1 Original 1881 Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway passenger depot
2 Original D&RG freight depot
3 Rio Grande Hotel
4 Sullivan Hotel
5 Although only sparsely occupied at this time, this portion of 200 South would soon become a pulsating area full of shops, bars, and restaurants.
6 Although in 1889 there was a prevalence of dwellings (denoted by a ‘D’ on the buildings) on 300 South, the area was just beginning to transform into an industrial-and railroad-based economy.
7 Future site of the current 1910 Rio Grande Depot
By 1889, the major transformations wrought by the railroad were in place. The Hub area had fully left its agrarian past. No longer an integrated part of downtown Salt Lake City, it became a border land.

The arrival of the railroad in 1870 had transformed the city into two regions—a west side and an east side, a divide that grew in the following years. By 1910, industrial growth and immigrant workers had transformed this quiet and bucolic area into a loud and bustling urban-industrial section. Two Rio Grande depots, one freight and one passenger, were situated on the west side of 600 West between 200 and 300 South. These wooden buildings served the rapidly expanding Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Company, a fierce competitor to the older Union Pacific. Block 63, on the east side of 600 West directly across from the D&RG depots, contained an active district that supported the railroad, including two hotels—the Sullivan and the Rio Grande. The hotels included kitchens and dining rooms and were continuing to expand. Between the two hotels were several shops, houses, and a billiards hall.

The north side of block 63 (facing 200 South, between 500 and 600 West) was initially unchanged by the railroad growth. In 1889 there were five houses, but no shops or hotels. Yet, in just twenty-two years it would become a thriving entertainment district. The south side of the block (facing 300 South, between 500 and 600 West) was similarly defined by residential dwellings. They were not, however, all single detached homes. Of the sixteen dwellings along this stretch of 300 South, three were duplexes and one was a triplex. The center of the block contained outhouses, placed at the back end of the properties.
The block to the south, block 46, was considerably less populated than blocks to the north. The east side of 600 West was completely barren. The northern and eastern block faces (facing 300 South and 500 West) contained only a handful of dwellings. To the east of blocks 63 and 46 was a more densely populated residential neighborhood, which would soon be demolished to build the current Rio Grande Depot. Most of the nearby blocks from the original settlement had been subdivided and new housing units were built relatively close together and included several duplexes. These buildings were primarily constructed of wood, brick, and adobe.

As a border place this area was defined by boundaries. The coming of the railroad in 1870 created a clear line of demarcation between east and west, locals and immigrants, and wealth and poverty. Yet, this line would soon change again. By 1910 new railroad lines had been laid on 500 West in preparation for the construction of a new and larger depot. In essence, the boundary between west and east shifted one block closer toward downtown Salt Lake City. This shift continued to solidify the area as the industrial and transportation hub for the city and state.

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### The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

“The Sanborn Maps® are a uniform series of large-scale detailed maps, dating from 1867 through 1969 and depicting the commercial, industrial, and residential sections of cities. The maps were designed by surveyor D.A. Sanborn in 1866 to assist fire insurance agents in determining the degree of hazard associated with a particular property. The Sanborn Co. was the first company to offer insurance maps on a national scale in response to the growth of urban communities after 1850. The company’s surveyors meticulously documented the structural evidence of urbanization—building by building, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, community by community.

“Sanborn Maps® illustrate in outline form the site, size, shape, construction and building material of dwellings, commercial buildings, and factories. Details of buildings include fire walls, the location and number of windows and doors, style and composition of roofs, wall thickness, cracks in exterior walls, and makes of elevators. The maps also indicate building use, sidewalk and street widths, layout and names, property boundaries, distance between buildings, house and block numbers, location of water mains, hydrants, piping, wells, cisterns, and fuel storage tanks.

“Sanborn Maps® are colored keyed… adobe buildings are painted olive, stone blue, brick pink, wood yellow, iron gray. Until 1911, the maps were handmade and hand colored. After that, corrections and amendments were pasted on top every few years” (J. Willard Marriott Library, n.d.).

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### Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880s</td>
<td>Salt Lake City’s population increases by 125% to 45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Congress passes the Edmunds-Tucker Act which disincorporates The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and reverts all its property to the federal government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>“Gentiles” make up almost half of Salt Lake City’s population, allowing the anti-Mormon Liberal Party to take control of the city council and mayor’s office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Congress passes the Edmunds Act, outlawing polygamy and putting federal agents in charge of Utah’s government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Streetcar system electrified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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As a border place this area was defined by boundaries.
An important and longstanding influence on Salt Lake City’s west side has been the Rio Grande Depot. The current Rio Grande Depot located at 300 South between 400 and 500 West replaced an original wooden depot building at 600 West to accommodate the joining of the Denver and Rio Grande and Western Pacific Railway systems. The Union Pacific, whose depot was situated just down the street at South Temple, was the Rio Grande’s main competition. The new Denver and Rio Grande Depot was designed by Chicago architect Henry S. Schlachs and completed in 1910 at a total cost of $750,000. This depot served as a symbol of the influence of the railroad that had affected Salt Lake City since the turn of the century. The township of Salt Lake had nearly doubled in population from 53,000 to 92,000 and consequently changed the official status of Salt Lake to “city” (Utah Historical Society, n.d.).

The depot formed an important part of the cultural landscape of the community, a fact evidenced by the many stories that sprung up around it, including a series of reported hauntings. The most famous of these is the story of the woman in a purple dress. She is described as very beautiful with raven-colored hair. Her clothing appears to be from another period and she is usually seen near the Rio Grande Café, a restaurant currently located in
the depot. According to legend, many years ago, she was engaged to a handsome young man. Because rail travel was the primary means of transportation at the time, the woman would visit her fiancé by train. One day on the train platform they had a terrible argument and their engagement was broken off. The young man threw the engagement ring onto the railroad tracks and the young woman hurried to retrieve it. Unfortunately, in her rush she never saw the train that struck and killed her.

There have also been reports of a “phantom party” in the cellar. One night, when the lights were going on and off in the depot, a maintenance worker came to check the problem. He went to the basement to check the fuse box and was stunned to discover a large group of people having a party. Even more surprising was the fact that they vanished in a few seconds!

Another story is told about a security guard who heard someone walking on an upper balcony at the same time every night. Each time he heard the sound he rushed up to the spot but would find no one. Finally, one night, he hid and waited for the person. When he heard footsteps, he sprang out, yet no one was there, even though he could distinctly hear someone walking. The footsteps came closer and closer and as they reached him he felt something brush past and then heard the steps continue down the stairs.

“The depot … centers on Third South street, one of the main business thoroughfares and has an immense approach or foreground on the town side and large, roomy covered platforms paralleling the tracks on the railroad side.

“The center … large room is lighted by three immense arched windows on each side (each 28x30 feet) through green opalescent glass. The interior of the waiting room is treated in an adaptation of a classic style of architecture similar to the exterior, the color scheme being brownish red and gray for the walls with a deep brown for the ceiling. All of this, combined with the green light through the windows, gives the room a dignified quietness.

“In the wings of the building at each end of the waiting room are provided all the accessories necessary to every large railroad depot. In one end are the baggage, express and parcel rooms, while in the other end are provided everything necessary for the comfort of travelers, including men’s smoking room, women’s retiring room, restaurant, etc. In the center of the large waiting room are the ticket offices, news stand, telegraph and telephone offices and other conveniences for the traveling public.

“In the second story of the main structure are the railroad companies’ offices.

“… The best of material of the various kinds has been employed in the structure. For the exterior there is a marble base of white Colorado-Yule marble five feet high all around the building. The balance of the exterior is in terra cotta and red New Jersey rain-washed brick. The roofs are of red tile. The building is absolutely fireproof and is treated on the interior with tile floors throughout and with marble wainscoting, all harmonizing with the general color effect of the different rooms.”

The Salt Lake Tribune, 14 August 1910