



A Stroll Through History

Historic St. George Downtown Walking Tour

Begin your tour at the Old Pioneer Courthouse at 100 East and St. George Boulevard. From there, spend some time strolling the streets of early day St. George, where many historic public buildings and private homes still stand as reminders of a bygone era.

* – Guides on site.

NP – Not open to the public.

1. Old Washington County Courthouse *

St. George was designated the county seat for Washington County on January 14, 1863. Construction of the courthouse began in 1866 and was completed in 1876. Brick and mortar were manufactured locally. The building has a full basement, which originally served as a jail. The first floor officed county government. The large room on the second floor was used as a schoolroom and courtroom. Other interesting features include the 18-inch thick interior doors, the old chandeliers, original paintings of Zion National Park and the Grand Canyon, a security vault, the exterior cornice work, and the cupola.



2. Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum *

(McQuarrie Memorial Hall)

Completed in 1938, this building was financed by Mrs. Hortense McQuarrie for the express purpose of housing pioneer relics. Included in the collection is a dress made of locally produced silk. The museum is being maintained by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP). Tours are welcome.



3. St. George Social Hall, Opera House

From 1875 until the 1930s, this building was the community cultural center. The slope of the floor was mechanically adjustable to afford an excellent view of the stage. Local drama clubs and outside players presented refined productions with elaborate scenery. The building was used for many years by the U&I Sugar Company for offices and beet seed storage. It was restored and has once again become the heart of the downtown historic district.



4. Will and Juanita Brooks Home

(Quicksand and Cactus Bed & Breakfast)

The original two-room rock house was constructed by George Brooks Sr. in 1877-78, using the stone chips and irregular rocks from the cleanup of the Tabernacle and Temple yards, where he worked as a stone mason. The locust tree in front was planted as a sapling in 1879. An adobe kitchen was added in 1887, the back rooms in 1943, and a new kitchen and living room in 1954. This is where the eminent historian Juanita Brooks raised her family and did much of her writing.

5. Brigham Young's Winter Home *

Construction of the original portion of the home began in 1869 and was completed in 1871. The front addition was completed in 1873. Brigham Young became Dixie's first "snowbird," leaving the snow of Salt Lake City behind and spending the winters here in St. George's temperate climate, where he supervised the construction of the St. George Temple.



6. Erastus Whitehead Home

(An Olde Penny Farthing Inn)

Built in the early 1880s by George Whitehead, this home sits on a lava rock foundation and is built of handmade adobe blocks. Erastus "Rass" and Josephine Whitehead raised seven children here.

7. Gates McQuarrie Home

This property was owned by Jacob Gates, the second mayor of St. George, and later by Hector and Ella McQuarrie. Ella rented some of the rooms in the home to "Drummers" (salesmen) traveling to St. George on business. Four of her six children were born here.

8. George Whitehead Home

George Whitehead built this home in 1883, and as the family expanded, so did the home. It contains two staircases – one running east to west, the other west to east, with a common landing. Originally, of course, there was no plumbing in the house, but George ran a pipe from the irrigation ditch to a bathroom upstairs so the family could have (cold) baths.

9. Woolley-Foster Home

(Seven Wives Inn)

Built in the 1870s by Edwin G. Woolley, this home was one of the finest in St. George. The attic is believed to have hidden polygamist fugitives many times in the early history of the Mormon Church. It has been used as a college dormitory, rest home, and was even scheduled for demolition when it was rescued and restored by Col. Elvin Maughn.



10. Dr. Israel Ivins Home (NP)

St. George's first practicing physician built and lived in this home. A little shop at the rear of the home served as a drugstore from which Dr. Ivins dispensed medicines and remedies.

11. Anthony W. Ivins Home (NP)

A prominent church and civic leader, Anthony W. Ivins was St. George's mayor from 1890 to 1894. In 1895, he was elected Washington County representative to the Utah Territorial Constitutional Convention. He later left St. George because of a church calling to help colonize in Mexico.

12. *Moses Andrus Home* **(NP)**

The rock foundation of this home was built and then left to "cure" for a year before the rest of the home was added. For this reason, it is believed that there have never been any cracks in the foundation.

13. *Benjamin F. Pendleton Home* **(NP)**

To build this home, the community blacksmith, Benjamin F. Pendleton, mixed his own adobe on the site where Dixie College now stands. Since he only had three brick molds, the bricks were made three at a time, dried and stacked. Then the process was repeated.

14. *Woodward School* **(NP)**

The early settlers placed a high value on education; a wagon box beneath the cottonwoods was the first school facility. In 1898, construction on Woodward School began. It was named after George Woodward, a childless resident, who donated a substantial sum of money for the hardware and glass. (Note the economical use of stone in the pattern of large and small blocks.)

15. *Orson Pratt/Richard Bentley Home* **(Greene Gate Village)**

Orson Pratt was one of two Mormon apostles called to lead the St. George Colony. After he was called on a mission to Europe, the home passed to Richard Bentley. He partially converted it to a mercantile with family living quarters upstairs. Richard's wife, Elizabeth, hatched silk worm eggs in the upper room. As they hatched, she fed the worms local mulberry leaves gathered by her grandchildren.

16. *Judd's Store*

The home behind the store was built in 1879 by William Oscar Bentley. Richard Bentley added the store some time later. In 1911, the store was purchased by the Judd Family and remained in the family's possession until 1985.



17. *George W. Worthen Home* **(LeJeans Draperies)**

This home is an interesting example of simplicity in design and craftsmanship. Built by George W. Worthen, it has a charm and pleasing line that project a warm, welcome atmosphere.

18. *Mormon Tabernacle* *

The 13 years it took to complete this building might seem like a long time compared with modern construction. But consider this: The stone for the 3-foot thick basement walls was hand-quarried from the foothills near the city. Red sandstone boulders for the 2½-foot thick walls were hand quarried from a site near the Red Hills Golf Course, then hand cut into serviceable stones. The 56-foot trusses were cut 32 miles away and hand-hewn with a broad axe. The twin spiral staircases



were hand-carved, complete with balustrades and railings. The interior plaster of Paris ceiling and cornice work were locally cast and prepared. The clock was made in London and shipped to St. George via New York. The fact that the Tabernacle was completed at the same time the Temple and courthouse were under construction (not to mention the family homes simultaneously being erected) is indeed a tribute to the industry of the early settlers. Note the individual chisel marks on each sandstone block.

19. *St. George Art Center*

The St. George Stake Academy officially began in 1888 and moved into this building in 1911. Both Dixie High School and Dixie College were housed here until the early 1960s, when new campuses for both schools were built in other parts of the city. The stone in this building is a lighter shade of red than that of the Tabernacle to the north, due to the fact that it was quarried from a different geological formation near the town of Washington.



20. *Tabernacle Street*

Many of the buildings along the south side of Tabernacle Street between Main and 100 East have deep historical significance. Sage Cottage Mercantile at 28 East was originally the A.R. Whitehead & Sons mercantile store, built in 1895. In 1914, it was acquired by the Watson family and was a drugstore until 1991. The building at 32 East, housing Dixie Studio, dates back to the late 1800s. The site of 50 East was a post office, general store and the Pymm residence. The Electric Theater was built in 1911. The building at 74 East was originally a mercantile.



21. *North Main*

Most of the buildings on Main Street between Tabernacle and St. George Boulevard are historically significant. The Bishop's Storehouse at 21 North Main was built in 1887 to receive and store the tithes and offerings from members of the LDS Church. The goods were distributed to the widows, the poor and the needy in town. The building at 21 North Main later became a bakery owned and operated by the McArthur family, who have recently restored it. The Wadsworth Theatre was built in 1927 and is still used as a cinema today. At the southeast corner of Main and St. George Boulevard is a memorial plaza adjacent to Zions National Bank. This is where Erastus Snow's "Big House" stood. Walk through the plaza and read the many plaques mounted on sandstone containing histories of buildings in the Historic District, including more detail on the "Big House."

22. *The Hardy House*

Augustus Hardy was the sheriff in St. George. He built this house in 1871. It was slightly remodeled by a bullet during one wild west incident. The bullet hole is still seen in one of its doors. During the same incident, a vigilante group broke into the house, took the keys to the jail, removed the unpopular prisoner and promptly hung him.

23. Gardeners' Club Hall

Built by members of the Gardeners' Club, this building served as a meeting place for horticulturists and is one of the oldest public buildings still in use in St. George.

24. Jail House NP

This structure is assumed to have been built by Sheriff Hardy around 1880. The one-room building was constructed from black lava rock hauled from the nearby foothills. The windows retain the original bars.



25. The Grundy House NP

A smaller home built in 1890 occupied the site of what is now the Grundy House, built in 1901. Built by Emma Packer Morris, the existing home is of hand-made adobe and faced with red fired brick, which was popular material at that time. The design is classic Victorian, and large panel windows and expensive wood trim are indications that no expense was spared. The home later passed to Isadore Grundy, Mrs. Morris' daughter.

26. The Gardner House NP

The first ladies' co-op was founded here by Mary Ann Gardner, third wife of the first mayor of St. George, Robert Gardner. The house was built in 1896. After the co-op disbanded, Mary Ann established a millinery shop here.

27. Old County News Building

The building which housed the Washington County News was originally a saloon in Silver Reef during the 1880s. After the mining town's demise, it was moved to its present location in St. George and has been used for publishing ever since. The first editor was John Wallis. He printed the paper until 1900.

The Historic Downtown St. George Walking Tour is published by the St. George Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. For more information, call 1-800-869-6635, 435-634-5747 or visit our website at www.utahstgeorge.com

