

GENERAL CONFERENCE THEN & NOW

About 30 members were present at the first conference called by the Prophet Joseph Smith on June 9, 1830. Today 21,000 members fill the Conference Center adjacent to Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. The words flowing from the Conference Center go far beyond this audience as they are translated into 93 different languages and reach members worldwide via radio, television, satellite, and Internet connections.

Following are photographs of general conference—then and now—since 1848, when members met in an outdoor bowery.

Right: General conference sessions emanate from the Conference Center adjacent to Temple Square.

Center: Every six months, Saints worldwide view conference via satellite, just as these Brazilian Saints did in October 2011.

Bottom: Members in April 1906 gather to attend a session of conference in the Tabernacle.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SANDRA MARIA ROZADOS © IRI



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLES ELLIS JOHNSON



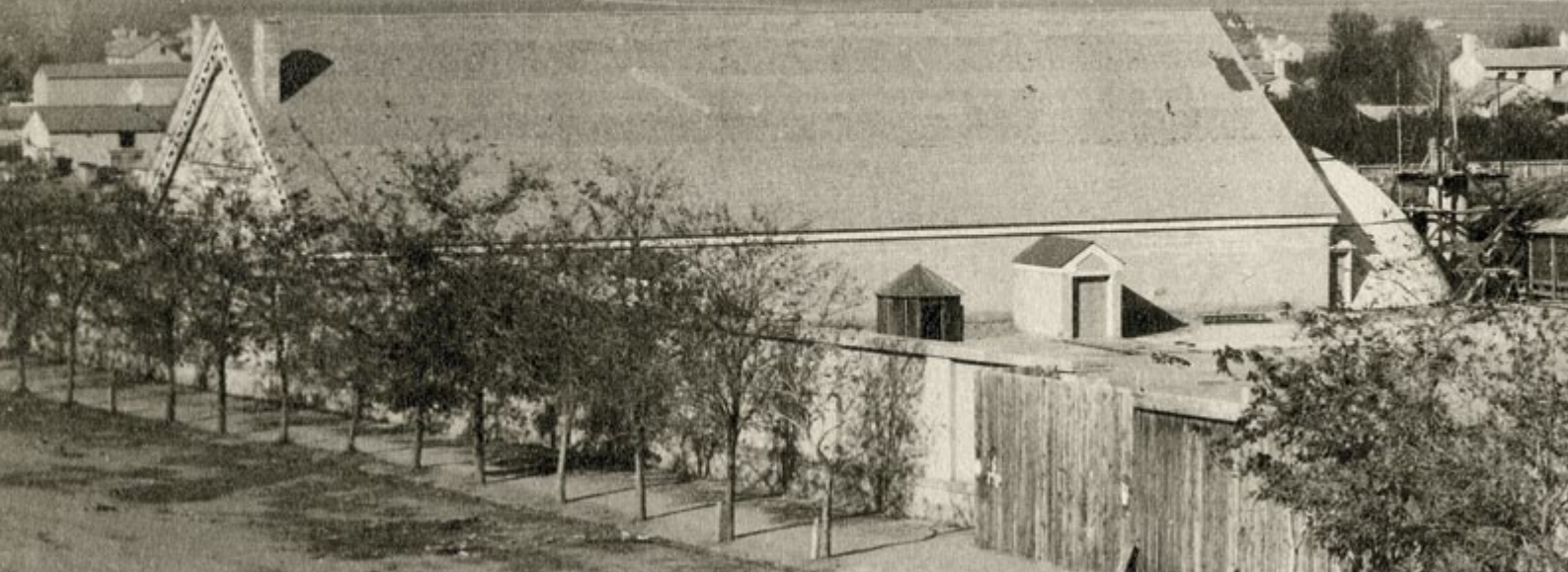
PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLIE NILLSON © IRI

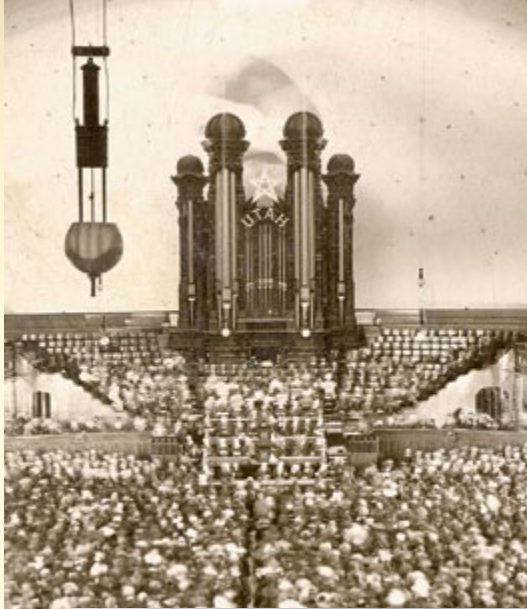


Left: Since April 2000, the Conference Center has accommodated increasing conference crowds. Today, with Church membership more than 14 million, some 100,000 people attend each conference at the Conference Center.

Below: From 1867 to 2000, Latter-day Saints attended conference in the Tabernacle.

Bottom: General conferences began to be held semiannually in 1840. Conferences continued throughout the various migrations of the Saints. Early pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley held their first general conference in 1848 in an open-air bowery, similar to the one shown below (on the right). The Saints then built an adobe tabernacle as a meeting place (below, left), where they met until the Tabernacle was completed in 1867.





PHOTOGRAPH BY WELDEN C. ANDERSEN © IRI



COURTESY OF THE DESERET NEWS



Top, left: At the October 1897 general conference in the Tabernacle, the Saints were still celebrating Utah joining the United States of America the year before.

Center, left: By the October 1954 general conference, 57 years after the 1897 conference (top, left), many changes to the Tabernacle had occurred, including an expanded organ and a larger Tabernacle Choir.

Above: Now, 58 years after the 1954 conference (center, left), the growth of the Church is reflected in the number of Church leaders on the stand in the Conference Center, which now includes the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, all other General Authorities, and the general auxiliary presidencies.

COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY