

Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities Advisory Committee

Salt Lake City
Canal System

May 22, 2025

Jesse Stewart
Deputy Director



Public
Utilities

History of Exchange Contracts



- In the mid-1800's the growing population of the City and County needed reliable water sources.
- At the same time, farmers who had appropriated Wasatch streams needed a firm and reliable supply of water to mature crops.
- City constructed JSL Canal in 1882 – major municipal investment
- First exchange was in 1888 between the City and Parleys Water Users Association – City provided Utah Lake water for irrigation through the JSL, in exchange for water rights to Parleys Creek.
- Other exchanges followed through the 1930's for Mill Creek, Big Cottonwood Creek and Little Cottonwood Creek.



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Purpose and Import

- **Mutual Benefit and Gain:**

- Irrigation Companies received stable supply of Utah Lake water for entire irrigation season
- Salt Lake City received a clean source of culinary water to serve a growing population

- **Historical Significance:**

- Most Exchange Contracts were entered between late 1888 and 1930's – more than 100 years of history
- Salt Lake City has developed complex delivery practices and distribution system to meet Exchange Contract deliveries.

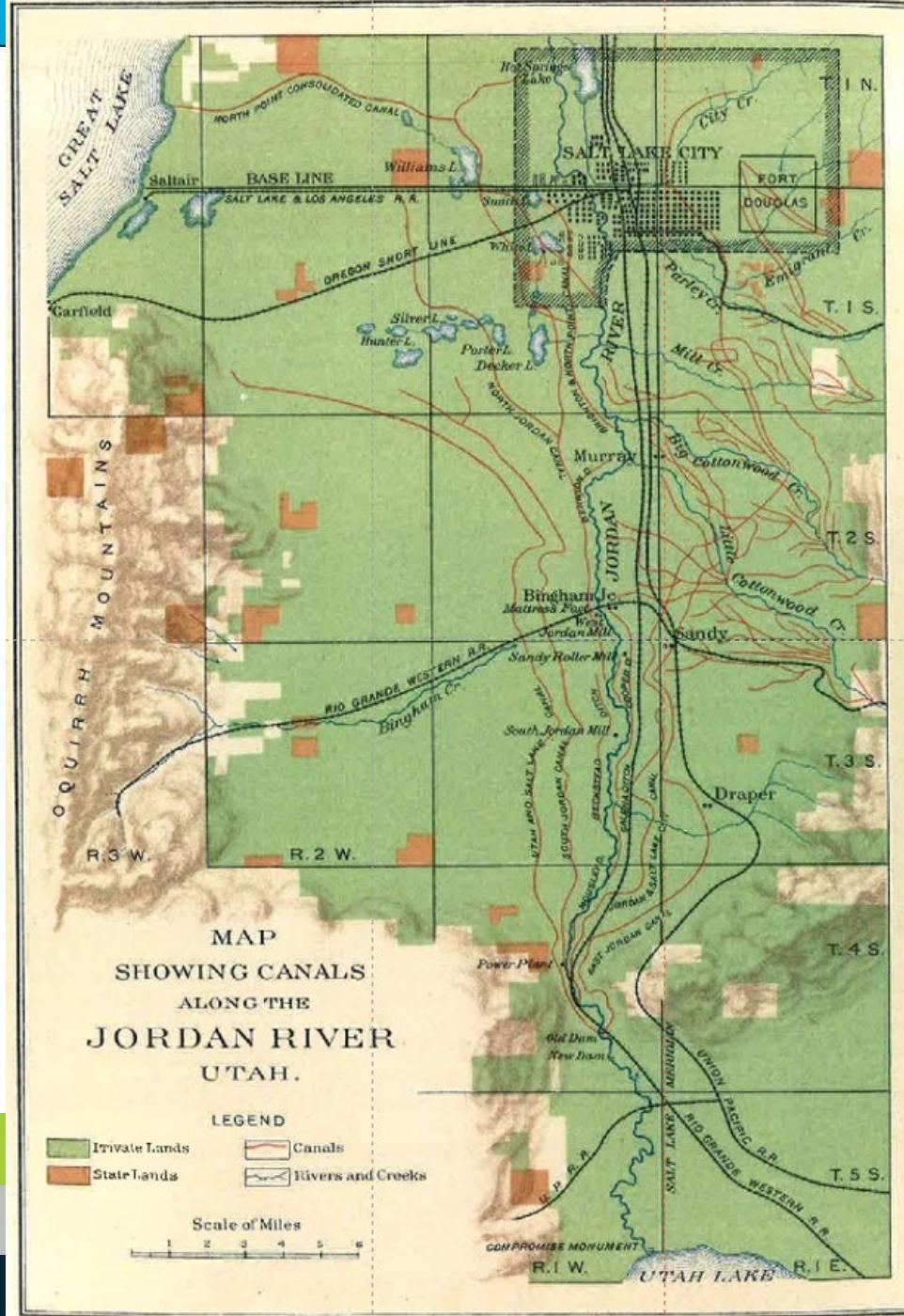
- **Future Significance:**

- City's planning metrics based on quantity of water it understands to be authorized under Exchange Contracts and using that water for municipal purposes.



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- There are over 50 Exchange Contracts between the City and various irrigation companies.
- Exchange Contracts implicate water in every major Wasatch Canyon.
- City Exchange Contract delivery obligations span much of the eastern portion of the Salt Lake Valley.
- Effect of Exchange Contracts is to link Wasatch streams and Utah Lake for Salt Lake City's water supply.



MAP OF
SALT LAKE CITY AND VICINITY
SHOWING
THE STREAMS WHICH ARE THE PRESENT
AND THE PROPOSED SOURCES
OF WATER SUPPLY FOR THE CITY.
ALSO SHOWING
THE PIPE LINES CANALS AND IRRIGATING SYSTEMS
WHICH DIVERT WATER FROM THESE STREAMS.

City Engineer's Office, Salt Lake City

November 17, 1900

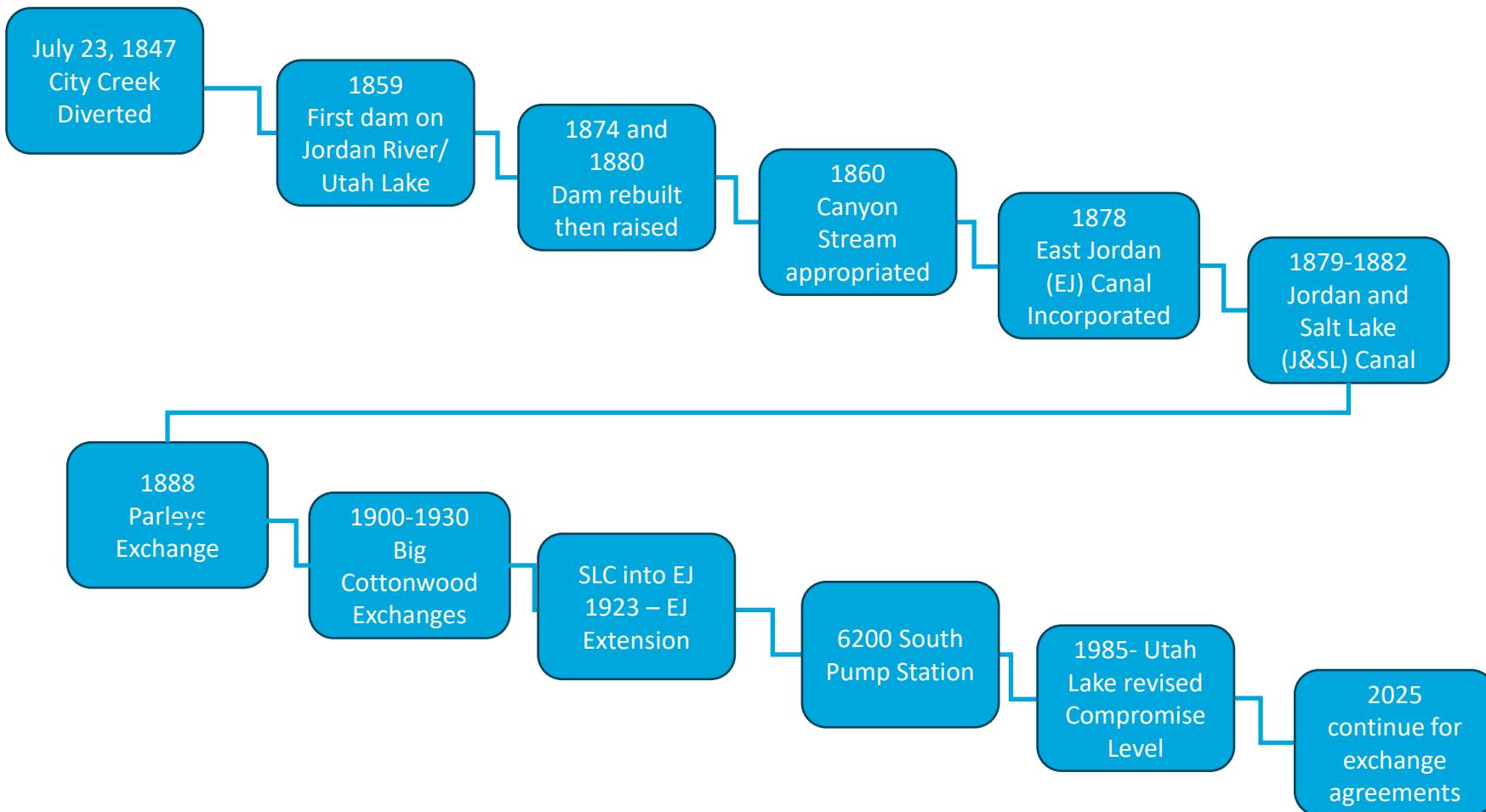
Scale, 2000 Feet to 1 Inch

Frank C. Kelsey
City Engineer

<https://maps.waterrights.utah.gov/EsriMap/map.asp>



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Challenges

Trees
Encroachments
Developments
Aging system



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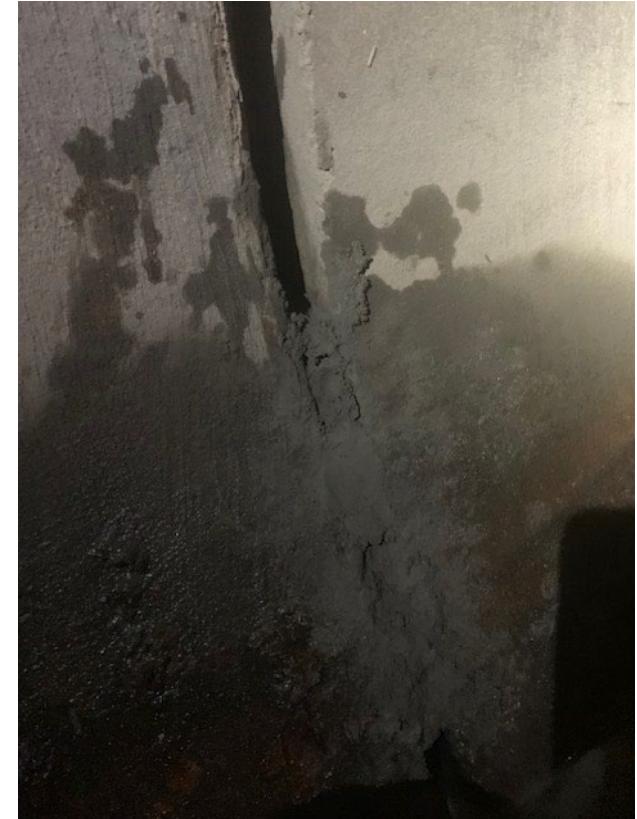
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Questions

[Salt Lake City Old Water Conveyance Systems](#)

[What is our water legacy?](#)

[Pioneers of '47-Pioneer Irrigators](#)

[Jordan and Salt Lake Canal](#)

