The tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, under construction (c. 1866). The curved roof was built without metal or nails; beams were notched and fitted, then lashed with wet rawhide that shrunk as it dried to provide strong support. The roof’s trestle-type design allowed for a 150-foot-wide, 80-foot-high and 250-foot-long unsupported interior space when the scaffolding was removed, resulting in exceptional acoustical qualities. Photographer: C. R. Savage.

Truman O. Angell, who replaced Folsom as Church architect early in 1867, designed the exterior cornice and the interior woodwork, including the gallery added in 1869–1870. This 3,000-seat balcony increased the building’s seating capacity to approximately 10,000 and improved its acoustics by reducing echoes. Although the Tabernacle was used for the October 1867 conference, it was not formally dedicated until October 1875. A baptismal font was installed in 1890; the rostrum area was extensively remodeled in 1882, 1933, and 1977; the shingle roof was replaced with aluminum in 1947, and a basement was added in 1968. The building was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1970 and as a National Civil Engineering Landmark in 1971.

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PAUL L. ANDERSON

TABERNACLE CHOIR
See: Mormon Tabernacle Choir

TABERNACLE ORGAN
While not the world’s largest, the organ in the SALT LAKE TABERNACLE is one of the most famous musical instruments ever produced. Thanks to the widely disseminated “Music and the Spoken Word” weekly radio (and later TV) broadcast, this
organ has probably been heard by more people than any other. Year-round daily recitals (inaugurated in 1915 and attended by millions of visitors to TEMPLE SQUARE each year) and numerous performances at Church conferences and other public recitals and concerts add to the number of people whose lives have been enriched by this remarkable instrument.

The present organ was built in 1948 by the Aeolian-Skinner Company of Boston, under the supervision of its president and tonal director, G. Donald Harrison. However, the person most responsible for the project was Tabernacle organist Alexander Schreiner, who, with colleagues Frank Asper and Roy Darley, shared the goal of creating an organ for Temple Square to equal the greatest ever known. Given the enthusiastic acceptance of this instrument by organ experts and the general public, they did indeed succeed.

This organ is the most recent of a line of fine Tabernacle instruments. Pioneer organ builder Joseph Ridges (1827–1914) installed the first one in 1867. Some pipes and parts from that organ and its successors have been incorporated into the present instrument not only to provide a link with the past but also to preserve the superb quality of those artifacts. The most notable feature from pioneer days is the central portion of the large organ case. The famous golden pipes, made of wood staves fashioned from Utah timber, still play today. Over the years, the case has been enlarged, but always following the style of the original, which was influenced by the Boston Music Hall organ (Walcker, 1863), the most sensational instrument of its day.

Neils Johnson enlarged the organ in 1885. Then an instrument incorporating some of the pioneer pipes and parts was built by the Kimball Company at the turn of the century. Much of that organ was replaced by the Austin Company in 1915. Essentially this is the instrument that was heard on the first radio broadcasts from the Tabernacle in 1930.

Most organ historians consider the present organ to be the most complete and perfect example of the American Classic style. The prime mover in developing the American Classic organ was G.
Donald Harrison, who brought this concept to maturity after World War II. Alexander Schreiner was impressed with this forward-looking approach and felt that an all-American instrument drawing on European and English traditions would be appropriate for the Tabernacle.

The organ presently contains 11,623 individual pipes organized into 147 voices (tone colors) and 206 ranks (rows of pipes). Grouped into 8 divisions, they are controlled from a console with five 61-note manuals (keyboards) and a 32-note pedalboard. All divisions of the organ are located behind the massive casework on the west end of the Tabernacle except the antiphonal division, which is in the lower attic at the east end and speaks through openings behind the center balcony seats. The longest pipe is 32 feet in speaking length; the shortest is three-quarters of an inch. Pipes are made of wood, zinc, and various alloys of tin and lead.

Between 1985 and 1989, Schoenstein and Co. of San Francisco directed a major renovation of the organ, regulating all pipework, rebuilding the console, and installing seventeen ranks of new pipes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

JACK M. BETHARDS

TAYLOR, ELMINA SHEPARD

Elmina (Mina) Shepard Taylor (1830–1904), the first general president of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association (see Young Women), was born September 12, 1830, in Middlefield, New York. She was the eldest of three daughters of Methodist parents, David S. and Rozella (Rosella, Rozita) Bailey Shepard. Following her graduation from public school and Hadwick Academy, she left home in 1854 to teach school in Haverstraw, New York, where she met John Druce, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.