Objectives

Students will:

- Examine historic photos for clues.
- Develop questions for historical inquiry.
- Find clues in a Case Report to answer their questions.
- Create a bulletin board and timeline featuring their questions, observations, and conclusions.

Student Instruction

1. Show Clue 1, The Kearns Mansion photo. Ask students:
   - What do you notice about the building in this picture?
   - How old do you think it is?
   - What do you think is happening?
   - Who might live here? What clues tell you this?
   - Make a list of observations and conclusions on the board.

2. Show Clue 2, The Kearns Family photo. Tell students this is a photo of the family that first lived in the house. Ask: What would you like to know about them? What would you like to know about their house? List student questions on the board.

3. Remind students how they solved the Mystery History of Room ___ as detectives. Tell students: We will be taking a field trip to the mansion in the photograph. It is called the Kearns Mansion. We will collect clues before, during, and after the field trip to help solve the Mystery History of the Kearns Mansion.

4. Tell students that detectives sometimes begin to work on a mystery by reading background information in a case report. Pass out The Kearns Mansion Mystery History Case Report to each student and start reading as a class. (Students will probably not be able to finish packet in one sitting.) Students will look for answers to their questions and test their conclusions as they read the report. Identify unfamiliar words for vocabulary or spelling. Take time to discuss the questions and activities found in the reading. The reading packet and activities are necessary as background information for students going on the tour.

Materials

- The Kearns Mansion Mystery History Case Report —1 copy per student—
- The Kearns Mansion photo —make overhead—
- The Kearns Family photo —make overhead—
- Bulletin board
- Index cards
**Class Product**

Create a *Kearns Mansion Mystery History* bulletin board. Divide the bulletin board into categories. *Categories might include:*

- **Transportation in Utah**—What kinds of transportation were used in the early 1900s?
- **Mining**—What was mining like in Utah in the late 1800s?
- **Styles**—How did people decorate homes and dress in 1901?
- **People**—What do we know about Thomas Kearns? What do we know about Jennie Kearns? How did rich people live in 1901?
- **Values**—What did the Kearns family value or care about? In what ways did the Kearns family give back to the community?

Divide students into groups, one for each category. Each group writes questions, clues, and conclusions on index cards and posts them on the board. If possible, use different colors of index cards for questions, clues, and conclusions. *Example:*

**QUESTION**—What did the Kearns family value?

**CLUE**—The Kearns family contributed money to the construction of the Cathedral of the Madeleine.

**CONCLUSION**—They must have valued their religion.

Encourage students to think of questions they would like to answer during their study of the Kearns Mansion. They may not have clues and conclusions for all their questions yet.

Begin a timeline of Thomas Kearns’ life and a timeline for the mansion. Find information for the timelines in the reading packet and from the discussion on the tour. Continue to add to the timeline as students proceed through the lessons.

**THOMAS KEARNS TIMELINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1862</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1918</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kearns Mansion Built</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEARNS MANSION TIMELINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1937</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Kearns donates mansion to State of Utah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Links**

- **Lesson 3:** *The Kearns Mansion in the News*  Pre-Tour
- **Lesson 4:** *What Does Your House Say About You?*  Pre-Tour
- **Lesson 5:** *Buildings Begin with Basic Shapes*  Pre-Tour
- **Lesson 8:** *Reflecting on the Kearns Mansion*  Post-Tour
- **Lesson 9:** *Craftsmanship in the Kearns Mansion*  Post-Tour
These pictures are clues to the Mystery History of the Kearns Mansion. Examine them closely and discover what they are during your tour.
“The Finest House Anywhere in the West”

Your class is going on an exciting adventure! You will be visiting one of the most elegant houses in Utah—the Kearns Mansion. When it was built in 1901, newspapers called the Kearns Mansion “the finest house anywhere in the West.” Today the Kearns Mansion tells the story of almost 100 years of life in Utah.

Buildings Can Talk!

Did you know that buildings can talk? Well, they can! But they will not speak to you directly. You must observe, read, and listen to find the clues that unlock their secrets.

Would you like to know what people were like a long time ago? Just look at the house where they lived. How was it decorated? What were the rooms used for? Which rooms were big and which were small? Can you tell what people cared about by the way they used their house? These questions will help you “listen” to what the Kearns Mansion has to say.

Kearns Mansion Detectives

You are now Kearns Mansion Detectives. Your goal is to find clues to unlock the mysteries of the mansion and life in the early 1900s. Look for clues in the way the mansion was designed and decorated. Even the mansion’s address on South Temple is a clue to understanding Salt Lake City in the early 1900s. Each clue is like a puzzle piece. Put them all together to discover the Kearns Mansion’s Mystery History.

The Kearns Mansion tells us about life in Utah at the turn of the century. The mansion was built during a time when people still rode in horse-drawn carriages! It was an exciting time. The modern world of automobiles, telephones, and radios was right around the corner. People felt like anything was possible and the future looked bright. The story of the mansion starts with one boy with big dreams. Thomas Kearns had no idea how exciting his life would be!

Thomas Kearns

Thomas Kearns was born in Canada in 1862. His family moved to a farm in Nebraska in 1870. His family didn’t have a lot of money, but Thomas had big plans. He hoped to make a career in the mines of the West. There were many jobs in the mines and always a chance you might strike it rich.

When Thomas was 17 years old, he left his family’s farm to look for a job. He worked in mines in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Tombstone, Arizona for a few years. While riding on a train, Thomas heard about a promising silver mining town in Utah called Park City. Thomas decided to try his luck there. He arrived in Park City in 1883.
Thomas Kearns Becomes a Silver King

Thomas learned many different jobs in the mines. He worked hard and spent his spare time studying everything he could about mining and geology. One day, while helping to build a new tunnel, he saw a vein of silver heading towards a mine that was not being worked. Thomas knew from his studies that this mine, called the Mayflower, might have a lot of silver in it.

Thomas and his friends, David Keith and John Judge, took a risk and leased the Mayflower mine. The risk paid off. On April 15, 1889, they struck a rich silver vein. Over the next few years, Thomas and his partners bought other mines nearby, including the Silver King. The Silver King was one of the greatest silver mines in the world. It soon made Thomas a millionaire!

Although Thomas became rich, he never became selfish. He always remembered his mining friends and spent time and money working to help them. Thomas understood the dangerous and unhealthy conditions facing the miners.

Jennie Judge Kearns

Thomas was in love with Jennie Judge, the niece of his partner John Judge. After striking silver in the Mayflower mine, he ran down the mountain to tell Jennie that they could afford to get married! They got married one year later in 1890.

Jennie’s father died when she was only two years old. She moved to Park City with her mother and stepfather when she was ten. Jennie helped her mother run a boarding house for miners and took care of her younger sisters. She also liked sewing and was very good at it. She designed and made many of her own clothes for much of her life.

Jennie loved children. She and Thomas had four children of their own. Their first child, Mary, died at the age of two. Their other children were Edmund, Thomas, and Helen Marie. Jennie also raised her sister’s three children after her sister died in 1921.
The Kearns Mansion Mystery History Teacher’s Guide

Salt Lake City’s Most Fashionable Street

After the railroad came to Utah in 1869, people came from all over the country and the world to work in Utah’s mines. A few of them, like Thomas Kearns, became very rich. Other people became rich in jobs which helped support the mines, like engineering, banking, or supplying and shipping goods needed by miners. People who struck it rich wanted to show their wealth by building fancy houses on Salt Lake City’s most fashionable street—South Temple.

Brigham Young, Utah’s most important pioneer leader, built several houses on South Temple when Salt Lake City was first settled. Other important pioneer leaders built houses nearby. In the 1880s and 1890s, the homes built along South Temple became bigger and bigger. The newspapers loved to write about the parties and lifestyle of the new wealthy residents just like they write about famous people today.

Thomas Kearns’s partners John Judge and David Keith both built mansions on South Temple. In 1899, Thomas bought some land on South Temple. Thomas and Jennie Kearns hired an architect named Carl Neuhausen to plan a grand house for them. They chose a style of house made popular by wealthy families in the eastern United States. The house took over one year to build and was finished in 1901.

The Best that Money Could Buy

Have you ever visited the yearly “home shows?” The houses in these shows display the latest styles and technologies. Thomas and Jennie wanted their house to be stylish and use the most modern technology. Jennie and her children went to Europe to find art and furnishings for the new house. She bought the best that money could buy. Thomas and Jennie also hired craftsmen to create beautiful wood, plaster, and paint decorations for the mansion.

The Kearns Mansion had up-to-date technological comforts such as electric lights, steam-heated radiators, a call board, and dumb waiters. Thomas’s bathroom had one of the first showers in Utah.

The Kearns Mansion even had a bowling alley. People had to set up the pins by hand. The lanes were removed when the Utah State Historical Society moved to the mansion. They needed the room for the library. As people’s needs change, buildings change, too.

Carl Neuhausen also designed the Cathedral of the Madeleine and the Kearns St. Ann’s Orphanage. How are these buildings part of the Kearns Mansion Mystery History?
Look at this picture of the Grand Hall taken when the Kearns family lived in the mansion. Describe what you see. What does this room remind you of? Point to the columns, the staircase, the tiger, and the beautiful rugs. The Grand Hall is on the first floor of the Kearns Mansion. A beautiful staircase leads to the second and third floors. The family bedrooms were on the second floor and the third floor had a large billiard room and ball room for dancing. All together, the Kearns Mansion had 32 rooms!

Could your family keep up a house this big?

Outside the Mansion

Architect Carl Neuhausen designed the Kearns Mansion to look like a castle in France. Each side of the mansion is different. The mansion has round towers, called turrets, on three corners. The walls are made of limestone and have beautiful carvings around the windows and doors.

On your tour, find the carvings of Atlas on the east side of the house. In Greek mythology, Atlas carries the world on his back. What does Atlas carry on his back at the Kearns Mansion?

Do you have a garage next to, or attached to, your home? The Kearns family also had a garage, called a carriage house, where they kept their horses and carriages. Thomas loved horses and had eight beautiful carriages.

Later, when cars became popular, the Kearns family stored their cars in the carriage house. Thomas bought one of the first cars in Utah, but he never learned to drive. The car is a clue to a sad part of the story of Thomas’s life.
Thomas Kearns was a Politician

Thomas was outgoing and cared about people. It was a natural step for him to enter politics. First he served on the city council in Park City. In 1895, Thomas was a delegate to Utah’s constitutional convention where he worked for better health and safety conditions for miners. Six years later he was elected to the United States Senate.

When he was in Washington, D.C., Thomas became friends with President Theodore Roosevelt. President Roosevelt had breakfast at the Kearns Mansion in 1903. A huge parade welcomed the president to Salt Lake City. After making a speech, the president rode to the mansion in one of Thomas’s carriages.

In 1901, Thomas Kearns and his friend David Keith bought *The Salt Lake Tribune* newspaper. The newspaper printed many of Thomas’s political views. The *Tribune* is still published today by the grandchildren of Thomas and Jennie’s daughter, Helen.

Thomas and Jennie Made Many Contributions to the Community

Thomas invested some of the money he made from the silver mines in projects that helped Utah grow. For example, he invested money to build a railroad connecting Salt Lake City and Los Angeles, California. The railroad was the most important kind of transportation for moving people and goods around the country in the early 1900s. Thomas also built one of Salt Lake City’s first skyscrapers—the Kearns Building on Main Street.

Thomas and Jennie helped the community by donating money to causes they believed in. Thomas and Jennie belonged to the Catholic Church. They contributed $10,000 to help build a beautiful Catholic church called the Cathedral of the Madeleine on South Temple and B Street. People still go to church in the cathedral today.

Jennie cared deeply about children. In 1899, she and Thomas donated $50,000 to build the Kearns St. Ann’s Orphanage at 430 East 2100 South in Salt Lake City. This orphanage took care of miners’ children.

**What is the connection between mines and children? Why would the children of miners need orphanages?**
Jennie visited the children in the orphanage often. She hosted a Christmas party for the children in her house every year. She also paid for dancing lessons and other activities to enrich the children’s lives.

**The Mansion After Thomas Kearns**

One day after work Thomas Kearns stepped from a trolley car at the corner of South Temple and Main Street and was knocked down by a speeding automobile. The accident caused a stroke and Thomas died eight days later on October 18, 1918. He was only 56 years old. Although he did not live to be very old, Thomas Kearns was one of the most influential men in Utah in the early 1900s. When Thomas died, The Salt Lake Tribune wrote, “He loved Salt Lake City and was proud that he had been an important factor in its upbuilding.”

Jennie Kearns went into mourning after the death of her husband. She wore black and no longer held parties, but she still cared about children. Her sister’s children and several of her grandchildren lived in the mansion. The mansion was a favorite place for children in the neighborhood to play. Jennie always left the back door open for the children to come in and find cookies fresh from the oven. She also continued to help the children at the Kearns St. Ann’s Orphanage.

By the early 1930s, everyone in the Kearns family had moved away and no one lived in the South Temple mansion. In 1937, Jennie decided to donate the mansion to the State of Utah to be used as the governor’s house. Before this, Utah did not have an official governor’s home. Jennie moved to Reno, Nevada. She died in a San Francisco hospital in 1943.

**The Kearns Mansion Becomes the Governor’s Mansion**

The Kearns Mansion was repainted and redecorated to become Utah’s Governor’s Mansion. Governor Henry Blood and his family moved into the mansion in 1938. They were the first governor’s family to live in the Kearns Mansion. Governor Herbert Maw moved there in 1941. He said that the Utah Governor’s Mansion was a tremendous boost for the image of the state.

Governor J. Bracken Lee was the next to move to the mansion in 1949. He found it an uncomfortable place to live. He thought the mansion was too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter.

Governor J. Bracken Lee and his wife, Margaret, lived in the Kearns Mansion in the 1950s.
When George D. Clyde became governor, he refused to move into the mansion. A new home was built for the governor in 1959. Both Governor Clyde and Governor Calvin Rampton, elected in 1965, lived there instead.

Why do you think that Governor Clyde refused to live in the most luxurious home in Utah? Why did people think it was uncomfortable? What things do you think had to be changed in order to adapt the mansion for modern living?

In 1957, the Kearns Mansion became the office of the Utah State Historical Society. Unfortunately, the historical society did not have much money to spend on keeping the mansion in good shape. Over the years, the mansion began to get run-down.

When Scott Matheson was elected governor in 1976, he wanted the Kearns Mansion to be the official governor’s house again. A lot of repair work needed to be done before the mansion could be the governor’s house.

Governor Matheson and his wife, Norma, led the effort to renovate the mansion. They moved to the house in 1980. Governor Norman Bangerter and Governor Michael Leavitt have also lived in the mansion.

This is the shower that Thomas Kearns had in his bathroom. It is a good example of the way that attitudes and needs change. The mansion had one of the first showers in a Utah home and Thomas was proud of it. He designed it himself! Governor Lee, who moved to the mansion in 1949, did not like the shower. He thought that it looked like a torture chamber and acted like a human car wash. Jets of water came from every direction. Governor Lee said it almost drowned him. When Governor Matheson stepped in and turned the handle, he was hit by cold water. No hot water ever came out. Movie makers even used the shower while filming a horror movie. Thomas Kearns thought his shower was a great invention. Times had changed.
Fire and Restoration

When the children from Kearns St. Ann’s Orphanage came to the Kearns Mansion at Christmas time, they found a huge Christmas tree in the Grand Hall. A Christmas tree was a tradition at the mansion, but it also led to a horrible disaster.

In December 1993, Utah First Lady Jacalyn Leavitt and her children were in the mansion when the Christmas tree caught on fire. The fire quickly spread up the grand staircase. Luckily, workmen rescued the family and no one was hurt, but the fire destroyed much of the mansion. Priceless woodwork, hand-carved and painted decorations, art, fabric, and furniture were charred and gone. The State of Utah owned the mansion and had to decide whether to restore it or demolish it.

If you were on the committee to decide what to do with the mansion, what would you say in favor of saving it? What would be the arguments against saving it?

Utah officials did decide to restore the Kearns Mansion. Craftsmen from all over the world came to work on the restoration. They worked hard to make the mansion look as much as possible like it did when Thomas and Jennie lived there in the early 1900s. They also updated the electrical wiring, plumbing, heating, and fire protection to make the mansion a safe and convenient home.

The Kearns Mansion has now gone full circle. It was built as most the luxurious home in Utah. It became a home for governors, an office for the Utah State Historical Society, returned to the governor’s mansion and was expertly restored after a fire. Utah is lucky that the mansion is here to tell its story spanning nearly 100 years. It continues to share the history of the Kearns family, Salt Lake City, and Utah with everyone who visits.

Listen to the mansion when you make your visit and find more clues to unlock its exciting Mystery History.