

# Fort Moore, Los Angeles, CA

## **Mexican–American War**

On August 13, 1846, early in the conflict, U.S. naval forces under Commodore Robert F. Stockton arrived at Los Angeles and raised the American flag without opposition. A small occupying force of 50 Marines, under Captain Archibald H. Gillespie, built a rudimentary barricade on what was then known as Fort Hill overlooking the small town.

### Siege of Los Angeles

The harsh martial law of Captain Gillespie soon ignited a popular uprising among Californios and Mexicans led by General José María Flores beginning on September 22, 1846. Known as the Siege of Los Angeles, Californios assembled a force to retake Los Angeles. Gillespie's fifty marines were able to resist an initial attack on the government house in town and regrouped on Fort Hill, where they strengthened the fortification with sandbags and mounted their cannon. As time passed, the Californio forces opposing the U.S. takeover grew to just over 600 men, with several Californio citizens voicing opposition. General Flores offered an ultimatum: leave within 24 hours or face attack. Gillespie agreed to withdraw from Los Angeles, under safe passage, on September 30, 1846.

On October 7, the U.S. forces regrouped, with Commodore Stockton sending 350 Americans, including 200 U.S. Marines, under U.S. Navy Capt. William Mervine, to retake Los Angeles. The marines were defeated in their attempt at the Battle of Dominguez Rancho, as Stockton's fleet fled south to San Diego. In December, U.S. Army forces under Captain Stephen W. Kearny were defeated by the Californio Lancers at the Battle of San Pasqual. After regrouping and resupplying forces in San Diego, on January 10, 1847, Los Angeles was recaptured by the combined 700 man forces of John C. Fremont, Stockton and Kearny, after the Battle of Rio San Gabriel and the Battle of La Mesa. With the signing of the Treaty of Cahuenga on January 13, 1847, war in Alta California ended.

On January 12, 1847, to secure the area from future attack, U.S. forces began erecting a 400-foot (120 m) long breastwork on the same strategic site as the previous Fort Hill and named it the Post at Los Angeles. The plans were later revised, and on April 23 a larger defensive structure was begun on the same site. Constructed by the Mormon Battalion and the U.S. 1st Dragoons, it was designed for six cannons. It was never completed and was dedicated as Fort Moore on July 4, 1847, named after Captain Benjamin D. Moore, 1st Dragoons, one of 22 Americans killed in the Battle of San Pasqual in San Diego County, on December 6, 1846.

From an news article by **Hadley Meares**| **May 31, 2013**

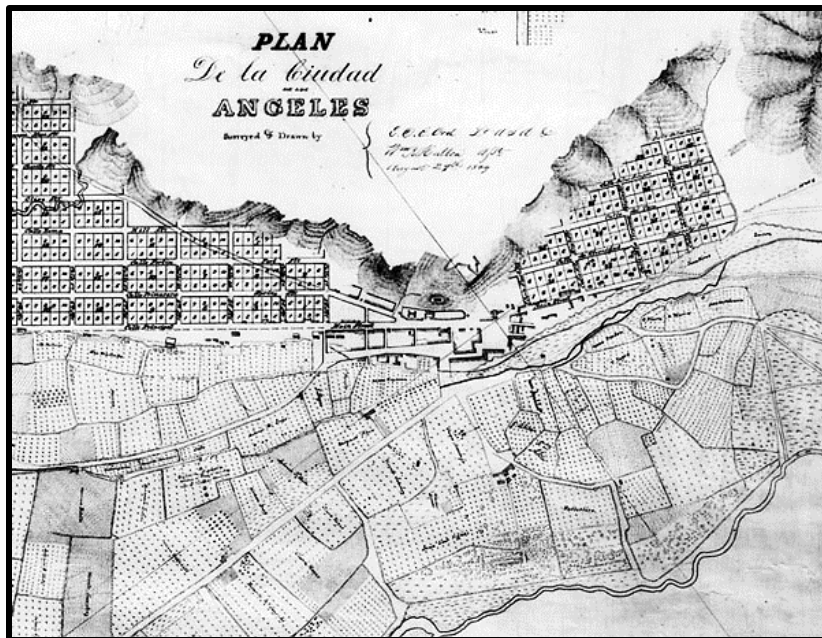
Most of the fighting had ended with the signing of the Treaty of Cahuenga in January, 1847. During the war, battles with local "Californios" in Los Angeles had led the American army to begin building an earthen works fort on the hill overlooking the town. After an internal skirmish, the first fort was abandoned, but work started again in the spring of '47. The majority of the labor was done by the U.S. First Dragoons, New York Volunteers, and the Mormon Battalion, the lone religious military unit in American history.

The Mormons had travelled an interesting road to get to this barren hill. In 1846, wanting to travel west and fearing for his flock's safety, Brigham Young had sent a delegation to Washington. In a meeting with President Polk the delegation was offered the chance to raise a battalion to help fight the Mexican-American War. This would not only help secure their passage westwards, it would also be a demonstration of good will towards a government with whom they were often at odds. A rather wary battalion of 543 men, 33 women and 21 children set out from Council Bluffs, Iowa to start the grueling trek west. While in Arizona they were attacked by a heard of wild bulls and fought back, in what became known derisively as "The Battle of the Bulls." After their arrival in San Diego they fought in numerous campaigns and some were taken to Los Angeles, where they helped secure the unruly pueblo.

It was these religious pioneers, along with more seasoned army veterans, who stood at attention along the hill on July 4, 1847. Los Angeles had been taken by the United States, driven out and taken again, but unrest still reigned. Many of the elite had abandoned their homes around the Plaza, and U.S. soldiers faced a constant barrage of "Californios" hurling insults and more as they rode alongside on horseback. To assert their dominance, a ceremony was planned on July 4. A local man was sent (with military escort to protect him from hostile Native Americans) into the San Bernardino Mountains to find suitable timber for a flagpole. Dolores Estudillo, along with her mother and sisters, was said to have made the flag out of flannel and muslin, the red material taken from an old petticoat.

Cannons were fired, summoning the sleepy residents of the town. A proclamation announced the Fort (which could house around 200 men) would henceforth be called "Fort Moore" after Benjamin D. Moore, a beloved soldier who died in the Battle of San Pasqual. The Declaration of Independence was read in English and Spanish, the flag raised, and according to some reports, a fandango ensued, with locals and soldiers dancing together. Another report had an American commander warning the locals that he would cut their heads off if they touched the flag ... so who knows.

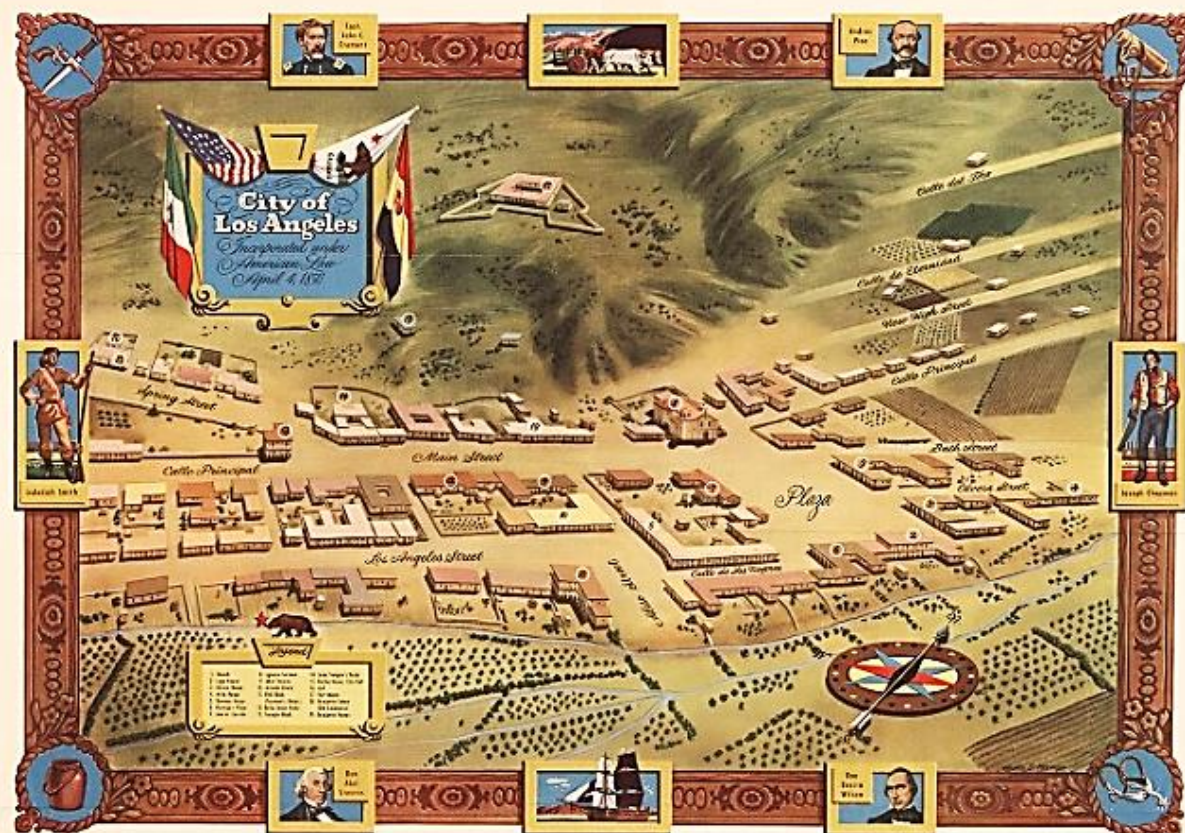
The town was soon stabilized and the Fort was decommissioned and abandoned in 1853. By this time residents had already found other uses for the perfectly situated hill. As early as 1850 a prominent builder named Jesus Manzo built a fine home on the hill, and others soon followed. White protestant settlers, unwelcome in the local Catholic cemeteries, quickly established an unofficial cemetery on the land. Records of burials started being kept in 1853. Andrew Sublette, a hunter killed by a bear in Malibu Canyon, was the first man officially buried there. (It is interesting to note that although the bear killed him, he also killed the bear.) His dog, "Old Buck", supposedly died of grief at the grave three days later. The "cemetery on the hill" soon became overpopulated, and there was little oversight. The city took over in 1869, with headstones already broken and many plots unmarked, and banned future burials in 1879.



The map above is the Edward O.C. Ord's 1849 map of Los Angeles. Fort Moore was the second of two historic U.S. Military Forts in Los Angeles, California, during the Mexican–American War.[1] It lay straight above the junction of the Hollywood Freeway and Broadway Avenue,[2] on an historic hill that once sheltered the old Plaza.

The landmark hill took its name, Fort Hill, from the first fort, and the hill afforded sweeping views of the old adobe town and the vineyards in the swale of the Los Angeles River.[3] Fort Hill was a spur of the ridge that runs from the Quarry Hills (Elysian Park) southward to Beaudry's Bunker Hill; it originally stretched east between 1st Street and Ord Street.[4] In old photographs, it forms a backdrop just behind the Plaza Church and square.[5] By 1949, what was left of the hill under the fort was cut down when the Hollywood Freeway was put through.[6]

The fort is now memorialized by the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial, a stone mural on Hill Street, along the south side of Grand Arts High School.



**JOHN J. GIBSON** accepted the surrender of Mexico on January 12, 1847, at a meeting of the governing junta in California. The meeting was presided over by the military and political leaders of the state. Gibson was a prominent figure in the state and was a member of the governing junta. He was a member of the governing junta and was a member of the governing junta.

**ANDREW** was the first American to come to southern California and the only foreigner to do so. He arrived in 1810 as a member of the crew of the *San Pedro*, the first ship to arrive in the area. He was a member of the crew of the *San Pedro* and was a member of the crew of the *San Pedro*.

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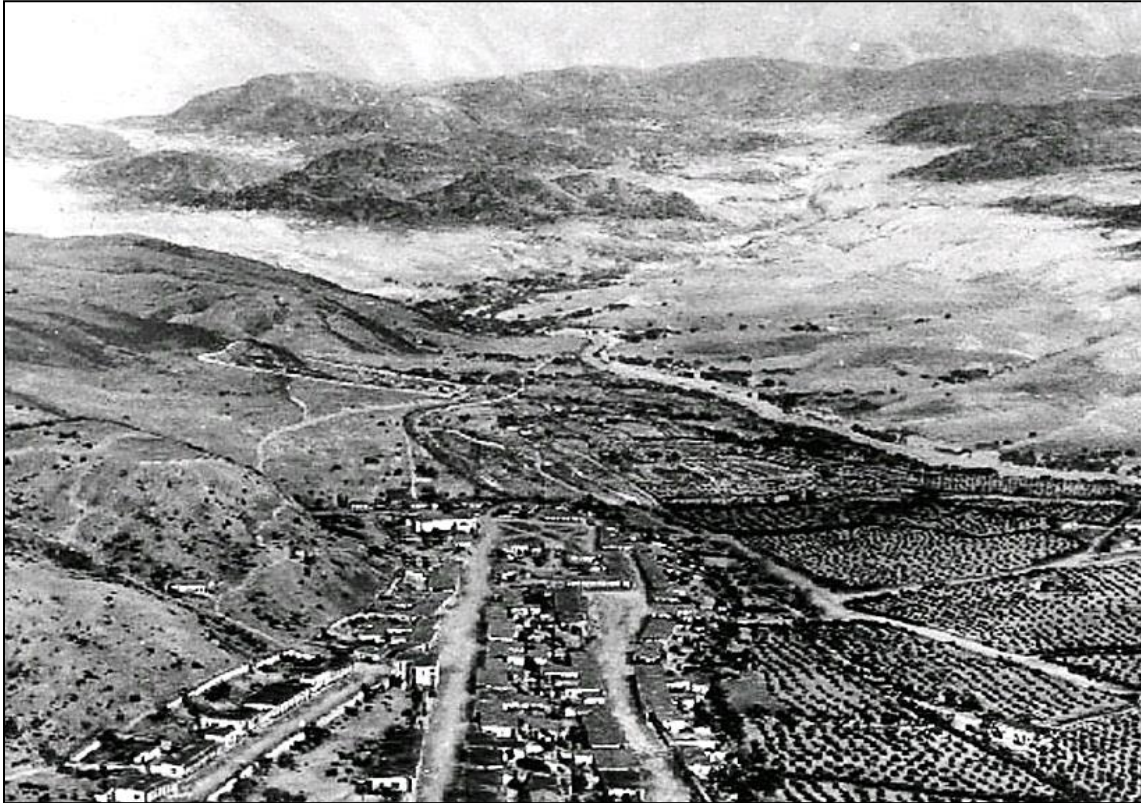
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This colored map of the City of Los Angeles as it appeared April 4, 1850, was constructed after very careful research and study. The physical layout of the city was based on the Old Survey which was made in 1849. Descriptive material and old photographs supplied the data for the buildings.





(1850)^\*# - This is an old photograph of an accurate model of Los Angeles in 1850. Looking northeast, the layout of the new city can clearly be seen with the Los Angeles Plaza located in the lower left-center. The large white structure to the left of the Plaza is the Old Plaza Church. The two streets running from bottom of photo to the Plaza are Main Street on the left and Los Angeles Street on the right. Alameda Street runs from the lower right corner diagonally toward the lower center of photo. The L.A. River can be seen running from the lower-right diagonally to the center of the photo, turns left and disappears behind the mountain. At that point the Arroyo Seco can be seen at its confluence with the LA River. The tall majestic San Gabriel Mountains stand in the far background. Vineyards blanket the area between the City and the L.A. River (lower right). The large dark spot in the lower-right of the photo is El Aliso, the historic landmark of the indigenous Tongva people who once lived in the Indian Village of Yangna at that location, adjacent to the L.A. River.

*View of Sonora Town and Fort Moore Hill looking north from Plaza Church, ca.1883*



Description Photograph of a view of Sonora Town and Fort Moore Hill on Hill Street looking north from Plaza Church on Temple Street, ca.1883. The mansion of the Banning residence is visible on Fort Moore Hill at the center of the frame, Hill Street curving in toward it at the left. Below the hill, smaller houses can be seen, showing an inn in the extreme foreground at right, advertising "Furnished Rooms". A latticework of picket fences can be seen to the left.; Photoprint reads "John A Willis bought site of his home in December 1884 -- improved lot and build residence in 1886" as well as "Ruins of

lot at left of picture -- Home in center built by Joe Phillips and purchased by M.N. Banning".

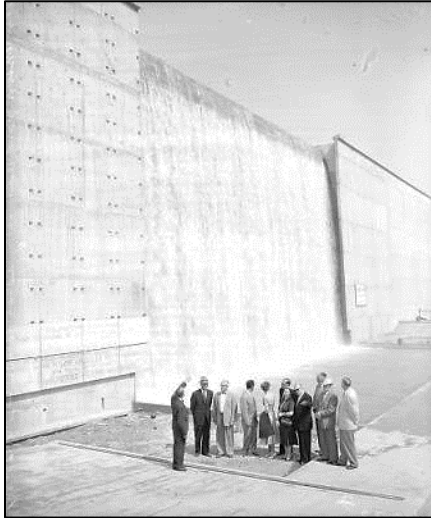


Flagpole and cannon remnants at Fort Moore in Los Angeles. The old Los Angeles County Courthouse is visible in the background. | Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library.

## 1958 Monument Dedication

<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15799coll44/id/74067/rec/59>

## Preview of new fountain on Fort Moore Hill, 1954



Utah Pioneers." 1954-09-27

Description 2 images. Preview of new fountain on Fort Moore Hill, 27 September 1954. John Anson Ford; Herbert Legg; Mrs. Edith Stafford; Jack Howells (Representing Sons of Utah Pioneers); Doctor Hugh Willett (President of Board of Education); Doctor Harry Howell (Acting Superintendent of Schools); Burton S. Grant (Chief Engineer of Water Works); Samuel Morris (Director of the Department of Water and Power); Edward Roybal; Mrs. Ruth Cole (Member of Board of Education).; Caption slip reads:

"Photographer: Brunk. Date: 1954-09-27. Reporter: Lewis.

Assignment: New Fountain -- Ft. Moore Hill -- Board of Education. 35/36: Present in picture: Supervisors John Anson Ford & Herbert C. Legg; Dr. Hugh Willett; Dr. Harry Howells; Burton S. Grant, Chief Engr., W & P.; Samuel B. Morris; Councilman Edward Roybal; Mrs. Ruth Cole; & Mrs. Edith Stafford, B of E; Jack Howells, Sons of

<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15799coll44/id/89101/rec/69>

## Mormon dedication, Fort Moore (monument), 1958

Description 8 images. Mormon dedication, Fort Moore (monument), 3 July 1958. Craig Hunt; Larry Hunt; William Walker; Warren Walker; William S. Muir; Raymond Wade; Mayor Norris Poulson (General view of crowds, etc.); Caption slip reads: "Photographer: Wilson. Date: 1958-07-03. Reporter: McMahon. Assignment: Ft. Moore monument dedication. 7/8: William S. Muir, 78, whose father was member of Mormon Battalion 111 years ago. He's presenting flag to Master Sgt. Raymond Wade in charge of color detail. 55/56, L/R: Craig Hunt, 28, & son Larry -- 5 yrs. Larry's great great grandfather 'Lot Smith' was member of Mormon Battalion. 32: Man at work Sane Lou; Bob Grosh. 31: Wm. L. Walker Jr. and son Warren L. Walker - 2 yrs., great great great grandson of Jefferson Hunt, Capt. of Co. 'A' Mormon Battalion. 33: Crowd shot. 34: Crowd shot. Speakers stand in background & choir singing. 57: L/R: Mayor Norris Poulson puts copies of City Budget, year 1926 & 1958 in box to be buried at base of flag pole. 58:



Picture of sculpture work on the wall.





*A crowd at the 1958 dedication of the Ft. Moore Pioneer Memorial on Hill Street in downtown Los Angeles. (Bruce Cox / Los Angeles Times)*



It was these religious pioneers, along with more seasoned army veterans, who stood at attention along the hill on July 4, 1847. Los Angeles had been taken by the United States, driven out and taken again, but unrest still reigned. Many of the elite had abandoned their homes around the Plaza, and U.S. soldiers faced a constant barrage of "Californios" hurling insults and more as they rode alongside on horseback. To assert their dominance, a ceremony was planned on July 4. A local man was sent (with military escort to protect him from hostile Native Americans) into the San Bernardino Mountains to find suitable timber for a flagpole. **Dolores Estudillo, along with her mother and sisters, was said to have made the flag out of flannel and muslin, the red material taken from an old petticoat.**

The development of a massive monument was a confluence of two unrelated threads. One was the influence in L.A. society of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, a group of those descendants, which gained the backing of Los Angeles Times matron Dorothy Chandler and then-L.A. County Supervisor John Anson Ford.

The other was the need for a large wall.

It was a time spanning World War II when a massive reshaping of Civic Center erased much of the area's early history. Along with the fort, two early cemeteries and a hilltop neighborhood of Victorian houses belonging to the city's elite all disappeared in a series of excavations that began in the 1930s to make way for roads and buildings.

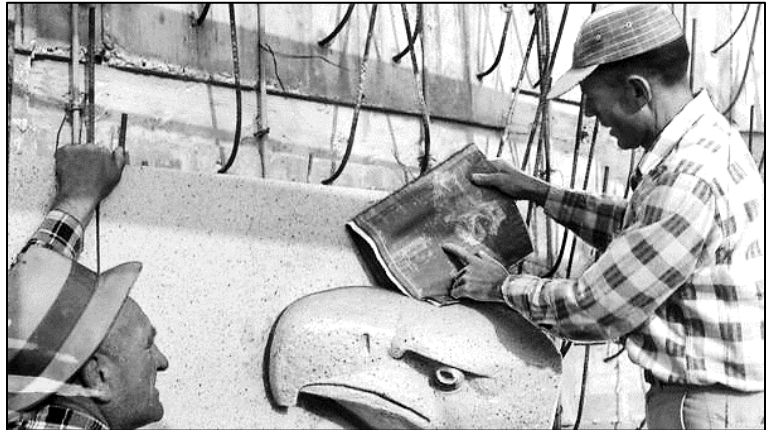
Ft. Moore Hill, which once extended from its current stub east to Spring Street, was clipped several times, the last in 1949 to make room for the new Hollywood Freeway.

The scarp that remained on its east side became the canvas for two immigrant sculptors, London-born Albert Stewart and Connecticut-based German native Henry Kreis, according to the Los Angeles County Arts Commission [website](#).

Kreis, who won a competition for the job, designed the terra cotta relief on the south of the waterfall that depicts the flag raising. A series of vignettes show the Mormon Battalion's march, a prairie schooner, a steam locomotive and regional scenes such as orange groves and cattle ranching.

Breaking up the view of the brick wall on the north side, a 68-foot pylon bears the eagle-crested inscription, "To the brave men and women who with trust in God faced privation and death in extending the frontiers of our country to include this land of promise."

*The last of the 24 pieces of ceramic veneer which make up the American eagle of the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial is anchored into place by workmen. (David P. Shelhamer / Los Angeles Times)*



In what would become an ironic element, one of the vignettes recognizes the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, a sponsor of the memorial, with the inscription: "Water and power have made our arid land flourish."

The fountain was turned off in 1977 during a drought. When rains finally returned, it was too late for the 47-foot-tall waterfall. Its mosaic tiles were falling off, and its pumps had been vandalized.

The Pioneer Memorial was all but forgotten, popping up only occasionally in news reports on Fourth of July reenactments of the 1847 flag raising.

In the hope of spurring a revival, a civic group staged an elaborate reenactment in 1997 with nearly 100 costumed soldiers, a 28-musket salute and blast from a period howitzer.

In 2000, at the request of then-Supervisor Gloria Molina, the county did a cost analysis for a restoration. Nothing came of it at the time.

Looking back, Molina told *The Times* recently, she thought it a shame that the waterfall had been neglected but was conflicted about memorializing the fort. "That's where they were shooting at us from," she said, referring to a clash between soldiers and rebellious *campesinos*.

She needn't have worried. The fort, erected by hand labor in only a few days, came after the shooting stopped, according to the California State Military Museums website. The battalion's military achievement, if any, has been characterized

by various sources as buffering Los Angeles from a rumored Mexican counterattack or discouraging Gen. John C. Fremont's aspirations to lead an independent California.

Molina's plan got new life in 2014 amid a general revitalization of the north end of Civic Center. "There's so much happening with Grand Park and the Hall of Justice reopening, it was time," Haggarty said.

The Board of Supervisors committed about \$4.1 million, later increased to \$5.5 million, and the city added \$500,000.

Donna Williams, who was the consulting conservator for the Hall of Justice and Hollyhock House restorations, will oversee the preservation work, ensuring that it follows U.S. Department of Interior guidelines so the memorial can one day be added to the list of historic sites, Haggarty said.

This recent surge of rain may have spared the county the double irony of turning the water back on during another drought. But officials are mindful of the need to balance the goals of historical accuracy and water conservation, said David Palma, capital projects manager with the county Department of Public Works.

The cascade that originally gushed like a miniature Niagara Falls will be reduced to a thin layer to eliminate spray, and pumps originally immersed in an 80-foot by 30-foot pool at the foot of the waterfall will be moved to a utility room. No longer will it be necessary to drain the 64,000-gallon reflecting pool to maintain the pumps.







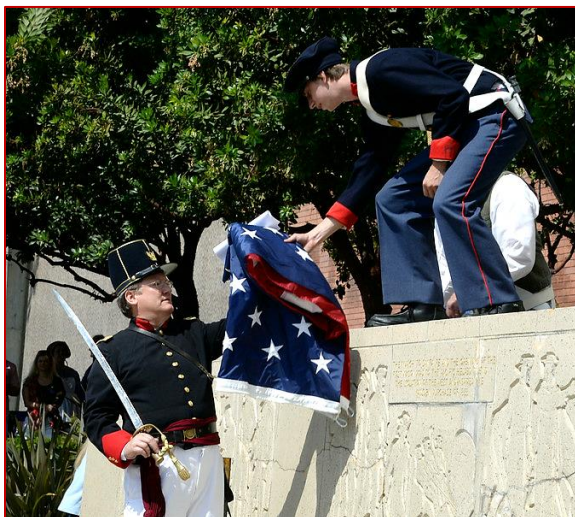
<http://mormonhistoricsites.org/fort-moore-pioneer-memorial/>

## Los Angeles' first Fourth of July flag raising commemorated

July 4, 2014. Los Angeles. CA. The Commemoration of the first Independence Day flag raising in Los Angeles, which took place in 1847. Reenactors perform the recreated Friday by the the Fort Moore Memorial Committee. Photo by Gene Blevins/LA DailyNews



*Photos: Commemoration of the first Independence Day flag raising*



By Susan Abram, Los Angeles Daily News

Posted: 07/04/14, 5:37 PM PDT | Updated: on 07/04/2014

The Commemoration of the first Independence Day flag raising in Los Angeles, which took place in 1847. Reenactors perform Friday during the ceremony put on by the the Fort Moore Memorial Committee. July 4,2014. (Gene Blevins / Staff Photographer)

Hours before fireworks would burst across the night sky, thunderous blasts from two cannons boomed across sleepy downtown Los Angeles on Friday morning as part of a little known historical re-enactment held for years on the Fourth of July.

Ear drums rattled and car alarms whined after the cannons were fired toward empty, gleaming skyscrapers. The historical salute announced that it was time to raise the

American flag at the Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial, a small, little-known spot on Hill Street that represents a piece of California's legacy during the Mexican-American War.

Friday's ceremony was a re-enactment of the first Independence Day flag-raising in Los Angeles in 1847 by members of the U.S. 1st Dragoons, New York Volunteers and the Mormon Battalion.

"This part of our history is getting lost and a lot of it isn't being taught in schools anymore," said Marilyn Mills, an historian and Upland resident.



Mills, dressed in a long skirt and bonnet, works with the Fort Moore Memorial Committee, which is one of the groups that has organized the re-enactment for more than 20 years.

The first Fourth of July flag-raising occurred at the fort not long after a peace treaty was reached by Gen. Andres Pico and Lt. Col. John C. Fremont in 1847 at Campo de Cahuenga, a small spot near what is now known as Lankershim Boulevard near Universal City. That act would lead to the formal end of the Mexican-American War in the California territory in 1848.

Fort Moore, meanwhile, was built after several skirmishes occurred between U.S. forces and the Californios. The fort was erected on a hill overlooking what was then El Pueblo de Los Angeles by members of the U.S. First Dragoons, New York Volunteers and the Mormon Battalion.



Guy Dickson, an Irvine resident, said two of his relatives were among the roughly 500 Mormons who marched and worked alongside the U.S. Army's movement toward California. Mormons signed up in exchange for food and supplies to help their own families who also were heading westward. Dickson came dressed as his relative Henry Boyle.

Those Latter-day Saint pioneers' work paved the way for California's eventual statehood through road building, and the mining of gold and timber, Dickson and others said.

Dickson said he feels a link to those early relatives when he takes part in the annual ceremony.

“It’s a fantastic opportunity for me to connect emotionally, to re-enact a time when my family members made sacrifices and gave so much of their lives to make what we have today,” Dickson said.

During the original ceremony in 1847, cannons were fired and the American flag was raised. The Declaration of Independence was read in English and in Spanish, and afterward, a great fiesta between soldiers and civilians took place for hours.

The fort was used only for a short time and after it was abandoned, its structure deteriorated from neglect. Urbanization, including the building of the Hollywood Freeway, chipped away at its existence.

But a large-scale bas-relief completed in 1957 at the site depicts the flag-raising scene and commemorates the actual spot where the fort once stood. It is the only public art in Los Angeles that portrays an historic event that occurred at the actual site of the work, according to the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

About 30 people gathered to watch Friday’s re-enactment and some such as Rachelle Kenchington, who grew up in the South Bay, said it was the perfect way to start the Fourth of July holiday.

Kenchington, who said she is a descendent of the Mormons who helped build the fort, came to the event with her husband, David, and their two children, ages, 7 and 9.

“We just wanted our children to appreciate the sacrifices made for our freedom,” said David Kenchington, who was born in England.

“I appreciate the freedoms in America,” he added.