The city grew rapidly. Dividing it into what became twenty ecclesiastical wards in the nineteenth century, the Mormon pioneers laid out ten-acre blocks. The business district developed southward from the temple block on Main Street. At first most people engaged in agricultural, industrial, and merchandising enterprises, but eventually Salt Lake City became principally a commercial, manufacturing, and governmental center. By 1870, only 16.1 percent of the heads of households were farmers, compared with 33.6 percent in 1850.

Dominated by the LDS population in the nineteenth century, the city’s non-Mormon population began to grow after the construction of the Utah Central Railroad in 1870 and the subsequent boom in mining, milling, and smelting. The city owed much of its growth in the nineteenth century to European immigration. In 1870, more than 65 percent of the 12,800 people in the city had come from abroad—principally from the British Isles. After 1900, immigrants from southern and eastern Europe came in larger numbers.

City government changed over time. It operated at first with a mayor-council–alderman system. Until the February 1890 election, the Mormon People’s party governed the city. With the division of the citizens of the two religion-based

Looking south on Main Street (c. 1869). Visible in this photograph are the Lion House (upper left), part of Temple Square (upper right), and the Heber C. Kimball block (foreground left). Photographer: C. W. Carter.
This panorama of Salt Lake City, looking southeast, shows the Wasatch Range of the Rocky Mountains in the background. The tall building at the left is the Church Office Building, with the six-spired Salt Lake Temple to the right of it. Courtesy Salt Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Parties (Mormon People's party and non-Mormon Liberal party) into both the national Republican and the Democratic parties, politics became much more like that of other American cities except for a brief period between 1905 and 1912, when the American party, organized by non-Mormons, controlled city government. The city commission system was adopted in 1911.

The city faced a number of problems in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, not the least of which was providing urban services. In general, private companies, such as those that operated street railways and provided electricity and telephone services, offered these services under franchise and expected to earn a profit. The city provided services not anticipated to pay their way, such as streets, water, and sewers.

During the 1920s, the city faced special problems of air pollution, zoning regulations, and budgetary concerns. Before these could be fully solved, the decade of the Great Depression arrived and was as difficult for citizens of Salt Lake City as for those elsewhere. In spite of economic problems, the city continued to play a dominant role as a key regional city in the Rocky Mountains. This was due in part to the planning of twentieth-century LDS pioneers who had emphasized commercial, financial, educational, transportation, and religious activities, and in part to the admixture of non-Mormons. In April 1936, the Church an-
announced its welfare plan, which, along with federal work programs, softened the blow of the Great Depression on city residents.

Strategic placement of military industries benefited Salt Lake City during World War II and brought some prosperity to the city. Fort Douglas, Kearns Army Air Base, Hill Air Force Base, Tooele Ordnance Depot, and other military facilities contributed to the economic vitality that was centered in the city.

Space industries based on rocket fuels and high technology gradually replaced defense-based employment after World War II. During the 1960s the Salt Lake City metropolitan area became one of the fastest-growing in the United States. The LDS Church, under the guidance of N. Eldon Tanner, a counselor in the First Presidency, became a major contributor to downtown development. Investment by Church-owned businesses helped in the building of the Salt Palace Convention Center, the Beneficial Towers, the ZCMI Mall, and the Crossroads Mall, some of the first downtown malls in the nation.

In 1979, a dispute in city government over administrative practices resulted in a vote by the public to change the commission form of government to a mayor-council form. This led the way for other Utah cities, and by 1986 all commission governments in the state had changed to the mayor-council form.

In 1983, Salt Lake City residents became nationally known for their volunteer efforts in controlling floodwaters through the city. A strong volunteer network and ethic grew in the city, which was later recognized when Salt Lake City was designated the United States bid city for the Winter Olympic Games by the United States Olympic Committee in 1989.

In 1990, Salt Lake City enjoyed renewed economic vitality after a period of recession in the mid-1980s. Though the city proper continues to lose population as younger people move to the suburbs, it remains the heart of the LDS community. The activities established by the pioneer founders continue to make Salt Lake City a vital and important Rocky Mountain center.

[See also Temple Square; “This Is the Place” Monument; Welfare Square.]

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SALT LAKE TEMPLE

The Salt Lake Temple is an impressive structure standing on the ten-acre TEMPLE SQUARE in the heart of Salt Lake City. For many years after its construction, the temple physically dominated the Salt Lake Valley. While other buildings now tower over it, the gray granite structure is still recognized as the religious symbol of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints worldwide. Millions of visitors annually have seen the building. Photographs of the temple have gone to scores of countries where people who have never personally