

The Kearns Mansion in the News

Core Requirements

SOCIAL STUDIES
6040-0103

LANGUAGE ARTS
4040-0101
4040-0202
4040-0502

Objectives

Students will:

- ✗ *Recognize newspapers as a source of historical information.*
- ✗ *Review period newspapers to find clues to the mansion's past.*
- ✗ *Develop "reporter" questions to investigate the mansion on the tour.*

Student Instruction



Divide students into five groups.

Distribute a copy of the recent newspaper article to each student.

Tell students: *Pretend you live 100 years in the future.*

What can you find out about the way we live today by reading this newspaper story? What happened? Who was involved?

What does it tell you about the things we value?

About what do we do with our time?

Each group brainstorms ideas.



Groups report back to the class.

Ask class: *What kinds of information do you think we can find about the past by looking at old newspapers?*



Distribute copies of **one** of the Kearns Mansion newspaper articles (Clues 3-7) to each group. Give each student a copy of the *Mystery History News Report Activity Sheet*. Read activity sheet instructions as a class and have groups complete the *Mystery History News Report*. After the activity, each group shares their findings.

Student Activity/Product



Students add new information to bulletin board and timeline.



Students prepare a list of reporter questions that will help them look for clues when visiting the mansion. (Use who, what, when, where, why, and how questions.) **Example:** *How was the Kearns Mansion built?*

Materials

- ✓ Article from a recent newspaper
—1 copy per student—
- Mystery History News Report Activity Sheet*
—1 copy per student—
- Salt Lake Tribune* articles about Kearns Mansion
—Divide students into groups of five.
Assign each group a different article.
Each group member should have a copy of their group's assigned article.—
- "Palatial Residence of Thomas Kearns"
The Salt Lake Tribune 11/2/1899
- "Kearns Home Accepted as Governor's Mansion"
The Salt Lake Tribune 2/20/37
- "Historical Society Holds 'House-Warming' Party"
The Salt Lake Tribune 7/23/57
- "Kearns Mansion Welcomes New Look 'n' Residents"
The Salt Lake Tribune 3/2/80
- "Christmas-Tree Fire Scars Utah's Historic Governor's Mansion"
The Salt Lake Tribune 12/16/93



Extensions

- Students write an article as if they were reporters for *The Salt Lake Tribune* describing an exciting event at the Kearns Mansion, such as a big party hosted by Thomas and Jennie or President Theodore Roosevelt's visit. Students will answer the reporter questions (who, what, when, where, why, and how) in their article.

Links

Lesson 8: *Reflecting on the Kearns Mansion* **Post-Tour**

Mystery History News Report



Your newspaper article tells about an important event in the life of the Kearns Mansion. It was written at the time that event took place. When newspaper reporters write an article, they try to answer the questions: *who? what? when? where? why?* and *how?* Work with your team to answer the reporter questions below.

1. *What is the title of the article?*

2. *When was it written?*

3. *What event in the life of the mansion does the article tell about?*

4. *Why did this event happen?*

5. *How was the mansion used at the time the article was written?*

6. *Who was using the mansion at the time the article was written?*



The Salt Lake Tribune

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, NOVEMBER 2, 1899

PALATIAL RESIDENCE OF THOMAS KEARNS.



Stately Silver King Mansion to be Erected on Brigham Street at the Head of Sixth East.

The above elaborate cut gives a fair idea of the fine mansion that is to be erected by Thomas Kearns on Brigham street, facing Sixth East street. The plat it is to stand on was originally 10x10 rods, but Mr. Kearns has bought in addition four rods, part of which may be added to the present residence lot. The ground dimensions of the new structure will be 62x90 feet, and the height three stories with a basement.

The basement will be 9 feet 6 inches in the clear, and be built of native granite quarried in Big Cottonwood. It will include the laundry, ironing-rooms, vegetable cellars, boiler-rooms, fuel-rooms, cold storage apartment maintained with the liquid air process, men servants' rooms, includ-

ing bathrooms, storerooms, boiler-room, and across the front a spacious bowling alley. The heating of the building will be on the indirect hot-water principle. The inside walls and the surrounding of the staircases will be of brick, but the outside walls of the building will be of white marble.

The first floor will be entirely fire-proof, and will contain the spacious vestibule, reception hall, wide staircase hall, parlors—one being a Turkish parlor-library, dining room, butler's pantries, silver vaults, coat and hall closets, day toilet-rooms, breakfast-rooms, servants' rooms, kitchen, etc. None of the large rooms will have less than 400 square feet. The height of this floor is 12 feet 6 inches in the clear.

The second floor will contain eight

large rooms, of about 15x20 feet each with dressing rooms connected, and there will be a large bathroom equipped with a variety of styles of baths. The staircase hall will be in the middle, under a 26x26 dome; and then there will be children's bathrooms, linen-rooms, a recess balcony, etc. The height of this floor will be 11 feet 6 inches in the clear.

The third story will have sewing rooms, fur closets, servants' chambers, additional bathrooms, large billiard hall and athletic hall with gymnastic fixtures, the latter hall being 10 x10 feet; also a dancing-room 40x40 feet.

The lighting will be electric throughout. The roof will be covered with moss-green glazed tiles. The inside finish is to be in English quar-

ter-sawed Plymouth black oak, with colored marble wainscotings, the whole interior being of an elaborate finish. The first floor will have mosaic floors, except the parlors, which will be in parquet style. All the bathrooms will be in marble, and the mantels of different marbles. The candelabra will be on the most elaborate kind.

The cost of this magnificent structure cannot be less than \$75,000, and the expectation is to have it finished within fourteen months.

The architect is C. M. Neuhausen of this city, ably assisted by J. S. Birch who has the reputation of being one of the most scholarly and artistic architectural designers in the West.

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SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, SATURDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 20, 1937.

Entered at the postoffice at Salt Lake City, Utah, as second class matter March 2, 1879.

Kearns' Home Accepted as Governor's Mansion

Famed S. L. Residence and the Woman Who Gave It to Utah



STAFF PHOTO
The palatial Kearns' home, shown above, Friday was donated to Utah by Mrs. Jennie J. Kearns, right, widow of the late Senator Thomas Kearns, as a governor's mansion. The gift was promptly accepted by both branches of the legislature. The residence, long a landmark in Salt Lake City, is located at 603 East South Temple street.

Kearns' Home Accepted As Governor's Mansion

Utah Legislature Votes Unanimously for Bill Accepting South Temple Residence as Outright Gift to State

Utah's legislature Friday unanimously passed a bill authorizing the state to accept from Mrs. Jennie J. Kearns, as a gift, the Kearns' home at 603 East South Temple street for a governor's mansion. The bill was introduced during the morning by Senate President Herbert B. Maw, and within ten minutes had been passed under suspension of the rules and sent to the house. It was passed by the house during the afternoon.

Gift Made Outright

"In many states," Senator Maw told the senate when his bill was introduced, "citizens frequently present their state or its institutions with valuable gifts. In Utah such acts have been very infrequent, but Mrs. Kearns is willing to give the family mansion to the state, as an outright gift, if we will accept it as a residence for the governor. It is the finest mansion in Utah and would be a splendid home for the chief executive of the state."

"We furnish a number of state institutional heads with homes, but have never provided a governor's mansion. Moreover, we pay him one of the smallest salaries paid by any state. I have talked to a large number of people, including members of the legislature, and they all agree we should take advantage of this generous offer."



Moves Quick Action

"I move," said Senator D. W. Parratt of Salt Lake City, "that as an expression of appreciation we give this bill immediate and favorable consideration."

Senator Ira A. Huggins of Ogden moved that the rules be suspended.

(Continued on Page Four)

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Historical Society Holds 'House-Warming' Party

The Salt Lake Tribune, Tuesday, July 23, 1957

60 Years --- and Home

Historical Society Holds 'House-Warming' Party

Utah State Historical Society played host to more than 1,000 persons at a "combined birthday party and house warming" Monday from 3 to 8 p.m. in the old governor's mansion, 603 E. South Temple.

The event marked the 60th anniversary of the organization's founding, and was held in its first permanent home, said A. R. Mortensen, executive director.

The society moved into the stately old mansion, which has been the residence of Utah governors for 20 years, in January, 1957.

It now contains rare exhibits, pictures and other displays depicting Utah's history, as well as the state archives.

The Historical Society was formed July 22, 1897, during celebration of the 50th anniversary of entry of the pioneers into Salt Lake Valley with many of the most prominent leaders of church, state and business numbered among its founders, Dr. Mortensen said.

Refreshments were served in the mansion's dining room during the open house by wives of the board of trustees members.

Mrs. Leland H. Creer, wife of the society's president, was in charge, assisted by Mrs. N. G. Morgan Sr., Mrs. Joel E. Ricks, Logan; Mrs. Russell B. Swensen, Provo; Mrs. Louis Buchman, Mrs. George F. Egan and Mrs. Lamont F. Toronto. Mrs. A. R. Mortensen, wife of the executive director, and Mrs. Juanita Brooks, St. George, a board member, also were on the serving committee.

USE OF the silver service from the old Battleship U.S.S. Utah added much to the beauty of the occasion. The massive silver bowl and 27 cups, made of Utah silver, were paid for by the pennies of Utah school children and presented to the officers and men of the battleship when it was commissioned in 1911, Mr. Mortensen said. The name of each of the then 27 Utah counties is on its 27 cups, he said.

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Kearns Mansion welcomes new look 'n' residents



By Hazel S. Parkinson

Tribune Home Furnishings Writer

The Grande Dame of South Temple, the French Renaissance "Kearns Mansion," has had a face lift.

Nevertheless, she has retained her charm, grace, stately dignity and personality.

Both interior and exterior have undergone "surgery."

The first phase overhauled the plumbing, electrical work and air-conditioning to bring it up to "code." The facade was sandblasted and a portico added.

The second phase was the cosmetic surgery — new paint and wall coverings; stripping off varnish and grime from the French oak woodwork; refinishing parquet-bordered hardwood floors; laying specially woven carpet designed with Utah symbols, bee and beehive; remodeling the kitchen; adding window coverings and new furnishings, some of which are modern adaptations of turn-of-the-century French design.

Befitting a Grande Dame

Once again the mansion is alive, exciting to behold and the beauty on the street, befitting a French Grande Dame of stature.

But like any face lift, it's only the beginning. There are still things to be done and it costs money.

For this future work, all Utahns have an opportunity to be part of Utah's rich heritage.

The Utah Heritage Foundation has planned a fund raising "Kearns Mansion Showcase." It is an "Orientation Week" of activities, March 9 to 14, at the mansion at 603 E. South Temple.

The week-long activities have a dual purpose:

1. To show off the Kearns Mansion, which will officially be called The Executive Mansion. Its new occupants are Utah's first family, Gov. and Mrs. Scott M. Matheson, their daughter, Lu, son, Tom, and two other sons, who are away at school, Jim and Scott Jr. and his wife.

2. To raise funds: Proceeds from the week's events will go to "The Governor's Mansion Fund," for further refurbishing.

Two invitational preview dinners are planned as kick-offs for the week with a \$100 a couple price tag.

Orientation week schedule begins Sunday, March 9, with an "Afternoon Tea with Gov. and Mrs. Matheson," from 4 to 6 p.m. at the mansion. Reservations for the \$7.50 per person tea can be made with the Utah Heritage Foundation.

March 10 to March 14 from 10 a.m. to noon programs each day will present in-depth views of the history, architecture, exterior and interior restoration and interior designs. Reservations for the five day series are \$15 or \$3.50 each, and can be made at the Heritage Foundation. (See week's schedule in box.)

Public tours will be held March 17 to 22. See hours in the schedule box. All contributions for the mansion restoration are tax deductible.

Members of the Utah Heritage Foundation and Utah Chapter of American Society of Interior Designers will conduct the tours with the cooperation of Gov. and Mrs. Matheson.

Backing Up

In 1977, the Utah State Legislature voted to sell the governor's residence at 1270 Fairfax Rd. It had been occupied since it was built in 1957 by Gov. and Mrs. George Dewey Clyde and Gov. and Mrs. Calvin L. Rampton and their families.

The \$400,000 received from that sale went into the Phase I renovation of the Kearns Mansion, principally to bring it up to building codes and standards. An elevator was installed in place of a dumb waiter. A bathroom on the third floor with wider doorway and fixtures was installed to accommodate handicapped. The Mathesons donated part of the housing allowance they received while they lived in their own home the past three years, for the remodeling of the mansion kitchen.

Overseeing efforts have been the Executive Mansion Fine Arts Policy Commission, Utah State Building Board and Mrs. Matheson. It was decided that volunteer time and labor should be encouraged and promoted to guarantee professionalism.

The Utah Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers offered volunteer time and labor in the interior designing phase. Members who participated designed the areas and room each was assigned.

Private funds donated have been used to purchase furnishings. The goal is \$200,000. To date \$150,000 has been raised. Exceptions have been tables and chairs in the state dining room, the Steinway grand piano in the drawing room (now reception room), two carved oak benches and a hand-tooled leather screen. Those items were gifts of Mrs. Thomas Kearns when she deeded the property in 1937 to the State of Utah to serve as a governor's residence.

ASID members involved have been Bert F. Vieta, coordinator; Gayl Baddeley, William Fleming, Karen Kinard, Thomas Frank, R. Lee Last, Norman Hughes, Merline Leaming, Joan Wilson and Orlian Owen.

At Turn of Century

The stately Kearns mansion was said to be one of the finest of homes in the "Golden Era" of Utah, when fortunes were made in mining, railroads and industry. Residents of the mansion on Brigham Street (now South Temple) contributed diversity and leadership to the community.

In 1899, mining magnate and co-owner of The Salt Lake Tribune, Thomas Kearns, engaged architect Carl M. Neuhausen to design an "imposing" home on the city's fashionable East Brigham Street.

The residence had 36 rooms, a bowling alley, a ballroom and a billiard room. The structure was of two foot thick granite masonry with an adjacent carriage house. The home was completed in 1902 at the estimated cost of \$250,000. By that time Thomas Kearns had been elected U.S. senator from Utah.

Much of the interior materials came from Europe and Africa. Woodwork used in floors, stairways, newels, balustrades, doors, framing and trim was French oak. Wood used in the library was black-stained Flemish oak. The polished red mahogany in the dining room came from the Ural Mountains in Russia.

Some of the woodwork was elaborately carved; the large shell above the hall mantel, the carved face of Neptune and the shell-like trim throughout. Two columns were carved with scenes from classical mythology. Today the oaks have been stripped and lightened. The red mahogany remains the same.

Bone French silk moire now is used as wall covering on the stairwells. Gold leaf wall coverings on the second floor are accented with a graceful design of plant and bird life.

A 'Come Alive Feeling'

Paint, raw silk wall coverings, plus the lightened wood bring out the beauty of the wood grains. One senses the "come alive" feeling of the mansion.

In the family dining room in the Northwest corner of the first floor, "a garland of roses in high relief gives a Dresden look," (as described in The Salt Lake Tribune, April 20, 1902) and comes alive again via the fine craftsmanship of the painters. It had been painted previously.

An area of the wall between the kitchen and family dining room has been so expertly painted it resembles marble.



The Salt Lake Tribune

THURSDAY
DECEMBER 16, 1993

Christmas-Tree Fire Scars Utah's Historic Governor's Mansion

Damage May Top \$1 Million; Leavitts Searching for a Home

By Vince Horiuchi and Michael Phillips
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

Utah's first lady, Jackie Leavitt, peered over the second-floor railing of the Governor's Mansion after hearing a loud pop from the towering Christmas tree.

A giant column of fire raced up the 24-foot tree Wednesday, engulfing the branches in seconds.

"It was going so quickly up that tree," she said. "I looked over and saw the flames and yelled: 'Fire!'"

On the first floor, executive assistant Carol Bench ran toward the tree with a fire extinguisher. As she was fumbling with the canister, the tree already "was engulfed," she said. "I knew the extinguisher wouldn't put it out."

Back upstairs, the first lady desperately was searching for her 3-year-old son, Westin.

"I called to Westin and we met in the hall," she said. "I didn't even have to go to him. He ran right to me and we ran down the stairs."

The two women, the boy, and six other people in the mansion struggled to open a back door. But flames had sucked the air and created a vacuum. The door wouldn't budge.

"I could see it wasn't locked but I was pulling as hard as I could," Leavitt said.

The fire rose to the roof and spread to the French oak railings. Two inspectors there to check the fire-alarm system grabbed the door and, "with all their might," flung it open.

"We had to use a ladder as a lever to keep it open while everyone got out," said



Lynn R. Johnson/The Salt Lake Tribune
Salt Lake firefighter lifts hose to balcony of burned-out Governor's Mansion.

inspector Gary Christensen. "And when we shut the door, it slammed shut."

A short in a string of Christmas lights apparently started the fire 2 feet above the base of the tree, said Salt Lake City fire Capt. Dan Andrus. The lights were on when the fire started in the mansion, 603 E. South Temple, Salt Lake City. Decorative logs circled the giant tree.

"It worked like a chimney," Salt Lake City fire investigator Steve Herrmann said of the blaze. "It went straight up, and

■ See A-4, Column 1

■ A Salt Lake historical jewel

B-1

when it hit the ceiling, the smoke" spread through the attic.

Gary Bradley was one of the first firefighters to arrive about 11:15 a.m. He hosed the fiery column as it rushed through oval openings on each of the mansion's three floors.

"The fire was really heavy," said Bradley, who was covered in black soot. "Flames filled up the whole area in front of us."

Six fire engines, three ladder trucks and more than 50 firefighters from Salt Lake City and South Salt Lake battled the blaze. Two of the firefighters suffered minor injuries and were treated at local hospitals.

Crews worked for nearly two hours to extinguish the blaze. By then, the mansion's main entry hall was charred, as was the grand stairway and upstairs ballroom. Damage was estimated to exceed \$1 million, Andrus said.

The mansion's fire alarms functioned properly, but by then "the damage was done," Herrmann said. What the historic building did not have — and is not required to have — is a sprinkler system.

"If it did, that sprinkler system would have . . . knocked that thing down like you wouldn't believe," Herrmann said. A water system could have limited damage to about \$20,000, he said.

Although the building is state-owned and historic, it is not required to have sprinklers because the structure is considered a residence, said Salt Lake City Fire Marshal Ren Egbert.

Ironically, officials had considered installing sprinklers in all state buildings, he added.

Officials do not know if the Christmas tree had been treated with fire retardant. A city ordinance requires that trees in public buildings be sprayed with retardant. But the state, which can supersede local ordinances, has no such requirement.

Herrmann said a retardant probably would not have stopped the fire from spreading. "The public doesn't know," he said. "They think they're getting a safe product — and they're not."

State officials believe the building remains structurally sound. The mansion can be refurbished and many of its contents restored. But hand-carved railings and intricate wallpaper coverings may be irreplaceable.

Money for restoration will come from insurance companies and the state's self-insurance reserve fund.

Meanwhile, Gov. Mike Leavitt, his wife and five children are arranging for a temporary home. He said social activities planned at the mansion this week will be canceled or postponed.

He hopes to move his family to a condominium or to their east-side home, which is being rented, until the mansion is rebuilt. The Leavitts have received numerous offers for temporary housing.

Most of the family's personal property was saved. The governor regrets losing an antique state-owned grandfather clock "I loved so much."

His 10-year-old son, Chase, recovered an item he cherished most from the home: a pair of autographed basketball shoes worn by Utah Jazz forward Karl Malone.

"But I had autographs in a book, and it was in the hallway," the boy said, clutching the blackened shoes.

"It's funny what you learn at times like this," said the governor. "My 16-year-old Republican son was worried about his picture with Bill Clinton."

