

Time Travel on Main Street

A tour for kids 9-12 with an adult

Do you ever wish you could talk to someone who lived over 100 years ago and ask them what life was like back then? The people who lived 100 years ago are no longer here. But some of the buildings they built are. If you ask these buildings the right questions, they can transport you back in time.

We are used to seeing many buildings every day. But have you ever really looked at a building? Have you wondered why buildings look the way they do? Or what they are made of? Or who planned and built them? Or how they were used a long time ago?

These are the kind of questions you need to ask to begin traveling through time. Keep them in mind as you walk through Main Street's history today.

Your walk through Main Street's history will take about 40 minutes. The tour ends at 200 South. You can ride the light rail or a free bus to return to the starting point at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. Enjoy the tour!



Hotel Utah, Joseph Smith Memorial Building

Built in 1911

15 East South Temple

Open to the public Monday–Saturday, 9 am–9 pm

Imagine you are visiting Salt Lake City in the 1930s and staying in the city's finest hotel. **Where are you staying?** Right here, at the elegant Hotel Utah! You will enjoy the hotel's beautiful lobby and the view of the city from the roof-top restaurant. You might even meet a famous politician or a movie star who is also staying in the hotel.

In 1993, the Hotel Utah became the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. It is named after the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The building now contains offices, a theater, and a family history library. You can still see the beautiful decorations in the lobby and dine in the roof-top restaurant from the days of the Hotel Utah.

Pretend you are going to draw the Hotel Utah. **Where will you start?** The Hotel Utah is a big, complex building. But if you look closely, you'll see its design is made of many simple shapes, like squares, rectangles, circles, and triangles. **How many shapes can you see? Do the shapes make any patterns?** When you get home, try drawing a building in your neighborhood using only simple shapes.



**Look
for
simple
shapes!**

2 *ZCMI Facade*

*Built in 1876
(center section),
1880 (south wing),
1901 (north wing)*

50 S. Main Street



Utah State Historical Society

Now you see it, now you don't! The cast iron front, or facade, of the historic ZCMI store is still here, but the rest of the store is gone. The old store was torn down in 1976. The cast iron facade was taken down, repaired, and put up in front of the new store. You can see how the old store looked in the historic photo.

Cast iron was a popular material for building facades in the 1800s. Cast iron is stronger than brick. Therefore, you can have more windows and doors in a cast iron wall than a brick one without the wall falling down. Notice how much of the ZCMI facade was open space for windows. Cast iron was replaced by an even stronger material, steel, in the 1900s.

ZCMI is an abbreviation for the Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution. This store was founded by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1868 to encourage Mormons to buy locally made products. It was in operation at this location from 1876 to 2000. There were ZCMI stores in many towns settled by Mormons in Utah and Idaho.

3 *McCornick Block*

Built 1891-1895

74 South Main Street

If you were walking down Main Street in 1893, you would notice the McCornick Block right away. Most buildings on Main Street at this time were between two and four stories



Utah State Historical Society

tall. The seven-story McCornick Block towered over its neighbors. It was a "pioneer skyscraper" in Salt Lake City. Twenty years later, though, there were buildings twice as high as the McCornick Block on Main Street.

What good is a skyscraper if you have to climb the stairs to your office on the top floor every day? Electric elevators, invented in 1889, whisked people to the tops of skyscrapers with ease. The McCornick Block had six of the first elevators in Salt Lake City.

An addition was made to the McCornick Block in 1908. Can you find it by comparing the historic photo of the building to the building today? In what other ways has the McCornick Block changed?

First Security Bank Building

Built in 1919

4

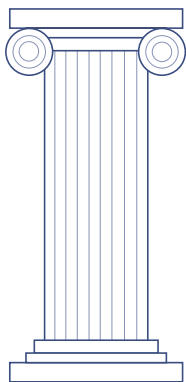
79 South Main Street



Today this building is known as the First Security Bank Building. But this wasn't always its name. Look on the west side of the building to find what it was called when it was first built. Also find the Indian head and buffalo head decorations.

Now that you've looked at the First Security Bank Building up close, take a step back and look at the whole building. **What does its shape remind you of?**

Architects faced a challenge when they first began designing skyscrapers. Skyscrapers were a new kind of building that no one had designed before. What should they look like? Some architects decided that the column would be a good model for the design of skyscrapers. Look at the sketch of the column and compare it to the First Security Bank



Building. How are they similar? Can you find any columns on the First Security Bank Building?

Look for another skyscraper built in the form of a column on this tour.



Utah State Historical Society

5 *Zion's First National Bank Building*

Built in 1864

102 South Main

The Zion's Bank Building is the oldest building still standing on Main Street. It transports us back to a time when the buildings on Main Street were only one or two stories tall. You can see the Zion's Bank Building on the far right of this photo of Main Street taken in the 1870s. **How has Main Street changed?**

This building has changed, too. When William Jennings constructed this building for his Eagle Emporium store in 1864, it had red sandstone walls. Just a few years later, the building became the home of the very first ZCMI store. ZCMI moved to its new building up the street in 1876.

In 1890, the building became a bank. In 1916, the bank covered the building's sandstone walls with white terra-cotta that looks like marble. **Why would a bank want its building to have walls that look like marble?**

6 *Clock*

Erected in 1875

100 South and Main Street

This beautiful clock has been marking time on this corner for more than 125 years. Imagine all the changes it has seen! The clock was made in Connecticut and installed here in 1873. At first, a water wheel under the street powered the clock. Later, four large springs which had to be wound every five days made the clock run. In 1912, it was connected to an electric clock system inside the bank.



The clock is one of the only pieces of historic “street furniture” on Main Street. Objects on the street that aren’t buildings, like lights, benches, bike racks, and bus stop shelters, are called street furniture. Street furniture can help give a street its own special character. What street furniture do you see on Main Street? What kind of street furniture does your neighborhood have?



Kearns Building 7

Built in 1911

136 South Main Street

One of Utah’s wealthiest mining men constructed this building. Thomas Kearns wasn’t always rich, though. He came to Utah in 1883 to work in the silver mines in Park City. After six years in the mines, he struck it rich! Kearns found an unclaimed vein of silver and soon became a multi-millionaire. He invested

some of his wealth in projects, like the Kearns Building, that helped Salt Lake City grow.

The front of the Kearns Building is pretending to be something it’s not. It looks like it is covered in white stone, but it is really covered in terra-cotta. Terra-cotta is made of baked clay. Sometimes it is left a red clay color. Sometimes it is glazed a different color to look like stone or marble.

Why use terra-cotta instead of stone? Terra-cotta is less expensive, lighter, and less likely to be soiled by pollution than stone. It is also easier to mold terra-cotta into different shapes for decorations than it is to carve stone. Look for the terra-cotta figures of a woman’s face on the Kearns Building. The face is said to resemble Thomas Kearns’ daughter, Helen.

Because of all its advantages, terra-cotta became a very popular building material. What other buildings covered in terra-cotta have you seen today?

Hint: They are white.

Tracy Loan and Trust Company Building

Built in 1916

151 South Main Street



The man who constructed this building was a friend of Salt Lake City's children. Russell Lord Tracy owned a bank called the Tracy Loan and Trust Company. He used some of his money to found the Tracy Wigwam Boy Scout Camp in Millcreek Canyon and the Tracy Aviary in Liberty Park. Many thousands of children have enjoyed Tracy's gifts to the community.

How would you describe the Tracy Loan and Trust Company Building?

Just as there are different styles of clothing and hair, there are different styles of buildings. This building's style is called "Classical Revival." It borrows ideas from the "classical" buildings of ancient Greece and Rome.

For example, this building has two large columns on either side of its front door. On top of the columns sits a long band of stone called an "entablature." There are columns and entablatures like these on buildings over 2500 years old in Greece. Now that's historic architecture!

Salt Lake Herald Building

Built in 1909

169 South Main Street

It is 1919. You are walking down Main Street and getting hungry. Why not stop for a sandwich at the new Lamb's Restaurant? That's right! Lamb's Restaurant has been in business in this building since 1919. (**How many years is that?**) Before Lamb's Restaurant, this building was the home of a newspaper called *The Salt Lake Herald*.



The front of the Salt Lake Herald Building is divided in two halves. Architects call this design a "U-shaped" plan.

What would happen if you filled in the space in the middle of the U? The U-shaped plan allows more rooms in the building to have windows that let in sunlight and air. If you had an office in this building, would you want one with or without a window?

Many buildings built in the late 1800s and early 1900s have a U-shaped plan. The Salt Lake Herald Building is a bit unusual because the U opens onto the street. Look back at the Kearns Building. It also has a U-shaped plan, but the U opens to the side of the building. In other buildings, the U opens to the rear.

Walker Bank Building 10

Built in 1912

175 South Main Street

The construction of the Walker Bank Building was exciting news in 1912. This new 16-story building was the tallest building in the Intermountain West. The people of Salt Lake City saw the Walker Bank Building as a sign that their city would be great. A newspaper story about the building called it a “monument to the progress and future of Salt Lake.” Do people still get excited about new buildings today? Why or why not? Think of an example.

The Walker Bank Building looks like it is wearing a hat. If you step back and look at the whole building, you can see a small, three-story section sitting in the middle of the roof. This “hat” is not simply for decoration. It contains part of the mechanical system that runs the building’s elevators.

Does the shape of the Walker Bank Building remind you of any other buildings you have seen on the tour?



Utah State Historical Society

You have reached the end of your time travel tour on Main Street. Next time you visit a historic building, make it into a time machine by asking the kinds of questions you explored today. If you would like a guided time travel trip, take a tour of the Salt Lake City & County Building or the Kearns (Governor’s) Mansion on your own or with your class. Call Utah Heritage Foundation at (801) 533-0858 for free public tour and school tour information.