

SALT LAKE CITY CELEBRATES



THE STORY OF:



Main Street, Salt Lake City, March 8, 1915.



By JULIA HOGAN

It was the famous Mormon leader, Brigham Young, who offered a solution to Salt Lake City's mass transportation problem 100 years ago. Ever cognizant of the needs of a growing pioneer settlement, he formed the Salt Lake City Railroad Company, and on July 2, 1872, the first mule-drawn streetcar appeared on the streets.

One old timer recalled the inaugural trip. His father was the Mountain West's first streetcar driver, William Campbell, and Brigham Young was among the distinguished list of passengers enjoying the first ride. As the car proceeded down the street, all of the youngsters were invited for a free ride. Before long, there was a carload of children all dazzled at the novelty of this new mule-drawn contraption.

An early historian, E.V. Fohlin, had this to say about the reliability of this new transportation system: "When the first streetcar service began in Salt Lake City, operations began with a span of mules, which for a number of years, faithfully pulled the cars through the principal streets at a speed of 20 to 60 minutes to the mile, according to the condition of the weather and with the prospects of being stuck at the half-ways on the road, when it happened to be snowbound in the winter season, giving the passengers a choice of wading the balance of the way through the snow-drifts to their places of destination or layover until the road could be cleared. Schedule



Main Street, Salt Lake City, 1885 with four mule-drawn streetcars.

time in those days was kept by the streetcars as correctly as a time piece would without a dial."

The mules were imported from Missouri, and, as mules go, they were not entirely dependable, oftentimes sitting a spell when the mood required, but this was the newest means of transportation in town—and after all, the fare was only five cents.

Then, in 1889, the first electric trolley car replaced the donkey-drawn streetcars, which delighted seasoned patrons. One historian reported that he witnessed the first electric car when he was a small boy. Upon seeing the approaching trolley with its unusual overhead trolley cable, a Chinese gardener, carrying two large baskets of vegetables, threw up his hands and yelled, "No pushy! No pully! Go like helly all the sameeee!"

The trollies were an immediate success. Several companies were competing for customers and prime routes. There was the Salt Lake Railway Company, the East Bench Street Railway, The Popperton Place, Salt Lake Rapid Transit and the Ft. Douglas Rapid Transit. They later merged into two major companies—The Salt Lake Railway Company and the Salt Lake Rapid Transit Company. The bitter fighting between these two operations still adds a touch of humor to Utah's transportation history.

On one occasion, men from the Rapid Transit were laying tracks for their line while 150 men from the City Railroad were busy tearing them up—following at a considerable distance for safety purposes.

Another time, two cars from both companies met on a single track going opposite directions. City authorities were summoned to the scene while the passengers, who obviously were having a good time, sat back in their seats to watch the entertainment. Tempers flew and insults were shouted until authorities arrived and convinced the conductors to back up their respective trollies.

This rivalry continued for more than ten years until both companies merged in 1904 to become Utah Light and Railway Company.

Another page of exciting history was added when E.H. Harriman, the well-known railroad magnate and father of Averell Harriman, purchased a controlling interest in the Company, and began to pour millions of dollars into transforming it into the finest electric streetcar system in the nation.

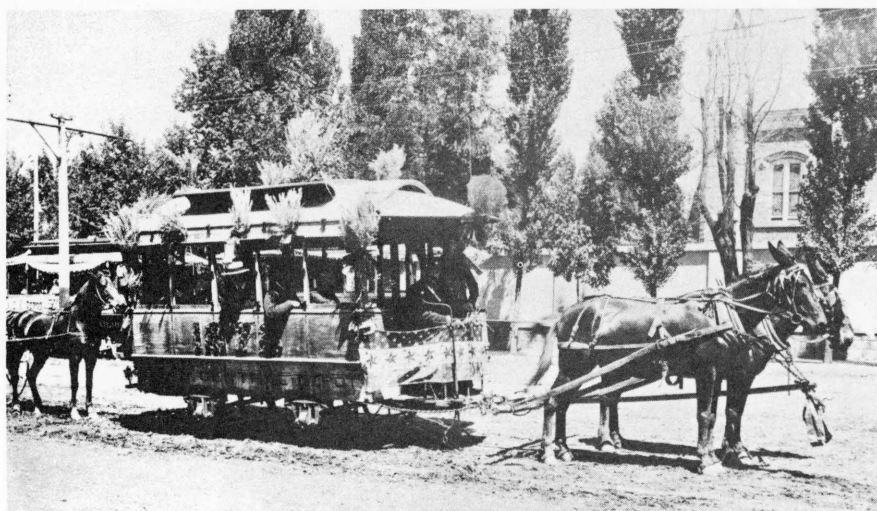
Harriman's first action was to select a permanent site for the operations. After securing a ten-acre tract of land that had served as the official Territorial Fairgrounds, construction of carbarns and maintenance shops began in 1908.

He also added 50 new cars of the latest and best construction. An account published at that time, offers a description of these: "Some of the larger and handsome cars have arrived and it is needless to state that for space and capacity, like those of the past, they will be found to always have 'room for one more.'"

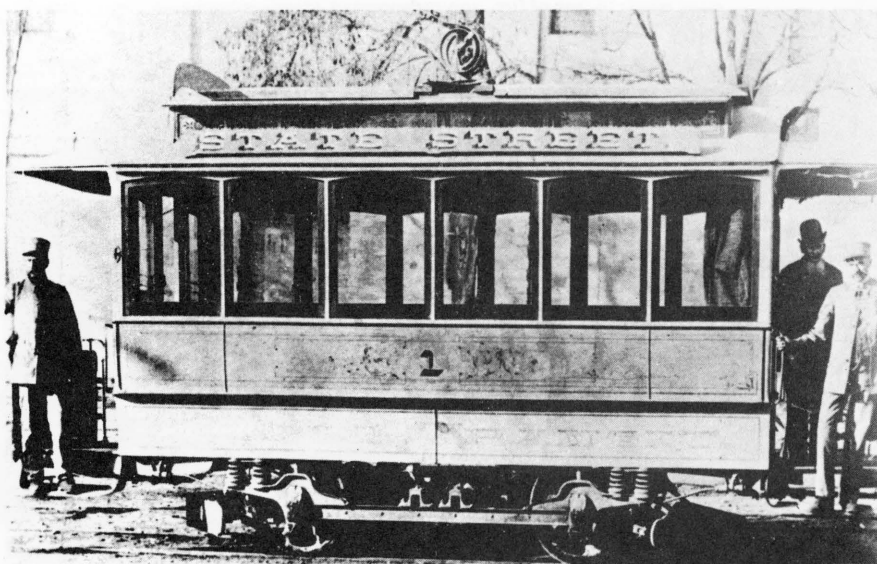
Harriman also provided the very latest in



Donkey-drawn streetcar proceeding down Main and First South, Salt Lake City, 1885. As to their speed, it was reported, "if you were in a hurry, it was a lot quicker to walk!"



1872 marked the beginning of streetcar service in Salt Lake City.



Car No. 1 of the Rapid Transit—the company's first car to run the Salt Lake City tracks. [Photo—Utah Historical Society.]



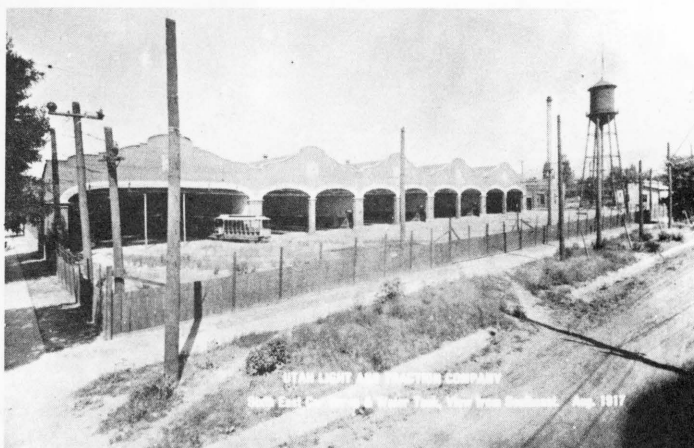
South Temple and Main to Third South car. Photo taken about 1900. At this time, the Salt Lake City Railroad was in the midst of a bitter "war" with the Rapid Transit Company. Later, the two companies merged to become the Utah Light & Railroad Company. (Photo Utah Power and Light Company.)



housing facilities. The mammoth car barn with its unique Mission-style architecture had a capacity for 144 double-truck cars. It was 320 feet wide and 420 feet long and was divided into four bays. (A fifth bay was added later.)

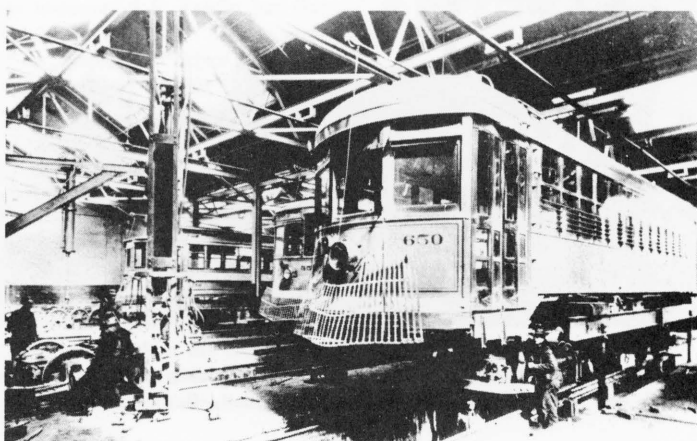
Inside the car barn, tracks were laid on concrete pit bases with depressed troughs to collect any moisture brought in by the trolleys each night. The pits were illuminated so cars could be inspected around the clock as needed. The ceilings were approximately 33 feet high with 208 skylights, to provide as much natural light as possible. To reduce fire risks, each bay was separated at midpoint by a huge steel rolling door and sprinkler lines were installed directly above and along the sides of each track. As another fire prevention measure, a 97-foot high water tower also was constructed to hold 50,000 gallons of reserve water.

Several repair and maintenance shops were also constructed. Harriman was adamant that the company be as self-sufficient as possible due to its distance from railway supply manufacturers. For this reason, if a part was needed and could not be immediately supplied from materials stocked, it was produced in the company's blacksmith shop. In the paint and carpenter shops, the trolleys received a coat of varnish every 18 months while a coat of enamel paint was applied every three years.



In 1914, the Utah Light and Traction Company took over all of the trolley lines. In that year, more than 38 million passengers rode the streetcars and the interurbans to suburbs north and south, and it appeared that Harriman's goal had been achieved—the Salt Lake operation was considered one of the finest streetcar systems in the nation. At that time, the street railway system in Salt Lake City consisted of 192 pieces of passenger rolling stock. The cars were then all the Payee (pay-as-you-enter) type, this model having been introduced in 1913.

Meanwhile, the horseless carriage was seen clattering across intersections, frightening horses and onlookers alike. A few years later, however, after considerable improvement, this somewhat noisy contraption



Utah Light & Railway Company's mammoth car barn was divided into 5 bays. Note the distinctive "Mission-style" architecture. About 1910. (Photo courtesy—Utah Historical Society.)

Inside view of the "Rip Shop" of Utah Light & Traction Company. (Photo Utah Historical Society.)

emerged as the automobile offering streetcar patrons a more convenient means of transportation.

As the number of streetcar passengers began to diminish, a need to keep pace with the changing times became apparent to company officials. So, in 1923, the first gasoline-powered bus was used on an experimental basis, as a "feeder" to the main streetcar routes. Five years later, additional buses were required to provide stub service to outlying towns, and eventually the tracks to these suburbs were removed.

A few years later, the company was faced with a new challenge. Because deferred maintenance on tracks and pavement began piling up at a rate entirely beyond the means of the company, a new transportation medium was needed that did not require tracks but would use the existing overhead lines and power plant facilities. The economical "trackless trolley" seemed to be the answer.

Trolley buses had never been operated on a grand scale up to this time in any city. But officials persisted that with a few design alterations, these buses would solve the problem. After a rather persuasive presentation to city officials for a franchise amendment, Salt Lake City became the first in the nation to successfully operate an electric coach system. The "trackless trolley" was introduced in Utah in 1928.

1933 marked the year in Salt Lake City when the first lightweight rear-engine gasoline bus appeared. These buses were designed for rapid acceleration and deceleration, and their complete route flexibility made it possible for the company to meet the constantly shifting needs of the city. It was the overwhelming success of these rear-engine buses, that literally spelled the doom to Salt Lake's trolley cars.

On May 31, 1941, a wreath was placed on what was to be the "last trolley run in Salt Lake City." Spectators lined the streets to be witness to this solemn occasion. With old "Dof" Evans, a 50-year streetcar veteran at the controls, the car made its last historic run.

On board were other oldtimers. W.S. Woodruff claimed he was a passenger on the first electric streetcar and also wanted to make the last ride. Being wreath-draped, the Old 712 attracted considerable attention all along the route, and even after it reached the end of its destination, parked in the car barn alongside 21 other veterans of a by-gone day.

Seven months later, due to a shortage of gasoline and materials to provide new buses during World War II, the trollies were reinstated back into service and continued service until August 19, 1945. The days of trollies in Salt Lake City were unofficially over.

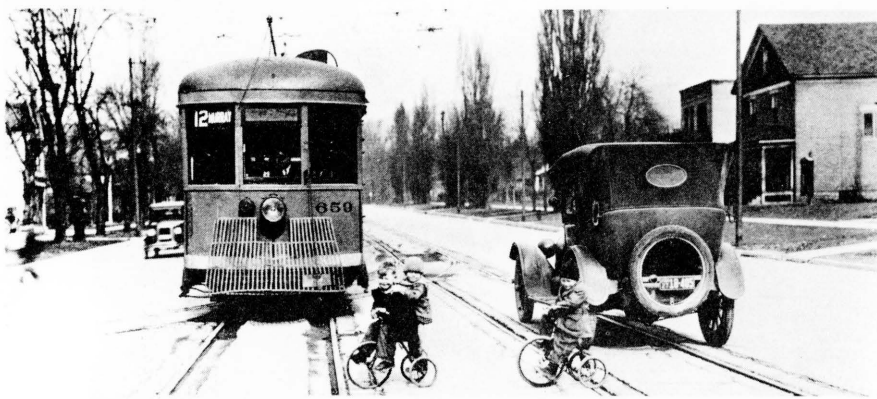
Today, more than 60 years after their construction, the car barn and maintenance shops have a new function, as they are being renovated into a \$7 million shopping and entertainment center, appropriately named "Trolley Square." Several of the 510 series trollies are being restored also. One as a cashier's office, another as a savings and



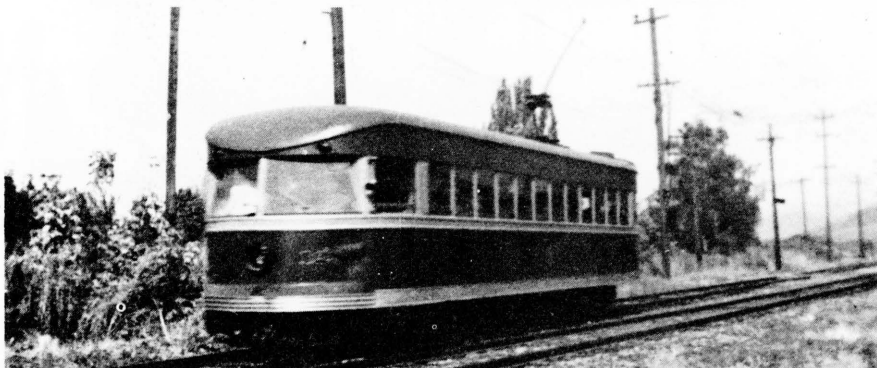
The last word in public transportation—Utah Light and Traction Company's fleet of modern trolley cars. (Photo—Walt Horrocks.)



Rail crews on the job at South Temple between Main and State, just across from Hotel Utah. (Photo—Walt Horrocks.)



1927 street scene in Salt Lake City with car 659. (Photo—Utah Power & Light)

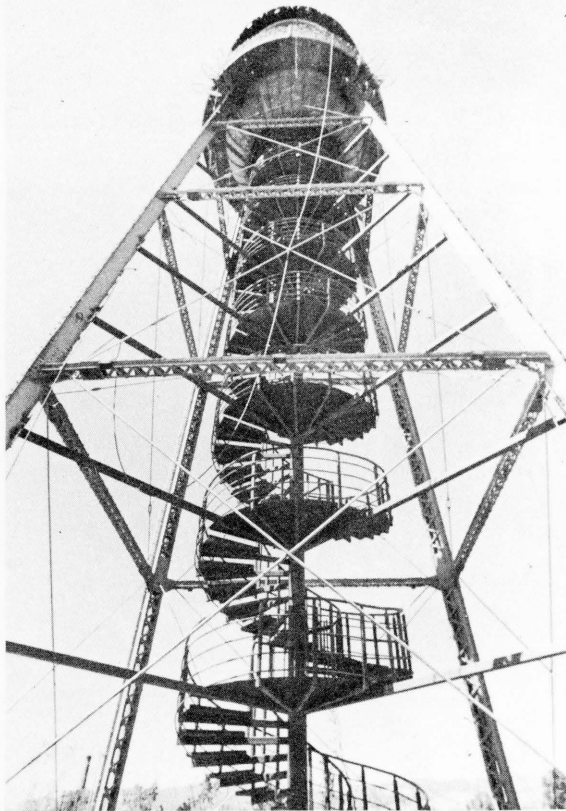


One of the "Bamburger" interurban cars providing service to suburbs north of Salt Lake City. (Photo—Gordon Cardall, Bountiful, Utah.)



Shoppers and browsers "discover" shops and entertainment attractions inside renovated car barns at Trolley Square.

Huge graphics on exterior of maintenance shop adds a nostalgic touch to the new Theatre building.



Vintage water tower that once held 50,000 gallons of reserve water in case of fire, now redecorated, stands as landmark of the Square.



The famous Salt Lake Bamberger interurban cars have found a new home at Trolley Square. Here one serves as a quick lunch operation, located in the Open Market, at the west end of the car barn.

loan and one as a florist shop. One of the interurban cars now is a quick lunch counter.

Trolley Square is steeped in nostalgia. Antique lighting fixtures that once adorned the streets of downtown Salt Lake City, now illuminate the Square at night with a warm glow. Thousands of tons of used brick have been used to transform the vintage car barns and maintenance shops into an exciting, lively shopping and entertainment center. Meanwhile, the old water tower has been transformed into a new landmark for the center. A seven-spiral staircase has been added, and from its vantage point, visitors may enjoy a magnificent view of the Square and the Valley. At night, more than 6,000 tiny lights illuminate the Tower.

Presently more than 90 shops and businesses are open at Trolley Square, with more opening every month through 1975. Included in Trolley Square are theaters (movie), restaurants, nightspots, sidewalk cafes, gift shops, specialty stores, jewelry stores, clothing and accessories stores, an open market, artists' workshop, home furnishings and several service-oriented businesses including a bank, savings and loan offices, beauty shops, etc. The bays inside the car barn are interconnected like streets, with shops tucked away in corners, around courtyards and along brick walkways where shoppers will find woodcarvers, diamond cutters to bakers and seamstresses to glass blowers and stainglass workers.

Developer Wallace A. Wright, Jr., managing partner of Trolley Square Associates, says the Square is one of the largest private renovation projects in the nation, and has been designed to preserve much of the state's historical past. "Many parts of Utah's historic mansions and buildings scheduled for demolition have been preserved and incorporated into the design of Trolley Square. Thus far we have helped restore a portion of Utah's history on an open market atmosphere for everyone to enjoy," Wright stated.

Recently Trolley Square was selected to be listed on the Utah State Register of Historic Sites, which is a unique distinction for a shopping center.

From fairgrounds to trolley barns to Trolley Square, the rehabilitation of this historic piece of real estate is a tribute to man's ingenuity. The size and scope of the project places Trolley Square as one of the most unique developments in the nation today . . . and there's more to come!

Architect is Albert A. Christensen of Architects Planners Alliance. Jack L. Ruby, Trolley Square Construction Company, is project superintendent.