

Historic St. George

# Walking Tour

Ancestor Square



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Prepared by the Washington County Historical Society

## *Introduction*

*Settlers who arrived in St. George in 1861 laid out the town on a grid based on LDS leader Joseph Smith's Plat of Zion. Individual home lots were clustered in the town center, surrounded by fields held in common*

by the villagers. The blocks in the historic heart of St. George are 528 feet square, with an area of 6.4 acres, and major streets are 90 feet wide. Each block was originally divided into eight lots. In addition to a house, each town lot contained gardens and orchards for food production, and pastures, pens, and corrals for domestic animals, along with outbuildings such as barns and granaries.



**George's Corner** 2 West St. George Boulevard

During the 1930s and 40s, this corner was the home of the Big Hand Café, owned by George Pace. At the center of town, the Big Hand Café was a gathering spot, a place where news was shared, and it quickly became a St. George icon and a stopping place for tourists as they traveled through Southern Utah. The Greyhound bus would make its one stop in town at the *Big Hand* and each time it pulled in, the waitresses would holler "bus in", and they would get ready to serve the hungry travelers. Best remembered for its sign of a big hand outlined with blinking lights pointing to the front door, the words lit up to announce, "*Especially Good Food*". The Big

Hand was easy to find, located at the only stop light in town. It was one of the first buildings to be "air cooled", which was much desired in the hot summers of Southern Utah.



Since 2010, George's Corner Restaurant celebrates the history of St. George and honors the great men and women who moved to this barren land and made it into a home. As the old sign promised, the restaurant today serves "*Especially Good Food.*"

### **Lunatic Fringe hair salon** 2 West St. George Blvd.

Owned by Andrea Lang-Daymaker, Lunatic Fringe St. George has an innovative and well-educated group of stylists with a strong emphasis on continued education.



## The Augustus and Elizabeth Hardy House

46 West St. George Boulevard

Circa 1871

Built in 1871 by Sheriff Augustus Hardy, this house with a basalt rock foundation and double thick adobe walls still has a bullet hole in the door, put there when a group of vigilantes broke into the house, took the keys to the pioneer courthouse jail, removed a prisoner accused of murder and hung him from a nearby tree. During the sequence of events, a stray bullet hit the door of the home. The bullet hole is still visible today. The Hardy house had two rooms downstairs and a half story upstairs for sleeping quarters, and its "Dixie Dormer" windows, very popular in St. George at the time, graced the upstairs. The lintel over the front door was decorated in a pattern much in vogue in Salt Lake City. *The Hardy House* is currently occupied by **Rize Management**. James and Lyndi Rose are the owners of some of the real estate at Ancestor Square.



**Gardner's Club Hall** 50 West St. George Boulevard  
Circa 1863

The Gardner's Club Hall is one of the oldest public buildings still in use in St. George. Members of the Gardeners' Club made the adobe bricks and drove their own teams and wagons to the Pine Valley sawmill to secure the lumber. The club published a newspaper, *The Pomologist and Gardeners*, to encourage horticulture, and staged displays of agricultural products, giving ribbons to the winners, in what must have been the forerunner of the county fair. The *Gardener's Club Hall* is currently occupied by **Groupie Love** that sells jewelry made from guitar picks.



## Old Jail House (in dispute)

Circa 1880

This black lava rock structure was reportedly used as a one-room jail, however, retired St. George Police Deputy Chief Kelly Larson stated that this building was never used as a jail. Built by Sheriff Hardy around 1880, the structure still retains the original iron bars in the windows.



## The Sandstone Building (*The Old Sheriff's Office*)

Circa 1860s

It is difficult to establish an exact date of construction of this building, one of a half-dozen structures built in St. George with leftover rock from the Tabernacle project. George Brooks may have been the builder, since he

built his home on Main Street in a similar fashion. Scheduled for demolition during the construction of Ancestor Square, it was determined that the structure was historic, so Ancestor Square was designed so as to save this sandstone gem. It is assumed that Sheriff A.P. Hardy used this building as his office.



**Pizza and Pasta Factory** *2 West St. George Blvd., Suite 8*  
Circa 1979

On a chilly night in the 1970's, Bill Kringlen and a group of friends desperately sought out a pizza parlor to dine at during one of their regular ski trips to Southern Utah. After searching and coming up empty, he group of friends decided to do something about a lack of pizza parlors in the area, and it was in that moment that the idea for The Pizza Factory was born. The original Pizza Factory opened in 1979 in St. George and is now famous for twisted bread sticks served in a vase on a stick.

**Linx Commercial Real Estate**, *2 West St. George Blvd. Suite 10*

**Painted Pony Restaurant**, *2 West St. George Blvd., Suite 22*

Owned by Randall and Nicki Pace Richards, this top-notch restaurant has been a mainstay in St. George for years.

**Benja's Thai and Sushi**, *2 West St. George Blvd., Suite 12*

Owned by Benja Peterson, this restaurant has been a mainstay in St. George for years.

**Berkshire Hathaway**, *2 West St. George Blvd.*

Be Hot Yoga, 2 West St. George Blvd.

White Space Studios, 2 West St. George Blvd.

Cafe Feel Love coffee shop, 2 West St. George Blvd., Suite 38



## Emma Packer Morris/Isadore Grundy Home

*151 North Main Street*

*Circa 1901*

This classic Victorian home, built in 1901 by 70-year-old widow and English-native Emma Packer Morris, was constructed of hand-made adobe bricks, then faced with red fired brick. The large panel windows and expansive wood trim are indications that no expense was spared. The mulberry trees growing around the house date back to 1890 when a smaller home occupied the site. The home passed to one of Emma's eleven children, her daughter Isadore Grundy. Currently occupied by Summit Sotheby's International Realty.







**Samuel and Esther Miles Jr. Home** *173 North Main*  
Circa 1876 to 1883

Because of the different colors of the adobe, the home was built in two phases for the Samuel and Ester Miles family. In 1875, Samuel Miles married Esther Louisa Worthen and this was where they raised four of their five children. Two-year-old daughter Esther died in the home, as did Esther who died suddenly of heart failure. Samuel was a harness maker, farmer, superintendent of the Sunday School, Justice of the Peace, and was a city councilman. The immediate family of Samuel and Esther Miles continuously occupied the home for a period of 116 years: after Samuel's death in 1921 from face cancer, the home was occupied by daughter, Louisa Miles Judd until her death in 1978 at age 100; then it was deeded to Esther Judd Wasden, a great granddaughter. Currently occupied by **The Mission Gallery**.



**Dr. William Randall Pike home** *189 North Main*  
*Circa 1915*

For twenty years, English-native Dr. William Pike, a graduate of Burlington (Vermont) Medical College, operated the St. George Drug Company from this home. Constructed of adobe brick with a heavy lava rock foundation, it has recently been restored and beautified.



**Illume Gallery of Fine Art, 29 West 200 North**  
owned by Jane Bell Meyer



**Authentique Gallery of Art and Design, 199 North Main**  
Owned by Jane Bell Meyer



## **Brigham Young Home** *67 West 200 North*

Circa 1869

Brigham Young became St. George's first "snowbird", leaving the cold up north to spend winter in the temperate climate of St. George. The original part of this home was begun in 1869 and the front addition was completed in 1873. The house had a two-room cellar built of red sandstone, a T-shape foundation of black rock, and the walls were constructed of locally manufactured adobes. The house contained an entry hall housing the stairway and opened into a formal parlor, a dining room, kitchen and pantry and the second floor had three bedrooms. Rather than importing costly hardwood, carpenters painted the pine that was available with simulated wood grains. Examples of this remarkable effort can still be seen on some of the tables, floors, and windowsills in the home.

East of the home is a small, one-room structure where Brigham Young had his office and his private telegraph equipment. Here he supervised the building of the St. George Temple, however, many residents insisted it was the room for the butler that plural wife Amelia brought down from Salt Lake City. The Young family owned the home until 1882. In 1959, the

home was given to the State of Utah to be operated as an historic site. It is presently owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and opened for tours. Because of the COVID 19 pandemic, it is currently closed to the public.



**William Thompson/Adolphus and Mary Whitehead/  
Floyd C. Stevens Home** *212 North 100 West*  
Circa 1871

Built by William H. Thompson, this home had thick 16-inch adobe walls and wood floors. In the basement, there was a wood/coal burning furnace with holes in the floor used to distribute heat throughout the house. Outside, the mulberry tree in front is said to be the oldest tree in St. George. In 1876, Thompson sold the home to Adolphus and Mary Whitehead who resided there for approximately 30 years. Mary Whitehead deeded the home to her children in 1905. Subsequent owners included Floyd C. Stevens and his wife, Leola, who owned the house from 1943 to 2001. Currently this is the **Thompson Mansion**.



## Edwin and Mary Woolley/Charles and Pamela Foster

Home 217 North 100 West

Circa 1873

This 15-room home was one of the finest in St George with woodwork and glass and many of the early furnishings shipped from England. The attic is believed to have been used to hide polygamist fugitives many times in the early history of the city.

Owner Edwin Gordon Woolley was a carpenter, judge, and a member of the prosperous mercantile firm of Woolley, Lund, and Judd. He was a man

of education and had a taste for the finer things in life, described as a true aristocrat.

In 1907, Woolley moved his family to Salt Lake City and sold the home to Charles Franklin and Pamela Foster. Charles Franklin Foster was a pioneer stockman, merchant and banker and because the family consisted of nine daughters, one son, two orphaned nieces, and an orphan boy, they finished the garret for more bedrooms. The Fosters were renowned for building one of the first five bathrooms in town and for importing a fine piano from the east. The scene of much of the social and cultural life of pioneer Dixie, a short time after moving in, the Fosters' 24-year-old daughter died, and her funeral was held in the parlor.

After 1952, the house was a rest home, and it once served Dixie College as a dormitory. The home fell into disrepair then was saved from demolition by Colonel Elvin Maughn. This Victorian home, formerly *Seven Wives Inn*, is currently occupied by **Mulberry Inn**.



**George and Esther Whitehead Home** 241 North 100 West  
Circa 1883

George Whitehead built this home for his bride, Esther Jane Morris. Using innovation, George ran a pipe from the irrigation ditch to a bathroom so the family could have cold baths inside, and he also built walk-in closets. The Whiteheads lived here until George died at the age of 98. Daughter Edna Whitehead Cloward owned the home until 1965. It is currently part of the **Mulberry Inn**.



## Erastus "Ras" and Josephine Whitehead home

*278 North 100 West*

Circa 1880s

This lava rock foundation home, built using handmade adobe bricks, was where Erastus and Josephine Nixon Whitehead raised their seven children. Erastus and his father owned the successful A.R. Whitehead and Sons Mercantile store on Tabernacle Street. Erastus died in 1906 at the age of 34 from asthma and rheumatism combined with stomach trouble, leaving Josephine a widow for 56 years. For years, the building was the well-known bed and breakfast, called '*An Olde Penny Farthing Inn.*' Currently, it is undergoing an extensive renovation and will be known as the '*Whitehead House,*' a vacation rental.





## Israel and Anna Ivins Home *187 North 100 West*

Circa 1880s

St. George's first practicing physician, Dr. Ivins installed a small apothecary shop at the rear of this home where he dispensed remedies. In 1888 he treated an entire Indian camp for measles. Ivins was instrumental in forming the first city government and was one of the original town surveyors. When federal marshals arrived to arrest polygamists, Ivins escaped to his hideout in the hills and waited until he saw the "all clear" signal of a white sheet hung in the upstairs window by one of his plural wives. Dr. Ivins was the father of Apostle Anthony W. Ivins. The home is currently occupied by **Thompson, Randall and Mellen Attorneys at Law.**



## **Anthony and Elizabeth Ivins home** *165 North 100 West*

Circa 1875

When the original settlers learned that the alkali in the soil dissolved foundations made of red sandstone, houses, including this one, switched to wide foundations made of black basalt quarried from the Black Ridge. The eight rooms on the ground floor were built of double thick adobe bricks and original lumber, flooring and square nails are still in the building. The original house had a front porch and a rear sleeping deck, both of which have been removed. This home was built for Elizabeth Snow and her childhood friend Anthony W. Ivins, a prominent public figure and future apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One of the distinctive features of the home is its setting. Brigham Young insisted that local homes be built close to the street so that there would be room in the rear for vegetable gardens. Ivins built his home on the south side of this father's lot, far from the street. In 1894, when called him to assist in a colonizing project in Mexico, Ivins sold his home to Thomas Gardner. In 1934, the home passed into the hands of Gardner's son, Wayne, and his wife, Bessie. For more than a hundred years the house was owned by only two families.



**Joe 'Jode' Burgess Home** 172 North 100 West  
*Circa 1916*

This home is an example of concrete block construction, popularized in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when immigrant stonemasons, who brought their trade from the old country, started becoming extinct. The Canfield Lime blocks were molded in frames that had the exterior texture of hand cut sandstone blocks. Jode Burgess hauled lava rock from the nearby Black Hill for the foundation stones of this 14-room house and used lumber from the family sawmill in Pine Valley. Currently occupied by **Engel and Volkers Real Estate**.



**Moses and Orpha Andrus Home** *139 North 100 West*  
Circa 1892

Moses Andrus finished the rock foundation of this home, then left it to cure for a year for a foundation void of cracks. The son of pioneer cattleman James Andres, Moses moved into the house with his bride, Orpha Morris, the ground floor consisting of four spacious rooms including a living room, dining room, kitchen, and bedroom. Orpha gave birth to nine children in the home, three of whom died in infancy. The Andrus family owned the home for over 50 years until blinded Moses died in the home at age 72. The home was sold and restored as a business establishment, Color Country Homes, who believed the home was haunted by the ghost of Moses Andrus himself. Currently occupied by **At the Crossroads (ATC)** a co-ed young adult transitional living program.



## Travel Lodge and Trafalga Restaurant 60 W. St George Blvd. Circa 1960s

The Trafalga restaurant opened between 1961 and 1972. Until about a year ago, the Inn of St. George occupied the original Travel Lodge motel while the St. George Bicycle Collective occupied the former Trafalga Restaurant. Both businesses vacated the premises at the request of city officials who have other development plans for the property.

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