

Historical Background of the Jordan River Utah Temple



In the middle of the Salt Lake Valley, there is a river that runs from south to north. After Mormon pioneers entered the valley in 1847, they named the river the Jordan River. The land near this river in the southern part of the valley passed through several pioneer families throughout three decades. In 1880, a 19-year-old English immigrant named William Holt bought 15 acres of land from his uncle Jesse Vincent for \$2.00 an acre. It remained in the Holt family and was passed to Holt's son, Alma, in 1948.

In the autumn of 1977, Alma Holt and his family felt inspired to donate the 15-acre parcel of land in South Jordan to the Church. On February 3, 1978, President Spencer W. Kimball announced plans to construct a temple on that prominent site overlooking the valley below. The name he chose for the temple was the Jordan River Temple, named after the river flowing through the area.

On June 9, 1979, President Kimball presided at the groundbreaking for the temple. After giving an address and dedicating the site, President Kimball donned a hard hat, climbed onto a large front-end loader and scooped up the first shovelful of earth. Approximately 10,000 people attended the groundbreaking.

On November 16–20, 1981, the Jordan River Temple was dedicated by President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency in 15 sessions. Sister Barbara Holt Jack, a daughter of Alma, was able to attend one of the dedicatory sessions and said, “The Spirit was

unbelievable, and this temple is an answer to prayer and a dream come true.”

The Jordan River Temple became the 20th operating temple in the Church, the seventh built in Utah, and the second temple in the Salt Lake Valley. It was the fourth-largest temple in the Church following the Salt Lake, Los Angeles and Washington D.C. Temples. More than 34 years after the original dedication, the Jordan River Utah Temple was closed in February of 2016 for extensive renovation.

At the time of the Jordan River Temple's early construction in June 1979, the population of South Jordan had grown to approximately 7,492, and the temple served approximately 267,000 people in 72 stakes (a stake is similar to a diocese) in South Jordan and its surrounding cities. Due to extensive growth in the southern part of the Salt Lake Valley, the Draper Utah Temple was built in 2009. Later that year, the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple was completed, making South Jordan the first place in the world to have two Mormon temples within one city.

As of January 2018, the South Jordan population had grown to 72,602 people. Church membership has also continued to grow during this time. The Jordan River Utah Temple will serve approximately 200,000 members from 66 stakes in the following cities: Herriman, Kearns, Magna, Midvale, Murray, Riverton, Salt Lake, Sandy, South Jordan, Taylorsville, West Jordan and West Valley.