



Newspaper article from LDS Church News – July 28, 2001

City memorializes its pioneer founders

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DRAPER, UTAH

The cornfields and cattle herds that once characterized this erstwhile farming community in the extreme south end of the Salt Lake Valley have largely vanished. But residents are still in touch with their pioneer legacy, as evidenced by a monument dedication July 23.

A sculpture depicting founding settlers Ebenezer and Phebe Brown, two of the original Nauvoo pioneers who came to the Salt Lake Valley, was dedicated by Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve at an evening gathering of descendants and townspeople. The life-size sculpture is the newest addition to Draper Historical Park, which was dedicated during the Pioneer Sesquicentennial year of 1997.

“Statues are not made for those that have passed on: they’re made for us to enjoy today,” Elder Perry remarked. “As you look at this statue, you must think first of their faith, faith in God, their Eternal Father; faith in their family and faith in themselves....”

“As you look at the statue, you must think of their devotion to the nation in which we live that they were willing to sacrifice part of their lives to serving this great country.

“And finally, you must think of their desire to build a community of saints willing to help and support and build with each other to establish that which the Lord has blessed us with, to be stewards of His land and take care of it the best way that we can.”

Among speakers on the program was Beverly B. Thompson, one of the organizers and a local historian. She outlined events in the lives of Phebe and Ebenezer:

Phebe Draper Palmer Brown was baptized by Brigham Young just a few months after he had been baptized. Her husband died shortly after she joined the Church, and she went to Kirtland, Ohio, with her two brothers and four children.

On the way to Far West, Mo., Ebenezer Brown and his family joined the Draper caravan. The Drapers had joined the Church in the East. After suffering with the saints at Far West, the

Brown and Draper families continued on to Illinois. Ebenezer married Phebe a few months later, blending their families, each with four children from a previous marriage.

During the exodus west from Nauvoo, Ill., the couple answered the recruiting call for the Mormon Battalion, leaving their two younger children in the care of the older siblings. A laundress and cook, Phebe was one of only four women to go with the battalion.

After helping to build the city of San Diego in California, they finally arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1849. Brigham Young sent the Browns to settle what was then called Willow Canyon in 1850. Phebe's brother, William Draper Jr., and his family also settled there, and William became the first presiding elder. It was for him that the city was named.

"But the community was really started by Ebenezer and Phebe," Sister Thompson said. "Ebenezer would invite people to come there to live, and tell them to choose a cow from his herd so they would have milk for their family. They were loved and respected by everyone. They opened and ran the first post office, and Phebe was the first teacher of the little children. They donated the land the monument stands on to the Church for a meetinghouse."

There was a picture of the statue and gathering with this caption. Elder L. Tom Perry refers to newly unveiled sculpture of Ebenezer and Phebe Brown while addressing congregation assembled in Draper, Utah, for monument dedication.



