

# MORMON BATTALION ASSOCIATION

## MORMON BATTALION ASSOCIATION BOARD

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## From the President

Greg Christofferson



RootsTech is a family history and technology conference and trade show held annually in the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah. It is the world's largest family-history technology conference. Our Association decided to have a booth at the March, 2025 convention. We had an expectation going in that there was an interest among attendees about the Mormon Battalion, but the attraction of our booth exceeded our expectations!

We had a continuous stream of people who wanted to know more about their ancestors who served in the Battalion. To that end, we had binders with the one-page biographies that Mary Ann Kirk has written about each Battalion soldier and all of the women who accompanied the Battalion. People were excited to learn more about their ancestors and we printed out the appropriate bios for them. Filling out our booth was a rations display and some of the artwork by Dorothy Boyle (see the January/February newsletter about the paintings). Most exciting, we signed up many new wonderful people as new members of the MBA, and sold quite a bit of merchandise!

I appreciate our staff members who manned the booth and did a great job of explaining the Battalion story and signing up new members. Not only are we going to return to RootsTech next

# General Membership Meeting

## WHEN

Thu, May 15, 2025  
7:00 PM MDT

## PRESENTER

Greg Christofferson

## WHAT

“From Sea to Shining Sea: The Mormon Battalion and the Mexican-American War.”

LINK  
TBD



year, but with a larger booth and expanded displays!

In this newsletter you will see other activities by staff and association members, including a large group that attended the Oregon-California Trails Symposium in Salt Lake City in April.

## MEET OUR PRESENTER

**Greg Christofferson** is president of the national Mormon Battalion Association. He has been involved with the Battalion’s history since the 1980s. He is considered an expert on the Southern portion of the California Mormon trail, developed a tour and taken many groups on trail excursions. He planned an overnight and hike for the experience



San Diego Council of the Boy Scouts of America to earn a Battalion patch. His current calling is as an Area Church History Specialist with an assignment in writing temple histories. He is an active member of the Mormon History Association, having twice served on its Executive Board. He has edited numerous Church history books, presented papers at conferences and is published in The Journal of Mormon History. Most importantly, Greg is the father of four amazing children, fourteen exceptionally talented and good looking grandchildren, and five precious great-grandchildren. Greg will situate the role of the Battalion within the larger context of the Mexican-American War as America sought to fulfill its "Manifest Destiny."

# APRIL MONTH IN REVIEW



*Greg made a presentation to the Jordan River Temple Chapter of the Sons of the Utah Pioneers*



*The MBA group who attended the OCTA Symposium*

## rootstech





**IN MEMORIAM**

As Memorial Day approaches, consider purchasing the newly designed grave marker for your ancestor. You can purchase it on-line at

<https://mormonbattalion.com/product/grave-marker/>

## 2025 FIRST ENCAMPMENT HIKE

Commemorative Trek to First Pioneer Campsite in the Salt Lake Valley  
Saturday, July 19th, 2025  
7:00 a.m.  
Donner Park  
2770 East and 990 South  
Salt Lake City, UT (East of Hogle Zoo)

**MORE INFORMATION:**  
<https://www.daysof47.com/events/first-encampment-hike>



## THE HENSONS ARE AT IT AGAIN . . .

Kevin & Denny Henson hiked from Mount Pisgah to San Diego in 2008-2009 to document the Mormon Battalion Trail. This time they are hiking from Pueblo, Colorado to Salt Lake City to document the trail the Detachment took in 1847. Follow them on their blog and listen to their podcast. See schedule next page!

<https://www.battaliontrek.com/blog.html>

<https://www.battaliontrek.com/podcast.html>



## May - June 2025

### **Battalion Trek 2025 - SCHEDULE:**

NOTE: Due to unforeseeable weather and possibly other contrary events, the schedule below should be considered 'tentative.' However, if a local activity is planned, the Henson's will arrange to be present even if their hiking/biking schedule must be rearranged.

Dates	WkDay(s)	Evening Camp and Key Event Locations
April 15-18	Tue-Fri	OCTA Conference – Salt Plaza Hotel, Salt Lake City
26-Apr	Sat	Introduction at 8 AM - Pueblo Riverfront Mormontown & Battalion Monument 539 Stanton Ave, Pueblo Start 5-mile Hike along Eastside Fountain trail - 9 AM – Noon
27 Apr	Sun	Presentation – 6 PM – LDS Pueblo Stake Center, 4720 Surfwood Lane, Pueblo The Mormon settlement at Pueblo 1846-47 and Their Route to Salt Lake City
3-May	Sat	Historic Fort Lupton Heritage Fair, Ft Lupton Living history event demonstration – 10 AM to 4 PM
17-May	Sat	Ft Laramie National Historic Site, Ft Laramie WY area
Jun 7	Sat	Casper WY - National Historic Trails Center - Presentation 1 PM Kearny's 1845 South Pass Expedition – prelude to war and Mormon Battalion
June 14-17	Sat-Tue	Martin's Cove area - National Historic Site
1-Jul	Tue	Farson WY - Ice Cream social at Farson Mercantile – 7 PM
July 6-7	Sun-Mon	Fort Bridger area & Ft Bridger Historic Site
18-Jul	Fri	Big Mountain Pass hike (tentative)
19-Jul	Sat	SLC - 5-mile public HIKE from Donner Hill to First Encampment site (tentative)
24-Jul	Thu	Day's of '47 Parade participation
26-Jul	Sat	Mormon Battalion encampment and symposium This is the Place Heritage Park, SLC – 10 AM to 4 PM

### **For more information go to:**

Link to Battalion Trek research hike blogs:	<a href="https://www.battaliontrek.com">https://www.battaliontrek.com</a>
Link to Mormon Battalion Facebook Page:	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/39hb7pr7">https://tinyurl.com/39hb7pr7</a>
Link to Mormon Battalion Association website:	<a href="https://mormonbattalion.com">https://mormonbattalion.com</a>
Link to Oregon-California Trails Association:	<a href="https://octa-trails.org">https://octa-trails.org</a>
Link to Historic Mormon Trails Association:	<a href="https://mormontrails.org/">https://mormontrails.org/</a>
This is the Place Heritage Park:	<a href="https://www.thisistheplace.org">https://www.thisistheplace.org</a>

PART FIVE OF SERIES

{Part One: July-August 2024 MBA Newsletter}

**A List Of Commemorative Works Honoring The Mormon Battalion**

**Cary B. Skidmore**

**Mormon Battalion Association, Member**

Draft Issue D February 2025



*Cary & Wendy Skidmore are presently serving a mission at the Nebraska and Iowa Historic Sites Mission. They previously served an eighteen-month mission at the Mormon Battalion Historic Site in San Diego from 2020 to 2021.*

**Idaho/Utah (12)**

**1. A trail marker near City of Rocks, Idaho** was verified and photographed. The text reads: “In 1848 Battalion members traveling eastward from California, left the California Trail near here to rejoin their families in Utah, thus opening the Salt Lake Cutoff. Eagle Project 1998 EDW.”

**2. Parting of the Ways: California Road at Raft River** (Delco, Idaho): This marker mentions the returning Mormon Battalion briefly with this text: “When the California Trail meant the Salt Lake Cutoff, many pioneers took that trail into the Salt Lake Valley. Returning members of the Mormon Battalion, traveling east, pioneered a route to Salt Lake.” It was erected in 2001 by Daughters of Utah Pioneers (marker number 520). 58

**3. Captain Jefferson Hunt, Soldier, Pioneer, Churchman** (Downey, Idaho): This monument is a tall obelisk with a bronze plaque that includes these words as part of the inscription: “Charles Jefferson Hunt served in the Mormon Battalion as Captain of Company “A” and as assistant executive officer. In its historic march from Council Bluffs, Iowa to San Diego, California, 1846 - 47. His service won the commendation of all who served with him.” It was erected in 1950 by descendants of Captain Hunt and the Utah Pioneer Trails and Landmarks Association (marker number 119). 59

**4. Captain James Brown** (Ogden, Utah): This monument includes a statue and two bronze plaques that detail his extensive involvement with the Mormon Battalion. It is located among other monuments in Ogden Park. This monument was erected July 29, 1947, by descendants of Captain James Brown, Citizens of Weber County, and Utah Pioneer Trails and Landmarks Association (marker number 112). 60

**5. The Old Emigrant Road** (Syracuse, Utah): This stone monument has a plaque with this relevant text: “This Old Emigrant Road was...first used by Captain Samuel Hensley with ten men, August 1848. Upon his advice, Mormon Battalion members returning from California also traveled this

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road. This contingent of forty-five men and one woman, with seventeen wagons took this trail on their way to Salt Lake City.” The plaque (No. 450) was erected in 1989 by “Rachel Layton Warren Camp – Iris Camp.”

**6. Thomas L. Kane** (Salt Lake City, Utah): Mounted on the base of the statue of Thomas L. Kane on the grounds of the Utah Capitol building are two bronze plaques that describe Kane’s connections to the Battalion and contributions of the Battalion. 61

**7. Salt Lake Cutoff** (Uddy Hot Springs, Utah): Photographed by Curt Whiteford on November 5, 2023. See photo below.

**8. The Constitution Revered** (Salt Lake City, Utah): This monument quotes from Brigham Young’s farewell address to the Battalion at Council Bluffs, Iowa. It was erected by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers – Central Company in 1976. It is marker No. 392. 62

**9. Mormon Battalion Monument** (Salt Lake City, Utah): Also, on the grounds of the Utah State Capitol, this is the most massive monument to the Mormon Battalion. The rose-pink granite rises to 100 feet. Bronze sculptures depict various aspects of the Battalion experience. Additionally, there are two bronze plaques. One lists all the members of the battalion and the other gives tribute to their accomplishments. “This monument was erected by authorization of the state of Utah as the results of a movement begun in 1905 by the ‘Daughters of the Mormon Battalion.’ The funds came from thousands of contributors, the total of which was duplicated by an appropriation by the legislature of Utah. The monument was completed, unveiled, and dedicated on May 30, 1927.” 63 To our knowledge, this is the earliest date for a commemorative work honoring the Battalion that is extant today.

**10. Mormon Battalion Plaza** (Salt Lake City, Utah): This emotionally moving collection of commemorative works is located just before the entrance to This Is The Place Heritage Park. The three principal sculptures are named, “Duty Calls,” “Answering The Call,” and “Duty Triumphs.” Two other pieces at the back of the plaza are captioned, “Faith as a Gale Wind Going West,” and “With Toil and Courage, Until We Meet Again.” Mormon Battalion Plaza was dedicated August 21, 2010.

**11. First Encampment Park** (Salt Lake City, Utah): Extensive informative is provided on three stone markers. Text that includes references to the Mormon Battalion is as follows: “On July 22, 1847, the main body of the Mormon Pioneer Company, along with a few of the Mormon Battalion sick detachment and some of the Mississippi saints, camped near this location...When the main body of the Pioneer Company camped here July 22, 1847, other members of the Company were in various locations. A group of pioneers and two Mormon Battalion men (James Oakley and George S. Clark) were delayed by Colorado tick fever and entered the valley two days later, July 24...Four men had been sent to guide the valley members of the Mormon Battalion Sick Detachment and a group of Mississippi Mormons who had wintered at Fort Pueblo, Colorado, Amasa M. Lyman and Roswell Stevens of the Pioneer Company, John H. Tippets and Thomas Wolsey of the Mormon Battalion.” The park was dedicated by Elder M. Russell Ballard, July 22,

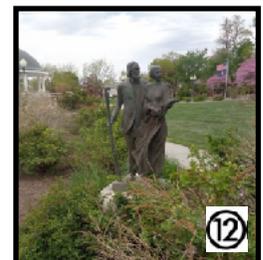
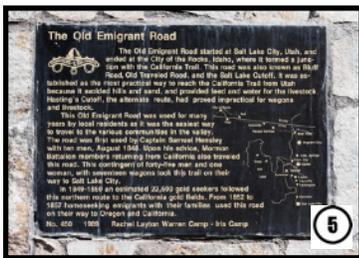
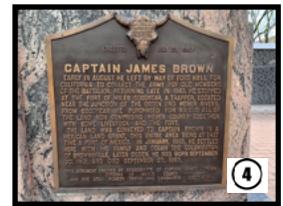
1997, exactly 150 years after the arrival of the pioneers there. 64

**12. First Settlers of Draper** (Draper, Utah): A full-size statue of Ebenezer and Phebe Brown rests on a stone base. The inscription on plaque at base of statue reads as follows: “Ebenezer Brown, 1801-1878, Phebe Draper Palmer Brown, 1797-1879, They arrived in 1849 after serving as members of the Mormon Battalion. This park was part of their original homestead and site of the Draper Fort.” This monument was erected in 2001. 65

**Summary**

We have listed 99 commemorative works that explicitly honor the Mormon Battalion. The earliest one was dedicated in 1927 and the most recent one in 2024. Some are massive in size while others are barely noticeable. Some are in large metropolitan areas while others are in extremely remote areas. Sponsoring organizations vary from local Boy Scout troops, Church units, and historical societies to state and even national organizations. Some were funded and erected by ad hoc committees formed for the sole purpose of creating a monument. Some work was commissioned of professionals and other labor was donated. The Mormon Battalion was enlisted over 178 years ago. We find it remarkable that so many commemorative works were erected over a period of 97 years. This fact, in and of itself, is a monument to the enduring legacy of the Mormon Battalion.

- 58 <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=123843>
- 59 <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=48986>
- 60 <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=149971>
- 61 <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=167225>
- 62 <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=132154>
- 63 <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=35195>
- 64 <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=224744>



## Looking for Documents with Laura Anderson Report on our National Archives Trip Feb 2025 By Denny Henson

If you've ever wondered why it is so important to send Laura Anderson to the National Archives, I hope this description of my trip in February 2025 will paint you a clear picture. It was nothing like I expected, and yet it was more than I expected. I went thinking I'd learn how to research documents, and left having learned so much more than that. I'm grateful I got to go, but I'm more grateful that I got to go with Laura. Without her, the experience would have been totally different.



All the logistics of our trip (appointments, lodging, and transportation) were arranged by Craig and Laura. We just had to get on the plane and show up ready to work. We, the hungry Hensons who hadn't eaten all day, requested a stop for nourishment. That led us to a Chinese takeout on the way to the *VRBO* and then a cozy meal in our little "DC digs". We settled in and then headed to the grocery store.

I guess God decided he was going to provide spiritual nourishment before physical because the first person we met in the parking garage was a bishopric counselor of the ward. With absolutely no effort, we had church info and an invitation.

Monday the archives were closed so we had a delightful afternoon meandering through the National Air & Space Museum, but Tuesday we were up and at it ready to arrive at the designated parking garage of choice by 8:30 before the daily fees went up. Craig was chauffeur and Laura navigated. On our daily "commute" I enjoyed seeing all the row houses, governmental & departmental buildings, and generally wondering what it would be like to live in DC.



First day at the archives was stressful for me. The security guards assume you are a criminal until you are found innocent. We were searched thoroughly, scrutinized carefully, and reminded of the rules frequently. Our 30-minute online training was completed without a hitch and we proudly received the coveted ID Card. This is the *key* to going *anywhere* or getting *anything* at the archives. I should note here – I noticed immediately Laura and Craig were not persons of suspicion. They received friendly smiles and "how-do-you dos."

Trusty ID card in hand, I was ready to work. I felt somewhat handicapped as any personal notebooks, pens, etc. had to be kept at my locker. They provided paper and pencils. That was it. I could take the one-page computer printout of names I was looking for but only after it was stamped. Computers are allowed but must be out of the bag, with chords, mice, thumb drives, etc. able to be inspected. Laura taught me to put all the accessories into a gallon Ziploc and that made it much easier to run all the stuff around to the various rooms I needed to use.

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My first day was to find Battalion pensions. The effort was going poorly as the only idea the staff member helping me had been able to give me was a batch of micro-fiche to review. Thankfully Laura came down to check on me and the woman recognized her and said the documents were already in Family Search. That increased my confidence dramatically since I was familiar with FS and Laura told me exactly how to find the ones I needed. Ha! Did I mention it's important to have Laura Anderson at the archives? I can't begin to tell you how many hours I would have wasted on those microfiche! I have to say it was a proud moment when I found my first document! Next step – requesting said document. This was a learning curve as well. Who taught me how to fill out the request form and the correct form to use? You guessed it – Laura! Once I turned the request forms downstairs, they delivered the documents to me upstairs in the “reading room.”



When you are in this room, you can almost taste the intense “research brainpower” of the people sitting there. Intense because they are so highly focused, and totally absorbed in not missing even the minutest detail of the documents they are looking at. I should note at one point during the online training you are essentially told not to “bother” other researchers. The first two days (out of fear of potential consequences from the security guards & staff) I abided by that rule. After that I found the opportunity impossible to resist! Fascinating topics, incredibly interesting – made you want to stand over shoulders and sneak peaks at the documents *they* were handling. And... this is where Laura’s reputation was even more evident. Other researchers acknowledged her, thanked her, asked her questions, and shared things they were doing. It was evident she was well respected.

Why you may ask? Whatever work Laura does for her personal research, she documents it in her own “index” making it easier for those who would follow her. A gentleman with a PhD who had been searching for Mexican War records for years told Kevin, “Oh those records no longer exist in the archive.” Kevin showed Laura, and she said, (after consulting her personally generated index) “No, I found those. They’re in box 660.” He was so grateful he shared some documents he had found with us from his own personal collection. So... she knows her stuff (or should I say her collections?) Kevin learned that even computerized documents may still only be found through personal interactions like the ones Laura has developed.

Next day was spent scanning documents I had found. This is where I really felt like I was touching history. Page after page of beautifully printed forms, governmental documents, elegant (and not so much) cursive handwriting, worn corners, faded ink, faded paper. The real deal. Very cool experience.

The last days I was culling through Utah War paymaster files – and oh how they make your imagination run wild. The things you see there, and the way documentation was done in those days is mind boggling. I’m sure they’d be amazed at how fast a computer can generate a report and I’m sitting there amazed at how many hours and hours it took to complete the forms by hand. It was an incredible experience to wonder how many times that payroll had been opened and refolded, the many places that piece of paper had been tucked in a satchel or saddlebag, and what would happen if they ran out of ink!? It made me wonder if anyone 160 years from now would handle any of the papers I’ve written. What would they be thinking if they did?

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Up at 6am out the door at 7:40, researching and scanning, homemade lunch, then more work until 5pm. Straight home for dinner, then Laura is back at it again recording all the things she's found that day, uploading the documents I scanned, updating her index until 11pm. Going to the archives with Laura is not a working vacation – it is work. Hard work. The woman is disciplined, focused, didn't waste one minute the whole two weeks I was with her. Even if she had an hour between appointments with legislators for "Hike the Hill", she was back at the archives trying to get something done with the time she had.

Kevin's and my general consensus are the archives are anything but straightforward – not a well-organized library where you get a number and find your book. The archivists don't know everything, and they probably can't because there is so much to know. Kevin says it is like looking for minerals. You may find some gems if/when you find a vein.

Summary: Don't go to the archives without Laura. If we are going to finance any archives trips- make sure Laura is there. She'll work from dawn 'til midnight, document what she finds, and 10 to 1 can find things faster than the archivists who work there. I'm so glad I got to go with Laura! I knew I'd had a successful trip when a security guard smiled at me.

**FORT LUPTON**  
**Colorado**

**Come It Is Time for a Visit**  
**History Is on Display**  
**Heritage Fair**  
**Sat. May 3, 2025 10 AM - 4 PM**

Cost Is \$5.00 in **Cash** per Person at Gate  
Children Under Twelve Free