

Historical Society
—OF—
Southern California
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
1903

A FLAG STAFF AND FLAG FOR FORT MOORE.

(Evening Express Sept. 3, 1903.)

Fort Moore, the first American fort erected in Southern California, is to have a memorial, the Native Sons and Daughters of California, the Pioneer Society, the G. A. R. and the Historical Society having united in the project of erecting a flag pole on the site of the famous fort, on the crest of Fort Hill, at the head of Broadway, just over the Broadway tunnel.

Yesterday the pole arrived in the city. It was procured in Siskiyou County and was brought by water to San Pedro, from where it was hauled by wagon, the stick being too long to be handled by the railway company. It is a magnificent fir tree, 127 feet long, fourteen inches in diameter at the base, eight inches at the tip, and straight as an arrow.

Recently the allied societies applied to the City Council for permission to erect a pole over the Broadway tunnel, and this was granted with the understanding that the work should be done under the supervision of Julius W. Krause, the City Superintendent of Buildings. It is his intention to have the pole set in cement, thus insuring its solidity, for it is expected to remain for many years as a landmark in the city. The flag is to be provided by Stanton Post G. A. R., the Women's Relief Corps, Daughters of the American Revolution and other patriotic organizations.

Several months' time was passed in the search for a pole suitable for the purpose. Thanks are expressed to the E. K. Wood Lumber Company, which aided in securing a spar of such superior quality, there being few like it even on this coast. No date has been set for the flag raising, as the erection of the pole will be a work of considerable care. It is intended to have the formal exercises within a month, and the occasion doubtless will be one that will long be remembered.

THE FLAG RAISING.

(From Los Angeles Times December 19, 1903.)

One hundred yards south of where the American flag was raised in Los Angeles over fifty-six years ago, on the site of Fort Moore, two thousand people assisted yesterday (December 18) in the exercises attending the raising of another flag in commemoration of the olden days when this queen city was in her swaddling clothes.

The flag raising was under the auspices of the Native Sons and Daughters and was preceded by a lengthy programme of music and speeches. Mrs. A. K. Prather, of the Native Daughters, was chairman, and F. A. Stephenson, of the Native Sons, master of ceremonies. The programme, which began at 2 o'clock, was as follows: Music, Seventh Regiment Band; depositing "sacred earth" from famous American battlefields, Mrs. Sade L. Rios; music, band; speech, "Conquest of Los Angeles," Grant Loraine of Los Angeles High School; speech, "The Pioneers," by Mendle Silberberg of Commercial High School; music, band; address, "Building of Fort Moore," by J. M. Guinn, of the Historical Society and Pioneers; music, band; address, John G Mott, of the Native Sons; music, band; presentation of flag, by Rev. Will A. Knighten, of Stanton Post G. A. R.; unfurling the flag, Mrs. A. S. C. Forbes, chairman of Flag Committee, and Mrs. A. K. Prather, chairman of Flag Pole Committee; music, "Star Spangled Banner," by the band; national salute by detail of Co. F, Seventh Regiment, N. G. C.

The exercises were held on a platform surrounding the base of the big flag pole, planted as everyone knows on the hill crowning the southern or city end of the Broadway tunnel. The big flag was presented by the Women's Relief Corps, Stanton Post, G. A. R., Daughters of American Revolution and naval organizations, and was unfurled from a pole 115 feet in

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height above the ground and buried fifteen feet in the ground.

A feature of the occasion was the presence on the platform of a son of Capt. Moore (M. J. Moore of Carpinteria), after whom the fort was named, and a daughter of Gen. Fremont, the pathfinder.

Another noteworthy circumstance was the presence of a spectator—William Beddome—one of the soldiers who helped build Fort Moore, who lived in it with 400 other soldiers for five months, and who witnessed that other flag raising July 4, 1847. He is a hale, hearty veteran, 74 years old, and has many interesting stories to tell of those old days when the population of Los Angeles was about fifteen hundred. He has lived in this vicinity for twenty years and now conducts a ranch at Garvanza. He is the only known person alive here today who helped build Fort Moore.

FORT MOORE.

BY J. M. GUINN.

Los Angeles was surrendered to Commodore Stockton and General Kearny, January 10, 1847. General Flores' army, which had been defeated by the American troops in the battle of Paso de Bartolo, January 8th, and in the battle of La Mesa, January 9th, were still in the neighborhood of the city. Commodore Stockton decided to erect fortifications not only to resist an attack should one be made by Flores, but also in the event of another revolution, (as Lieutenant Emory puts it) "to enable a small garrison to hold out till aid might come from San Diego, San Francisco or Monterey, places which are destined to become centers of American settlement."

On the 11th, Lieutenant Emory, of General Kearny's staff, was detailed "to select a site and place a fort capable of containing one hundred men." On the 12th, the plan of the fort was marked out and ground broken. Work was continued on it up to the 17th by the marines and soldiers.

In the meantime General Andres Pico, in command of the Mexican troops, surrendered to Colonel Fremont at Cahuenga, and the war was over. Work on the fort ceased. Commodore Stockton and General Kearny having quarreled, Kearny left for San Diego, Stockton and his sailors rejoined their ships at San Pedro, and Lieutenant Emory was sent East via Panama with dispatches. Fremont's battalion, numbering about five hundred men, was left in command of the city.

On the 20th of April, 1847, reports supposed to be reliable reached Los Angeles stating that the Mexican Congress had appropriated \$600,000 for the conquest of California, and that a force of 1500 men under command of General Bustamente was advancing by way of Lower California against Los Angeles. On the 23rd day of April, work was begun on a second fort planned by Lieutenant J. W. Davidson of the First Regiment U. S. Dragoons. Its location was identical with Lieutenant Emory's fort, but it was twice the size of that earthwork. The work on it was done by the Mormon Battalion. This battalion was recruited from the Mormons in the spring of 1846, who were encamped at Council Bluffs, Ia., preparatory to their migration to Salt Lake. The battalion came to California under the command of Colonel Cooke, arriving at Los Angeles March 16, 1847. Its route was by way of Santa Fe, Tucson, Yuma and Warner's Ranch to San Luis Rey, and from there to Los Angeles. The battalion numbered 500 men at starting, but a number gave out on the march and were sent back.

On the 4th of July, 1847, the fort having been completed, the Stars and Stripes were raised to the top of the flag pole, which was 150 feet high. The timber for the flag staff had been brought down from the San Bernardino mountains and consisted of two pine tree trunks, one about eighty and the other seventy feet long. These were spliced together and fashioned into a beautiful pole by the carpenters of the battalion. It was raised in the rear of the fort about where is now the southeast corner of North Broadway and Fort Moore Place.

Col. J. D. Stevenson of the Seventh Regiment, New York Volunteers, who had succeeded Colonel Cooke in the command of the Southern Military District, issued an official order for the celebration of the 4th of July and the dedication of the fort.

"At sunrise a Federal salute will be fired from the field work on the hill which commands this town, and for the first time from this point the American standard will be displayed."

The troops, numbering about 700, were formed in a hollow square at the fort and the Declaration of Independence was read in English by Capt. Stuart Taylor and in Spanish by Stephen C. Foster. To Lieutenant Davidson, who had planned the fort and superintended the work on it, was given the honor of raising the flag to the top of the flag pole.

Colonel Stephenson in dedicating the field work paid this high tribute to Capt. Benjamin D. Moore, after whom the fort was named:

"It is the custom of our country to confer on its fortifications the name of some distinguished individual who has rendered important services to his country, either in the councils of the nation or on the battlefield. The Commandant has therefore determined, unless the Department of war shall otherwise direct, to confer upon the field work erected at the post of Los Angeles the name of one who was regarded by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance as a perfect specimen of an American officer, and whose character for every virtue and accomplishment that adorns a gentleman was only equaled by the reputation he had acquired in the field for his gallantry as an officer and soldier, and his life was sacrificed in the conquest of this territory at the battle of San Pasqual. The Commander directs that from and after the 4th inst. it shall bear the name of Moore."

The fort was simply an earthwork with six embrasures for cannon. It was not inclosed in the rear. Two hundred men could have held it against a thousand if the attack had come from the front, but it could have been captured from the rear by a small force. It stood intact for about thirty years. It was demolished when the streets that pass through its site were graded and the lots it crossed were built upon. No trace of it now remains.