



The Boise Valley is the ancestral, cultural, traditional, and unceded territory of the Shoshone, Bannock, and Northern Paiute people. The City of Boise was established on this territory in 1863. The downtown Boise city block located between North 11th and North 12th streets to the east and west and West Bannock and West Idaho streets to the north and south was initially distinguished by dwellings. During the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, the area existed primarily as a residential neighborhood which stood within walking distance of the city's downtown core. As the twentieth century progressed, the area began to transition away from its roots as a residential neighborhood and support more commercial activities. By 1912, a livery had replaced homes on the northeast corner of 12th and Idaho streets, and by 1949, the transition from residential area to commercial hub was complete. No homes remained. Instead, the area was occupied by the El Korah Shrine Temple, a YMCA building, automobile sales and service businesses, and a surface parking lot. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps depicting the City of Boise and published at intervals between the late 1800s and the mid-1950s provide a visual representation of the neighborhood's evolution.¹

The blocks surrounding this core area of interest also began as predominately residential spaces and gradually transformed into commercial areas. By the end of the 1940s, the area contained several automobile sales companies and service garages as well as a collection of other businesses. Other prominent structures in the larger geographic area include the Empire Building, the Hitchcock Building, and Summers Funeral Home. In 1971, Boise Plaza opened on West Jefferson Street. In 2016, the 1100 block of West Bannock Street was the location of surface parking lots.²

The following list provides brief information about a selection of businesses which operated during the early to mid-twentieth century in the larger area:

Link's Business College was founded in Boise in the early 1900s and graduated students for decades. The school's location changed over time, but for a number of years it was based on Idaho Street.³

During the early 1900s, a livery and stable business began operating on the northeast corner of 12th and Idaho streets. It was destroyed in a devastating fire in October 1913 which killed 47 horses. The El Korah Shriners fraternal order then acquired the property and built the El Korah Shrine building. It was dedicated in November 1914.⁴

The Summers Funeral Home began business in Boise in February 1911 and was originally located on Jefferson Street. The funeral home moved to its present location in 1938 when a new building was erected on the corner of 12th and Bannock streets. The two-story building was built of clinker brick and featured stone trim. At the time of its construction, the building plans included space for offices, a reception room, and a large chapel, as well as a basement and living quarters on the second story.⁵

In 1919, the Sharman Automobile Company began construction of a new building to house their business on the northeast corner of 11th and Bannock streets. The building was designed by well-known Boise architecture firm, Tourtellotte & Hummel.⁶

In 1920, Norman Gratz completed the construction of a garage building on the corner of 11th and Bannock streets. In addition to functioning as a service station, the building included a showroom to

display automobiles. *The Idaho Statesman* newspaper described Gratz's garage in a 1920 article as being decorated with high ceilings, oak millwork, plate glass windows, and tile floors.⁷

In July 1920, the cornerstone was laid for the new YMCA building constructed on the northwest corner of 11th and Idaho Streets.⁸ The building was later demolished.

The Boise Bowling Center operated out of its location at 909 Bannock Street in the early 1940s followed by a move to its second location, 1212 Idaho Street, in 1947.⁹

The Idaho Super Service gas station and automotive department store operated on the corner of 12th and Bannock streets. An advertisement for the business, published by *The Idaho Statesman* in 1949, noted the company also offered automobile repair and maintenance services.¹⁰



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