

Delivery and Exchange

The Jordan and Salt Lake City Canal has played an important role in developing the city's water supply. In the beginning, the canal was to deliver Utah Lake water to the city, however, it later was the mechanism to exchange high quality mountain water for Utah Lake water. The canal was constructed between 1879 and 1882 and subsequently was improved and enlarged to a capacity of 150 cubic feet per second. This canal extends north through the east side of the Salt Lake Valley from the Jordan Narrows through the Sugarhouse area to the city.

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In 1882, A.F. Doremus, then city engineer, initiated the principle of exchanging water from Utah Lake through the canal for the high quality mountain stream water which had been appropriated for use in irrigating the valley's farms. He resolved that since the lake water was not potable and would require pumping to obtain the pressures needed in the water distribution system, it would be better adapted to irrigating the farmlands which were then being irrigated by the mountain streams. Because this mountain stream water had already been appropriated by the farmers, acquiring it by the city through direct purchase or condemnation would result in the destruction of the farms, which was undesirable. However, he felt that since the mountain streams often could not meet the irrigation needs of the farmers late in the summer, they might be receptive to exchanging that water for a dependable supply from the lake.

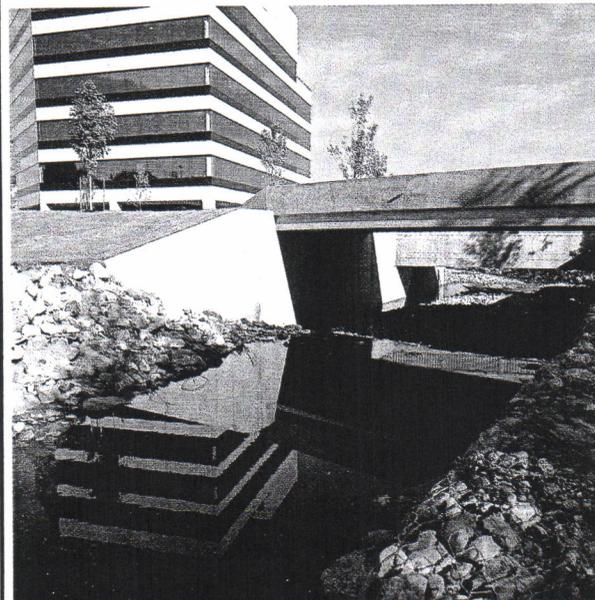
The first "exchange" took place between the Parley's water users and the city in 1888. Subsequent exchanges were made with the users in Big Cottonwood, Little Cottonwood and Mill Creek Canyons.

Currently approximately 50 percent of the city's water supply comes from the mountain streams involved in these exchange agreements. As a result of those agreements, irrigation water must continue to be provided through the Jordan and Salt Lake City Canal and the East Jordan Canal so that Salt Lake City's right to use the mountain stream water can continue unimpaired.

Today the canal continues to flow north through Sugarhouse, however, the fields it used to irrigate have now been largely developed into subdivisions and shopping centers.



Above: Watermaster cleans grates to deliver Utah Lake water through a segment of the Jordan and Salt Lake City Canal.



Left: Improved East Jordan Canal as it crosses Little Cottonwood Creek.

From: S.L.C.
Public Utilities
annual report
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Little Cottonwood
Creek

upstream file: