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2000

New Photograph of the Granite Shaft for the Brigham Young Monument

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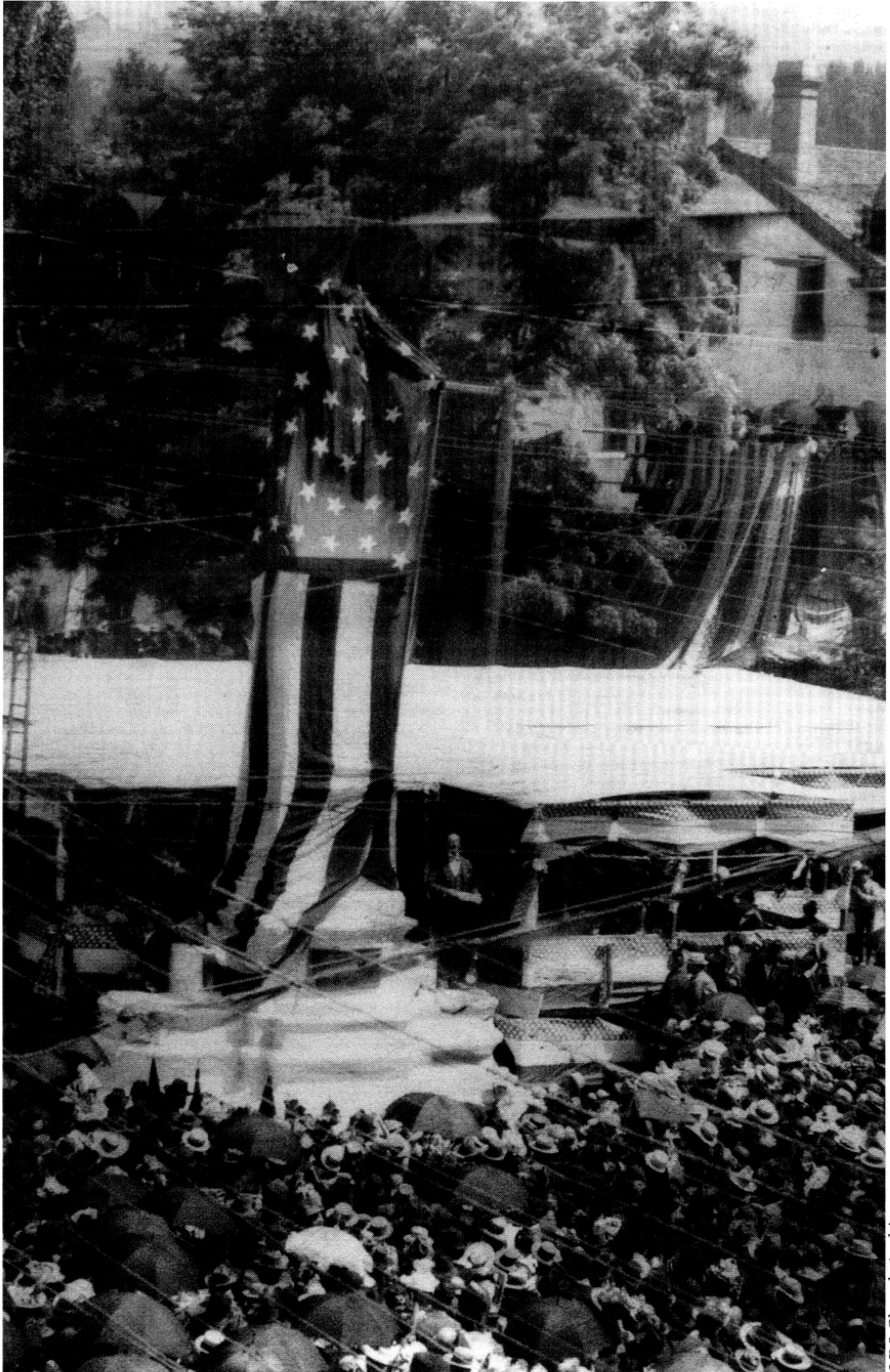
Original Publication Citation

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and J. Michael Hunter, "New Photograph of the Granite Shaft for the Brigham Young Monument," *BYU Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 98-106.

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Holzapfel, Richard Neitzel and Hunter, J. Michael, "New Photograph of the Granite Shaft for the Brigham Young Monument" (2000). *Faculty Publications*. 1396.
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub/1396>

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LDS Church Archives

FIG. 1. A view of the ceremony just prior to the unveiling of the statue of Brigham Young, July 20, 1897. Detail of a photograph by Charles R. Savage.

New Photograph of the Granite Shaft for the Brigham Young Monument

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and J. Michael Hunter

In July 1897, Latter-day Saints from throughout the Intermountain West gathered for a five-day celebration honoring the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of Brigham Young to the Great Basin. On the first day of the celebration, a large crowd gathered at the intersection of Main and South Temple to dedicate an unfinished monument (fig. 1). A lone statue of Brigham Young stood upon a tall granite shaft taken from Little Cottonwood Canyon in June 1897, just weeks before. A rare photograph recorded the scene after the shaft was loaded onto a wagon for the first leg of its journey to the site of the Monument to Brigham Young and the Pioneers (fig. 2).

Historical Context of the Photograph

The Brigham Young Memorial Association, a quasi-Church organization, commissioned Cyrus E. Dallin to design and sculpt the monument. After Dallin completed the statue of Brigham Young some time in early 1893, the figure was cast by the Ames Manufacturing Company in Chicopee, Massachusetts. Eventually, it was placed on a temporary pedestal in front of the Utah Building at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago from May 1 to October 30, 1893 (fig. 3). Following the closing of the fair, the statue was shipped to Utah and placed on another temporary pedestal on Temple Block in the open area southeast of the temple. Several historic photographs show the statue in both locations.¹ The Brigham Young statue remained on Temple Block until 1897, awaiting the completion of the entire monument and the designation of its final location.

The association's site committee went to work trying to locate a permanent site for the completed monument. Several locations were proposed, including a site in Brigham Young's private cemetery, on Main Street in front of the temple, in front of the as-yet-unbuilt state capitol building,² and on the southeast corner of Temple Square. The association finally chose the latter, with a plan to take down the southeast corner of the square's wall and incorporate stones from the wall into the monument's foundation.³

Raising money to complete the monument had lagged, but the association thought it could revive interest by announcing plans to dedicate the monument in its unfinished state during the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley, July 24, 1897. The Church



FIG. 2. Onlookers and workmen paused in June 1897 to memorialize the culmination of “a vast amount of labor and considerable ingenuity.” The large stone for the Brigham

advanced \$8,000 to the association for work on the granite pedestal. By this time the association had decided on a new location for the monument: the intersection of Main and South Temple Streets. Agreeing that a monument to the pioneers should be in this more public place, the Salt Lake City Council deeded to the association a plot of ground 25' x 25' at the intersection.⁴

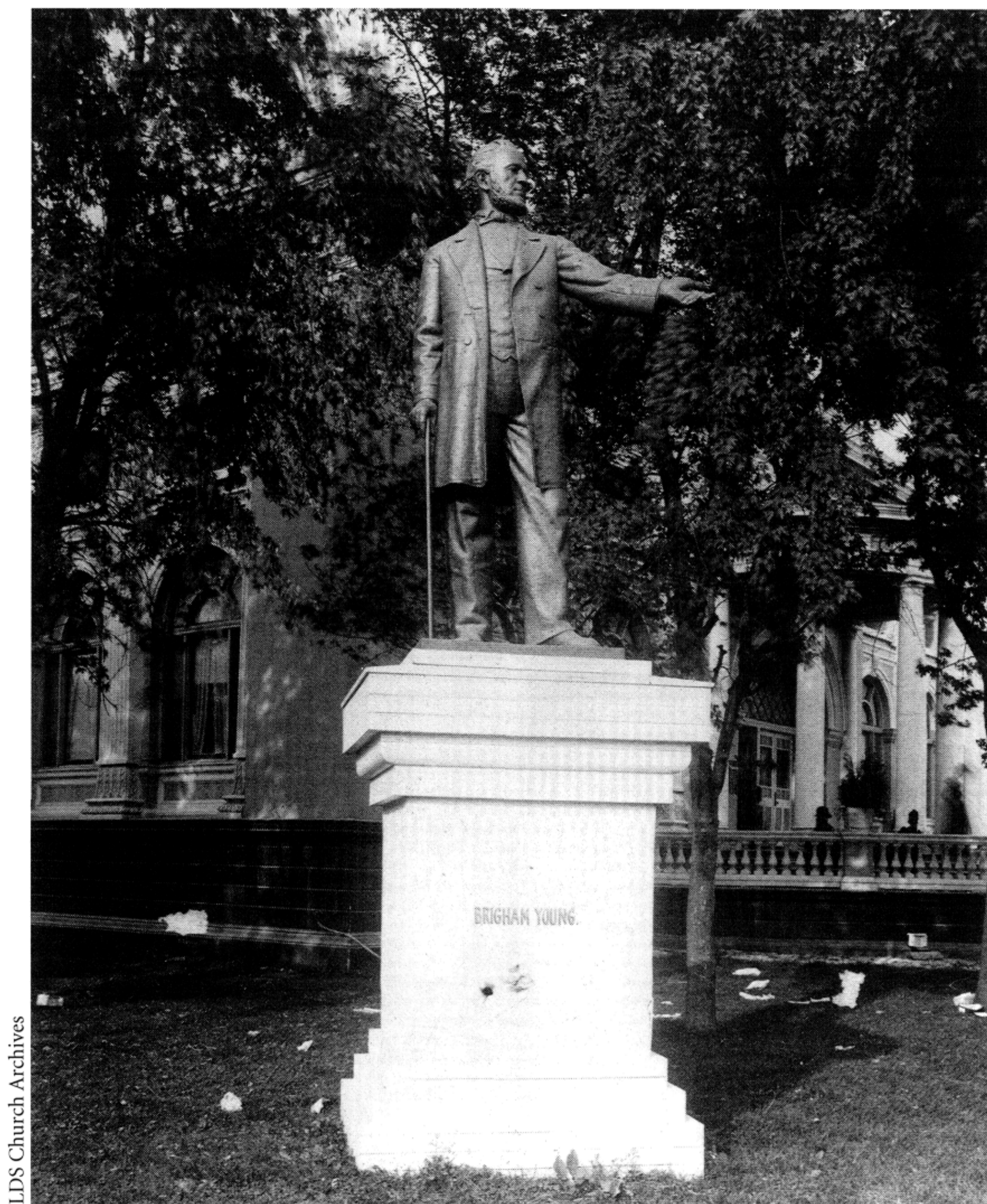
The association entered into an agreement with Watson Brothers to complete the granite pedestal on June 6, 1897. The monument was to be unveiled on the first day of the five-day Utah Pioneer Jubilee celebration,



Young monument pedestal had been successfully cut and loaded on the “specially provided” wagon that would carry it from Little Cottonwood Canyon to a train.

July 20, 1897⁵ (figs. 1, 4). A report of the transport of the granite base was published in the *Deseret Evening News* in June 1897:

[Accompanying] the above is an exact chalk plate reproduction of a photograph of the big rock hewn from the Livingston quarry in Little Cottonwood canyon, for the Pioneer Monument shaft. As shown here the block was being moved on rails by human strength to a wagon nearby. A vast amount of labor and considerable ingenuity have been expended in cutting the stone from the mountain and getting it ready for shipment to this city.



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FIG. 3. Brigham Young statue at the Chicago World's Fair. From May 1, 1893, through October 30, 1893, the statue stood in front of the Utah Building at the exposition. It was then sent to Utah.

A large force of men have been steadily employed in the undertaking for several weeks and today they succeeded in loading it on a specially provided wagon on which it will be conveyed a distance of one mile from the quarry to the Rio Grande Western over which it will be transported to this city. When it is understood that its present weight exceeds twenty tons an idea of its size can be more easily formed. When it reaches the depot in this city it will again

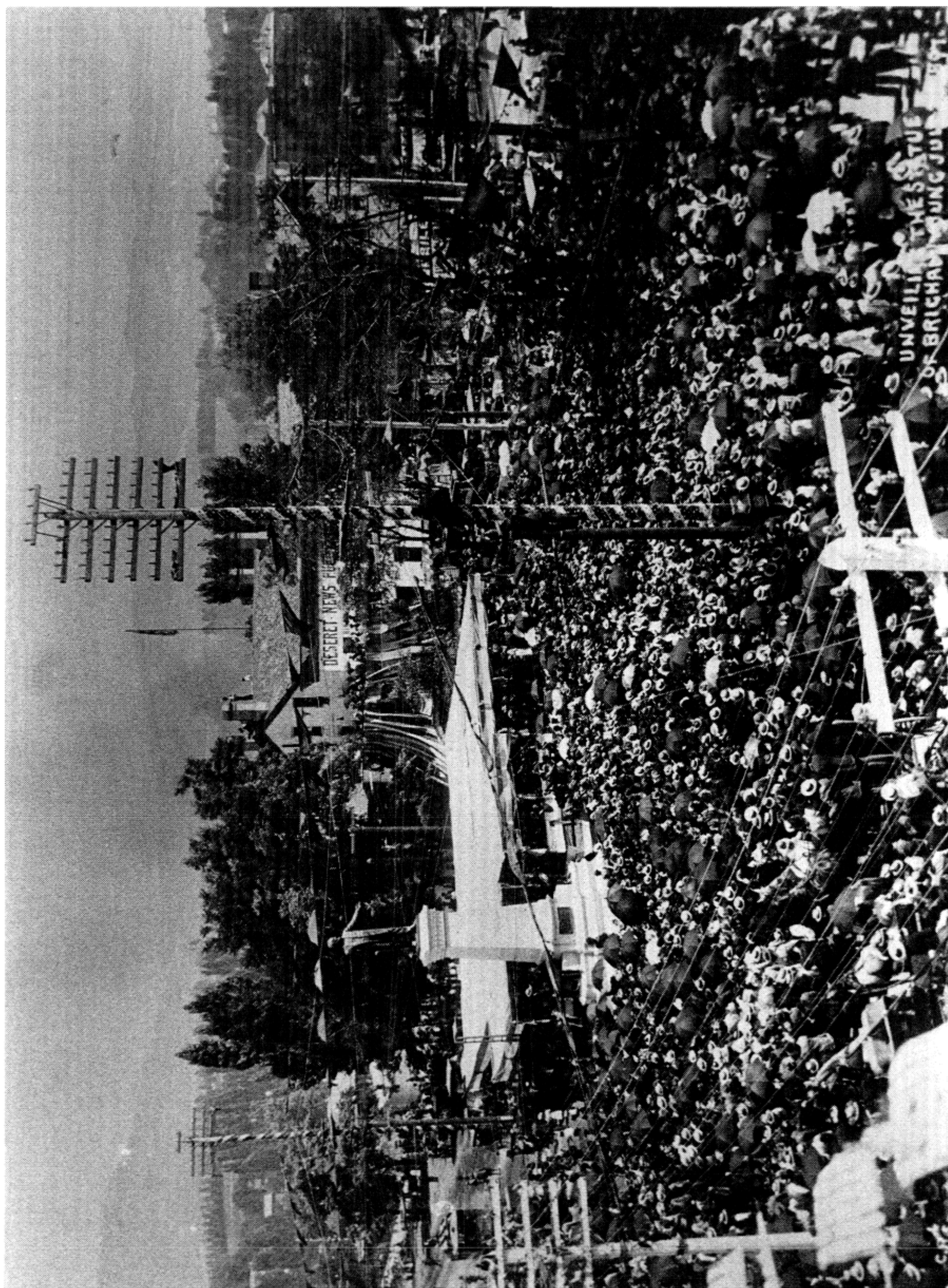


FIG. 4. Brigham Young monument after it was unveiled at the intersection of Main and South Temple Streets,

Salt Lake City, July 20, 1897. The Brigham Young statue stands upon its new granite pedestal. Charles R. Savage.

be transferred to a wagon and conveyed to the intersection of East and South Temple streets, where it will be made ready for placing in the shaft which is to commemorate the achievements of the Pioneers. It is estimated that it will require fifteen span of horses to draw it from the depot to the Monument site. The corner stone will be laid with proper ceremonies some day next week.⁶

Additional commemorative bronze figures and a plaque were added to the monument before its final dedication on July 24, 1900⁷ (fig. 5).



Courtesy Susannah Broberg Langenheim

FIG. 5. Brigham Young monument, ca. 1904, Underwood and Underwood. This view shows the monument after additional bronze plaques and details were added.

Provenance of the Photograph

The photograph of the granite stone used in *The Monument to Brigham Young and the Pioneers* was donated by Daphne Steele Despain (1902–present) in 1994 to the LDS Church Archives. She was the wife of Robert Earl Despain (1898–1986), from whom she obtained the photograph. Robert Earl obtained it from his father, Robert Henry Despain (1875–1967), who in turn received it from his father, William Joseph Despain (1843–1918). According to family tradition, William helped cut the granite from the Livingston quarry in Little Cottonwood Canyon. He also supposedly appears in the photograph (unidentified). Originally the family tradition provided a date of May 1893 for the photograph. However, the *Deseret Evening News* provides the date of the image as June 1897.⁸

The image was damaged before being donated. Dale Heaps, LDS Church Archives conservator, repaired and remounted the image in December 1999. The photograph measures 15.3 x 33.3 cm and is mounted on card stock 17.3 x 36.2 cm. Since a drawing of a photograph taken just before the shaft was loaded on the wagon appeared in the *Deseret Evening News* on June 1897, we may assume that the same photographer was involved with this view. While the *Deseret Evening News* provides the name of A. W. Silver, the first initial may be a misprint. Primary sources, including the 1897 Salt Lake City Directory, do not mention any professional photographers with the name of A. W. Silver. However, there is a James W. Silver, an apprentice working at the Silver Brothers Iron Works, who could have been an amateur photographer and the person involved in preserving this historic event.

Conclusion

An amateur photograph captured a brief moment in LDS Church history in Little Cottonwood Canyon in June 1897. The decision to place the Brigham Young statue by Cyrus Dallin upon a granite pedestal was part of a lengthy effort to erect an appropriate monument to the early pioneers.

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1. See Nelson B. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass: The Mormons, the West, and Their Photographers* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 259, 289.

2. *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 7, 1895, 8. On April 28, 1888, Heber J. Grant proposed that Salt Lake City donate a portion of the city's Arsenal Hill to Utah Territory for a

state capitol building site. The next day, the mayor, governor, legislators, and councilmen visited the hill and selected a site for the capitol building. The city officially tendered 19.46 acres on March 1, 1888. In the years before the capitol was built in 1916, the area was landscaped, enclosed with an iron fence, and named Capitol Hill. *Deseret Evening News*, February 29, 1888, 2; *Journal History of the Church*, May 26, 1908, 5, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives), microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Nobel Warrum, ed., *Utah Since Statehood* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1919), 209.

3. *Journal History*, May 27, 1897, 2; June 3, 1897, 2; *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 7, 1895, 8.

4. *Journal History*, May 26, 1897, 2; June 3, 1897, 2.

5. Watson Brothers' contract, 1897, Brigham Young Memorial Association papers, LDS Church Archives.

6. "Pioneer Monument Shaft," *Deseret Evening News*, June 25, 1897, 1.

7. For a detailed discussion of the monument's history, see J. Michael Hunter's forthcoming article, "The Monument to Brigham Young and the Pioneers: One Hundred Years of Controversy," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 68 (fall 2000): 332–50.

8. "Pioneer Monument Shaft," 1.