The immigrants who settled here did not do so as individuals, nor did they assimilate seamlessly into the surrounding environment. Most banded together with their compatriots to form distinct communities to capture the feel of their former countries or simply for economic survival. Marked off from the rest of Salt Lake City by their diverse languages, religions, and customs, these communities gave life to areas like the Hub district that were abandoned by those who could afford to go elsewhere, a vitality and diversity whose traces are still evident.

The largest of these ethnic neighborhoods was Greektown, located on 200 South between 400 and 600 West. Between 1900 and 1920, Leonidas G. Skliris, the padrones or “Czar of the Greeks,” brought thousands of Greeks to the state. He secured jobs on the railroad or in the mines for any one willing to sign a contract to pay him one dollar a month for the rest of their lives (or, in effect, until his power was broken by a strike in 1912). His offices were located at 507 West 200 South.

Though at first Greek immigrants were mainly laborers and railroad workers, they eventually owned and operated a significant number of businesses along 200 South. In its heyday, the two-block Greektown area was home to “small hotels and boardinghouses, coffeehouses, saloons, grocery stores, bakeries, and import stores selling octopus, Turkish tobacco, olive oil, goat cheese, liqueurs, figs, dates, and Greek-language newspapers,” all serving the area’s Greek community. Nearly 60 Greek businesses were located on these blocks in 1911 (McCormick, 2000).

Just east of Greektown along 200 South, a Little Italy flourished between the Union Pacific and Denver and Rio Grande Western railroad depots. This was home to many Italians who came to Utah in the first part of the 20th century. Although most came to work the railroads or in factories, some founded successful businesses like the Western Macaroni Factory. Italian-language newspapers—such as the Corriere d’America, headquartered at 253 Rio Grande Avenue—served as important centers of the Italian community in the area.

Middle-Eastern immigrants to Salt Lake City settled mainly in Little Syria or Lebanese Town, located around 300 South and 500 West. The experiences of these immigrants were perhaps best summed up by Sarah Attey, an early Syro-Lebanese immigrant:

We lived on the west side, by Greek Town, with Lebanese neighbors. You know, when you are far from home, you want to be with your people. Lebanese Town it was called. Three Lebanese were very successful. Bonos Shool had a grocery store in Greek Town, on Second South. George Katter and Kalil Fadel also, dry goods, stores. George Katter got men jobs at Bingham copper mine. Lebanese men peddled, selling jewelry to Greeks and lace, linens, cloth, and bedspreads all over Utah. Many Lebanese men labored for ten cents an hour ten hours a day, making it necessary for the women to take in boarders. They had to (Papanikolas, 1976).
Spanish-speaking immigrants did not begin to settle the area in large numbers until the 1930s and 40s. As the more recent immigrants, Hispanics were often shoved to the bottom of the economic ladder. In one interview, John Florez summarized his experiences: “People who talk about the ‘good old days’ do so because they didn’t have to live it” (McCormick, 2000).

The Catholic Church established Our Lady of Guadalupe after 1930. The mission, located at 524 West 400 South, was led by Father James Collins and run by nuns from the Order of the Perpetual Adoration who had set up a convent in the area three years earlier. “The Sisters of Perpetual Adoration helped the children of the west side by teaching religion classes, Sunday school, and arts and crafts,” according to Jorge Iber of the Oral History Institute (Papanikolas, 1976). The mission still serves the Hispanic community of Salt Lake in its new location at 715 West 200 North. Although most were initially Catholic, a significant number of Hispanics converted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, prompting the formation of the Rama Mexicana, or Mexican Branch, in 1921, located at 448 South 300 West.

For many immigrants, the blocks around the current Intermodal Hub formed the center of their community, a place where they felt a sense of belonging, could relate to others like themselves, and could seek refuge from an often hostile world. Their stories are woven into the fabric of these blocks and are visible today in the traces of the buildings they constructed.

### 3 immigrant stories

#### Frederick Eberhardt

Frederick Eberhardt emigrated from Germany to the United States for the mining industry. However, like Antonio Ferro (the “pasta king”), he soon found economic opportunity in a different sort of business. While mining he realized that he lacked anything adequate to sleep on, and this unpleasant experience encouraged him to develop his first “mattress.” Eventually Frederick established his own company called Salt Lake Mattress and Manufacturing. Later, in the 1930s, the company became Serta Salt Lake. Today, Serta is located on Redwood Road.

#### Scandinavian Immigrants

Every census from 1850 to 1950, showed Scandinavia as the second most common region of origin among Utah’s foreign-born residents. In 1900, Scandinavian countries accounted for 34 percent of Utah’s foreign-born.

According to the census, Utah’s Scandinavians were employed as farmers, artisans, journeymen, apprentices, blacksmiths, carriage makers, tailors, carpenters, cabinetmakers, cooperers, wheelwrights, seamstresses, dyers, weavers, smiths, iron founders, coopersmiths, tinsmiths, machinists, shoemakers, tanners, saddle- and harness-makers, stonecutters, masons, bricklayers, butchers, brewers, bakers, millers, fishermen, seamen, ropemakers, house painters, miners, matmakers, hairdressers, hunters, bookbinders, printers, thatchers, sailmakers, shipbuilders, instrument-makers, clerks, potters, and furriers.

#### Louis Hentelff

Louis Hentelff, a Russian immigrant, arrived in Utah in 1928 and began manufacturing furniture with his brother-in-law, Ben Novikoff. During World War II, when steel was unavailable, they used plywood for springs. Later, when steel became available again, they retrofitted all the plywood springs with steel. Intermountain Furniture Manufacturing Company now has over 70 employees and supplies over 300 retail outlets across the western United States and Canada.
In 1870, the railroad came through Salt Lake City’s west side. This both established the west side as the city’s gateway and sowed the seeds for its future segregation from the town’s geographic, cultural, and economic mainstream.
the revolution of the railroad

Images of Salt Lake City’s Early Years

A Steel engraving showing Salt Lake City in 1853
B Photo of Salt Lake City looking southeast from the top of Main Street in the mid-1860s
C 1867 drawing of Salt Lake City

HISTORY

25
Much of the Hub district’s early character was to change after 1870, the major turning point for west side Salt Lake City. One year after the 1869 completion of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory Point, the Utah Central Pacific rail line was built, joining Salt Lake City to the transcontinental line near Ogden. This railway cut directly across Salt Lake’s west side, drastically altering its physical character. An even greater transformation came from the economic and social changes that followed this new connection with the outside world.

Originally, the railroad stopped a few blocks north of the Hub district, ending at what was to become the Union Pacific Depot and is now The Gateway development. In 1887, the Denver and Rio Grande railroad company extended the line south to their original depot just west of 600 West and 300 South. Hotels, saloons, and billiards halls sprang up around this depot to serve the needs of the immigrants that came to work in the mines and on the railroad. Third South between 500 and 600 West became a dense residential district, home mainly to railroad workers too poor to move farther east. They lived in wood, brick, and adobe houses, many of which were tightly-packed multiple-family duplexes. This created a building pattern quite different from the city’s original widely-spaced single-family dwellings, and signaled a departure from prior economic and cultural patterns.

Along with Main Street, this area formed one part of what historian Leonard Arrington called Utah’s “two economies:” the cooperative, agriculture-based economy of the Mormons, and the mining, railroad, and trade economy that marked this area, which was mainly non-Mormon. Arrington referred to this new economy as “a large enclave of gentile merchants, bankers, freighters and prospectors ‘catapulted’ by the railroad into the midst of the semi-closed Mormon cooperative economic system” (Arrington, 1964).

The changes brought to the area by the railroad were best described by John McCormick in his book *The Westside of Salt Lake City:*

After 1870 all of this began to change, and by 1900 the area had pretty much assumed its present character. The key factor was the coming of the railroad in 1870 and the development in the next two decades of a network of rails throughout the city, which split off and isolated the west side from the rest of the city. As this happened, much of the area became increasingly commercialized and industrialized. Thus, by 1890, a stockyard, two breweries … two tanneries … a brickyard, a brewery, a biscuit factory, a salt works, a soup factory, two lumberyards, several foundries, and an artificial ice factory [existed in this area]. The isolation of the west side also led to the sections that remained residential becoming working-class neighborhoods, many of whose residents worked for the railroads and for associated
As the west side evolved from being part of an agrarian village to a mixed commercial/industrial/working class residential section, it became increasingly blighted, in several senses. First, the original lots were subdivided, and new streets and courts were cut through the original blocks. The idea was to enable more people to live close to town and to the railroads. The new streets, however, were subject to little regulation and instead of becoming quiet retreats from the noise and dirt of the city, they often degenerated into crowded back alleys of squalor. Both small operators and large developers, who bought entire blocks and subdivided them, undertook this new construction. Secondly, disagreeable industries and establishments increasingly located on the west side ... for example, the city dump, the city stray pound, and the city crematory were all located there. Thirdly, city services were extended to the west side much slower than to other parts of the city (McCormick, 1982, 152-3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Lincoln elected President</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Discovery of silver and lead in Bingham Canyon; the same year dry farming, as a type of commercial agriculture, begins in Utah; these two industries would grow to define the state’s economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1862-1865</td>
<td>The Civil War</td>
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<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>ZCMI, Zion’s Cooperative Mercantile Institution, founded; it was America’s first department store</td>
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<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>19 May Joining of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railways at Promontory Point completes the transcontinental railroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869-1870</td>
<td>January Completion of the railway between Ogden and Salt Lake City, linking the latter city to the national rail system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame, • With conquering limbs astride from land to land; • Here at our sea-washed,

**greektown**

"The coffeehouse in particular was an important institution... the real home of many Greeks... It was a community center often providing their only social life."

The numerous cafés along 200 South formed the center of Greek life in the city, along with the Holy Trinity Church, which was originally located on 400 South.

Cruise lines advertised regularly in the Greek-language newspapers, offering transport for friends and family to Ameriki, where there was work.

"On West 200 South between 400 and 600 West, was Greektown, the most extensive of Salt Lake’s ethnic neighborhoods... Along its two-block area were small hotels and boardinghouses, coffeehouses, saloons, grocery stores, bakeries, and import stores selling octopus, Turkish tobacco, olive oil, goat cheese, liqueurs, figs, dates, and Greek-language newspapers. In 1911, nearly sixty Greek businesses occupied the two blocks" (McCormick, 2000).
“You know, when you are far from home, you want to be with your people.”

SARAH ATTEY

“A miniscule Little Syria blossomed during the 1920s and 1930s in the vicinity of the residences and stores centered on Third South and Fifth West.”

“Lebanese men peddled, sold lot of jewelry to Greeks. They peddled lace, linens, cloth, bedspreads all over Utah. They bought from New York stores.”

“Three Lebanese were very successful. Bonos Shool had a grocery store in Greek Town, on Second South. George Katter and Khalil Fadel also, dry goods, stores. George Katter got men jobs at Bingham copper mine.”

“Lebanese men in some labor jobs made ten cents an hour for ten hours a day. That’s why some Lebanese women took in boarders. They had to” (Papanikolas, 1976).