



# History of Salt Lake County

Auditor's Office  
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**Salt Lake County  
Government  
Center**

**North Building**

*Lower Level*  
Management Information Systems

*First Floor*

Credit Checks

County Treasurer

County Services

County Recorder

City Attorney

*Second Floor*

County Mayor & County Council

County Auditor

County Jail

*Third Floor*

Public Works Department

Development Services Division

Planning Division, Referral/Response

Engineering Division

Administrative Support Services Department

*Fourth Floor*

Community Services & Economic Development

Contracts & Procurement Division

Personnel

Records Management / Archives

Animal Services Department

**ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE  
AREAS LOCATED ON THE  
EAST SIDE OF BOTH NORTH  
AND SOUTH BUILDINGS.**

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# Salt Lake County at 150 Plus

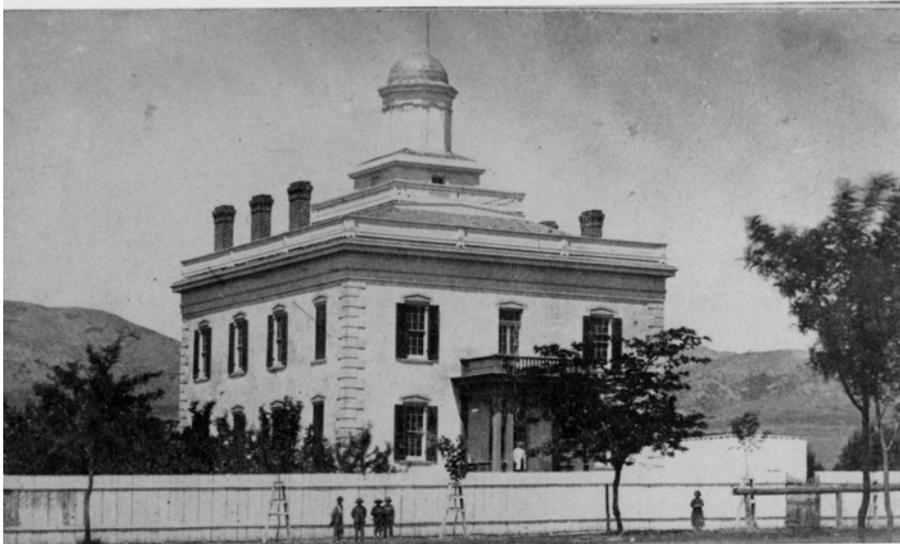
Salt Lake County government was formed over 150 years ago in 1852, not quite five years after the arrival of the first band of 148 Mormon pioneers on July 24, 1847, who, led by Brigham Young, founded Salt Lake City. More settlers arrived as part of the onward migration of Latter-day Saints seeking to join the “saints in Zion,” or find adventure on the great frontier. The area grew rapidly. The 1850 census placed Great Salt Lake County’s population at 6,155. It was called “Great Salt Lake County” until January 29, 1868 when “Great” was dropped from the designation.

Salt Lake County was an isolated place indeed in those early days. No railroad, no telegraph, and no cities for hundreds of miles around meant that settlers relied on their own intuition and the

fruits of their own labors. At times, food could be scarce as settlers ate what they planted, raised, hunted, or foraged from the land. Meager harvests were common, and crops were occasionally devoured by crickets.

Salt Lake County is within the State of Utah, the successor to Utah Territory, a territory that Congress formed in 1850. Brigham Young was the first territorial governor, a position to which U.S. President Millard Fillmore had appointed him. Brigham Young had envisioned and proposed an expansive “State of Deseret” that reached all the way to the Pacific coast in southern California. Salt Lake City is the County Seat of Salt Lake County. Salt Lake City was incorporated January 6, 1851, and Jedediah M. Grant was its first Mayor. Other areas were being settled, but no other in-

corporated city existed within the County at the time County government came into being. A newly or near-completed adobe structure called the “old tabernacle” existed on Temple Square, but not the Tabernacle known today, and there was no temple. However, many of today’s streets, including Main Street, were in place. The birth of Salt Lake County government occurred on Main Street.



*County Courthouse, 1855-1890's*

In this frontier environment, Salt Lake County came into being. On March 15, 1852, Salt Lake County government held its first meeting. This “first strictly official meeting,” as early records state, was held in a long-since-forgotten, and demolished, post office located at 20 South Main Street. The first type of County government, which remained in place for the next 46 years, was a “County Court,” comprised of a “Probate Judge” and three “Selectmen.”

The first Probate Judge was Silas Smith, Salt Lake City’s postmaster, providing a possible explanation for why the first County meeting was held at the post office. At this first meeting, 47-year-old Silas Smith, first cousin of Mormon founder Joseph Smith, was sworn into office as Salt Lake County’s “Probate Judge.” The territorial legislature appointed him to this position, to which he was later elected and re-

elected until he retired due to ill health on March 18, 1884. His tenure in office of 32 years established Judge Smith as probably the longest-serving elected official in County history.

“Judge Smith” gave the oath of office to the three appointed County selectmen at that first meeting, each of whom was designated to receive a salary of \$3 per day. Their names were Reuben Miller, Samuel Moore and Jonathan C. Wright. The Selectmen met in County Court meetings. These meetings typically lasted four or five days and were held usually once each quarter, in March, June, September and December.

An “Assessor and Collector,” and a Treasurer also were appointed at that first meeting on March 15, 1852, a ½ percent property tax rate was established, and an

additional ¼ percent was added for “road purposes.” Another matter of



*Probate Judge, Elias Smith*

business was appointment of three men as “Inspector of School Teachers.” One of these men was Orson Spencer, a noted figure in Utah history who was the first

12, 1852. For this first election, one selectman was given a term of three years, another two years, and the third three years, depending on their age. In later elections, terms



**County Courthouse, Fremont School, and County Jail, circa 1890**

chancellor,” or president, of the University of Utah.

Though today we have autonomous school districts, County government oversaw schools and school administration until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. One of the County Court’s duties was to divide the County into school districts. Initially, these “school districts” followed LDS ward boundaries.

And so, Salt Lake County government was established. Thereafter, Judge Smith presided at meetings of the County Court, and in addition to his executive role, fulfilled judicial responsibilities, including the issuing of judgments in cases of theft and divorce. Judge Smith was a devoted diarist, and in his journal often recorded “settling difficulties among emigrants.” Probably most of the time in his official capacity was spent in resolving legal disputes as opposed to administration of County operations.

The first election of County officers, including the Probate Judge and Selectmen, was held August 2, 1852. Those elected were sworn into office August

were fixed at two years.

In his diary, Judge Smith wrote of new emigrant arrivals to the valley, in one case noting how a newly arrived company of pioneers were camped out on West Temple Street.

County government in those early days performed fewer functions than the government of today. Then, as now, public works issues were of prime concern as demonstrated in the appointment on

March 17, 1852, of an Albert P. Rockwood as “Road Supervisor.” Records of the time record that he was assigned a salary of \$2.50 for “every faithful day’s service.”

In a diary entry dated Wednesday, September 22, 1852, Judge Smith notes an early Public Works venture. “In the afternoon I went with Samuel Moore (selectman) and br. [brother] Rockwood to examine the Jordan Bridge, and made arrangements, to have it removed, as it is in danger of going off the next rise in the river.” The bridge was finished early the next year. Rockwood disputed his compensation for building the bridge, but the matter was resolved by none other than Brigham Young. Again, Judge Smith, in a diary entry dated January 29, 1853, records, “Went down to see the

Jordan Bridge with S. Moore and A.P. Rockwood, as the latter says he finished it. There was some difference of opinion between us on the subject of pay, which was referred to the President [presumably Brigham Young] and amicably settled by his decision.”

Judge Smith also wrote concerning a visit by Brigham Young to a County Court meeting. Smith’s journal entry of Friday March 26, 1853 states, “having been engaged on the revenue of the County...President Young came in and the advice he gave in relation to some matters relating to the temporal affairs of the people was very acceptable, and all matters relative to the County and Territorial Revenue was satisfactorily arranged.”

County Court minutes of December 6, 1861 reflect the simple and straightforward operation of government at that time. In part, these minutes state, “On motion R.T. Burton was authorized to negotiate for a fire-proof safe and scales usable for weighing wheat and also to erect a flag staff on the courthouse lot.”

In addition to public works, public health also drew the attention of early County officials. For example, a small pox outbreak is addressed in the minutes of December 1, 1856. “Judge Smith reported that inasmuch as the small pox had broke out in the county



**City and County Building, 1892**

some time ago, he had issued orders to James Gordon authorizing him to attend to it and use all legal means to prevent its spreading through the County and Territory.” For many years, starting sometime in the 1800s,

until they shall attain the age of legal majority.” Laws of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also mandate County government to “provide for the burying of the indigent dead.”

Throughout history, County offices have been located in four principal buildings. From 1852 to 1859, offices were shared with Salt Lake City in the “Council House” located on the southwest corner of Main Street and South Temple. Also used for church, court and political function, the Council House was destroyed by fire in 1883. However, long before this tragedy the County completed and occupied its own building, the “County Courthouse.”



**Commissioner A. H. Crabbe in Room #150 in the City/County Building, August 2, 1916**

there was a position designated “county physician.”

Attending to the needs of the poor, mentally ill, and orphans also occupied early Salt Lake County government agendas. One duty, then as now, was to cover burial costs for the poor who had no one else to pay for these expenses. Today, welfare is mainly a Federal Government function. Orphans are the responsibility of State government, but the County still has a mandate to aid the mentally ill, though therapy methods have changed over time.

In 1852, the first territorial legislature mandated that County selectmen “oversee the poor...take the care, custody and management of insane persons...who are incapable of conducting their own affairs, and of their estate both real and personal.” Selectmen were also given the duty to “bind out orphan children, and vicious, idle, or vagrant children, or such minors

By 1855, officials were considering erecting a “Courthouse.” In a journal entry dated February 22, 1855, Judge Smith records the following: “Went with Samuel Moore (selectman) and looked about the city for a site for a County House which we contemplate being built this coming summer.” His entry of Saturday, May 12, 1855 records the rewarding of the bid for the construction on this project. “Only four bids were put in, the lowest responsible one being that of R.T. Burton & A. Cunningham for \$10,000 for the completion of the outside of the building. It was accepted.”

Construction on the County Courthouse occurred between 1855 and 1861, apparently taking longer than anticipated, but being sufficiently completed that on September 5, 1859 the County Court held its first meeting there. The Courthouse, pictured in these pages, was located on Second South, in the vicinity of the present-day Salt Palace. It was a two-story building that included a jail in its basement. The County Courthouse saw its demise long ago, being demolished by the late 1890s. Today it is only seen in pictures.

The City and County Building at 451 South State Street, a building still in existence, was dedicated December 28, 1894. For the next 92 years, County offices were located here, together with those of the city. It was not until 1986, with the completion of the County Government Center at 2001 South State Street, that the County would again have its own building, its own exclusive offices. As the years progressed, burgeoning County government operations required that additional office space be used in other buildings as well.

Except for the Mayor and Council, early County government comprised all other elected officials that form today’s government structure. Territorial laws of 1853 specify offices and outline duties for an Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, Attorney, Recorder, Sheriff, Surveyor and Treasurer. All of these offices originated in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The most frequently mentioned offices in early County minutes were those of the Assessor and Treasurer. The first Assessor and Treasurer resigned their offices to serve LDS Church missions. Shortly after County government was formed, Judge Smith records the following in his journal entry of September 6, 1852. “The County Court was in session till late in the evening, settling with H.S. Elldridge, Assessor and Collector, and Thomas Rhodes, Treasurer of the County, as they are both going on missions to the states.”

Contemporary Treasurers deal with delinquent taxpayers, just as County government did in those early days, an event noted here in Judge Smith’s journal entry dated Tuesday September 5, 1854. “The Court was engaged today with the delinquent tax list for the current year, which was not got through with till nearly sunset.”

Functions of elected offices evolved over time. For example, direction for issuing “warrants,” or checks on which the County Auditor warrants that funds are available for payment, can be traced at least the late 1800s.

The *Laws of the State of Utah* passed by the first State Legislature in 1896, provide for the treasurer to “disburse county moneys only on county warrants, issued by the county auditor.” The warrant system is still in place at the County today.

Territorial statutes of the 19th century consistently provided a role for the Clerk to “keep an accurate account of all receipts and expenditures of his county, also, of all debts...” duties that the Clerk no longer has. County government of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century also included an elected coroner and superintendent of schools, positions that no longer exist within County government. At one point, there was an elected Collector (of taxes), separate from the Treasurer, an office the Legislature abolished effective June 1, 1897 and whose duties were folded into the Treasurer’s Office.

The Sheriff is one of the most visible and recognized offices. In 1852, James B. Ferguson became Salt Lake County’s first Sheriff. The first Sheriff’s deputy killed in the line of duty occurred in 1913 when a miner from the now-defunct town of Bingham shot and killed Sheriff’s deputies who were pursuing him for murder.

One dramatic event of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century involved the Sheriff, the Federal Government, and a showdown over polygamy, a practice at that time of the

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A Sheriff’s office history reports that the Federal Government routinely sent its own Marshalls to look for so-called “co-habs” because of the refusal of Sheriff’s office deputies to perform this task themselves.

The situation reached a crisis point in 1882 when Federally-appointed Utah territorial governor, Eli H. Murray designated his own alternative County government in place of officials already in office. He appointed a County Sheriff, Probate Judge, and other officials in opposition to current office holders. County Probate Judge Elias Smith, in his journal entry of Friday September 22, 1882, reported a dramatic climax to this event. “U.J. Wenner, the appointee for Probate Judge...came today and presented a document purporting to be a commission from Governor Murray as Probate Judge, and demanded of me the office books, records, and papers of the Probate Court, which I refused to surrender...Arthur Pratt, the appointee for Sheriff, also presented to Sheriff McKean...and made demand of that office, the county jail, the prisoners confined there and all property in his custody pertaining to that office.” Within the decade, the LDS Church officially ended the practice of polygamy, and Utah gained statehood on January 4, 1896.

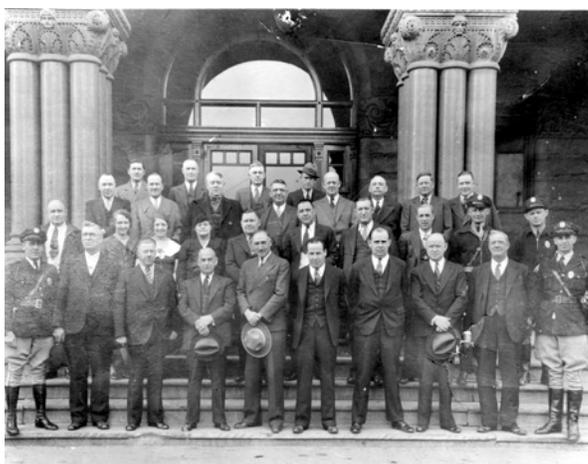
In his diary, Judge Smith wrote that he was not happy with his last 10 years in office due to tensions with the Federal Government. When he resigned in 1884, his eldest son, Elias Asahel Smith, assumed his position as County Probate Judge. Twelve years later, with the advent of statehood, the County Court form of government, including the County Probate Judge, was abolished and a three-member board of County Commissioners, all of them elected at large, was formed. The Commissioners had both legislative and executive powers.

The County Commission form of government was only recently dissolved, fresh in the memory of most County citizens. The first County Commissioners were A.S. Geddes, M. Christopherson, and C.H. Roberts. The first County Commission meeting was held June 8, 1896. The County Commission form of government, in effect for the next 104 years, was replaced by the Mayor/Council form of government on January 1, 2001.

Some forgotten offices of long ago are as amusing to recall as they are important footnotes in County history. For example, the 1880 territorial legislature mandated that counties appoint a “bee inspector” to inspect bees for the disease “foul brood.” The County also started appointing a “pound keeper” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a position that presumably foreshadowed today’s Animals Services Division. Examples of other now-defunct offices were the “crops and pests inspector,” the “county infirmary superintendent,” and the “water superintendent.”

At one time, County government included a “water works” department. Minutes from December 31, 1906 include a “water rate plan.” For example, a household was charged \$1.50 for “hose connection for sprinkling garden, lawn or yard,” \$1.00 for “washing private vehicle,” \$1.00 for “each bath tub,” and \$1.00 “for each animal.” Apparently no water metering system had been implemented at that time.

The Sheriff, then as now, has been designated by State statute as the County jailer with responsibility for the jail and its inmates. As already noted, the first jail was located in the basement of the County Courthouse. The second jail was built exclusively as a jail in the 1860s or 1870s, a standalone building located at 268 West Second South next to the County Courthouse. Dubbed the “rotary jail” because of its interior “drum” configuration, it consisted of two tiers with 10 cells on each tier that, when doubled-bunked, allowed for 40 prisoners. This jail had the appearance of a Victorian-style house and is pictured in these pages. Though demolished in 1927, it ceased operations much earlier when a new jail with capacity for 150 inmates opened on July 7, 1910 at the corner of Second East and Fourth South. In front of the jail, a home was built for the Sheriff in which to live.



**Sheriff Young (front, third from left) and Deputies in front of City and County Building, 1930's or 1940's**



**Hospital Ward, May 1, 1921**

This jail operated until the mid-1960s, was demolished on August 6, 1966, and replaced by the modern “Metro Jail” at 450 South 300 East which, when it opened, had capacity for 311 inmates. This jail was contemplated as early as 1950, but according to the Sheriff’s history, was delayed due to political wrangling. Metro jail is not far from the memory of most Salt Lake County residents since it continued operations through 1999, and was demolished in 2000. The new jail, or Adult Detention Center, at 3415 South 900 West opened in 2000.

The County Hospital, a nearly-forgotten chapter in history, occupied the site of the current Salt Lake County Government Center at 2001 South State Street. Over the years, various buildings were constructed on the site for the hospital and “infirmiry,” an early term used in reference to a hospital. The County purchased this property on October 17, 1885 from a Louisa Ferguson of New York for \$3,500. Shortly thereafter, the County built an “infirmiry and asylum” on the site of the current Government Center south building. A picture of the infirmiry is shown in



**County Infirmiry, 1880’s-early 1900’s**

these pages.

A new “County Infirmiry Hospital” with a bed capacity for 25 patients and 100 “inmates” was built in 1911-1912, at a cost of \$200,000, and dedicated May 12, 1912. In addition to serving the public at large, it was used to serve the medical needs of the poor. Prior to this time, the poor were directed to St. Mark’s Hospital, under an agreement with the County. An “isolation hospital” for tubercular patients was built in 1917. With no antibiotics at the time to treat tuberculosis, isolation of patients was used to prevent spread of this deadly and highly contagious disease.

Another “County Infirmiry” opened on the property in early 1923 to replace the old County infirmiry hospital. The older facility was then devoted strictly to “medical, surgical and obstetrical cases,” and re-



**Nurses Class, 1941**

named the “County General Hospital.” The removal of the infirmiry from this older facility allowed for an expanded medical bed capacity for 125 patients. A new isolation hospital was completed in 1934.

The County Hospital also served the mentally-ill, and as therapy included electrical shock treatment, a practice that has since been replaced by more effective methods, including medications.

A school for nurses was opened in 1913. The first class, numbering six students, graduated in 1916. Former County Commissioner, Mike Stewart, remembers the nursing school as a beige building located on the site of the current Government Center parking terrace. As a child attending the nearby McKinley School, he also remembers a boys’ detention home with two



**County General Hospital, 1911-mid 1960’s**

big pine trees in front, that stood on the site of the current Government Center north building.

From 1942 to 1965, the County Hospital was also a clinical training facility for University of Utah medical students. The County Hospital filled roles in many ways similar to today’s University Medical Center. Such notable University physicians as Dr. Peter Lindstrom, a neurologist and ex-husband of actress Ingrid Bergman, had offices and performed surgery at the County General Hospital. The University Hospital (Medical Center) opened in 1965, by which time the County Hospital essentially ceased operations. The buildings remained until 1985 and were used as County offices, and one building served for a short time as the office for FHP, a private health care provider.

So-called “poor houses,” or “poor farms,” were facilities common throughout the country in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that were operated by Counties. Salt Lake County also operated a



**Salt Lake County Fire Department, circa 1927**

“Poor House,” a residence offered to the poor who could not otherwise support themselves.

The Salt Lake County Volunteer Fire Department, which in later years became a full-time operation, was organized No-



**Salt Lake County Fire Department,  
May 28, 1952**

ember 21, 1921. Early County fire fighters are pictured in these pages. Volunteers were paid \$1.50 for the first hour in fighting a fire, and \$1.00 for each hour thereafter. The County purchased its first ambulance in 1937, and in the 1970s added paramedics to its operations. In 2004, the Fire Department ceased operation as a County government entity and became the United Fire Authority, a quasi-governmental organization operating as a special fire district that included selected cities within the County, in addition to unincorporated areas.

County budgets of past years pale in comparison to contemporary budgets of \$800 million. For example, County minutes of December 20, 1926 provide a breakdown of the 1927 budget, a budget that totaled \$1,631,100. The Sheriff was appropriated \$141,250, \$26,430 was appropriated to the Attorney, \$65,000 to the Assessor, \$96,520 to the “poor commissioner,” \$9,375 to the “Girl’s Home,” \$50,000 to the “Widow’s Pension,” and \$136,235 to the General Hospital, among other organizations. Of course, many of these functions no longer exist, including the poor commissioner, girl’s home, widow’s pension, and general hospital.

The biggest appropriation in the 1927 budget was \$402,435 to “roads and bridges.” The “Roads and Bridges Department,” the forerunner of a portion of

today’s Public Works Departments, was an important mainstay of County operations for many years. Its budget was much larger than the Sheriff’s, a fact quite the opposite today.

As government moved through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the County’s reaction to World War II, as evidenced in County Commission minutes, is of particular note. In response to concerns about children of mothers employed in defense industries, the County Commission approved a \$1,000 contribution to child care nurseries to be operated by the Federal Government’s Works Progress Administration (WPA). Also, a plan was considered whereby 300 interned Japanese citizens would be brought into the County “for harvesting crops” of various agricultural companies. The planting of “victory gardens” was a common event throughout the country during World War II. County minutes of 1942 state that approval had been made to a request from a Mrs. Cloe Barnhurst to use County-owned property to plant a “victory garden.”

In other minutes from the period of World War II, a “communication” to the Commission is mentioned wherein it was suggested that obsolete voting machines contained 1,200 pounds of metal that could “be made into effective bombs.” Moreover, the Commission approved a \$1,000 contribution to a “recreation center for Negro soldiers” on Fourth South, between Main and State Streets.

Following World War II, Salt Lake County entered what could appropriately be termed its modern era. Many new County government functions began, and employees were organized under a merit system.

Former chief deputy County Recorder Glen Acomb, who started work in the Recorder’s office in 1948, recalls that it was not uncommon for a newly-elected official to replace an entire office with his own set of employees, including those at a clerk or entry-level position. The County implemented a merit system in the 1950s, thereby protecting workers from the vagaries of elections and changes in elected officials. It also provided for job classifications and pay scales within those job classifications.

Prior to the merit system, the Sheriff’s history reports that deputies obtained employment by belonging to the Sheriff’s political party, being his acquaintance, or otherwise currying his favor. The Sheriff maintained a “flower fund,” dedicated to his campaign re-election account, to which all deputies were expected to contribute. The Sheriff’s office did not administer tests for the hiring or advancement of deputies until the 1960s, and the Sheriff’s office adopted its own merit system in 1961, and in 1964 reduced its six-day work week to allow for more flexibility.

At one time, the Sheriff’s salary was the excess of what he did not spend on the care of jail inmates. For many years, he was



**Sheriff’s Office Building,  
March 27, 2002**

paid 16 cents per meal served to an inmate, an amount that was raised to 21 cents in 1966. In 1967, this type of salary plan was discontinued and the County started paying the Sheriff his own salary, and budgeting separately for the jail.

Internal audits gained a more important role in business and government by the latter half of the 20th century. In 1971, the Auditor’s Office issued its first internal audit report of a County agency. Also in the 1970s, a separate finance department existed for a short time, a function that later reverted back to the Auditor’s Office.

Another sign of modern County operations was the implementation of zoning for land use and development. This first occurred on December 19, 1949 with the creation of the Millcreek and Rosecrest (Canyon Rim) planning districts, and was followed by the Uniform Zoning Ordinance, first published November 7, 1952. The County started issuing building permits and implemented the first building code in 1954. Prior to that time, any type of building could be constructed at any location. Planning and Zoning is included in the Public Works Department portfolio.

Other Public Works functions, including Sanitation (refuse collection), Flood Control and Traffic Engineering, and Solid Waste Management have evolved over time. Sanitation became Special Improvement District #1 in 1977. The Solid Waste Management Division's landfill at 5600 West California Avenue is jointly owned by Salt Lake City and County, as set forth in an inter-local agreement with Salt Lake City, dated January 1979.

Solid Waste Management issues its own audited financial statements, and the County and City divide the reporting of revenues and expenses among themselves. The County's previous landfill operation was located west of its current location on a 70-acre plot at 7600 West. From 1968 to 1975, the Landfill, known as the "Old Pioneer Landfill," was leased from the Pioneer Stake of the LDS Church and located east of the current landfill. The Salt Lake Valley Waste Transfer station, located at 503 West 3300 South, was opened in 1999, ostensibly as a means to prolong the life of the Landfill. Garbage dumped at the transfer station is scooped onto railroad cars, and until 2005, was hauled to a landfill in east Carbon County.

The County Library Sys-

tem began operations in early 1939. The first libraries were small collections located in schools, or in one case, a store front. The Kearns Library, completed in 1957, marked the first, large stand-alone library. The Whitmore Branch, opened in 1974,



**Jazz playing in the old Salt Palace**

became library system headquarters and remains so today. County Library Services, its present designation, has 18 libraries, with the largest being the Sandy Branch, opened in 1991. The most recent additions to the system include South Jordan, opened October 8, 2005, and Draper, opened November 5, 2005. Draper replaces an older library building. Both of these state-of-the-art libraries have automated book sorting systems, self check-out and radio frequency-ID tagged books that facilitate the self-checkout and automated book sorting functions. All libraries have wireless internet, and audio books that can be downloaded to a patron's PDA. The book automatically deletes itself from the PDA after three weeks, signaling that the book is "due."



**Salt Palace, 1980's**

County Parks and Recreation started operations on May 1, 1946 as an initiative and request from the Granite Recreation Association to the County Commission. Like the Libraries, Recreation began operations within existing school buildings. Evergreen Park became the first park in the system and was dedicated May 10, 1946. A County recreation report from 1947 provides details of a few activities in place at that time. There were "quiet games," like jacks, checkers and puzzles, and also the typical softball and baseball activities, dance instruction that included dance festivals at each center (school), and also Saturday morning 15 minute broadcasts in the summer on KALL radio that featured music talent from local schools.

Today, Parks and Recreation operates many facilities around the County, including 66 parks comprised of 9 "regional" parks, 34 "community" parks and 23 "neighborhood" parks, 13 recreation centers, 8 stand-alone outdoor swimming pools, and six golf courses. The oldest golf course, Meadow Brook, opened in 1951, and is located at 4197 South 1300 West. The newest golf courses are Old Mill, a newly constructed facility, and South Mountain, a golf course purchased from a previous owner. Old Mill opened in 1998 and is located at 6080 South Wasatch Boulevard. South Mountain, located at 1247 East Rambling Road, opened in 1998 under ownership of a private company from which the County purchased the golf course in 1999.

Federal Community Development Block Grant money received in the late 1960s and 1970s allowed for construction of the Central City, Redwood, Northwest and Copperview "Multi-Purpose Centers." Copperview, which opened in 1981, was the last multi-purpose center built of these four. These facilities were not only recreation centers. As part of the funding mandate they were to also provide daycare to low income families and space for health clinics and food banks. They also

included senior centers at the time they were built. Except for Northwest, these centers no longer maintain day-care operations, or devote space for senior centers, and none of them has a health clinic. In recent years, the centers have become somewhat obsolete and vacant space has become evident in the face of modern fitness centers with their exercise equipment, spas, climbing walls and open design.

After Copperview was completed in 1981, no more recreation centers were added until 1995 when Parks and Recreation acquired the Marv Jenson Fitness Center. However, the lull in con-



**Lifeguards at Fairmont Aquatic Center, May 16, 2002**

struction ended with the advent of the Zoo, Arts and Parks (ZAP) tax in 1997, which proved a boon to Parks and Recreation expansion. Money from this .10% countywide sales tax was used to finance construction of many new recreation centers, including Dimple Dell, and Gene Fullmer Fitness Centers, opened June 2, 2000 and August 11, 2000, respectively, Accord and County Murray Ice Centers, opened June 6, 1997, and December, 1999, respectively, the Fairmont Aquatic Center, inaugurated January 15, 2002, Magna Fitness and Recreation Center, opened March, 2000, the Holladay-Lions Fitness Center, opened December 15, 2000, Centennial Park Swimming Pool, opened May, 2001, and the indoor arena at Equestrian Park, which opened in late 1999/early 2000.

The Salt Lake Sports Complex and Steiner Aquatic Center, owned and built by Salt Lake City, but managed

by the County's Parks and Recreation Division, opened in February, 2001. The Taylorsville Recreation Center, which opened in September, 2002, is the newest Parks and Recreation facility. Parks and Recreation also operates the Cottonwood and Valley Regional Softball Complexes.

Parks has developed sections of the Jordan River Parkway, a system of trails, trailheads, underpasses, parking lots and other improvements to provide safe accessibility to the natural beauty of the Jordan River, and has been involved with development of the Bonneville Shore Trail, including the Parley's Trail crossing. Both of these are on-going projects.

Wheeler Historic Farm, another Parks and Recreation operation, located at 6351 South 900 East, was property sold to Salt Lake County in 1969. In December, 1974, the County Commission approved its restoration and designated it as Salt Lake County's official American Revolution Bicentennial (1776-1976) project. It features live farm animals, planting and harvesting of crops, a family farm house built in 1898-1900, and an activity barn, completed in 1990. Horse-drawn hayrides were discontinued in the 1990s following the accidental death of a boy. In 2000, a popular Christmas light display was discontinued due to lack of funding.

Bicentennial revelry also provided impetus for funding the restoration and renovation of the Capitol Theater, and construction of Maurice Abravanel Hall (used for symphony concerts), and the visual arts center. These three buildings were designated as a Bicentennial Arts Center Complex for which groundbreaking took place March 10, 1977 on the southwest



**Salt Lake County Government Center, South Building, March 28, 2002**

corner of South Temple and West Temple Streets, the site of Abravanel Hall. In December, 1975, Salt Lake County voters approved an \$8.675 million bond to finance this project.

Maurice Abravanel Hall (originally Symphony Hall), located at 123 West South Temple, was inaugurated September 14, 1979. The Capitol Theater, a building opened in 1913, for many years was operated by a private company and called the Orpheum Theater, and later, the Capitol Theater. Salt Lake County acquired it in the 1970s, and opened the newly renovated Capitol Theater on October 18, 1978.

Rose Wagner Theater, located at 138 West 300 South, is a new facility in the County's Center for Arts organization. Phase I of Rose Wagner opened in January, 1997, followed by phase II, the big theater, on March 31, 2001.

Next to Abravanel Hall is the Salt Palace Convention Center, located at 100 South West Temple. This is the second Salt Palace on site. The first building was demolished to make way for a center that more adequately suited contemporary convention marketing needs. The first Salt Palace was an arena, noted for its circular "drum" appearance outside, and convention center that opened to much fanfare on July 11-13, 1969 with concerts by the Utah Symphony, Mormon Youth Symphony and Chorus, and country singer, Glen Campbell. It was home court to the Utah Stars basketball team of the old American Basketball Association (ABA), the Utah Jazz of the NBA, and the Salt Lake Golden Eagles hockey team. An addition on the north side of this original Salt Palace was completed in 1984.

The concept for the first Salt Palace dates to March 16, 1962 when a joint city-county civic auditorium committee concluded that such a facility was needed. On November 5, 1963 voters approved a \$17 million bond, by a 59% to 41% margin, to finance its construction. On July 9, 1968, the project was named "The Salt Palace."

Additional exhibition space was required to attract sizeable conventions to the city. Therefore, the first Salt Palace, including the arena and drum, but not the 1984 addition, was demolished in 1991 and a completely new convention center, without an arena, was built in its place at a cost of \$85 million. The new Salt Palace was dedicated in February, 1996.

Not long after its completion, an additional 100,000 square feet of exhibition space was built onto the south end of the building. The first events in this new section were held in December, 2000, with the official opening occurring in early 2001. The Salt Palace has 367,000 square feet. As of this writing in October 2005 another addition is under construction, and the 1984 addition has been demolished.

The County built the 243,000 square foot South Towne Exposition Center, located at 9597 South State Street in Sandy, as a companion to the Salt Palace to handle mainly trade shows, fairs, and events designed more for the local community. South Towne was completed in December, 2000. In 1991, the County entered into a contract with SMG, a convention center management company based in Philadelphia, to manage Salt Palace, and later, South Towne Exposition Center operations.

The Salt Palace served as the Media Press Center and International Broadcasting Center for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games held in Salt Lake City February 8 – 24, 2002. The entire perimeter of the Salt Palace was fenced off for security purposes. Other County facilities served as venues for the Winter Olympics of 2002, including Abravanel Hall and Capitol Theater where events of the “cultural olympics,” and various press conferences were held. Also, Parks and Recreation facilities, including the Accord Ice Arena, and ice rinks at the Salt Lake City Sports Complex, were used as practice venues by figure skaters, racers, and hockey teams.

The County entered the planetarium business in 1978 when Salt Lake City

transferred ownership of the Hansen Planetarium, located in the old City Library at 15 South State Street, to Salt Lake County. Salt Lake City opened Hansen Planetarium in 1965. It was so named because of a pri-



**Hansen Planetarium**

vate donation of \$400,000 received in 1964 from Mrs. George T. Hansen.

The County operated the Hansen Planetarium through December 31, 2002, at which time it closed. The new Clark Planetarium opened April 11, 2003. County officials had discussed the need for a new planetarium because of the disrepair of the Hansen Planetarium. The Clark Planetarium was so named due to a \$1 million donation towards its construction from the Clark Foundation. A Clark family member serves on the planetarium board, and desired to name the facility after his mother.

Government-grant programs of the 1960s, and particularly the 1970s, led to the creation of new or expanded County divisions in Human Services. The County received large amounts of Federal money in the 1970s. Social upheaval of the 1960s and the advancement of new ideas aimed at solving social ills led to many new programs passed by Congress during the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations.

In addition to social upheaval from the Vietnam War, campus protests, and the increasing use of illegal drugs, it was an era of economic prosperity and spirited endeavor in human achievement, spawned in some cases by the Cold War. Man went to the moon. The World Trade Center in New York was built. People were on the move to newly-built suburbs. Situated in a relatively favorable budgetary position, and spurred by

academics and those wanting change, Congress passed any number of social engineering measures aimed at solving crime and poverty, and providing more humane treatment to the elderly and mentally ill.

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act was the impetus for creating the County's Economic Development and Community Resources Division in 1974 or 1975. The Division has undergone several changes and redirection in its mission since that time. When it was initially formed, the Division focused on job training, but in 1979, following passage of the Job Training Partnership Act, expanded its focus to job creation. The job creation aspect of the program was discontinued as a County operation in 1988 and became a private corporation called the Economic Development Corporation of Utah. Today, the County's Economic Development and Community Resources Division is called Community Resources and Development (CRAD), and serves various functions, including administration of federally funded HUD housing projects, Youth Employment Services for disadvantaged youth, and the County's graffiti eradication program.

The County's Substance Abuse and Youth Services Divisions are both funded almost entirely through Federal grant money. Youth Services began operations in 1974 as a countywide initiative to counsel, rather than punish, youth challenged by social deviancy. The program expanded in 1978 when the Legislature passed responsibility for ungovernable and runaway youth from Juvenile Court to the State Division of Community and Family Services.

In September, 1994, in cooperation with the State Division of Corrections, the Youth Services Division started the first juvenile receiving center in Utah. Arresting officers now have the option of taking youth to this center for orientation and direction.

The Youth Services campus at 177 West Price Avenue (3610 South) includes an administration, counseling and intake building and a boys' group home, both

opened in August, 1996, a girls' group home, opened in November, 2000, and the Christmas Box House, opened in October, 1999. Construction of the Christmas Box House was a private/public partnership that included a \$1,000,000 donation from noted author, Richard Paul Evans. It serves as an intake center for youth up to age 18 and shelter for abused and neglected children.

The Criminal Justice Services Division (CJS) started in 1972-73 as a small pre-trial release pilot program. It expanded in 1974 after being awarded "LEAA" grant money to fund what was known as the "Des Moines Replication," a criminal justice model that featured a heavily supervised recognizance program, a probation aspect, and a residential/incarceration program. The LEAA grant continued through 1978.

"Pre-trial Release," as it was then called, became a County General Fund activity on January 1, 1979, and in time lost some of the features of the Des Moines replication. On January 1, 1987, the Division acquired the Alcohol Counseling and Education Center (ACEC) from the Substance Abuse Division. ACEC is a probation supervision unit for individuals convicted of alcohol-related offenses.

Today, CJS is a jail pre-trial recognizance release, probation and counseling program for individuals charged with and convicted of crimes. CJS employees have their own office at the jail. They interview arrested individuals immediately after they have been brought there for booking. CJS recommends release of qualifying individuals prior to their trial. Individuals are released on their own recognizance subject to limited supervision from CJS.

Like Criminal Justice Service, Valley Mental Health was started through Federal grant seed money. In this case, the purpose of the grant was to deinstitutionalize the mentally ill through the funding of community mental health centers. The community

mental health movement gained importance in the 1960s.

Valley Mental Health, formerly a County Division, but since 1987, a private contractor of the County, actually started as three mental health centers in Salt Lake County. The first of these was Granite Mental Health, which began operations in the late 1960s. Granite Mental Health was followed by Salt Lake Mental Health, which serviced the north end of the valley, and lastly, by Copper Mountain Mental Health, which served the south end of the Valley.

In 1980, the County Commission collapsed these three mental health organizations into one to form Valley Mental Health. Following the recommendation of a blue ribbon panel in 1995, Valley Mental in 1997 discontinued operation as a County organization, became a private, non-profit corporation, and continued under contract as the sole mental health service provider for Salt Lake County. The agreement with Valley Mental Health has been renewed and continues to this day. During the last several years, Salt Lake County has compensated Valley Mental Health about \$6 million for its services each year. Valley's total budget approximated \$80 million 2004. Valley continued to maintain its offices on the second floor of the County Government Center until the mid 1990s when it moved into its own headquarters building.

The Federally-funded Meals on Wheels program, providing hot meals to the aged in their homes, began operation in 1966 as a private, non-profit organization. The County Commission formed the Council on Aging, in 1970, and changed its name to its current designation of Aging Services Division in 1978.

The first senior center in Salt Lake County was the Tenth East Recreation Center, opened in 1964. In addition to Meals on Wheels, the Aging Services Division added a number of other programs for the care and comfort of the elderly including, but not limited to,

Transportation in 1971, Foster Grandparents in 1972, and Caregiver Support and Elder Abuse in 2000.

City-County consolidation was a much-discussed subject of the 1960s and 1970s. It found its greatest and essentially only fulfillment, in 1970, in the consolidation of the City and County Public Health Departments. From 1970 to 2000 it was called the City-County Health Department, after which the designation was changed to its current name, Salt Lake Valley Health Department. The Health Department has a number of functions. Perhaps most visible of these are the seven community health centers around the valley. The Environmental Health Services section of the Health department moved into its own, newly-constructed building at 788 East Woodoak Lane in September, 1999. Previously, these offices were located at 610 South Second East, a building which for many years also served as headquarters for the entire Health Department and today includes a health clinic and the Vital Records section. One of the most noted roles of Environmental Health is its inspection of restaurants for conditions that could lead to food borne diseases.

The merging of Salt Lake City Animal Control Services into the County's Animal Services Division, in 1991, was another city-county consolidation. The modern era of animal control in Salt Lake County dates back to 1941 when Edna Thompson opened a kennel at 3080 South 210 West for animals impounded by Salt Lake County. This facility was used until 1973 when the County purchased an already-existing boarding kennel at 511 West 3900 South, the site of the current shelter, a newly constructed building that opened in 1992. Animal Services became a County Division in 1987.

The computer age in Salt Lake County dates to 1969 when a data processing director was hired. A systems analyst and programmer were then hired in January, 1970, following which other personnel were hired. The first processor, an IBM 360-30 with 96,000 characters of memory, was installed in September, 1970 in the basement of the City and County Building in facilities that had been retrofitted especially for computer use.

Payroll and financial systems were the first applications placed on the computer. The tax system, a high priority for computerization, was placed on-line in 1974 following an arduous two-year migration from its previous manual operation. Placing the tax system on-line eliminated several drawers of Addressograph plates containing legal descriptions of property, and names and addresses of property owners that previously had been used in the processing and distribution of tax notices.

The County's Information Services Division (I/S), as it is called today, started operations as the Data Processing Department, followed by Management Information Services. In late 1986, I/S was the first agency to move into the newly-built Salt Lake County Government Center at 2001 South State Street. The County has installed an IBM Z800-2066-0A1 main computer system with 8 billion characters of memory, a storage capacity of over 2.1 trillion characters of data, and a processing speed of 80 million instructions per second.

Desk top personal computers (PCs) became common office tools by the 1980s, and access to the Internet was generally available by 1996. Computer-aided design programs, digital imaging, and the Government Information Systems (GIS) on-line county map, and Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment have greatly enhanced planning, and property identification and tax assessing methods.

Advanced technology has been useful to the Recorder's office which first used digital imaging of recorded documents in 1997, a technology that greatly reduced lag time over time required in the previous system of microfilming records. Also in 1997, the Recorder's office started providing on-line Internet access of recorded documents and maps.

Technology used in the Surveyor's office to establish section and quarter corners has advanced from compasses, steel chains and manual calculations to total station surveying equipment, global positioning systems and data

collectors. Technology also allows taxpayers to make payments via the Internet. The Treasurer implemented Internet payment of property taxes in 2001. Computer technology has also greatly aided the Clerk's office in its tallying of election votes.

Following nearly a century in the City and County Building and scattered offices throughout the valley, in the mid-1980s the County built its own office building, the Salt Lake County Government Center, located at 2001 South State Street on the northeast corner of State Street and 2100 South. The Government Center was completed in 1997. It is the seat of County government. The County Council chambers are located here, as well as offices for all elected officials and department heads.

The Salt Lake County Government Center comprises two separate buildings, the "north building," and the "south building," connected on the third floor by a breezeway. Groundbreaking for the south building occurred September 9, 1985, and for the north building it occurred earlier that year.

Former County Commissioner Mike Stewart, a member of the Commission that proposed, approved and oversaw construction of the Government Center, stated that the deteriorating condition of the nearly 100-year-old City and County Building was a factor in deciding to build the Government Center. Uncertainty existed in the early 1980s as to when or if needed renovation would take place on the old City and County Building. There was also a desire to bring department heads under one roof from their various locations throughout the valley. In November 1985, general obligation refunding bonds of \$50,135,000 were issued for long-term financing of the Government Center project. These were repaid in 10 years.

The new County jail is another major construction project of recent years. Inmates moved into the current County jail, or Adult Detention Center, in January, 2000. This newly-constructed facility located at 3415 South 900 West was built at a cost of \$132 million. The jail, which has a capacity for 2,000 in-

mates, is a "podular design," with cells built around open, common areas. Cells have locking doors, but no bars. The nearby Oxbow Jail, completed in 1992, is a minimum security facility with an inmate capacity of 552. It was closed in an effort to save money. The last inmates were transferred from Oxbow to the Adult Detention Center on February 23, 2002.

The District Attorney's office, which has prosecuted such notorious criminal figures as Ted Bundy, underwent an organizational change on January 1, 1995 with the formation of two elected offices, the District Attorney, who prosecuted criminal cases, and the County Attorney, who handled all legal matters related to County government itself. E. Neal Gunnarson was elected as District Attorney, and Douglas R. Short was elected as County Attorney. Both offices were



**First Salt Lake County Council. 2001**

combined and called the County Attorney's Office prior 1995.

Frequent disputes ensued between the County Commission and County Attorney elected in 1994, leading the Commission to reduce the County Attorney's budget and transfer many of his attorneys to their supervision. After just one election cycle, the District Attorney and County Attorney's Offices were recombined, and a District Attorney was elected in 1998 to perform both functions.

This conflict also proved a key factor in advancing the idea of a new form of government. In the election of November 8, 1998, Salt Lake County voters approved a Mayor/Council form of government to replace the County Commission. The new form of government took

effect January 1, 2001 with the swearing in of new County officials. The first County Mayor was Nancy Workman, a Republican who, prior to being elected Mayor, had served as the elected County Recorder for the previous six years.

The Council was organized with three at-large Council Members elected Countywide and six Commissioners elected from designated districts. The original nine-member County Council comprised six Republicans and three Democrats. The Democrats were Randy Horiuchi, Jim Bradley, both at-large, and Joe Hatch. The Republicans were Steve Harmsen, an at-large Council member, and Winston Wilkinson, David A. Wilde, Russell C. Skousen, Marvin Hendrickson, and Michael H. Jenson.

Mayor Workman's term in office came to a stormy conclusion amid criminal charges filed in 2004, the year in which she was running for re-election. A jury later found her not guilty on all charges. On September 7, 2004, the District Attorney charged her with two felonies, one second degree and one third degree, and one misdemeanor, in connection with the hiring of two employees whose salaries were paid out of Health Department funds. These employees assisted in accounting operations at the Boys and Girls Club, a non-county entity, and did not report for work at the Health Department. The act of being charged with a felony required that Mayor Workman immediately be placed on administrative leave.

Workman's previously strong standing in the polls plummeted, and on October 12, 2004, she withdrew her name from the Mayoral race. In a letter, she declared that a "disability" prevented her from continuing the race, thereby allowing her name to be removed from the ballot and replaced with that of another Republican candidate. Her trial began February 2, 2005, and on February 10, 2005 a jury acquitted her of all charges. Following her acquittal, Mayor Workman was quoted as saying, "I'm just thrilled. I'm so thrilled now I can't stand it." Peter Corroon, a Democrat, won the election and became Salt Lake County's second Mayor.

In 2002, Salt Lake County celebrated its sesquicentennial. To end this sesquicentennial year, on February 26, 2003, a time capsule containing 150 documents was placed in the ground at the Government Center with directions that it to be opened in 50 years, in the year 2052. Salt Lake County has gone from pioneer times of horse and buggy to modern times of automobiles and jet travel, from hand-written ledgers and records to high-speed computer-generated tax notices and documents, from offices in sturdy old pioneer buildings to the sleek, modern Government Center of today. Salt Lake County has moved with the changing times, incorporated new technology into its operations, and adapted to social trends. As it has for the past 153 years, Salt Lake County continues to provide services for the betterment, enjoyment and advancement of its citizens.

—Larry Decker

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