

A tribute to the Mormon Battalion would not be complete without honoring the noble women who were affected by this march. Those who remained behind and those who walked side by side with their husbands. Many things will be said in tribute today about the members of the Mormon Battalion. These same tributes apply to the women and children marching with them.

But there were many left behind as the Battalion marched away. I shall briefly pay tribute to those women and children who stayed behind.

May the spirit of history touch us as we pause to reflect upon the contributions made by these women to the cause of building Zion and this nation.

Remembering them we shall make a contribution in our own communities that not only builds on what they built as a foundation for us but gives those that follow an equally noble foundation of liberty to build upon. May we remember the scripture as stated in 2 Cor. 3:17: "Where the Spirit

of the Lord is, there is Liberty”.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin taught us in April conference that we should not only strive to get out of debt, but that we also have spiritual debts that we owe. I suggest that one such debt is a debt of gratitude and remembrance to those pioneer families affected by the march of the Mormon Battalion. This march was used by the Lord to prosper the cause of Zion and this nation but it was not without cost. A huge part of the cost was paid by those left behind. We honor these faithful pioneer women with a beautiful bronze plaque on their graves and they are remembered in the book written by Shirley Maynes, *“500 Wagons Stood Still”*. You can not read their stories and not weep. We remember them in the Tabernacle today. But I would like to suggest a pattern that may help us remember them more often.

Deanna Edwards wrote a beautiful song about remembering. Imagine with me that

the words from this song are the voices of our dear pioneer sisters asking us to remember them.

Remember me whenever you see a sunrise – is it possible that it could remind us that “joy cometh in the morning.” As the Battalion marched their 2000 miles these sisters held down personal forts with faith and obedience.

Remember me whenever you see a star - Many were the nights that found our pioneer sisters weak from inadequate nourishment or worrying about where they would obtain food for the morrow. They and We are numbered to our Heavenly Father as the stars.

Remember me whenever you see a rainbow – often storms brought chills and fever, and pneumonia and death – or sometimes they brought rainbows as a reminder of God’s promise to those who keep their covenants with Him.

Or woods in autumn colors from afar - To

everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heavens. What a great purpose the Mormon Battalion served, “they the builders of this nation”.

Remember me whenever you see roses - or seagulls flying in a sky of blue - and remember the miracles. Have miracles ceased? ...nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men.”

Remember me whenever you see a tear drop - the pioneer women shed tears for loss of home, concern for husband and want of food and raiment for their children.

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy...”

Remember me whenever you see meadows wet with the morning dew - for we know “his favor is as dew upon the grass.”

Most importantly - **remember me whenever you feel love growing in your heart -** “The hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers... for love is of God.

Remember me and I'll be remembering you.

As we remember our pioneer sisters and their courage and sacrifice is it not possible that we will do a better job of keeping our own covenants with courage and exactness?

Elder Eyring said it best while talking about the trial and test of this life. What is being tested is the same at all times in our lives and for every person: will we do whatsoever the Lord God will command?

Remember that our sisters passed that test. Imagine us passing that test now.

Is it possible we were cheering on these sisters from Heaven? Probably.

Can we imagine that they are indeed cheering us on from Heaven as well! Absolutely!.

Clarinda McCullough wrote to her Mormon Battalion member husband, Levy, "My trials are great and it seems sometimes as

though I cannot live.” It was the last letter he received from her. She did not live. Nor did their little baby Emily But we remember Clarinda this day and all those many valiant women like her – when we see sunrises, or stars, or rainbows, or woods in autumn; when we see roses or seagulls or waves shining in the sun – from Council Bluffs, to California, or in the Salt Lake Tabernacle or where ever we are.

As we remember and study, we will grow in feelings of love in our hearts and will work harder to pass the test of life.

Adding another verse to the hymn “They, the Builders of the Nation” we pay tribute to the women who also laid the foundation for our nation.:

“They, the women gone before us
tending hearth, safeguarding home,
while their loved ones, soldiers mustered,
marched, they stayed behind - - alone.
Courage, patience, faith displaying
They too built what we build on,

Let us show that we remember
These dear pioneers now gone.
We honor them in the Tabernacle tonight.
In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.