guy Olpin interview with author, August 20, 2007, Heber City, Utah.

never imagined. In the small community of Heber where religion played a heavy hand, it is possible the brewing movement that would launch a generation of feminists had caught fire in the hearts of these women. But more likely it seemed they were less interested in making a political stand than in accomplishing the task at hand. In the spirit of Pamela Cunningham, who led the “first successful nationwide effort at preservation” to save Mount Vernon in 1853, the women in Heber stepped up to the fight regardless of perceived gender restrictions.³⁴

The fight to save the tabernacle not only challenged gender roles, but the “faithfulness” of church members who supported the cause. As the question over the tabernacle dragged on, the town grew more divided, defined by who was for and who was against saving the building. In a church that values both obedience and personal agency, the question of where to stand on the tabernacle issue was a murky one. Members who supported saving the tabernacle had to reconcile the fact that they pledged to support their ecclesiastical leaders and, yet, personally felt impassioned about saving palpable evidence of their heritage. To further complicate things, church members were not only expected to support their leaders but were counseled to refrain from criticizing them in any form. Those who supported saving the tabernacle openly, were seen by some members of the church as rebels, on the slippery slope to losing their way. Guy McDonald recalls the attitude that those who supported saving the tabernacle were “not strong enough in the faith.”³⁵

As a result, most church members in leadership positions in the valley fell in line with Call’s decision to raze the tabernacle and if they disagreed they were not vocal about it. Barbara McDonald remembers how “a lot of those in the church hierarchy were silent. They came to us and said, ‘I can’t support you, but we hope you are successful.’”³⁶ Even Call’s first counselor, Wayne Whiting, confided to Witt and McDonald that he “would personally hate to see the old building torn down.”³⁷ But Whiting, like many others in positions of leadership, kept his opinions to himself. Don Hicken, a bishop at the time, who had also served in a ward bishopric with Harold Call, said, “I never got the feeling the tabernacle would be torn down. I didn’t want it to be torn down but I didn’t do much to save it. They [church leaders] knew my feelings.”³⁸ Perhaps Guy Olpin summed it up best when he concluded nearly fifty years later, “the tabernacle debate became a church thing [when] it shouldn’t have.”³⁹

³⁴ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Presence of the Past*, (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1965), 57.

³⁵ Guy McDonald interview with author, September 18, 2009, Heber City, Utah.

³⁶ Barbara McDonald interview with author, September 18, 2009, Heber City, Utah.

³⁷ Quoted in Ruth Witt and Barbara McDonald, “Wasatch Stake Controversy,” Ruth Witt file, SHPO.

³⁸ Hicken interview.

³⁹ Olpin interview.

In the meantime, Call found himself increasingly pinched between keeping peace in the valley and moving on with the new stake center. It is interesting to consider Call's signature on the first petition to help save the tabernacle. Early in the campaign, Call had said in a conversation with Everett Cooley that "he would be the happiest man in the world if some way could be found to preserve the Stake house."⁴⁰ But as efforts of the committee progressed and opposition to his plan heightened, Call was put on the defensive. Guy Olpin, who served as Stake Young Men's President at the time, insisted: "I don't think he [Call] was opposed to saving the tabernacle. He was directed by church leadership to build a new Stake Center."⁴¹ Finding a practical, affordable and convenient location for the stake center became Call's focus, believing that he was following the counsel of church leaders, even if that counsel vacillated, especially after the Save the Tabernacle Committee had met with the same church leaders in Salt Lake City.

The week extension grew into several as negotiations sputtered forward and slowed to a crawl. On October 6, 1964, the stake presidency proposed an alternate site for the stake center with a price tag of sixty thousand dollars. The property, located a couple blocks northwest of the tabernacle block, already had houses on a portion of it, which meant the price was nearly double that of other vacant sites being considered. Call's concern, he insisted, was for the widows who often walked to church, that kept him from considering property on the fringes of town.⁴²

A month after the extension date to raise the necessary funds to buy the property, committee members were asked to meet with the stake presidency and several ward bishops. Because many were involved in road show performances that evening, the committee had a sparse representation of only three: Ruth Witt, Hope Mohr, and Glen Hatch who met with Call, his counselors and the bishops of the two wards. Tempers ran high in the meeting. Call pressed committee members to work harder to raise the necessary funds, pointing out that only \$4,090 had been collected. When Call warned they needed to "make a better show" in the coming week or else the building was coming down, Witt fired back, quoting from LDS scripture how "all things shall be done by common consent in the church."⁴³ Call heatedly responded: "I am President of this Stake!"⁴⁴ Tom Baum who had walked in late, just in time to hear the exchange, broke the tension when he said, grinning: "Is everybody happy?"⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Everett J. Cooley to People of Heber Valley, "How Can the Stakehouse be Saved," open letter, August 1964, Ruth Witt file, SHPO.

⁴¹ Olpin interview.

⁴² Ruth Witt diary, October 13, 1964, SHPO.

⁴³ Doctrine and Covenants, 26:2.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Ruth Witt and Barbara McDonald, "Wasatch Stake Tabernacle Controversy," SHPO.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

The committee must have gulped hard at the price for the property settled on, and then gulped even harder at Call's insistence to come up with more substantial funds within a week. With the additional challenge, committee members flew into action, distributing flyers to residents in Heber Valley and anyone who had ties to Heber, requesting donations to save the tabernacle, stressing that time was running out. Keeping phone lines buzzing and newspapers privy to their efforts, the committee saw modest results. One elderly widow, the *Deseret News* reported "who makes quilts to support herself. . .gave \$15."⁴⁶ Another woman put her newly remodeled long-time family home up for sale "with half the purchase price to be donated to the tabernacle fund."⁴⁷ Through great effort, by the end of the week the committee had added two thousand dollars to the pot. But it was a drop when they needed a downpour.

On October 21, Witt got a call around midnight from Jan Padfield at the *Deseret News* who had taken an interest in the story, and had published several articles on the fight going on in Heber and was following events closely. Padfield told Witt that President Call had been to visit President Brown and given the committee another extension—November 3. With the help of other journalists like Padfield, publicity spread to other communities which garnered individual and corporate donations. When the city council agreed to take title to the tabernacle block property as a "park and the buildings as a museum and public auditorium," it now seemed the question of use and maintenance was finally answered. As the November 3 deadline came and went, the committee kept up the hard drive for donations, feeling on the verge of accomplishing what they set out to do.

With progress being made, suddenly came a big blow. Call received a letter from the First Presidency dated November 20, 1964, giving him permission to "move forward with the original plans to raze the present stake buildings." The brief letter stated that the Save The Tabernacle Committee had failed to come up with a site for the new stake center as well as making any provisions for the maintenance of the tabernacle. For nearly a month Call kept the letter and mulled over what he could have considered a free pass for a new stake center, ending all negotiations. Instead, he waited. In the middle of bargaining over the new stake center property and realizing the growing support for saving the building, it could be he wanted a cooling off period and another month for the committee to actually pull it off. In any event, finally, on December 17, he made the letter public, publishing its entirety in the *Wasatch Wave*.

"Most felt like this was the end," Witt admitted. Reassured by her son Dan, Witt began drafting a letter to President Brown.⁴⁸ Before the week

⁴⁶ Jan Padfield, "Extend the Tabernacle Deadline?" *Deseret News*, October 20, 1964.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ruth Witt file, December 17, 1964, SHPO.

was out, a letter was sent to the First Presidency from the committee insisting that their decision to raze the tabernacle was “based on erroneous information.”⁴⁹ The property the stake presidency had settled on was at a standstill because several people whose homes were located on the property refused to sell. Another letter was sent by the committee to church authorities in Salt Lake City making a second request for an impartial investigation of the entire issue.



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As the new year began, the committee waited on edge for a response from church headquarters. With nearly ten thousand dollars raised toward the fund and the city willing to take title to the property, the committee had made considerable progress, but still had only a fraction of the amount needed. Grant Iverson of the Utah State Historical Society said of the tabernacle and what failure might mean for other historic buildings, “this has to succeed, because it is the first. If we lose this one we will lose them all.”⁵⁰ Witt also sensed the fear that the outcome over the tabernacle would foster “anger and resentment, even rebellion and dissension. The Stake will be so divided that it will never be united in our lifetime.”⁵¹

Early in January 1965 a crew had begun removing furniture from the tabernacle in preparation for demolition. Simultaneously, a meeting between Iverson, Call, and President Brown took place in Salt Lake City. At the meeting Iverson reported that Call had told President Brown that the Save the Tabernacle Committee was composed of a group of “fanatical women who had no backing and were inactive in the church.”⁵² Hearing of Call’s accusatory remark spurred Witt to set things straight. She

The interior of the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle.

⁴⁹ Save the Tabernacle Committee to the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, December 22, 1964, Ruth Witt file, SHPO.

⁵⁰ Ruth Witt file, January 2, 1965, SHPO.

⁵¹ Ibid., January 8, 1965.

⁵² Ibid.

immediately typed out a list of committee members, their standing in the church along with their church callings past and present and mailed it to President Brown.⁵³

By the middle of the month the battle for the tabernacle had reached such intensity that the First Presidency finally acceded to the committee's request for an impartial investigation. Apostles Marion G. Romney, Thomas S. Monson and Howard W. Hunter were sent to Heber to assess the situation.⁵⁴ The apostles interviewed sixteen people including Ruth Witt, Barbara McDonald, Beth Ritchie, Don Barker, the Heber stake presidency, and Wasatch County commissioner Walter Montgomery. As McDonald waited her turn for an interview, she was nervous, wondering what they would ask. As she thought about all that had transpired since the announcement in stake conference the summer before, she felt they would simply ask her how she felt about the matter. When she finally walked in to be interviewed she heard, "Tell us how you feel about this" and she was more than ready to do so.⁵⁵

In early February, the three apostles made their recommendation to the First Presidency. They concluded that tabernacle block on Main Street was not the ideal location for a stake center. They also recommended an extension of June 30, 1965, to give the committee in Heber City time to come up with the funds to buy the tabernacle block property. The apostles' recommendations were included in a letter sent to Call, which was read in a stake priesthood meeting by President Whiting on February 14. The committee had just enough time to take a breath, before realizing how much there was left to do.

In the three months that followed, huge gains were made. The city agreed the fifteen thousand dollars it had received from the church to purchase city property on the tabernacle block would be returned and the church would then use the money toward the purchase of the new stake center site. The city also sent a letter to President McKay expressing its interest in the tabernacle property. Fund raising continued and the people who had refused to sell their homes for the new stake center site now relented. In April, Call met with Witt, giving her a copy of the apostles' recommendation, which she had unofficially known about for nearly two months. Call made an offer of forty-five thousand dollars for the stake center property, less the fifteen thousand dollars for the city property on the tabernacle block. Call asked for Witt's and the committee's full support, if the deal with the city failed, suggesting that a stake center on the

⁵³ Of the eleven committee members, two were inactive. The rest were currently serving or had served in numerous positions including full-time missionaries, bishopric members, scoutmasters, choristers and organists, stake Relief Society president, organist, ward clerks, High Priest Group leaders, home teachers, Relief Society and Sunday school teachers. Ruth Witt Files, SHPO.

⁵⁴ June Wheeler, "Wasatch Stake: A New Site," *Deseret News*, February 16, 1965.

⁵⁵ Barbara McDonald interview.



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tabernacle block would be more desirable than a commercial enterprise.

The Wasatch County Courthouse on the left and the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle on the right.

As the committee worked hard to raise the money needed, prospects to save the tabernacle grew more favorable when the Heber City Council and the Heber Stake Presidency met with the First Presidency, requesting the church turn the tabernacle over to the city to maintain. Yet, there were issues that clouded the prospects as the committee edged closer to making the deal. Contributors to the tabernacle fund began clamoring for an accounting of their donations. Still a bigger blow faced the committee. On May 19, President Call received a letter from the First Presidency again giving him “liberty to raze the old building” stating that the “majority of stake officers, high counsel, bishops and people want to build the new tabernacle on the site where the old tabernacle stands.”⁵⁶ The letter, made public three days later, dazed and shocked the committee. The committee immediately met and drafted a letter reminding church leaders to honor their previous extension date. Piling into several cars, committee members headed to the church office building in Salt Lake City where they hand delivered their letter to President Brown who seemed surprised at their persistence. At first, he said there was nothing he could do, but after reading the letter he relented, saying he had “stuck his neck out for us before. . .and guessed he could do it again.”⁵⁷ He promised he would deliver the letter to President McKay while mildly scolding the “rebellious group” to which Witt responded: “President Brown, if there hadn’t been groups like us, there would never have been a United States of America. . .or the Church of

⁵⁶ First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to President J. Harold Clark and counselors, Wasatch Stake, Heber City, May 19, 1965. Handwritten photocopy, Ruth Witt File, SHPO.

⁵⁷ Ruth Witt diary, May 24, 1965, SHPO.

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”⁵⁸ The previous extension was again honored by the church officials in Salt Lake City.

As the deadline loomed a little over a month away, efforts by the committee to gather support were more vigorous than ever. The committee mailed another brochure to residents in Heber Valley making a passionate plea for more donations. Signs were placed at the cemetery entrance and exit on Memorial Day reminding people to give to the cause. Week after week, the tabernacle made news headlines in Salt Lake City and Provo, which garnered the interest and support of notable figures including LDS scholar and Professor Hugh Nibley of Brigham Young University. Nibley’s support came by way of his pen, a call to arms for all pioneer structures:

If you are bleeding to death, you do not go first to your bankbook to see whether you can afford a doctor. The remnants of our pioneer culture are fast draining away; it is astonishing that any responsible person could seriously contemplate the act of destroying any of its remaining monuments. . . Consider the money, time and energy that will be extended this year in celebrations commemorating the accomplishments and struggles of the pioneers in elaborate and costly make believe, while the last remnants of their actual toil and faith. . . will be undergoing systematic destruction to save a few dollars.⁵⁹

Rodello Hicken Hunter, a Heber native and writer, whose story about Heber Valley was about to be published in the *Reader’s Digest* that summer, also “decried the contemplated destruction of the [tabernacle].”⁶⁰ Hunter had her picture taken for the magazine, standing in front of the tabernacle hoping to increase awareness of the historic building whose future still seemed so uncertain.

As the committee planned to use upcoming road show performances as a way to boost the tabernacle fund, there were reasons to hope the end was near. Early in June, Heber City Council offered to sell a piece of property along Midway Lane and donate the twenty-three thousand dollars received to the tabernacle fund. A day later, the city council met with President Brown and signed a contract to take title of the tabernacle block property and agreed to pay earnest money toward the purchase of another church site. To make the tabernacle presentable for the road show performances a crew of twenty-five volunteers worked to clean the tabernacle, leaving everything from the bathrooms to the sandstone steps leading to the front doors scrubbed and shining. The night before the road shows, the committee met with the stake presidency and the city council where Mayor R.N. Jiacoletti accepted title and responsibility for the maintenance of the exterior building. The committee agreed to maintain the tabernacle’s interior. On the night of the road shows, one week from the deadline, the tabernacle was brimming with people. Following the road show performances as people were exiting the building, Bill Witt, Ruth Witt’s

⁵⁸ Ruth Witt and Barbara McDonald, “Wasatch Stake Tabernacle Controversy,” SHPO.

⁵⁹ Hugh Nibley, “Appeals for Preservation of Pioneer Monuments,” *Provo Daily Herald*, June 7, 1965.

⁶⁰ “Last Ditch Effort Launched to Preserve Historic Tabernacle,” *Wasatch Wave*, June 3, 1965.

son, began swinging a loud bell to get the people's attention and announced the need for more funds to save the tabernacle. Five hundred dollars were collected as people filed out the door.

As the deadline neared, the committee faced additional problems. The city's contribution of twenty-three thousand dollars was not due to be collected until August 1st, but the deadline was a month earlier for the committee to hand over the forty-five thousand dollars toward the new stake center site. Additionally, President Brown requested Witt and McDonald find eighteen people to pledge a hundred dollars a year toward the upkeep of the tabernacle. In two hours the women had drummed up the eighteen commitments. Then Brown called again asking for fifteen more pledges of fifty dollars each from local businesses, which took a couple of days to garner. The bottom line to these additional problems was the full dollar amount that had been agreed to by all of the parties had not yet been collected even though the committee had assured the Heber City Council that "sufficient funds [were] available to secure the property."⁶¹

The future of the tabernacle hinged on hundreds of individuals stepping up in various ways—giving and sacrificing—to save the tabernacle and make it the community's once more. The majority of individuals who contributed did so with modest contributions, many as little as five dollars. The Hatch family, descendants of Abram Hatch, many of whom no longer lived in the valley, came forward and pledged to make up the difference and help cover the city's twenty-three thousand dollar contribution. Exactly how much they contributed is uncertain, but it is clear that the building would not have been saved without their generosity. Others, including a group of actors from Park City heard about the effort, and donated \$632—proceeds of a night's performance—to help save the building.

On a hot July 4, 1965, a special priesthood meeting was called for all male church membership in the valley. It was said to be the most well attended priesthood meeting in town history. President Brown, who conducted the meeting, showed up without a suit coat, in just a shirt and tie. Members of the stake presidency and high council in a show of support peeled off their jackets and walked into the meeting coatless. For nearly an hour President Brown told stories, until finally he changed gears and prefaced the announcement everyone had come to hear. Stressing there would be no "hearings or discussions about it" he said the First Presidency had decided that the beloved tabernacle would be saved, which "is what he personally had hoped all along."⁶² When the men came home with the news, Witt later confessed "to say we were thrilled would be an understatement."⁶³ When the deed of the property was officially handed over in September 1965 the *Wasatch Wave* announced: "A history-rich red

⁶¹ Heber City Council minutes, September 3, 1965, 337, Heber City Offices.

⁶² Ruth Witt and Barbara McDonald, "Wasatch Stake Tabernacle Controversy," SHPO.

⁶³ Kris Radish, "Tabernacle a Symbol of Love, Hard Work," *Deseret News*, July 11, 1978.

sandstone building—carved from the very hills of Heber Valley—now belongs to the people.”⁶⁴ Five years later in 1970, the tabernacle was listed on the State Register of Historical sites and the following year it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service.

The struggle to save the Wasatch Tabernacle had an impact on historic preservation within the community, state, and LDS church. As the debate over the tabernacle mushroomed, the *Salt Lake Tribune* suggested that “whatever the final outcome of the Save the Tabernacle drive, its momentum should stimulate a statewide program of preserving historical landmarks.” Indeed, within a few months of Call’s announcement the Utah State Historical Society initiated a statewide survey to “identify other landmarks and historical sites with the aim of saving them from the wrecking crews.” When the *Salt Lake Tribune* suggested the “Save the Heber Tabernacle campaign could well grow into a strong ‘Save the Utah Landmarks’ movement,” they were more accurate than they possibly realized.⁶⁵ One of the most influential results was the formation of the Utah Heritage Foundation in 1966, which became the “first statewide preservation organization in the western United States” whose “first project was to preserve Heber town square.”⁶⁶ On a local level, the Save the Tabernacle Committee became the Wasatch Historical Society, dedicated to work with the Utah Heritage Foundation to promote and preserve Utah’s architectural heritage.

Ultimately, the tabernacle represented more than just an old building to many in and outside the community. Just a week after the tabernacle was saved, George Dibble wrote in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, the reverence and respect many felt for a building “born of sacrifice and devotion. . .this monument of purpose, imagination, devotion and skill, the builders enshrined their noblest hopes and dreams in a tabernacle they dedicated to their God.”⁶⁷

Once the tabernacle was secured, it seemed only time would heal the wounds incurred during the past turbulent year. There were individuals and church and community leaders who urged residents to wipe the slate clean, but there were others who had no desire to do so. Barbara McDonald felt the effects of her involvement when in 1970, as a registered nurse, she applied for a job at the new Wasatch County Hospital. She was told they weren’t hiring “trouble makers” and as a result commuted to Salt Lake City for work for a number of years.⁶⁸

One important and tragic event did more to heal the wounds over the

⁶⁴ *Wasatch Wave*, September 3, 1965, as quoted by Dr. Raymond Green, Wasatch Stake Tabernacle Program, May 5, 1989, 4. The Warranty Deed states “the property herein shall be used for the general public and not for any private or commercial enterprise,” September 3, 1965, Book 52, 288–89, Entry 87817, Wasatch County Recorder’s Office, Heber City.

⁶⁵ “Save Landmarks as Part of Heritage,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 26, 1964.

⁶⁶ Embry, *A History of Wasatch County*, 252. “Boots Heritage,” *Deseret News*, February 16, 1966.

⁶⁷ George Dibble, “Heber Tabernacle Gets New Cultural Function,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 11, 1965.

⁶⁸ Barbara McDonald interview.

tabernacle than time ever could. Eighteen months after the tabernacle decision, Harold Call and his wife Helen were driving down Provo Canyon to see their son perform in a ROTC program at Brigham Young University. It was January when roads are unpredictable and notoriously icy. A terrible automobile accident took the life of President Call's wife Helen. Her daughter Carolyn and friend Lynette Clyde were also seriously



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injured and hospitalized for several weeks. News of the tragedy literally rocked the valley and in the days that followed, many hearts were softened and grudges set aside. "Compassion," as one resident remembers "was literally poured out on President Call and his family."⁶⁹ At the time, the new Heber Stake Center was all but completed, the dedication date just two weeks away. By special permission, Helen Call's funeral was held in the new building. As Call continued to serve six more years as stake president, sympathy deepened to respect and many hard feelings were further softened as he juggled the demands of church leadership while raising his large family before eventually remarrying.

In the twenty years that followed saving the tabernacle, volunteers struggled to keep up with the extensive repairs that were needed. Residents pitched in where they could and many outside the valley sent money to aid in the building's repairs and maintenance. The tabernacle also reminded many of fond memories. Virginia Hanson from Logan, Utah, wrote Witt: "Buy a few drops of paint with this little offering. I want to have a small part in the rejuvenation of the tabernacle. . . Among the multitudes who have walked across the stage in the tabernacle is the undersigned. I was in the first Ward MIA play. . . unfortunately no Hollywood Scouts were on hand that opening night. . . my dramatic career was rather brief."⁷⁰

Presentation of a certificate on July 16, 1970, in recognition of the listing of the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle on the National Register of Historic Places. Theron Luke, member of the Utah State Board of History, on right presenting the certificate to Heber City Mayor Harry McMillan with Ruth Witt present.

⁶⁹ Olpin interview.

⁷⁰ Virginia Hanson to Ruth Witt, May 17, 1971, Ruth Witt file, SHPO.

During the 1960s and 1970s the tabernacle staged theatrical productions but they failed to provide the necessary revenue to cover the cost of maintenance and repairs on the building. For example, 1973 records show Heber's version of the "Pioneer Playhouse" went in the hole with \$16,242.49 expenses exceeding the \$15,598.06 income. By the early 1980s the tabernacle was for the most part empty but for the bats who inhabited the interior. Though petitions and plans for implementing a full scale renovation had been in the works since the building was saved, lack of funding kept the realization always in the future. In 1982, the *Wasatch Wave* published photos of the once beautiful tabernacle, paying tribute to the building and renewing interest in it. The *Wave* wrote:

It is one of the most prominent structures in Heber. It has stood straight and tall through the many years since it was constructed. There aren't many old buildings like this one still around, and when you enter it, if you listen closely you can still hear the singing of the early saints as they sang out praises to their God. Maybe the structure is a little dusty inside, but there is the ever present recognition, that those who settled here before were sturdy men who knew how to build a building to last through the ages.⁷¹

The future of the tabernacle once again seemed tenuous. Witt, who for twenty years had been so active in the maintenance of the building and serving on the board of trustees for the Utah Heritage Foundation was forced to limit her involvement after suffering multiple breaks in her leg due to a car accident in 1984.⁷² Witt's "16 year long love affair with a building" was, she insisted, a "labor of love."⁷³ But when Witt's health failed her, there were those who picked up where she left off. City Councilman Louis R. Jackson "appealed for more volunteers to help fix the building," pointing out volunteers had donated time and labor to help build the tabernacle and it would take volunteers to help keep it up.⁷⁴ Robert McCormick, a retired engineer, also took an interest in the building, inspected it thoroughly and found it stable but in immediate need of repair. At the time, Heber City was in need of new offices and plans were prepared to refurbish the tabernacle for the mayor and city council. Many felt the best way to preserve the building was to put it to use. Architect George Olsen estimated the renovation would cost \$510,000. To get a sense for how the community felt about the project, the city council held a public forum where the majority in attendance enthusiastically supported the idea and felt as Heber resident James Jenkins Jr. expressed: "I have always attached a certain sacredness to things that are irreplaceable. I can't

⁷¹ *Wasatch Wave*, May 27, 1982, quoted in Embry, *A History of Wasatch County*, 252.

⁷² Lavon Provost interview with author, September 18, 2009, Heber City, Utah. Ruth Witt suffered a crippling automobile accident along the same road in Provo Canyon that had taken the life of Helen Call. After her accident Ruth Witt walked with the aid of a walker. A year later Witt was diagnosed with breast cancer and died from the deadly disease in June of 1986.

⁷³ Kris Radish, "Tabernacle a Symbol of Love, Hard Work," *Deseret News*, July 11, 1978.

⁷⁴ Embry, *A History of Wasatch County*, 253.



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help believe that heritage is one of the last remaining gifts we can give.”⁷⁵ In an historic bond election, Heber residents voted to issue \$350,000 in bonds to restore the tabernacle for use as a new city hall. The *Provo Herald* reported the “338-95 vote made this the first time a bond issue has been approved the first time it was put before Heber voters.”⁷⁶ Heber City Mayor Gordon Mendenhall seemed equally surprised by the outcome, stating: “it usually requires three or more elections to get bonds approved by Heber voters and normally they pass by only a 10 percent margin.”⁷⁷ The city, with \$270,000 in its capital improvements fund had more than enough to complete the project.

The Wasatch Stake Tabernacle, once hailed as the “historic heart” of the city, underwent extensive interior renovation and exterior restoration.⁷⁸ Offices were created and a second floor added. Glass cabinets were installed to house historical artifacts, period clothing, photographs, books, and

⁷⁵ James Harris Jenkins Jr., “How do you feel about the Heber City Council’s Proposal to renovate the Tabernacle?,” *Wasatch Wave*, June 25, 1987.

⁷⁶ Sonni Schwinn, “Heber residents OK bonding for renovation of Tabernacle,” *Provo Daily Herald*, July 8, 1987.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Kate B. Carter, “DUP President Offers Support,” *Wasatch Wave*, August 27, 1964.

mementos. Portraits of Heber's early pioneers were collected and hung in gilded frames lining the interior walls of the building. On May 5, 1989, the hundred-year anniversary of the completion of the tabernacle, the remodeled building was rededicated as home for the Heber City offices. During the program contractors were praised as well as city officials, architects, politicians, and citizens who had made the renovation possible.

The rededication ceremony drew unexpected numbers. As traffic on Main Street slowed and travelers took notice of the large crowd gathering on the lawn outside the tabernacle, the symbolism was striking. The looking back, remembering the dream a handful of pioneers carried into the valley, had inspired a community dedicated to preserve that legacy. The Wasatch Stake Tabernacle, whose walls were raised by the offering of devoted pioneers, stood tall and proud again because a new generation fought to save it for yet another generation who pledged to restore it. The lesson that issued from the tabernacle would provide impetus for historical preservation within the community, state and LDS church, raising awareness about the intrinsic value of architectural heritage. But ultimately, the work of saving and restoring the Wasatch Stake Tabernacle affirms that men and women "of every generation are pioneers," driven by dreams to find "a wilderness, some place, some achievement, or some task that is still unfound, unimagined or forgotten."⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Mortimer, *How Beautiful Upon the Mountains*, 20.

BOOK NOTICES

Caroline Keturah Parry Woolley, "I Would to God": A Personal History of

Isaac C. Haight. Edited by Blanche Cox Clegg and Janet Burton Seegmiller.

(Cedar City: Southern Utah University Press, 2009. vii + 219 pp. Paper, \$25.00.)

Having heard the story of her grandfather, Isaac C. Haight's participation in the Mountain Meadows massacre at a very young age and knowing of her father's collection of information that he had collected concerning her grandfather's involvement in the massacre, Caroline Keturah Parry Woolley (1885-1967) was motivated to conduct further research and to write a history of her grandfather.

Unable to complete the history of Haight before her death, Caroline Woolley donated to Southern Utah University her manuscript collection, which included drafts of the personal history of her grandfather with the provision that her manuscript be published. The volume covers the entire life of Isaac C. Haight, focusing primarily on religious details of his life.

The two editors took on the task of preparing the two part thirty-one chapter book for publication. "I Would to God" is the second in a series of monographs on Mountain Meadows published by Southern Utah University Press.

Soldiers West: Biographies from the Military Frontier. Edited by Paul Andrew Hutton

and Durwood Ball. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009. xii + 404 pp. Cloth

\$34.95.)

First published in 1987, the editors of this edition have replaced the "Introduction" by Robert M. Utley, "William Clark" by Jerome O. Steffen, "James H. Carleton" by Arrell M. Gibson, "William B. Hazen" by Marvin E. Kroeker, and "Frank D. Baldwin" by Robert C. Carriker with an "Introduction" by Durwood Ball who has also provided a biographical sketch of "Stephen W. Kearny." Other new biographical sketches include "Philip St. George Cook" by Jeffrey V. Pearson, "John M. Chivington" by William J. Convey, "Oliver O. Howard" by Scott L. Stabler, and the replacement biographical sketch by the same title of "James H. Carleton" by Arrell M. Gibson.

Particular interest to Utah readers are the sketches of James Carleton, Philip St. George Cook, William S. Harney, and Stephen W. Kearny. Other biographical sketches include Stephen H. Long, Philip H. Sheridan, George A. Custer, George Crook, John G. Bourke, Benjamin H. Grierson, Ranald S. Mackenzie, Nelson A. Miles, and Charles King.

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