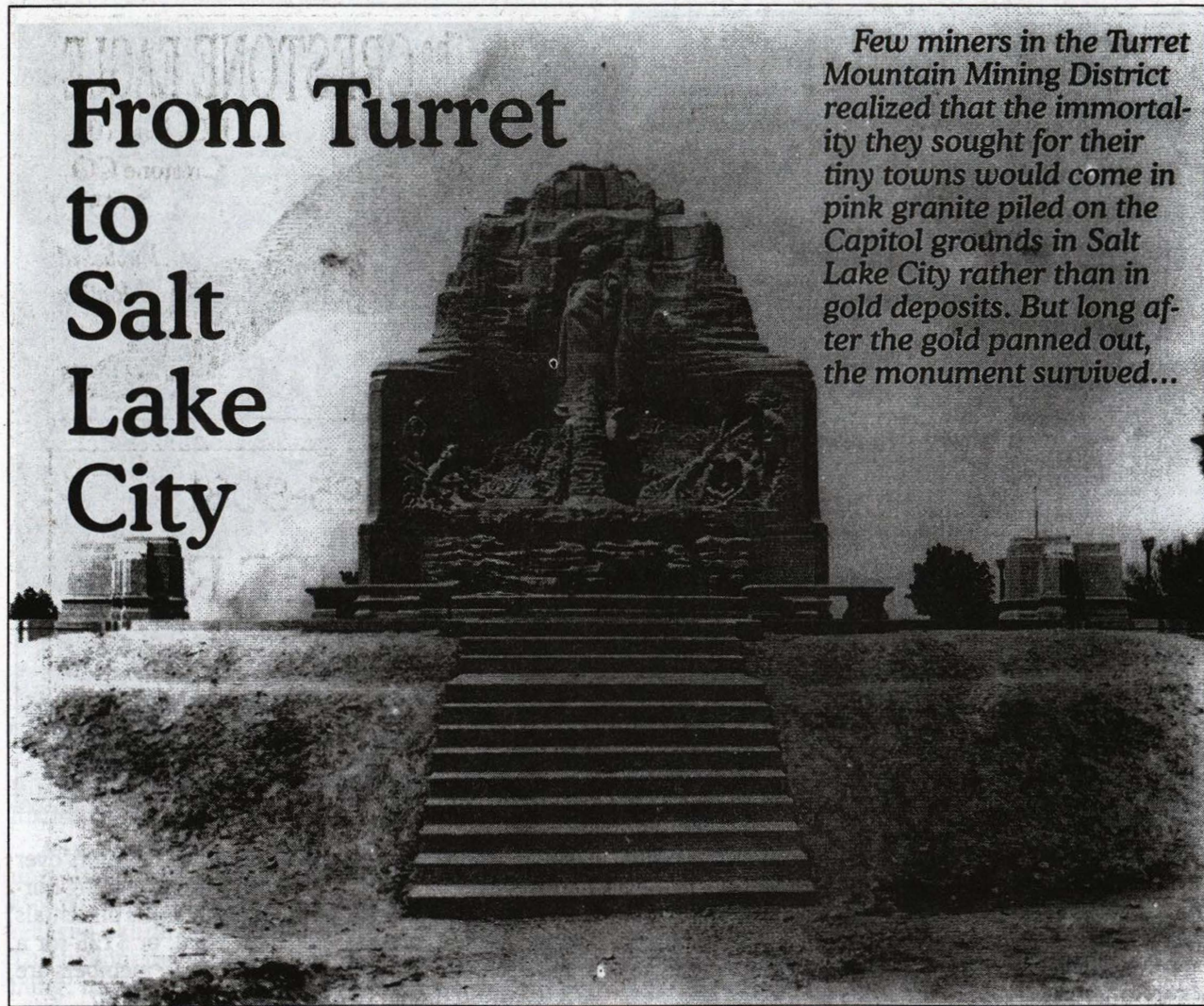


# From Turret to Salt Lake City

Few miners in the Turret Mountain Mining District realized that the immortality they sought for their tiny towns would come in pink granite piled on the Capitol grounds in Salt Lake City rather than in gold deposits. But long after the gold panned out, the monument survived...



STONE FROM THE UTE TRAIL AREA via Salida Granite Co. received national acclaim May 30, 1927, when the Mormon Battalion Monument in Salt Lake City, Utah, was unveiled before a crowd of 15,000 people.

Located on the southeast corner of the Capitol Building grounds in Salt Lake, the monument commemorates a 2,000 mile march that began in May of 1846 and lasted until July 16, 1847.

During that march, Mormon volunteers in the U.S. Army took physical possession of much of the Mexican-owned southwest for the United States during the Mexican War. And in addition, the Mormon Battalion then carved out the first southern wagon road to California.

The Mormon Battalion Monument to honor this endeavor cost \$200,000 with the state of Utah paying half and with private subscription covering the remainder.

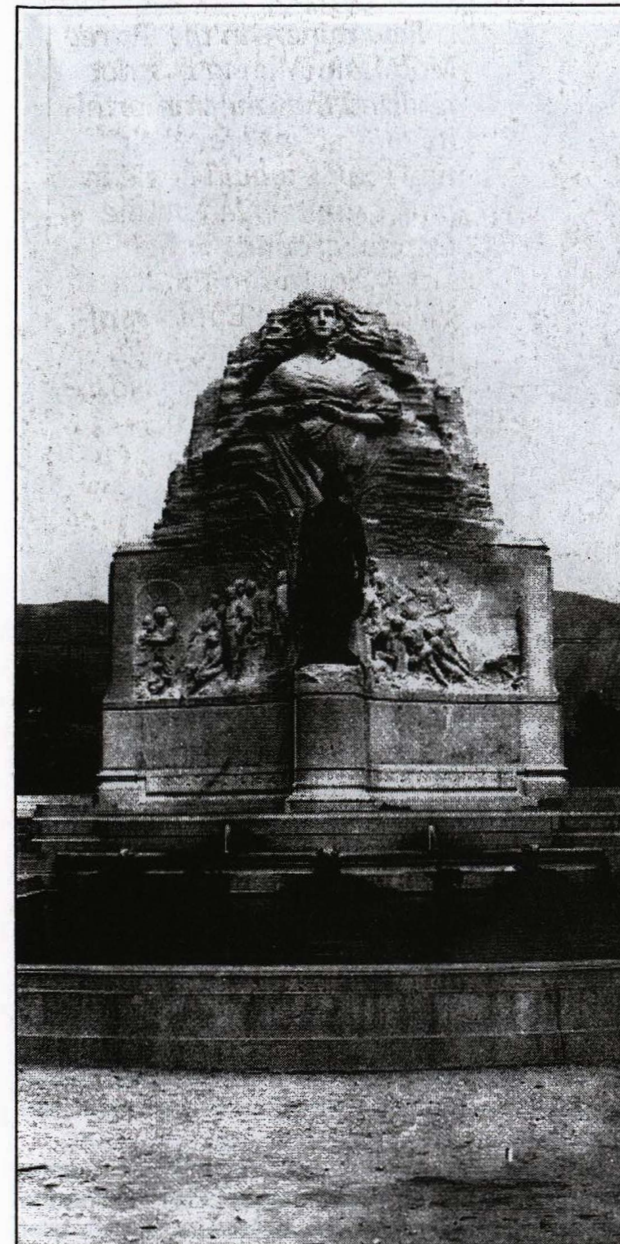
Although the idea was born in 1905, work didn't begin until 1920. The monument took five years to assemble with an additional two years for granite carving. On June 8, 1927, Wesley King, vice president of

the Mormon Battalion Monument Commission, wrote thanking F.W. Gloyd, president of Salida Granite Corp.

*We believe we have the very finest piece of sculptor work in the country and we feel sure also that we have the very finest and the best character of granite for this kind of a monument. It is beautiful almost beyond any power to describe and not only the members of the commission, but the citizens at large of the state of Utah, are delighted with and exceedingly proud of it. We feel, Gloyd, that we are most fortunate indeed in being able to secure your granite for this magnificent memorial.*

The American Granite Association, in an article published October 4, 1927, in *The Salida Mail*, was profuse in its praise of the fine granite. The association said only two other quarries — both in Vermont — had stone which even approached the superior quality of that which went into the Mormon monument.

Responding to a set of photographs sent to the American Granite Association in Washington, D.C., Lucian O. Holman, secretary, said he had never seen pink granite of this type and wanted a sample. He wrote that the monument "is strikingly original in design and the carving around the base is executed with unusual



delicacy and accuracy. I do not believe there is another piece of granite carving anywhere in the country done in such delicate detail."

Holman added, "It is the general belief over the country that delicate carving cannot be executed in granite. I believe that the marble people make a great deal of that point. We all know anything that can be carved in marble can be carved in granite if it is planned, designed and executed with proper knowledge of the cutting of granite. Your Mormon Monument is good proof of that."

The Mormon Battalion Monument took 22 standard gauge carloads — more than 439,000 pounds or about 4,000 cubic feet — of Salida Rose Pink granite for the sculptural portion.

The monument proper is constructed of 71 individual stones. The largest is six and a half tons, and the

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<small>(Data from USDA and Texas A&amp;M)</small>	<small>(kcal)</small>	<small>(g)</small>	<small>(mg)</small>
Beef retail composite lean only	183	8.4	73
Chicken broiler skinless	162	6.3	76
Salmon sockeye	183	9.3	74
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<b>LONGHORN BEEF</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>53</b>

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average weight of each stone is about three tons.

Although there were other smaller monuments carved from Salida Rose Pink, most of the big boulders in the Ute Trail area were quarried to provide stones for the Salt Lake City project. The local supply was nearly exhausted.

The monument mass is roughly triangular with concave sides. It's 29 feet high, the front face is 30 feet wide and the east and west sides are 19 feet each.

Surrounding the monument are walls, two reflecting pools planted with colorful flowers, concrete benches, sidewalks, wide stairs on three sides and display locations for three large bronze plaques, creating a site 138 feet long and 72 feet wide.

Aggregate for the concrete in walls, benches, and other trim was made from spall — chips and dust carefully saved from construction and carving.

The sculpture is hollow, originally housing a small steam boiler to heat water for fountains in the reflecting pools, allowing them to flow year around.

Architects and contractors Frank Chase Walker and James M. Morrison came up with the idea in 1905. They eventually sold their dream to the State of Utah and the Mormon Battalion Monument Commission was created to carry out construction. The stone carver was Gilbert Riswold.

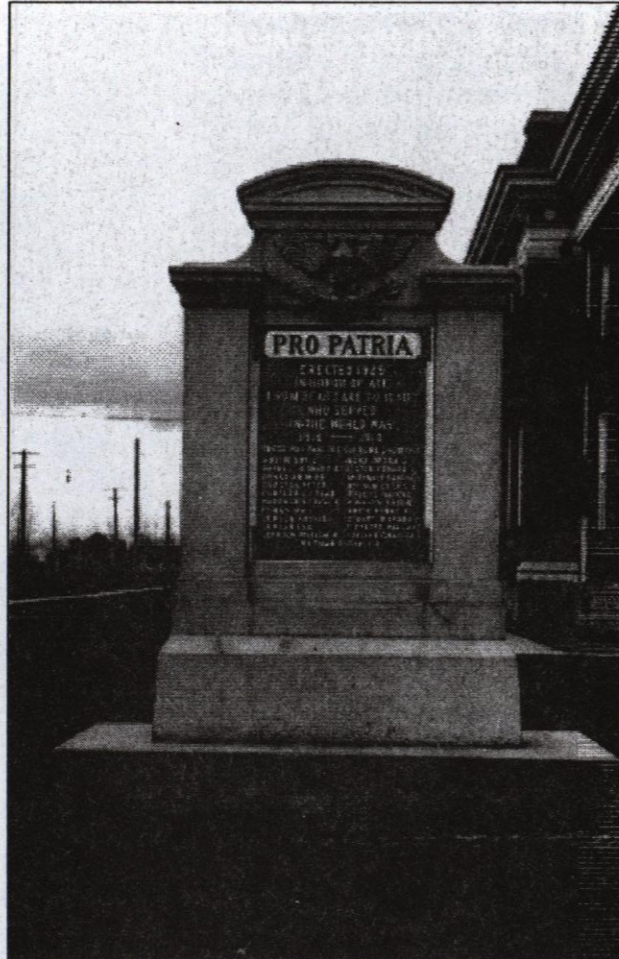
The work includes 33 near life-size figures, and three other figures created in larger than life "heroic size."

Renovation of the monument, estimated to cost \$360,000, began May 30, 1992, exactly 65 years after its unveiling. As with original construction, money came half from the State of Utah and half from private subscription.

Work included sand blasting and cleaning the stone to restore its warm, skin-tone pink glow, restoration of stone joints, and repair of deteriorating concrete which forms the perimeter of the monument site and enclosures of the two reflecting pools.

Work was nearly done by June, 1997. Concrete walkways with pink-aggregate trim were refurbished, chips in concrete walls were patched with almost no evidence of restoration, and the old boiler was removed.

The reflecting pools which began to leak decades



ago were planted with colorful flowers and restoration plans called for once again filling the pools with water. However, the possibility of drowning for children prompted the restoration committee to again plant pool areas with flowers.

A bronze plaque names the contractors and stone carver in addition to all the members of the Mormon Battalion, but nowhere is Salida Granite Co. or any of its employees mentioned.

Triggered by publicity from Utah, the State of Idaho ordered Salida Rose Pink granite for a \$25,000 monu-



ment to Governor Frank Stunenberg who was assassinated by terrorist Harry Orchard — the subject of a current best-seller, *Big Trouble* by J. Anthony Lucas. And Orchard had been active in Colorado, since he was also implicated in the dynamiting of a railroad depot near Cripple Creek.

Because most of the Ute Trail supply was exhausted for the Mormon Battalion Monument, pink granite for the Stunenberg monument came from a quarry 34 miles east of Salida near Texas Creek, but it was sold as Salida Pink.



The bronze plate on Stunenberg's memorial reads, "When in 1899 organized lawlessness challenged the power of Idaho, he upheld the dignity of the state, enforced its authority, and upheld law and order within its boundaries for which he was assassinated in 1905. Rugged in body, resolute in mind, massive in the strength of his convictions, he was of the granite hewn.

In grateful memory of his courageous devotion to public duty, the people of Idaho have erected this monument."

Although neither quarry workers nor their company are named on either monument, they are nevertheless monuments to those workers and to the mineral which finally paid off. Miners sought immortality in gold, but permanence came in the form of indestructible granite monuments in other states.

Granite monuments from the Ute Trail area became a part of American history as those who made that history sought to remember it.

*Dick Dixon teaches journalism and American history at Salida High School, and is working on a book about the Turret granite quarries. He is the author of several books of local history, among them an account of the smokestack in Smelertown.*


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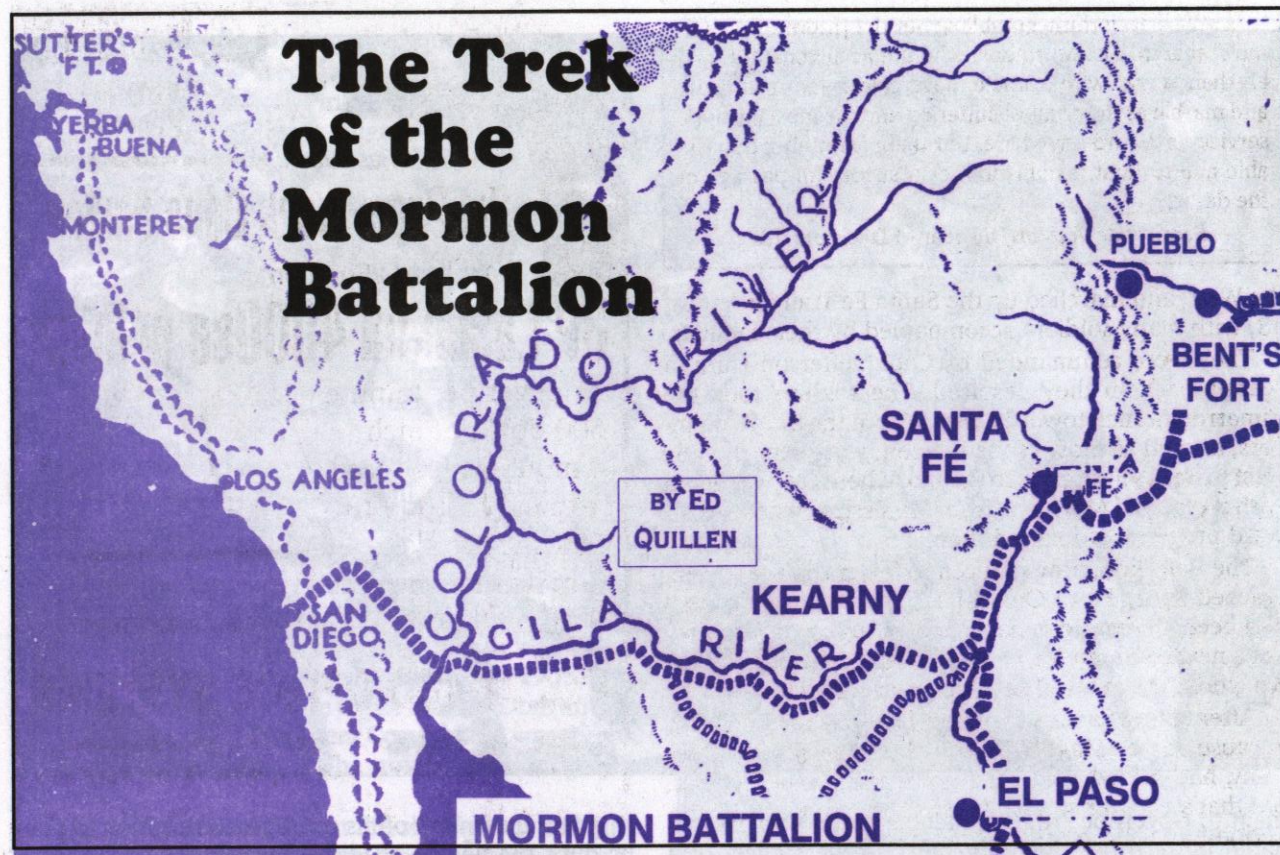
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# The Trek of the Mormon Battalion

**G**IVEN THE AMERICAN PENCHANT for commemorating historic anniversaries, it's rather surprising that two such events have eluded civic notice.

This year, 1998, is the centennial of the Spanish-American War, and we've yet to hear of any scheduled celebrations. It marked America's emergence as a world power, it demonstrated the power of the media to manufacture public hysteria, and it resulted in a long and brutal guerrilla war in the Philippines that was an eerie preview of American involvement in Vietnam.

This year is also the sesquicentennial of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which ended the Mexican War. Again, no presidential proclamations or commemorative postage stamps have been scheduled.

If you're looking for a monument to the Mexican War, you can just look around. All of Colorado south and west of the Arkansas River was part of Mexico before that war, as well as parts of Kansas and Wyoming, along with all of California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

As for a formal monument, there is one in Salt Lake City. Its granite came from the Salida quarries, and it honors the Mormon Battalion for its service in the Mexican War.

When the Mexican War began in 1846, the first Mormon parties had barely started West, destination unknown. They were fleeing from America to found their own realm, Deseret, which was in theory on Mexican territory, but in practice might be pretty much on its own.

Brigham Young, the most successful colonizer in

American history, clearly saw the trend — America was coming his way, whether he wanted it or not. So it made political sense for his people to participate in the war against Mexico.

It also made economic sense. Soldiers may not have been paid much then, but they were paid in hard gold dollars, and the main Mormon congregation, huddled near modern Omaha after fleeing Illinois persecution in haste, desperately needed the money.

Young made a deal with the recruiting officers from the Army of the West when they came by in 1846. He would furnish a battalion of soldiers who would tramp all over the West during the war, but their pay, and the \$21,000 advance clothing allowance, would go to the church to be distributed as needed among the faithful.

Young also promised the 500-plus men in the Mormon Battalion that as long as they remained true to the faith, none would be injured by enemy bullets.

The prophecy held, for the Mormon Battalion never faced hostile fire during its service, although several members died from disease, the big killer of armies in that era.

The number of Mormon troops dwindled, though, since the army deemed many of them too old and infirm to serve and thus discharged them. During those early days of their western odyssey, the Mormons had few able-bodied men to spare.

The Battalion left the Mormons' Winter Quarters (near Council Bluffs, Iowa) on July 21, 1846, marching to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. There they drilled under Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny, commander of the Army of

... there is nothing notable about the [Mormon Battalion's] march. The Mormons, who are accustomed to gild all their works with miracle, have celebrated it in prose and marble as the cruelest suffering and the most patriotic service on record anywhere. But there is nothing remarkable about thirst, exhaustion, or a successful passage of the desert.

— Bernard de Voto in *The Year of Decision*: 1846

the West, and marched up the Santa Fé Trail on August 13, with many soldiers accompanied by their families.

They were commanded by Capt. Jefferson Hunt, a "gentile" whom they despised. The soldiers took the Cimarron Branch toward Santa Fé, but the infirm members, as well as most of the women, were sent directly west to Bent's Fort, then to Pueblo, where they wintered with a group of Mormons from Mississippi whose westward progress had halted there.

The Battalion, now reduced to fewer than 400 men, reached Santa Fé on October 12; the territorial capital had been in American hands since August. There they got a new commander, Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke, for whom they would develop great respect.

After taking Santa Fé without firing a shot (probably because James Magoffin, who was sent ahead of the army, had bribed provincial governor Manuel Armijo, but that's another story), Kearny had left a small occupation force and proceeded west to California.

The Mormon Battalion had orders to follow Kearny to California, though by a different route, farther south — essentially the route by today's Interstate 10. The Mormons were the first to take wagons along this route.

They left Santa Fé on October 19. Their march across the deserts took 103 days, many of them waterless and on short rations, and most of their mules died. The only "combat" came on December 11, along the San Pedro River, when a herd of wild cattle charged their camp. Several men were gored.

In San Diego, their enlistments ran out after their arrival on January 30, 1847. Some stayed in southern California, most made their way to join their families and the rest of the host of Zion at the Great Salt Lake, and a few went north and found work at Sutter's Fort in the central valley of California. Several members of the Mormon Battalion were at hand on that fateful January day in 1848 when gold appeared in the tail race during construction of a sawmill.

That event will get commemorated, of course; 1999 will doubtless offer a host of "49er Gold Rush" sesquicentennial celebrations.

As for the Mexican War, its politics were sordid, but as a military operation, it deserves a memorial and more: We should take just pride in an army which won difficult campaigns against larger armies in hostile territory at the end of a long, tenuous supply line.

But the most notable public memorial honoring that war is to the Mormon Battalion, which never fought in a single battle of the Mexican War.

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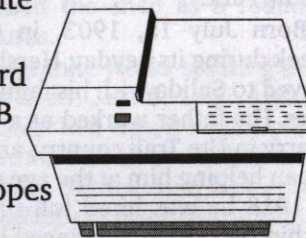
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**JOHN EARL HERSHBERGER** of Salida was one of the stonecutters who prepared granite for the Mormon Battalion Monument. In addition, he carved more than 1,000 gravestones in his 58 years in the profession — but he never got around to making one for himself or his family.

But Hershberger's skills went past carving tombstones. His most famous work was the sundial that still tells time in Cranmer Park in Denver. He also carved the pair of gargoyle-faced lions, slightly larger than life-size, that guard the entrance to Salida's Alpine Park.

Born July 15, 1903, in Cripple Creek during its heyday, Hershberger moved to Salida with his family soon after. His father worked at a granite quarry in Ute Trail country, and John began helping him at the age of nine. In 1918 he was hired full time and within two years, convinced his boss he was old enough to become an apprentice stonecutter. During the next three years, Hershberger learned the basics of the trade, and it became his life's work.

Stonecutting was a skill much in demand in the early 1900s — it was an individualized art form of which men could be proud. Besides, the pay was good. As an apprentice, Hershberger earned \$3 per day and as a journeyman the scale rose to \$9 per day. Miners then earned \$3-\$3.50 per day.

When he retired in 1970, Hershberger was one of the last American practitioners of granite carving.

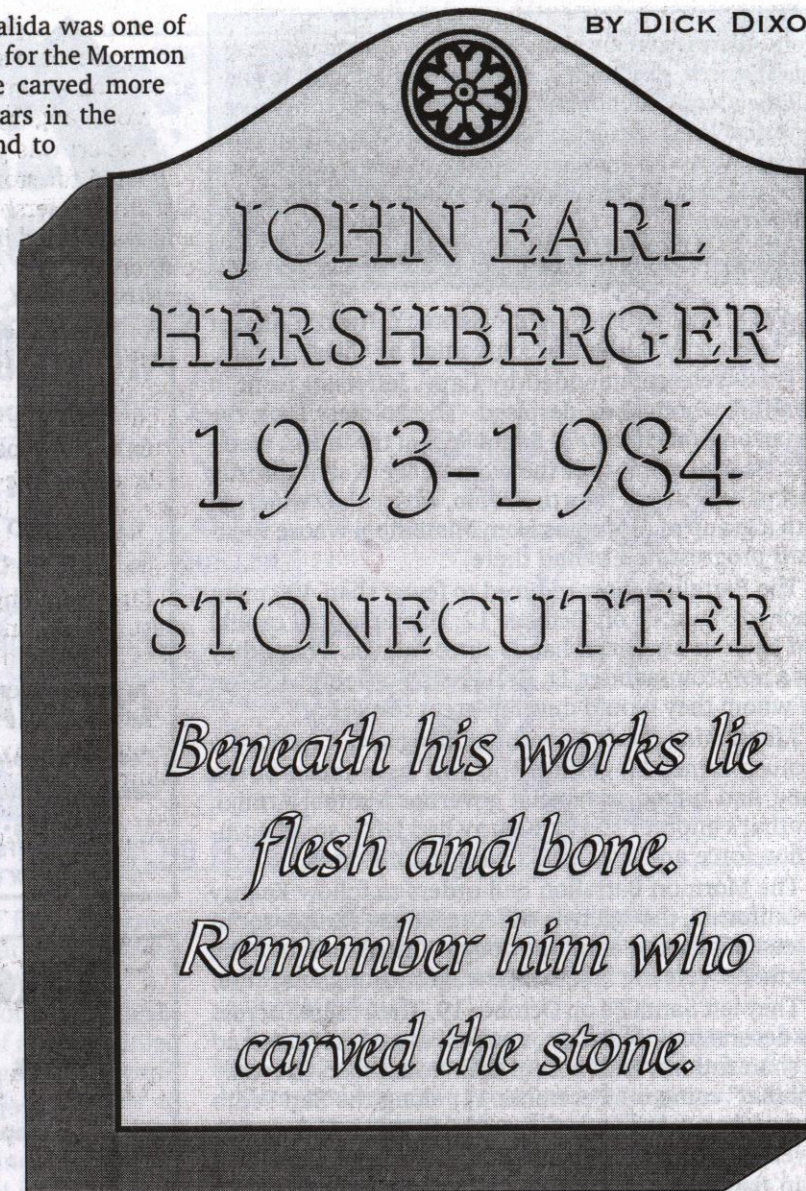
Fame of Salida's dense, dark granite spread fast. In January 1917, Fred L. Tomlin, a local agent handling granite from Federal Quarry in the Ute Trail country took an order from the Cripple Creek Masonic Order for 100 grave markers. The *Salida Record* noted the order totaled \$1,000 and that the Salida Blue Granite was selected in competition with all kinds of eastern granite and marble.

Stone arrived at the Salida Granite Company via wagons and later by truck. It usually left via the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad which extended a siding from its Monarch Branch to service the plant.

Salida Granite Company employed about 13 stonecutters at its works in 1918, and Hershberger was among them. At that time, one man worked on one piece, making the entire stone uniquely his creation and art work.

Eleven years after his semi-retirement in 1969, Hershberger remembered he created more than 1,000 gravestones during his years as a stonecutter. They

BY DICK DIXON



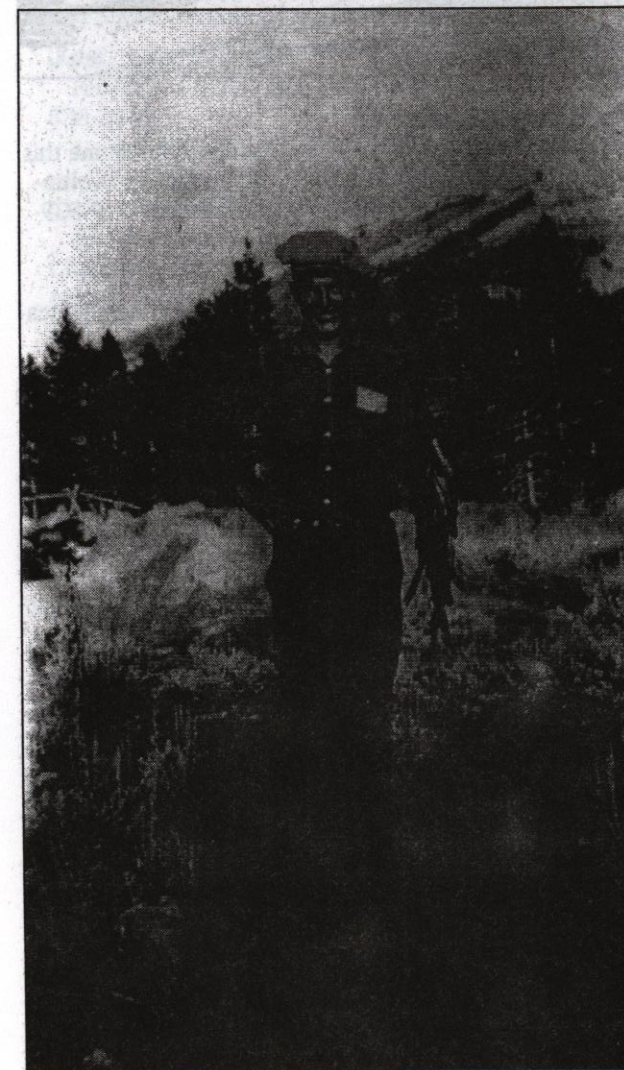
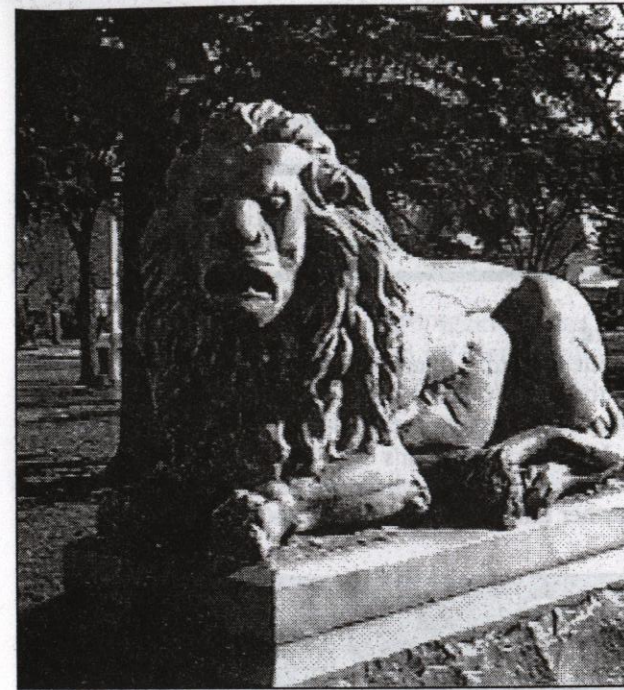
were shipped all over the United States.

A couple of more interesting stones he created included one for the Dickmann family of Salida. It included a reproduction of the family cattle brand — one of the first registered in Colorado. The stone today is in the old Cleora Cemetery east of Salida.

Another stone was for the daughter of a Wyoming Indian. The inscription he was instructed to carve read, "Buried in white man's coffin."

November 18, 1963, Hershberger leased the Salida Granite Company shed on West Fifth Street in Salida. Papers filed in the courthouse show he was president of Colorado Granite Company. He continued to turn out carved stones until heart trouble forced his retirement in 1969. He could find no one interested in continuing the operation, so it was shut down.

Hershberger came out of retirement in 1970 when G&L Granite Company of Denver needed a stonecutter to complete orders before Memorial Day. By then, the



to complete orders before Memorial Day. By then, the art had become an assembly line process where stones arrived on a conveyor belt for him to letter. Work such as scrolls, angels and trumpets was done by machine.

"The art was gone out of it," he said. "There wasn't any need for stonecutters any more." Those were the last stones Hershberger carved. He died Feb. 26, 1984 and was buried in Salida's Fairview Cemetery — without one of his own tombstones to memorialize his artistry.

For a time the huge granite shed beside the Denver and Rio Grande Monarch Branch spur remained empty. It again became home to unique art creations when Carl Wagner, a Salida artist used the shed as a foundry turning out bronze sculptures.

Picie Hylton bought the granite works building during the 1970's. Before his death Jan. 6, 1997, Hylton — a lifetime art lover — said, "In a way, it's still a place where art is created. There's a mill in there that turns out fancy molding and picture frames. And, it's a warehouse for all kinds of building materials for homes. I guess these are a kind of art form also."

The huge overhead gantry crane is still in place on its huge supporting timbers that run the full length of the building. Hylton said when he began using the building as a warehouse, the crane was pushed back out of the way and blocked to stay where it was. "I guess it would still operate today if someone wanted to hook it up," he said.

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