

sensational trials. Labor boss Big Bill Haywood stood accused of hiring the assassin who had dynamited former Idaho Governor Frank Steunenberg outside his Caldwell home. The Idanha had boarded Steunenberg's killer and other colorful players: Clarence Darrow, the nation's most celebrated defense attorney; James McParland, one of the century's most famous detectives; Harry Orchard, a notorious mass-murderer and hitman for the labor bosses; and co-prosecutor William "The Lion" Borah, a future senator and presidential candidate who famously challenged Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

Boise's signature turrets topped all four corners of 10th and Main during the era of the famous trial. Electric trolleys screeched through a crowded block of mercantile and boarding houses: the Romanesque Gem-Noble building with its pharmacy, 1902; the Alaska Center, 1906; with its retail Cash Bazaar, and the Tiner Building, 1910; with its Manitou Hotel and future New

Boz Theater. For decades the Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1910, with its chandeliered domed ceiling and rooftop garden was billed as the most "modern and complete" hotel between Chicago and San Francisco. It fronted the Larsen Building, 1904, which housed the prom-date banquet room of the Royal Restaurant, 1947.

A pot-bellied stove still heats Hannifin's, where prominent men talked politics and bought their cigars. The Blues Bouquet preserves its elegant turn-of-the century brass and mahogany bar. Architectural gems nearby include the Chicago-Style Empire Building, 1910, and the sandstone Hack and Transfer Building, 1908, now El Korah Temple of the Shriners fraternal club.

The Boise State University College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs proudly supports the preservation and urban renewal of downtown with classes and events at 1020 W. Main in the university's Center on Main.

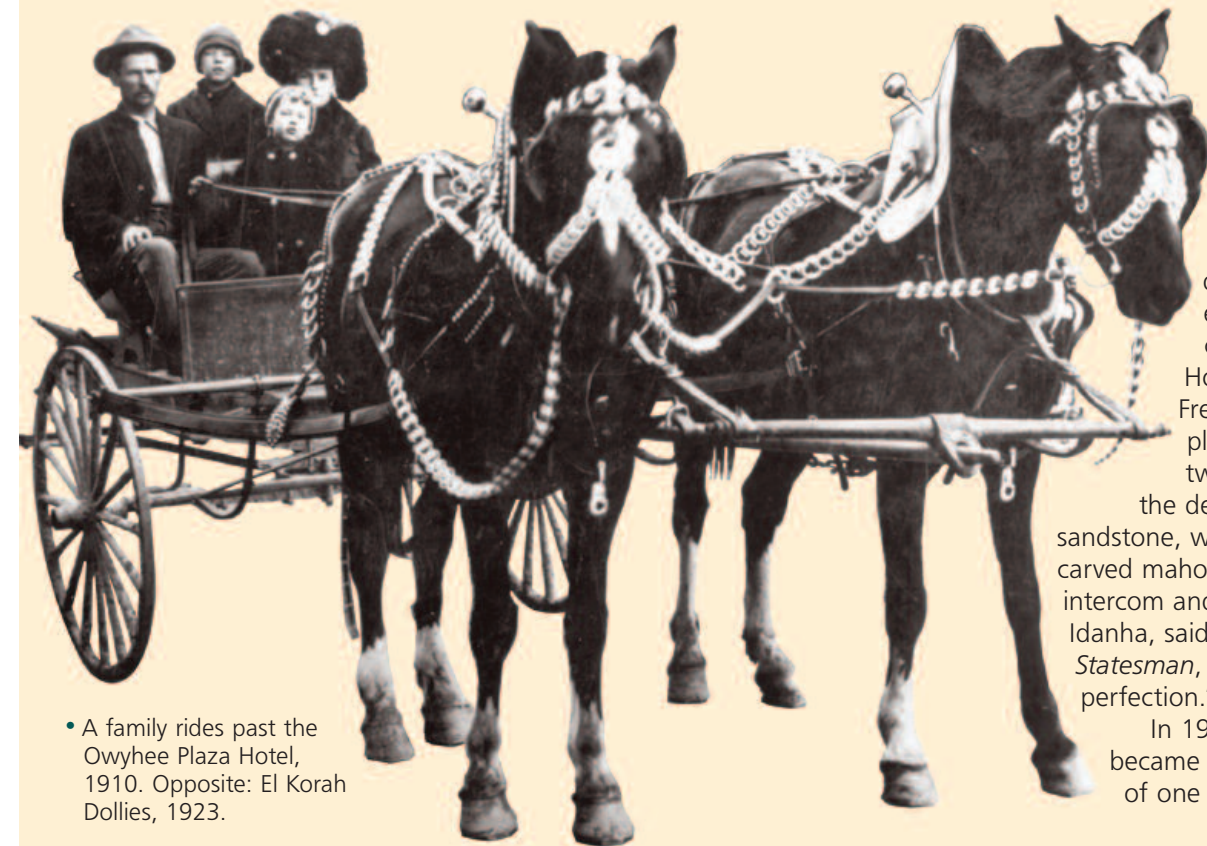


BOISE CITY
DEPT OF ARTS
& HISTORY

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The Mercantile District

Forgotten landmarks recall the era of the Boise trolley on the 1000 block of West Main.



- A family rides past the Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1910. Opposite: El Korah Dollies, 1923.

Boise's Mercantile Block recalls the era of hotels, theaters, and merchant houses that made Boise a retail hub. Developed in the turn-of-the-century era of trolleys, when electricity and a downtown depot transformed the streets and their architecture, the block extends from the Idanha to the Owyhee Hotel along the 1000 block of West Main. The area largely survived the devastation of 1970s urban renewal when more than 80 historic buildings were razed from the core of downtown. Today the 1000 block is the last section of Main's trolley streetscape without big-box garages or surface parking. Walking the storied streetscape helps guests revisit the architectural landmarks, historical events, and colorful personalities that make Boise like no other place.

History

In 1893, at 10th and Front Streets, the Oregon Short Line built its spur-line passenger depot near warehouses and a tree-lined city canal. The Idanha Hotel, a turreted French Château completed in 1901, rose two blocks north of the depot. Red brick and sandstone, with marble steps, carved mahogany, telephones, an intercom and electric elevator, the Idanha, said the *Idaho Statesman*, was "the acme of perfection."

In 1907 the Idanha became the pulsating heart of one of the century's most

Mercantile District Walking Tour

1. **Idanha Hotel**, 1901. Guests of the historic Idanha Hotel included Presidents William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt, and Harry Orchard, who assassinated Idaho Governor Frank Steunenberg in 1905.
2. **One Capital Center**, 1975. Designed by John Graham and Co., who also designed Seattle's Space Needle. The park next door served as the Idaho Shakespeare Festival's original home.
3. **Larson Building**, 1910. Constructed to replace the Prout and Larson Grocery Store's original structure, the second floor housed the Olympic Hotel and the ground floor welcomed visitors as the Boz Theater.
4. **Smith Block**, 1905. Built for Roscoe W. Smith, the block replaced one of Boise's earliest buildings built by Dr. Ephraim Smith, the mayor of Boise in 1866.
5. **Owyhee Plaza Hotel**, 1910. Designed by J.E. Tourtellotte and Chicago hotel expert R.T. Newberry, its Candlelite Room and club rooms housed meetings of Boise associations and important figures such as Senator William E. Borah.
6. **Hitchcock Building**, 1919. Originally home to auto service company Oakley & Sons (later Oakley-Moody). The Record Exchange opened here in 1977.
7. **El Korah Temple**, 1908. Boise Hack and Transfer originally occupied this building, which was later remodeled by the El Korah Shriners.
8. **Boise Plaza**, 1971. Formerly the Boise Cascade headquarters, the Boise Plaza with its giant atrium became Idaho's largest office building.
9. **Hannifin's Cigar**, 1897. Built by J.E. Tourtellotte, Hannifin's Cigar moved to the building in 1909.
10. **Alaska Center**, 1906. Designed by J.E. Tourtellotte and Co., the Cash Bazaar occupied the building between 1906 and 1981. Today the building houses Boise State University's Center on Main.
11. **Tiner Building**, 1910. The Tiner originally housed the Manitou Hotel in its upper floors, and the grand New Boz Theater on the ground floor. The Blues Bouquet moved to this location in 1975.
12. **Gem-Noble Building**, 1902. J.E. Tourtellotte built both the Gem Block and the John Noble Block, constructed to match the Gem. The Gem housed one of Boise's first pharmacies.
13. **Empire Building**, 1910. Designed by Nisbet and Paradise after the columnlike Chicago-style Wainwright Building in St. Louis.
14. **U.S. Bank Building**, 1927. This neo-classical style building served as an addition to the Empire Building.
15. **Grove Street Illuminated & Boise Canal**, 2003. Amy Westover built this public sculpture to commemorate the Grove Street Neighborhood and Boise Canal, which runs underneath the 1000 block of Main.

