

THE *Conception* OF THE
FORT MOORE
PIONEER MEMORIAL

by
MAY BELLE T. DAVIS

THE CONCEPTION OF THE FORT MOORE PIONEER MEMORIAL

A Project of the Los Angeles County
Daughters of Utah Pioneers

(Formerly California Daughters of Utah Pioneers
of Los Angeles County)

by May Belle T. Davis

This is the year of our Lord Nineteen Hundred Fifty Eight.

The Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial, now completed, has been a long term project to which many contributions of money, time and talent have been given from public as well as private sources. The first contribution in the sum of one dollar was made twenty-five years ago. The Memorial has been in the course of construction for eight years.

The idea for the Memorial came from an experience which had its beginning forty-eight years ago. I could not tell the real story of the conception of the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial, if I failed to give in some detail an account of the experience from which the conception derived.

PART ONE

When I moved with my family in 1922 from my native State of Utah, I was already acquainted with the history of Fort Moore which had been built by the Mormon Battalion. At that time I was serving as a member of a Utah commission which had been authorized by the State Legislature to erect a monument in honor of the Mormon Battalion upon the State Capitol grounds, then in the process of being laid out and landscaped.

I had become interested in the Battalion through my association with the Daughters of the Mormon Battalion, an organization dedicated to the commemoration of these almost forgotten volunteers from the camps of the Utah Pioneers while en route to the West. The Battalion had enlisted in the United States Army for service in the Mexican War with orders to open a wagon road to the Pacific Coast.

I had learned the story of the Mormon Battalion from the diaries of its members which were the cherished possessions of these daughters.

I was emotionally responsive to the personal experiences as related in these diaries. They provided an answer to conflicting impressions that had disturbed my youthful mind. My childhood thinking had been influenced by the stories, to which I had listened with eager ears, as told by my two pioneer grandmothers.

My grandparents, Ann and Thomas Karren, had left their native England to make a new home in the United States of America, that far-famed land of opportunity and freedom, especially freedom of worship. They were religious converts bound for Nauvoo, the glorified city of the Latter-Day Saints.

They had reached their destination in the darkest hour of the hard-driven Mormon Pioneers. In the two years following their arrival, the leaders of the church had been killed by an infuriated mob, homes had been burned and the people had been forced, under threat of extermination, to leave the new homes they had built in their city of hope and brotherly love. In mid-winter they had crossed upon the ice of the Mississippi River into a strange land infested with savages and wild animals.

From the stories I had heard from my grandmother and others who had shared those bitter experiences, I gained the impression that the United States was a party to these misfortunes, in that it had failed to rescue these persecuted people from mob violence and exile. It was a story that left a haunting memory of enmity existing between my church and my country.

My grandmother Thurman, also a convert to the Mormon faith, though not of the Nauvoo vintage, presented an entirely different point of view. Of Colonial and Revolutionary descent, she had high regard for her American heritage and referred with pride to herself as

a Daughter of American Pioneers.

Her family had journeyed on horseback with the Lincolns and Thurmans westward from Virginia to make a new home in the lush blue-grass region of Kentucky. Her father, an itinerant Baptist minister, had inspired his children with two great devotions. One to the United States, and the other to religion as expressed in the Bible from which they had learned to read at an early age.

With this background and grandmother's personal experience of the rigors and losses sustained during the Civil War, she was a witness in some measure, to United States History in the making.

When the War was over, she had packed her carpetbag and come West in the first year of the railroad construction, 1869, to join her oldest son, William, who had started for the gold fields. Not being able to get beyond Salt Lake City, because of the forbidding snows, he had remained to make his home in Utah.

Grandmother was dynamic, patriotic and fluent. As we sat around her on the long winter evenings her reminiscences became tales of adventure. Her grandfathers who had fought under General Washington and her grandmothers who had molded bullets for their guns, were personalities of heroic stature. The Civil War had saved the Union and liberated the slaves. The United States was the most glorious and benevolent country in the world and could do no wrong.

Here were two conflicting impressions. Was the United States a menacing ogre threatening destruction to the weak and disabled; or a gracious friend with doors of freedom and opportunity open to the downtrodden of all nations? I was confused for my church and my country were equally dear.

While the perusal of the Battalion diaries had revived those long dormant unhappy youthful impressions, it had resolved their haunting confusion.

These men of the Battalion, enlisted from the rank and file of the Mormon Pioneers, were not outcasts or exiles seeking refuge in a foreign country. They were patriot soldiers carrying the flag of the United States to its remote frontiers. Here was a story of high adventure, tinged with hardship and sacrifice, in the same category as those I had heard from the lips of my American grandmother.

The call of the Battalion, resulting in many benefits to the Mormon Pioneers on their journey westward, was a proof of the friendship of the United States. But there still remained questions to be resolved, questions which motivated my enthusiasm and activity with the Daughters of the Mormon Battalion.

The following is a quotation from the "Mormon Battalion Monument Souvenir Brochure."

"The monument movement had its inception in 1905 with the Daughters of the Mormon Battalion, whose desire to keep green the memory of their fathers assumed the

definite purpose to erect a monument in their honor. The inspiring motive for their undertaking was not pride of high achievement, or even consciousness of the historic significance of the services of the battalion, but rather emotions of filial affection and appreciation of that lofty sense of duty which had required of their fathers and mothers a sacrifice unsurpassed."

"Deep buried in the hearts of these daughters were family traditions of mothers with their children homeless upon the frontiers, bereft of their natural protectors, fighting a lonely battle of hunger, cold and danger; of unmarked graves upon the wind-swept plains; of fathers, oftentimes with bare and bleeding feet, trudging westward over dreary miles of desert and mountain, enduring the pangs of hunger and thirst and anguished thoughts of loved ones left behind.

"In the perspective of three quarters of a century the contribution of the Mormon Battalion toward the great empire of the West had assumed such historic significance that the Daughters realized that the Battalion did not belong to its descendants only, but to the State and to the Nation also.

"After ten years they concluded that their efforts were not adequate to the task to which they had assigned themselves. In 1915 they appealed to the Governor and the Legislature of the State of Utah to erect a fitting memorial upon the State Capitol grounds in honor of the

Mormon Battalion."

As a basis for this appeal it was necessary to provide information upon the subject as there was none in general circulation. Their petition, including a summary of the history and achievements of the Battalion, concluded with the following:

FURTHER, we wish to express our appreciation that the United States government, through the enlistment of the Mormon Battalion rendered important aid to the Utah pioneers in their labor of founding this State. Government money, paid to the Battalion assisted in equipping the pioneers of '47. Government permission, obtained on account of the enlistment of the Mormon Battalion, gave the pioneers permission to pass through and settle temporarily upon Indian lands, and to plant and harvest crops; and

FURTHER, we feel that Utah's first memorial should commemorate the first national and patriotic event in her history as a State and part of the United States.

For the foregoing reasons we feel that it is right and fitting for the State of Utah to make an appropriation for a monument in honor of the Mormon Battalion; and further that a site upon the Capitol grounds be set apart for that monument; and we ask that such be granted.

DAUGHTERS OF THE MORMON BATTALION.

MAY BELLE THURMAN DAVIS, Regent.

MARY JONES CLAWSON,

thirty copies were made KATHLEEN FERGUSON BURTON,
The Legislature of HATTIE JONES PICKETT,
of a Commission to procure LAURA COON CUTLER,
and appropriated ISABEL KARREN THURMAN,
became available, upon receipt Memorial Committee.

The petition was first read to a select group in the Governor's office to determine whether a recommendation for the erection of a monument in honor of the Mormon Battalion should be included in his message to the State Legislature, about to be convened. After listening with mounting interest, the Governor said: "Have 200 copies of this petition printed and distributed to the members of the House and Senate." He continued with the pertinent remark, "I do not understand why this outstanding incident in the history of the Utah pioneers and the entire West has not received the publicity it deserves."

The response of the Governor and Legislature to this appeal was spontaneous. Their feeling was similar to that of a man who finds upon his own soil a precious gem. In the annals of their pioneers, under a new illumination, obscured pages were revealed. Their hearts were touched. In a special message to the Legislature, Governor Wm. Spry, recommended that initial steps be taken toward the erection of a monument in honor of the Mormon Battalion.

A site upon the southeast corner of the Capitol grounds was selected and a design for the monument was procured by means of a nationwide competition in which

thirty entries were made.

The Legislature of 1917 authorized the appointment of a Commission to proceed with the erection of the monument and appropriated one hundred thousand dollars to become available, upon condition that a like sum should have been secured from other sources and deposited with the State Treasurer.

Soon after the appointment of the Commission our country became engaged in World War I and the work of the monument was necessarily delayed.

Soon after the conclusion of the war the Commission again took up the work of the monument. A committee was sent by the Commission to Chicago, where a one-inch scale model of the proposed design had been prepared and was ready for inspection at the studio of Riswold, Morrison and Walker, the winners of the First Award in the competition. The award had been made by a competent jury, from photographs and drawings. The artists felt that the model, because of its unusual design, could not withstand the hazards of packing and shipping, so that this visit to their studio was our first opportunity to have a realistic view of the design from which the Mormon Battalion Monument would be made.

A careful study of the historical background was of vital importance for the creation of this monument. Under the supervision of B. H. Roberts, president of the Commission, high churchman, and citizen of great prestige, the

Commission had prepared and mailed to all contestants a "Compilation of Data for Sculptors and Artists" which included salient facts pertaining to the four great events which made possible the development of the West, namely: the Mexican War, the opening of the highways between the East and West, the discovery of gold in California, and the introduction of irrigation to the arid intermountain region. To all of these events the Mormon Battalion had made worthy contributions. In addition to these data, the suggestion had been made that the design should express a forward movement indicative of the march of the Battalion.

The general design of the model was a triangle pointing Westward. The mass of the monument was rugged in character, typifying the terrain over which the Battalion marched. Upon the three concave sides of the triangle were scenes developed from a study of events and suggestions presented in the "Data for Sculptors and Architects."

The central feature of the monument was the Battalion Man mounted upon a base extension pedestal in front of the mass.

Above the Battalion man, dominating the entire monument, was the figure of a woman, her face standing out in full relief, her hair and drapery wafting back while her figure faded in dim outline into the mass.

There was animated discussion as to the symbolism of this figure. Was it the Spirit of the West, Progress, Pioneering? To me it could be none other than Columbia, symbol of the United States, advancing majestically to

the fulfillment of her "manifest destiny" to span the Continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.

Soon after this trip, a contract was signed and the artists moved to Salt Lake City, where they established a studio.

It was an inspiring experience to observe this process of creating, tearing down, and recreating, as one after another the various figures and panels were completed and cast in plaster. But it was even more fascinating to watch the artist, as with a sculptor's tools, he brought to life the figures that had been immured through endless ages within their granite confines.

While this work was being carried on by the artists, the Commission was engaged in securing the \$100,000 required to meet the State's appropriation.

In the erection of this notable monument there were three memorable occasions in which the public displayed great enthusiasm. First was the occasion of the groundbreaking by Governor Charles R. Mayne, with a brief informal ceremony. Second was the laying of the cornerstone by Governor George H. Dern, the placing of the memorial receptacle by Mayor C. Clarence Neslen of Salt Lake City and the offering of the dedicatory prayer by President Heber J. Grant. The third notable occasion was the dedication of the completed monument, which took place May 30, 1927. The ceremony was preceded by a grand parade, in which appeared the U. S. Army band and attachments of the U. S.

Army escort. It was estimated that ten thousand people were on the Capitol grounds, listening to the ceremonies through loud speakers, used on that day for the first time in Salt Lake City.

It was a memorable occasion, a climax of 18 years of devotion and unfaltering purpose.

The monument was not only a memorial to the Mormon Battalion, for during the years it had come to mean much more than that to me. It was a witness to the courage and patriotism of the Mormon Pioneers, who, compelled to leave their country and while en route to some unknown haven, yet sent their much-needed able bodied young men forth upon a long and arduous march to fight, perhaps to die, for her.

In a still broader sense it was a symbol of the great American Westward Movement. It was the United States coming to her matured stature. I was humbly proud that this pioneer battalion was included in the vanguard of that great adventure.

In writing this story of my experience with the episode of the Mormon Battalion Monument in Utah, covering a period of eighteen years, I am conscious of much that I have omitted -- the many personalities, including the members of the Commission; the numerous contributions; the roles played by each of the four Governors and the four Legislatures; the educational campaign through the schools that carried the story into the homes; and the attempt to divert

the State's appropriation from the Monument and the mass-meeting that ensued. These and many other things that I recall after thirty years, I have omitted, but they all form an important part of the story.

My purpose in writing this sketch is to present briefly the background of my personal experience from which the idea of the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial was conceived.

Fort Moore Hill in Los Angeles was especially interesting to me as a site of historic significance to which my own pioneer heritage was related. The Mormon Battalion, in opening a wagon road to the Pacific, had performed one of the longest and most arduous marches by infantry in history. Having arrived in San Diego ill-fed and clothed in tatters, after a brief respite, it again took up the march. Company B had been assigned to guard duty in San Diego, while Companies A, C, D and E proceeded to the Pueblo of Los Angeles. Upon an arduous march to the Plaza, the long adventure had ended with the building of Fort Moore, the last barrier required for the completion of an adventure that spanned a continent.

As Fort Moore had been the end of one, so it had marked the beginning of another. It was the end of one

PART TWO

During the last five years of my service with the Utah Commission my time was divided between Utah and California. Although I had become a resident of Los Angeles, I was still retained as a member of the Commission, and as its Secretary and Treasurer. As I traveled back and forth I thought of the Mormon Battalion as a bridge uniting the two states in a common pioneer heritage. While Battalion members had helped to settle the State of Utah after their term of enlistment had expired, their contribution to the winning of the West had been even more intimately related to California.

Fort Moore Hill in Los Angeles was especially interesting to me as a site of historic significance to which my own pioneer heritage was related. The Mormon Battalion, in opening a wagon road to the Pacific, had performed one of the longest and most arduous marches by infantry in history. Having arrived in San Diego ill-fed and clothed in tatters, after a brief respite, it again took up the march. Company B had been assigned to garrison duty in San Diego, while Companies A, C, D and E proceeded to the Pueblo of Los Angeles. Upon an eminence overlooking the Plaza, the long adventure had ended with the building of Fort Moore, the last bastion required for the completion of an adventure that spanned a continent.

As Fort Moore had been the end of one, so it had marked the beginning of another famous march -- one lead-

ing to the Colloma Valley and the historic gold fields of California.

The first Fourth of July celebration in Los Angeles had other connotations than those usually accompanying Independence Day. The thirteen gun salute by the U. S. First Dragoons in honor of the birth of the nation had proclaimed Los Angeles a city of the United States and the tall flag-pole with the Stars and Stripes waving above was a symbol of the towering city that Los Angeles was to become. The events of this day had yet another significance -- the ratification of the advent of the American Era of California History. The United States was now sovereign from "sea to shining sea!" With the opening of the highways, accelerated by returning soldiers, and the discovery of gold as an incentive, American pioneers, who had been moving westward for more than a century in quest of new homes and more abundant life, were poised and ready for the "gold rush" and the discovery and settlement of California, the end of their quest. Fort Moore was the Herald.

In my mind's eye I visualized Fort Moore Hill as a beautiful park dedicated to patriotic meetings and celebrations. There would be monuments honoring those who had come by land and sea to bring the flag to these far western shores and to those whose vision and industry had provided for the needs of a growing community.

The years passed and my family had become rooted in Los Angeles. Life was interesting and exhilarating in this fast-growing city destined to become famous.

The monument upon the State Capitol grounds in Salt Lake City was as a shining child with whom I had parted but still fondly cherished.

My interest in Fort Moore Hill remained the same as when I first saw it, but as yet, ten years later, no park or monument graced its summit. Houses that had once been the homes of the socially elite were fast becoming slums. I had faith that the city fathers would yet awaken to the significance of the city's American heritage as symbolized in the events related to the hill, but I began to wonder how and when the awakening would come.

There was much publicity about the Spanish Era of the Southland. Tourists were directed to its numerous shrines which told the story of an ancient culture that had left a lasting imprint in names of streets and cities. Gallant dons and gracious ladies with high back-combs and lace mantillas, and padres of old mission fame were featured in plays and pageants and remembered with affection. But history had decreed that the Pueblo de Los Angeles was not to reproduce its kind upon the northern continental shores of the Pacific Ocean. Upon the site where the Pueblo had stood the expanding American City of Los Angeles had been built by skills and enterprise of the American pioneers.

In vain I watched and waited for some mention of the coming of the vanguard of these pioneers.

A United States flag, waving from a tall flag-pole above the Broadway tunnel had been placed there many years before by the Escholzia Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. This gave mute assurance that Fort Moore had not been entirely forgotten. I wish to express my respect and appreciation to those women who had kept that flag and pole restored throughout the years. But to the majority of citizens of Los Angeles and the multitudes pouring into the city, its significance was unknown. I felt that these people and the thousands of school children, future citizens of Los Angeles, were entitled to know the history of Fort Moore.

In 1927 the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, centrally located in Salt Lake City, had commenced organizing Camps in Los Angeles. I was eligible for membership and joined the Wilshire Camp. As a history recording organization, its objectives included "restoring old landmarks and marking historical places" connected with pioneer contributions. As the organization expanded I pondered the idea that the Los Angeles County Camps might undertake a "locality project" to commemorate Fort Moore, which was an "historical place" associated with Utah Pioneers. Then, a situation that I had not anticipated arose. A portion of Fort Moore Hill was being removed to provide for the extension of Spring Street. I read that other

portions would be removed as the need arose, and it was possible that the entire hill might be obliterated. This was disturbing, but nevertheless challenging.

I had envisioned a monument sponsored by the city or some other governmental agency. In view of my former experience, it was natural for me to think this, but no sponsor had appeared and the site was a vanishing prospect.

I felt keenly that a remnant of the hill should be retained for a memorial. Should this not be possible, at least the memory of personalities and events associated with this historic site should be rescued from oblivion. The record of these dramatic and meaningful events had been closed for a century, save to the few who cared to delve. The time had come to open the book that all who so desired might read this chapter of the history of the West.

The overall objective of the D.U.P. was to "perpetuate the names and achievements of the men and women who were the pioneers in founding this Commonwealth."

I gave much thought as to the method of presenting the idea of building a Pioneer Memorial. Two things were essential -- accord with the Constitution of the D.U.P. and a feasible plan for raising a fund. Also, the resolution should be sufficiently broad and flexible to provide for any eventuality that might arise.

The following resolution was presented to the County Company at its regular meeting held September 1, 1932.

A copy was sent to each Camp and it was ratified at the Picnic held September 23, 1932, at Westlake Park:

"To the Daughters of Utah Pioneers living in Los Angeles County regarding the erection of a Memorial:

"We, the Daughters of Utah Pioneers living in California are identified with the Daughters of Utah Pioneers in Utah, whose object is to perpetuate the names and achievements of Utah Pioneers, and whereas,

"The Utah Pioneers were not only founders of the Intermountain American Civilization, but were also contributors to the settlement of the State of California and to the advancement and well-being of the United States, in that they participated in the following events:

- 1- The opening of the highways between the East and the West;
- 2- The establishing of the United States Government upon the shores of the Pacific Ocean;
- 3- The discovery of gold in California;
- 4- The settlement of San Bernardino and other towns and cities;

"Therefore be it resolved:

"That we, the California Daughters of Utah Pioneers, express our desire and purpose to commemorate in a worthy and fitting manner the contribution made by the Utah Pioneers to the settlement of California and the advancement of the United States.

"Donations to be a love offering of any amount, not to work a hardship on either camps or members."

The following excerpts are from the minutes of the Los Angeles County Company:

1- "Picnic Social held at Westlake Park, Sept. 23, 1932. President Olive S. Howells introduced May Belle T. Davis who had a resolution to present to the Camps. May Belle T. Davis talked to the subject of erecting a monument to the memory of Utah Pioneers, who played a very important part in the settlement of Southern California. Said it would take years to accomplish this but felt that if we got it started and showed a determination to carry on we would receive support from influential people and organizations. Did not wish to work a hardship upon Camps, but if the Daughters would give any amount when they could afford to, the fund would grow.

Vice President Mabel C. Cain moved that the Resolution be adopted. Carried.

Captain Vada Kast of the Wilshire Camp moved that Pres. Olive S. Howells be appointed Chairman and empowered to select the other members. Carried. May Belle Thurman Davis was the first donor with One Dollar. Katherine Edwards was the second with Twenty Five Cents. Singing "Come Come ye Saints."

This amount was the first contribution made toward the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial.

2- Excerpt from minutes of meeting held at

Adams Ward Chapel, February 20, 1933.

"Vice President Mabel C. Cain took the Chair and Pres. Olive S. Howells resigned as Chairman of the Monument Committee. Pres. Howells said she wished to be released as Chairman of the Memorial Committee as she thought May Belle T. Davis should be the Chairman as she was the originator of the Resolution and was entitled to the honor.

Resignation accepted. Daughter May Belle T. Davis, who drew up the Resolution in regard to the monument was appointed and accepted as Chairman of the Monument Committee."

A committee to be composed of the County President, the County Treasurer and a Monument Chairman was authorized to provide for receipt and depositing of funds, to sign checks and to carry on the work generally. The Monument Chairman was to report the progress of the work each month and at the annual conventions. The other two members of this standing committee would be replaced as succeeding elections might provide.

This cold factual record from the minutes of Los Angeles County Daughters of Utah Pioneers could not forecast the enthusiasm and devotion of the camp members, or the dedication of the succeeding Presidents with whom, as the only continuing member of the Monument Committee, I was to serve for twenty-five years. These Presidents

are: Olive S. Howells, Mabel Cooper Cain, Sophie M. Boshard, Blanche A. Mattson, Zella F. Stubbs, Jeanette W. Redd, Maude S. LaFrankie, Beulah K. McAllister, Blanche S. Heglund, Clara L. Merz and Fay L. Davis.

So it was, after an interlude of six years, I found myself participating in an adventure that seemed strangely new, and yet of a familiar pattern. It was like "coming back home." I knew the direction.

My own objective, clearly etched upon my mind, was to initiate a movement for a civic monument to present in perspective the historic events and personalities relating to Fort Moore. Should this grandiose conception fail of execution, the Los Angeles Daughters of Utah Pioneers still could pursue their purpose to "commemorate in a worthy and fitting manner the contribution made by Utah Pioneers to the settlement of California."

We knew from the beginning that the monument might require many years for completion. Due to the status of Fort Moore Hill, the time was not ripe for any action in that direction. The only urgency was that we start raising a fund. The building of a monument was an ambitious undertaking. A fund was to be the basis of our appeal for support of "influential people and organizations."

As the depression was in full swing, any pressing drive for money might inflict a hardship, which we were pledged not to do. We asked for "love offerings of pennies, dimes or any convenient amount." This was our "locality project", separate from the central organization.

It was as our own child. We resolved to provide for it as best we could.

During the early years my monthly report to the County Company consisted of vignettes of California Pioneer history, especially referring to the Mormon Battalion, and to anything I might have heard or read about Fort Moore Hill. But always, as tactfully as I could, I sought to augment the fund. Though slowly at first, the fund continued to grow as new camps were organized. In an effort to dramatize the subject, a pageant, "The Advent of The American Era in California" was presented on several occasions by members of the camps.

One might wonder how a project so uncertain as to location, so vague of form and remote in time could sustain an interest adequate for progress over a period of many years. The answer lies in the nature of the subject.

Time has a way of sifting the chaff from the kernel of historic events and assigning to them the significance to which they are entitled. Los Angeles was rapidly growing in prestige and importance as one of the great cities of the United States. In ratio to this growth those events associated with its beginning as an American City would take on larger meaning. We could afford to wait as faith, time and history were our allies.

The organization carried on with growing confidence in the merits of our undertaking as the members became better informed concerning activities of Utah pioneers in California.

Through conversations with persons connected with the Civic Center I sensed a nostalgic sentiment for the old landmark, now losing its familiar contour, even though they possessed scant knowledge of the history that had invoked the sentiment.

I became conscious of a pressing need to publicize this history especially to attract the attention of those whose support might be essential to the success of the memorial project.

The Celebration in honor of Western Transportation at the time of the dedication of the Union Station in 1939 provided an opportunity to introduce the subject of the Mormon Battalion to public officials and other civic-minded citizens.

To the Celebration Committee the story of opening the first wagon-road to the Pacific and its relation to the Gadsden Purchase and the Southern Pacific Railway was new and apropos and called forth a hearty response. With overtones of human sacrifices and endurance it injected a dramatic element into this historical pageant in honor of western transportation that was about to be presented to the people of Los Angeles.

The interest and cooperation of the general committee in the preparation of a Mormon Battalion float for the grand parade gave assurance that the complete story of Fort Moore Hill would, with proper timing, receive a similar response. The following is an excerpt from a

report of the monument committee.

PARTICIPATION IN THE CELEBRATION

In recognition of the contribution of the Mormon Battalion to the development of transportation in the West, the California Daughters of the Utah Pioneers were invited by the Union Station Celebration Committee to participate in the grand celebration presenting the history of transportation, held May 3, 4, and 5, 1939, in honor of the completion of the Union Station at Los Angeles.

Through the sponsorship of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints and the cooperation of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, the Union Station Celebration Committee constructed a unique and interesting float which appeared in the grand parade, and on exhibition for three days.

The float was built upon a railroad flat car 32 feet long by 8 feet wide, decorated in the semblance of the desert. Rising abruptly from the midst of this desert scene was a huge boulder upon which was presented on panels on either side a reproduction in clay of the graphic scene entitled "The March" by Gilbert Riswold, from the Mormon Battalion Monument located upon the State Capitol grounds in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Columbia, represented by Beth Marshal D'Arc, bearing the Stars and Stripes, standing upon an elevation in the foreground, presented a thrilling picture. Scenic banners, depicting the country through which the Battalion marched, formed an apron surrounding the car. Placards bearing the following explanatory inscriptions were posted on the float.

1- "1847".

2- The Mormon Battalion enlisted in the service of the United States from the ranks of the Mormon Pioneers at Council Bluffs, Iowa, July 16, 1846.

This Battalion marched from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean, 2000 miles, the longest March of Infantry in history.

It was ordered to make a road through to California.

It pioneered a trail of 474 miles, later traversed by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

3- THE MARCH OF THE MORMON BATTALION

They marched clothed in tatters and scarcely
half fed
And the desert was stained where their bruised
feet had bled;
Their tongues were parched dry 'neath the hot
desert sun,
Yet no water was found when the day's march
was done;

Abreast of their wagon-wheels, burdened by
packs,
They plodded through deep sands to make wagon
tracks.

With stout ropes they pulled their mules
up the ascent
While half fainting themselves with the
effort they spent;

They hewed through the rock with crowbar
and axe
And carried their wagons on low bending
backs.

Orders were orders as every one knew -
"Make a road to the coast, bring the
wagons on through."

By

May Belle T. Davis

- - - - -

The sponsorship of the float by the Presidency of the L.D.S. Church through the mediation of David H. Cannon, President of Hollywood Stake, was an indication of the interest of the Church and a source of encouragement to the California Daughters of Utah Pioneers for the future undertaking.

Participation in the Celebration in honor of Western Transportation gave a new impetus to the monument movement. I was being asked pertinent questions as to the kind and site of the proposed monument. An answer to these questions was soon to be forthcoming.

When I saw a picture in the Los Angeles Times of the plan for the Civic Center, accompanied by the explanation that Fort Moore Hill was to be removed, save only the small portion where the Board of Education Buildings were located, I knew the time had come for some definite action. I called upon Summer Spaulding, an architect connected

with the Civic Center, who very kindly explained the plans on display in his office. I told him that the purpose of our organization was to commemorate Fort Moore Hill, and at his suggestion I appeared before a meeting of the Board of City Planning Commissioners and asked for a monument site on Fort Moore Hill. Mr. Schuchardt, the Chairman, replied that if I would write a letter, setting forth the request as I had stated it, the Commission would give it consideration.

Following are copies of two letters that refer to this matter:

February 7, 1941

City Planning Commission
Los Angeles City Hall
Los Angeles, California

Attention: Mr. Schuchardt

Dear Sir:

A recent edition of a local newspaper gave the information that the Master Plan for the Los Angeles Civic Center provides for the removal of Fort Moore Hill. This item is of particular interest to the California Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.

For several years this organization has been engaged in raising funds for the purpose of erecting a monument in honor of the Mormon Battalion which was enlisted into the service of the United States Government from the ranks of the Utah Pioneers while en route to the West.

The historical location suitable for such a monument would be on Fort Moore Hill, the site of the old fort erected by the Battalion in 1847.

Fort Moore Hill is rich in historical significance from such events as raising of the flag by Fremont and Stockton, the first Fourth of July celebration, and various other events associated with

the establishment of the U. S. Government upon the shores of the Pacific Ocean. The old fort, itself, was, according to our best information, the first United States construction in California.

Is it not desirable and feasible to retain at least a portion of the Hill as an imposing elevation for a patriotic shrine where these historical events might be memorialized and where public patriotic ceremonies might be held.

The California Daughters of the Utah Pioneers are interested in memorializing early American California history and will continue their efforts for securing funds that they might be able when the time arrives to make a worthy contribution in honor of the Mormon Battalion incident.

At a meeting held January 30, 1941, in the Council Chamber of the City Hall, Mr. Spaulding stated that the Master Plan for the Los Angeles Civic Center provides numerous sites for monuments. We request that a site near the vicinity of the old Fort be assigned for a monument in honor of the Mormon Battalion. But, if your plan includes a master monument to memorialize early American California history, then we would prefer to make our contribution toward a Mormon Battalion unit of that monument.

We sincerely trust that you will honor us with an early reply that we may adjust our program to conform to your plan.

Respectfully,

California Daughters of the
Utah Pioneers.

(Signed) May Belle T. Davis

By May Belle T. Davis
Chairman Monument Committee
1570 South Ogden Drive

Board of
CITY PLANNING
Commissioners

Los Angeles
Room 361 City Hall

February 13, 1941

Maybelle T. Davis
Chairman Monument Committee
1570 South Ogden Drive
Los Angeles, California

California Daughters of the Utah Pioneers

Dear Miss Davis:

Your letter of February 7th addressed to
Mr. Schuchardt has been referred to me for answer.

Mr. Schuchardt desired me to inform you that
portions of Fort Moore Hill had been removed when
Sunset Boulevard was built, other portions in 1931
when Spring Street was straightened, and also in
1934 in preparation for the railway station. It is
intended that the portion of Fort Moore Hill now
occupied by the school will remain. It was his
belief that a suitable location for the proposed
monument to the Mormon Battalion could be provided
in the area lying between the school and the pro-
posed County Buildings.

Very truly yours,

Department of City Planning

(Signed) Glenn A. Rick

Glenn A. Rick,
City Planning Director

GAR:HK

- - - - -

This letter from the City Planning Commission gave
the word that we had, for nine years, been awaiting, that
there would be a suitable location for the proposed monu-
ment on or near the site that we desired. There were

claimants, besides the Mormon Battalion, to identification with Fort Moore. The United States First Dragoons, who fought the Battle at San Pasquale and the New York Volunteers also had participated in that first Independence Day Celebration that was so far reaching in its implications.

Here then, upon this imposing elevation above the Civic Center was the ideal site for an American shrine where those who had come by land and sea to help win the Southwest for the United States would be memorialized. Our objective was now clarified -- a civic memorial worthy of the theme, the site, and the City of Los Angeles, for which we would continue to augment our offering.

Two factors, essential to the building of the Monument, yet remained to be determined -- the time and the builder.

Preparations for removal of the hill continued until November 7, 1941, when the demolition began with a brief ceremony on the hill. The program consisting of music by the band, a parade of the colors, speeches, etc., appeared in the newspapers of the preceding day and named Mr. Isadore Dockweiler, a citizen of high prestige, as Chairman.

I wondered if Mr. Dockweiler had the information concerning Fort Moore that I felt sure he would like to have for this occasion. Here might be an opportunity to publicize this story. I called Mr. Dockweiler on the telephone. When I said that I had in my possession a story of the building of the fort, he interrupted with,

"My good woman if you will come in in the morning and read that story you will save my honor. I have had every librarian in the city searching and they have found nothing upon the subject."

The next morning I went to the hill and read Col. Cooke's orders for the construction of Fort Moore and a brief account of the First Fourth of July Celebration in Los Angeles. I doubt if many or any of those present had ever heard those facts before. The reporters who asked me for a copy, heard them that day for the first time. Mr. Dockweiler who had grown up in the neighborhood said he had played in the "old ditch" when he was a boy, but all he had known was that U. S. troops had been stationed there during the Mexican War.

This incident impressed me still more strongly with the need to disclose this gem of history that somehow had cast a luster on the hill, but was itself concealed. A tradition of adventure, patriotism and significance of which any city of the United States might be proud, had disappeared from view as had the crumbled earth-works of the abandoned fort. With the demolition of the hill this "lost first chapter" of the history of Los Angeles, as an American city, would be found and framed in inspiring beauty to shine above the City's Civic Center.

On December 7, 1941, one month after the demolition ceremony, a blow was struck at Pearl Harbor and the United States found itself embroiled in World War II, which

became the all absorbing subject for the American government and the American home.

The Daughters of the Los Angeles County Utah Pioneers converted their monument fund into defense bonds and the Camps made their annual contributions in bonds until the close of the war.

For eight years longer the organization kept the fire of purpose and enthusiasm burning. We were able to do this because the subject did not grow cold. As the hill diminished in size, our interest grew ever warmer, since the time was now approaching when we should know whether this monument was to be a civic project of imposing proportions sponsored by the governing board of Los Angeles or a simple marker financed by our own organization.

As I weighed the problem to be solved in the near future, judging in the light of my former experience, I felt that a younger and more robust person than myself should be appointed to act as chairman of the monument committee. I asked the newly elected president, Beulah K. McAllister to accept my resignation, stating that I should at all times be happy to serve in a lesser capacity. This she declined to accept in no uncertain terms, as she felt that I should still carry on.

The one remaining factor, pertaining to the building of the monument, yet to be determined was the "Builder" -- the particular public official to whom a subject of this category might appeal, one who possessed the prestige and the ability to carry it through to a successful

culmination. While mentally exploring the field for a possible candidate, I was suddenly brought to a standstill by the headlines in my morning newspaper that the demolition of Fort Moore Hill had been completed and that the work on the County Courthouse would commence without further delay.

This was the day of decision, the "Time" I had foreseen. My breakfast remained untouched as I came face to face with my responsibility. I had neither strength nor will to investigate and seek numerous interviews. This was what I had sought to escape. My pre-war contacts, that could at this crucial period be most helpful, were lost. The time had come for action. After several hours of unproductive worry, I did the simplest and most obvious thing -- I called the editor of the Los Angeles Times and asked him if he would be interested in a story about a group of women who wished to contribute \$2,000 toward building a monument upon Fort Moore Hill to commemorate the first Independence Day celebration in Los Angeles. I was happy to find him very responsive. He assured me that he was interested and that others had called him about this subject. He said he would send a reporter for an interview.

The following is an account of this interview appearing in the Los Angeles Times, April 4, 1949.

WOMEN RAISING FUNDS TO MARK FORT MOORE SITE

Every bite of that big electric shovel gnawing away at Fort Moore Hill makes the history-minded of Los Angeles

sorrowful - sorrowful because part of the city's historical ground is crumbling before necessary progress.

There's Mrs. May Belle T. Davis, of 242½ N. Van Ness Ave., monument chairman of the California Daughters of Utah Pioneers, for instance, who thinks something should be done about it.

"It's not that I'm against progress, mind you," the energetic former Utah Legislator said, but there should be something where Fort Moore Hill was, to remind coming generations of Americans of the coming of our pioneers to this area."

Raise Fund for Marker

She revealed, as a starter, that the California Daughters of Utah Pioneers accumulated \$2,000 toward the creation of a fund for a suitable marker.

"Even though the Mormon Battalion built the Fort in 1847," she said, "I believe any monument, or flagpole site, should be broad enough to commemorate the coming of American civilization to California."

She showed a number of historical documents quoting military orders. They were dated April 24, 1847, from the headquarters Southern Military District, Los Angeles, ordering the 1st Dragoons of the Mormon Battalion to begin construction of a fort. The fort was to have "one small bastion, front for at least six guns in barbette."

On July 4, that same year, her documents show, the American Flag was raised over the completed project in typical American July 4th fashion.

The Broadway tunnel, soon to disappear, passes under the place where the bastion once stood. And Mrs. Davis said she will not rest until some fitting monument to commemorate this significant event in Los Angeles history has been achieved -- progress or no progress.

- - - - -

The letters and telephone calls in response to this story were complimentary and sympathetic and strengthened our conviction that public sentiment would favor a memorial. Various ideas were presented for proceeding with the project but they contained no suggestion that might lead to a solution of our quest for the builder.

After four months, the postman delivered the letter that I had been waiting and hoping to receive.

August 8, 1949

Mrs. May Belle T. Davis
242-1/4 North Van Ness Avenue
Los Angeles, California

I read with interest an interview with you concerning Fort Moore Hill, which was published in the Times on April 4, 1949.

As architect engaged by the City and County in 1947 to revise the Civic Center Site Plan, I had occasion to look into the history of Fort Moore and recommended to the city and county that a park be built on that site and that the Broadway Tunnel be retained. This was one of the recommendations in my report which has not been followed. However, I understand the Civic Center Authority is considering the construction of some sort of memorial near the original site accessible from Hill Street, and at their meeting last Monday the matter was referred to the County Regional Planning Commission for further study.

I have been in contact with this agency, urging that the project be not limited to the erection of a flagpole, but that it include adequate park or esplanade and a suitable structure for the retention of military records of the citizen soldiers and sailors of the Los Angeles area.

Since our views appear to be in harmony, I am wondering if you would care to give me a call in the next few days in order that we might discuss ways and means toward that accomplishment.

Yours very truly,

Burnett C. Turner

BCT:hf

I lost no time in making contact with Mr. Turner. The President, Beulah K. McAllister and Vice-President, Zetelle Sessions of the D.U.P. accompanied me to his office where we had a momentous interview. We were

keenly appreciative of Mr. Turner's contribution at that time. The information and advice which he gave us were the key to what followed. After a somewhat lengthy briefing as to the site and possibilities for a memorial, I asked him the important question as to whom we might present the subject with the greatest hope for success. He told us if we could secure the interest of County Supervisor John Anson Ford, that our long cherished dream would become a reality.

I do not recall the details of our interview with Mr. Ford. But what Mr. Turner said was a prophesy of which the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial is the fulfillment. Such expressions as "the first Independence Day Celebration in Los Angeles," an American shrine, "birth of Los Angeles as an American city," may have supplied the spark that ignited the sentiment already existing in a general way for a memorial upon the historic site. But the personalities and significance of events that had inspired the sentiment were obscure. The Fort Moore episode seemed to be the "lost chord" in the symphonic saga of the West. Mr. Ford was sensitive to its muted strains.

Directing our attention toward the hill, visible from his office window, he asked us to accompany him to the site. There it was, a stretch of mutilated terrain extending from Hill Street to Broadway. Where the demolition had ceased there was a cut in the hillside forty

feet deep and three hundred twenty-five feet long, an unsightly view in the heart of the Civic Center. What kind of monument could be erected on such a site? A memorial wall was the obvious answer.

That interview may have suggested a solution to a subject "under discussion by the Civic Center Authority for construction of some sort of memorial and referred to the County Regional Planning Commission."

Noting Mr. Ford's responsive interest as we discussed the various facets of the subject, I saw the stature of the builder emerging. His long experience as a public official, dedicated to the spiritual and cultural, as well as the physical needs of the city, had admirably equipped him for the task awaiting.

As we parted I had a feeling of exhilaration and relief as though I had passed on to another something that I had long treasured and possessed, yet still retained.

A few weeks had passed when we received invitations to attend a meeting in the assembly room of the Board of Education where a small model of a memorial wall was to be unveiled. Several days after our interview, Mr. Ford had engaged the services of Mr. Kellog, an architect; and his wife, who was a sculptress, to make this model as a visual aid in presenting the idea of a Fort Moore Memorial to the members of the governing agencies which would be asked to unite in financing this project.

As I sat in that meeting listening to the speeches of approval by the city and county officials and other

citizens of high standing, and contemplating the dispatch and diplomacy that had brought about the occasion, I was happy and relaxed in the thought that there was nothing more for me to say or do, except as it referred to the pledge of the D.U.P. Then I was aroused from my complacency when I heard Mr. Ford say, "I would like Mrs. Davis to say a few words."

During the three years that followed I was to hear that introduction by Mr. Ford many times as the Fort Moore Memorial was being discussed at the public sessions of the various boards. The subject presented many facets -- idealistic, aesthetic, and patriotic. But its utilitarian appeal as a retaining wall was a persuasive factor reinforced by recurring earth slides. According to the plans that had been devised, certain features of the memorial, specifically those pertaining to the flag staff ensemble, would be financed from private contributions for which a campaign would be conducted at a later period.

The final appropriation by governmental agencies, as then estimated, was made by the City Council in June 1952. I was present upon that occasion. Cora Fischer, Mr. Ford's secretary, had called me to come to the council room at once, as she had received word that the Fort Moore Memorial was to be voted upon within the hour and she had not been able to locate Mr. Ford. This was the crucial moment at which the success or failure of the project would be determined. What would happen if Mr. Ford should not be

there? But he arrived just in time. The situation had been so disturbing that I failed to understand the motion. I could hear the votes coming over the microphone -- NO, NO up to nine of them with only three yes votes.

My head was swimming. We had lost. Our long years of working and waiting, and all of our high hopes of the past three years had failed at this last moment. In utter despair I turned to Cora Fischer. "What now," I asked. "We'll proceed with building the monument, of course," she calmly replied. "But the vote was 'no'," I said. The question, she advised me, had been "shall \$80,000 be deleted from the budget?"

The project was assigned to the County Board of Supervisors to be conducted by a committee composed of a representative for each of the governing agencies under the chairmanship of County Supervisor John Anson Ford. The committee, as first organized, consisted of Dorothy B. Chandler, representing the County Board of Supervisors; Olin Darby, the Board of Education; May Belle T. Davis, the Civic Center Authority; Charles H. Matcham, City Council; H. A. Van Norman, the Board of Water and Power Commissioners. The committee would function under the official title of The Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial Advisory Committee.

A fund, allocated from the public treasury and an official agency were now available for carrying on the work of the memorial. These factors, with a bank deposit

of \$2,500.00, accumulated through twenty years by the Los Angeles County Daughters of Utah Pioneers as a core for contributions from other private sources, gave assurance that Fort Moore would be memorialized in an imposing and inspiring pioneer memorial that would be worthy of the site, the subject, and the City of Los Angeles.

This is my story of the inception of the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial.

Mr. Kelly, seventy-one drawings were posted in the room of the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The auspicious moment for depiction by a jury, selected from among eminent artists of the United States, had arrived.

It was a tense moment, when Mr. Kelly brought the envelopes containing the identifications of the competing architects to be opened in the presence of the Advisory Committee. But even more tense for the contestants, awaiting the decision. Among these were Kamuel Alachi and Dixie Fagan, recipients of the first award.

The contract for the construction of the memorial wall was awarded to M. J. Brock and Sons, the low bidder.

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on July 21, 1912, under direction of John Aaron Ford, chairman of the advisory committee.

A competitive method was later employed by Mr. Stewart, art director of the advisory committee, to find an artist to do the sculptured plaques for the wall of the memorial.

THE BUILDING OF THE MEMORIAL

The first subject for consideration by the Advisory Committee was an architectural design for the memorial.

Following the announcement of a competition for this purpose, the creative embers in the minds of the architects of Los Angeles County began to glow. On the date specified in the program of competition, which had been prepared by architect Roy H. Kelly, seventy-one drawings were posted in the room of the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The auspicious moment for decision by a jury, selected from among eminent artists of the United States, had arrived.

It was a tense moment, when Mr. Kelly brought the envelopes containing the identifications of the competing architects to be opened in the presence of the Advisory Committee. But even more tense for the contestants, awaiting the decision. Among these were Kazumi Adachi and Dike Nagano, recipients of the first award.

The contract for the construction of the memorial wall was awarded to M. J. Brock and Sons, the low bidders.

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on July 13, 1953, under direction of John Anson Ford, chairman of the advisory committee.

A competitive method was later employed by Dr. Albert Stewart, art director of the advisory committee, to select an artist to do the sculptured plaques for the south panel of the memorial.

As in the former competition, the award was made by a panel of distinguished jurors, among whom were Dr. Albert Stewart, Kazumi Adachi, Dike Nagano and Mrs. Dorothy Chandler, a member of the advisory committee.

Henry Kreis was chosen from a group of sculptors noted for the special type of work required for this construction. Models for the plaque were prepared in the Kreis studios in Connecticut and were cast in ceramic veneer by the Gladding, McBean and Company of California.

The advisory committee selected Albert Stewart to do the sculptures on the low wall at the base of the flagpole and the design on the pylon.

My special assignment for the project was to the historical committee, whose chairman was Dr. Glen S. Dumke, Dean of Faculty and Professor of Western History at Occidental College of Los Angeles. This work comprised an analysis of the significance of the Fort Moore incident of California history and verbal interpretive inscriptions for the sculptured designs.

As the memorial wall neared completion, the subjects of the pylon and flagstaff were discussed. This was the signal to private sources interested in financing these features.

The Mormon people, now comprising a substantial membership in Southern California, were keenly interested in these special features of the memorial. Many of these people were descendants of Mormon pioneers from whose

ranks the Battalion had been recruited.

The Sons of Utah Pioneers had been carrying on a limited campaign with the promise that a movement on a larger scale would follow. This promise came to fruition in the proffer of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to contribute the amount required to complete the financing of the pylon and flagstaff. The plan provided that the Stake Presidents would conduct a campaign to secure one-half of the amount in the Los Angeles County Stakes and that this would be matched by a sum from the general church fund.

The Los Angeles County Daughters of Utah Pioneers had planned for many years to make the first private contribution since the first donation for a Fort Moore Memorial had been made in their organization. But with this opportunity to double the \$5,500.00 now in their monument fund expedience prevailed, and all funds collected for the memorial were joined in the "Stake Presidents' Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial Fund."

Several weeks following the close of the Presidents' campaign, Elder George Q. Morris, representing the First Presidency of the Mormon Church presented a check in the sum of \$76,258.00 to County Supervisor John Anson Ford, Chairman of the Advisory Committee, for construction of the flagstaff and pylon.

Since the original organization of the Advisory Committee, the following new members have been added:

John H. Mathews, John F. Howells, Jr., S. B. Robinson, Alexander J. Stoddard and Dr. Hugh C. Willett.

Now that the project has been completed a program committee has been appointed to arrange for the dedication ceremony. Members are: Charles O. Matcham, Chairman; John F. Howells, Jr., John Mathews and Richard J. Wood. We anticipate this should be a grand occasion in the history of the City of Los Angeles. This dedicatory celebration will mark the first substantial memorial in Southern California commemorating the occasion when California became a part of the United States of America.

Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial occupies a commanding eminence above the Civic Center, standing between the Hollywood Freeway and Sunset Boulevard.

The south panel of the Memorial Wall is decorated with four sculptured plaques. Three of these are devoted to subjects that have made the southland a habitation for abundant and happy living for millions of home-loving people: "water to meet the expanding needs; progressive transportation; and agriculture to share and spare." The large center plaque represents the raising of the American Flag, July 4, 1847, at the first Independence Day celebration in Los Angeles -- a circumstance which insured to this land the protection of a free government for a free people.

The flagstaff ensemble, with its historical portrayals on the low wall, and the majestic pylon, embellished

with a sculptured eagle and noble inscription, rising eighteen feet above the high wall and forming a background for the tall commemorative flagpole, with stars and stripes waving above, will present an inspiring scene to all who view the Memorial.

* * * * *

