

ST. GEORGE HISTORIC SITES

St George LDS Temple

Location: 250 East 400 South, St George

Mormon pioneers began building this temple in 1871, soon after arriving in the area. The building was completed and dedicated in 1877, making it the first LDS temple to be completed in Utah. (The famous Salt Lake Temple was started in 1853, but was not completed until 1893).

The temple is a majestic white structure that serves as an important area landmark. Visitors are invited to tour the grounds and view informational displays at an adjacent visitors center, but are not allowed to enter the temple itself.

St George LDS Tabernacle

Location: 18 South Main Street, St George

Built of native red sandstone by struggling pioneers, the tabernacle was dedicated in 1876 and stands as a monument to their faith and determination. Today, the tabernacle is home to church services, daily music recitals, and the weekly Dixie History and Music Series.

Brigham Young Winter Home

Location: 200 North and 100 West, St George

Brigham Young, the Mormon leader, established a winter home in St George, where he enjoyed the area's mild, snow-free winters. The original portion of his home was begun in 1869 and completed in 1871. The front addition-what most would call the main part of the house-was completed in 1873. The home is open for public tours.

Jacob Hamblin Home

Location: Corner of Santa Clara Blvd and Hamblin Drive, Santa Clara

Jacob Hamblin was a prominent Mormon pioneer who became known as a friend to the Native American Indians living in the area. His home, completed in 1863, is two-story adobe, sandstone and ponderosa pine structure and is one of the few remaining examples of early pioneer-era home-building. It is open for public tours.

Ancestor Square

In the heart of downtown St George, historic shops and buildings have been restored in a quaint area called Ancestor Square. The Square features small shops, boutiques and galleries, within easy walking distance other downtown attractions and many motels.

Mountain Meadows Site

Location: Along Hwy 18 about 5 miles south of the community of Enterprise, north of St George.

During the so-called "Utah War," tensions were high between Mormon pioneers and people traveling through the territory. On Sept 11, 1857, for reasons that may never be fully understood, a group of Mormons and local Indians slaughtered members of an immigrant wagon train encamped at Mountain Meadows. A memorial has been created at the site.

Grafton Ghost Town

Grafton is a photogenic, partially preserved ghost town located near Rockville, just outside of Zion National Park. It is located along the Smithsonian Butte scenic backway. The old school is fairly well preserved and is often photographed. The old cemetery is also worth visiting. The town was established in 1859 by pioneers attempting to grow cotton along the Virgin River.

Silver Reef Ghost Town

Rich veins of silver were discovered in the hills north of what is now the town of Leeds, along I-15 about 15 miles NE of St George. A boom occurred in the 1870 and a town sprang up, rapidly becoming the largest community in southern Utah. At its zenith it boasted some 9 stores, 6 saloons, a bank, several restaurants, a hospital, 2 dance halls, 2 newspapers and 3 cemeteries. By 1891 the mines had produced about 25 million dollars worth of ore. But the veins played out quickly and the town went bust.

The old Silver Reef Wells Fargo Express office is on the National Historical Register and is now houses a small museum. Foundations of a few other old buildings can be seen. Tailings from mines can be seen in the surrounding area. New mining efforts are undertaken now and again, and much of the area is closed to exploration. A few dangerous open shafts dot the countryside and so explorers need to use caution.

Pine Valley Church

A unique old chapel can be found in the community of Pine Valley, north of St George. It was built in 1868 by shipbuilder Ebenezer Bryce. Bryce is perhaps best known for the homestead he established next to what is now Bryce Canyon National Park.

Area pioneers wanted a permanent chapel and Bryce was the only person around with building experience. He applied unique techniques as he constructed the chapel, making it somewhat resemble the upside down hull of a ship. Techniques including wrapping the corners of the building with strips of green rawhide that tightened as they dried. When the church was finished, he said, "If a flood should come, it would float and if a wind came strong enough to blow it over, it would still never crash to pieces."

The building is still in use as a chapel.