

Trail Marker

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Happy New Year! As we enter 2026, it is an appropriate time to reflect on the good in our past and to look positively ahead, setting sights on personal growth and new experiences. The upcoming year is expected to bring new opportunities for service, beginning with us and our families. SUP as a whole remains dedicated to its mission of service, encouraging each chapter to identify and pursue meaningful ways to contribute both to its members and the broader community.

January marks not only the start of a new year but also the anniversary of Utah's admission as the 45th state on January 4, 1896. This milestone was achieved after nearly four decades of efforts to secure approval from the United States Congress for statehood. Members of the National Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers should reflect with respect on the perseverance demonstrated by our pioneer ancestors throughout this extended process.

On a broader scale, this new year is also the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. This year, the nation will commemorate the signing through a range of events, including special national exhibits in Washington D.C. Regional, state-level, and community-led programs will also be held across the country.

In addition, January 16th has been recognized annually as National Religious Freedom Day since 1993, commemorating the importance of religious freedom. As members of SUP, we recognize the significance of protecting and upholding religious liberties.

SUP members are encouraged to commemorate our independence and freedoms through personal, family and chapter-specific celebrations, as deemed appropriate by each group. National SUP will commemorate the event by hosting a National SUP Trek in the Washington D.C. area from October 13 to 23 this year. Please note that the dates have been extended from previous announcements to enhance the overall trek experience. Additional details will be communicated as the event approaches. Members are advised to note these dates on their calendars, as this presents a valuable opportunity to honor our nation's history.

After 34 years associated with the U.S. Air Force and Utah Army National Guard, I am grateful for the chance to have served our nation. Now, my focus is on serving SUP and you. Please communicate your membership and chapter needs and successes to National SUP through your chapter and AVP leadership so that National SUP can better support and add value to your membership.

Have a wonderful new year, and may the principles of faith, family, loyalty, courage, and other pioneer values continue to burn brightly in your hearts!

Wally

Wally Breitenstein Sr. | 2026 National SUP President

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PIONEER STORIES

JAMES HENRY BLACKNER AND JANE ALLEN BLACKNER

BY KAY E BLACKNER

My Great Grandfather, James Henry Blackner, and my Great Grandmother, Jane Allen Blackner, were born in (GF) Hullnall, Forkhead, England, and (GM) Marshbrough, York[shire], England. They were married [October 20], 1852. The date of their baptism into the Church is not known, but Grandfather's Elder's License was dated [February] 18, 1858, and was signed by Elder John Hyde and Elder Peter Betts. Grandfather and Grandmother, with two little children, John Henry and Mary Jane, left their home and loved ones in England, March 15, 1860, to come to America. They left Liverpool England in a sailing vessel named Emilie. They were on the Atlantic Ocean 6 weeks. They had a rough voyage on the water. Grandfather was very sick on the voyage, so they were very glad to see the shore of New York. They arrived near New York, 1 May 1860. While the vessel was still anchored, Grandmother gave birth to a baby girl. They blessed the baby and gave her the name of Emilie on 2 May, 1860, in memory of the ship they came over on.

In the morning, the ship crew carried Grandmother and the new baby into a boat, along with the other passengers and they were all transferred into a steamer boat called the New World, on the Albany River. From this steamer, they were landed in New York. They were delayed in New York about six weeks on account of Grandmother's illness because of the birth of the baby. They met the Saints in St. Louis, Missouri, and Grandfather bought his handcart and equipment ready for the journey. They had a very hard time crossing the plains. Two incidents, especially trying, were an epidemic of whooping cough that broke out among the little ones in the company, and unfortunately, baby Emilie contracted the disease. The baby was very ill,



James Henry Blackner and Jane Allen Blackner

but the saints were unable to wait to care for the sick, so they traveled on. Grandmother carried the sick baby in her arms over unbroken trails and surrounded with Indians and wild animals, over rock, across rivers, over hills and valleys, with bleeding sore feet and very weary and worried, knowing the darling baby was dying. They camped that night at Council Bluffs. It was very early when they broke camp and the tent had to be taken down; they had to move on. Baby Emilie was in convulsions and died a short time later in Grandmother's arms. The saints took the last piece of lumber they had and made a coffin for the baby. Grandmother put a little white gown on the baby and buried her in July 1860, near Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the prairie.

After their sorrowful, sad, experience, they wended their way toward the west and the Rocky Mountains, plodding on, walking hundreds of miles. These trials were telling deeply on the pioneers, the long hazardous march, the exposure to the elements, all kinds of danger, but they went steadily onward. The rations became low and every morning the Captain measured out the allotment for the day. There wasn't discipline in the camps and through all their troubles, they still had many agreeable pleasures on the plains. Grand mother

made a pair of little pants by hand for John Henry, so the herdsmen would take him on their ponies with them until evening. This was done day after day. The second incident I mentioned at the beginning was: As they were nearing Salt Lake City at Emigration Canyon, the wagon drivers would take the smaller children in the seat with them. It happened that little Mary Jane was in Bro. Slaugski's wagon on the seat with him as they crossed the river. When the women and children arrived near the bank of the river, they could hear loud talking and a lot of excitement. They learned that one of the wagons had turned over in the water. When Grandmother learned this, she rushed among the crowd trying to make them understand that her little girl was under that load. Imagine the excitement with the men working feverishly getting the load off from her. When they got her from the water, it seemed she was dead. Bro. Karl G. Maeser, Chaplin of Company, took the little Mary Jane with some of the Elders among the trees and Bro. Maeser, with the Elders administered to Mary Jane and blessed, and promised her that she would live. Bro. Maeser scraped her chest to the bone and rewarded with a few drops of blood. Mary Jane lived and raised a family of 8 children and died when she was 48 years old. Brave Grandfather and Grandmother, undaunted, never faltering in their faith, courageously went onward to the goal of Brave Pioneers.^{1,2}

Photos from FamilySearch.org

1. Article submitted by Kay E. Blackner to Sons of Utah Pioneers Historical Research Library
2. Article by Bonnie Ames "James Henry Blackner,

Monument Trek

Original Utah State Penitentiary



SUP #17 | SUGARHOUSE PARK | GPS: N40 43 30.1, W111 51 04.0 ELEVATION 4448 FEET (40.7250278, -111.8511111)

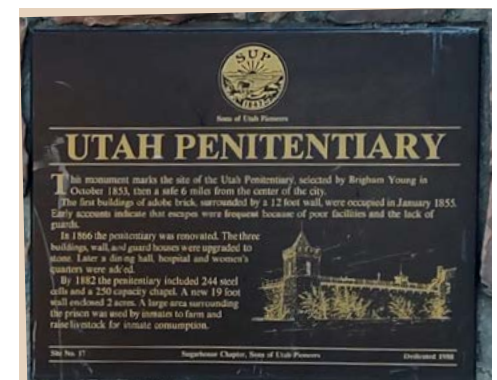
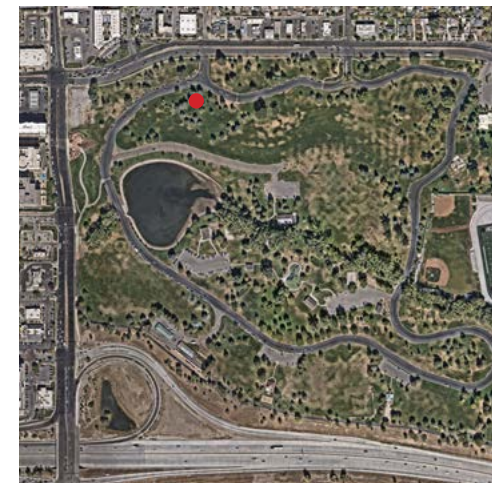
The original Utah State Penitentiary was located at today's Sugar House Park, 2140 South 1350 East Salt Lake City. It was a safe six miles from downtown Salt Lake City, as established by Brigham Young in October 1853. In 1988, SUP Monument #17 was installed by the Sugar House Chapter, Sons of Utah Pioneers, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Sugar House Community Council, Utah Peace Officers Associations, & The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The South Edgehill Camp, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, also placed a plaque (Site No. 440) to commemorate the facility.

The initial adobe brick structures, enclosed by a 12-foot wall, were first occupied in January 1855. Contemporary reports suggest that escapes occurred regularly due to inadequate facilities and insufficient security personnel.

In 1866, renovations included the addition of three buildings, a wall, and the upgrade of guard houses to stone. Subsequently, a dining hall, hospital, and women's quarters were constructed.

By 1882, the penitentiary featured 244 steel cells and a chapel that could seat 250 people. A new 19-foot wall enclosed two acres. A large area surrounding the prison was used by inmates to farm and raise livestock for inmate consumption.

Following World War II, city expansion prompted the construction of a prison at Point of the Mountain in 1951. After 70 years, this facility closed in 2022 when a new penitentiary opened at 1480 N 8000 W in Salt Lake City.



TRAIL MARKER NEWS

Compiled by Roland Lee

If you would like to have your chapter news printed in the Trail Marker please do the following:

1. Write-up should be one-paragraph (Less than 250 words) in MS Word or send as the text of an email. NO pdf files.
2. Attach 1 quality jpeg photograph to your email
3. Email to: rolandleefamily@gmail.com
4. News must be received by the 25th of each month

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!

NAMECHAPTER

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Richard Lynn Smith..... Mills
Steven N Winters..... Salt Lake Pioneer
Drew Major..... Squaw Peak

LIFE ETERNAL

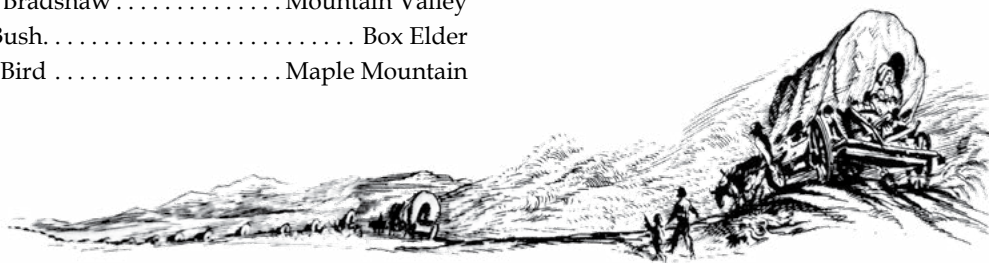
Byron "Pete" Riches.....Holladay
John R Shupe..... WorldWide Pioneer
Lynn E Smith..... WorldWide Pioneer
Charles Brinkerhoff..... Cedar City
Raymond Leon Graham..... Mt Nebo
Timothy M Neville..... Temple Fork
Van Bushnell..... Cedar City
Wayne L Wahlquist.....Ogden Pioneer

NAMECHAPTER

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

Michael Bradbury..... Box Elder
Blair B Burnett.....Hurricane Valley
Brad Hall..... Pocatello (Portneuf Pioneers)
Colin Arch Stout.....Hurricane Valley
David Samuelson..... Mt Nebo
David Wadman.....Ogden Valley
Dondavid Powell..... Upper Snake River Valley
Eric K Allred..... Cedar City
Gary Carpenter..... Box Elder
Gary Egbert..... WorldWide Pioneer
Grant E Johnson..... Upper Snake River Valley
Jeffery M Bradshaw..... Mountain Valley
Michael Bush..... Box Elder
Phillip F. Bird..... Maple Mountain

Randall Probst..... Mountain Valley
Richard Best..... Maple Mountain
Roger Fredrick Sawyer.....Twenty Wells
Sheldon Case..... Mountain Valley
Stephen Fauth..... Upper Snake River Valley
Var Harris..... Eagle Rock
William Henry..... Pocatello (Portneuf Pioneers)
Ed Rich.....Ogden Valley
Lyle Richins..... Cotton Mission
Paul Gapinski..... Centerville
Paul Graf..... Cotton Mission



FOR UPCOMING SUP NATIONAL EVENTS, CLICK HERE

BOUNTIFUL CHAPTER - Bountiful, Utah



Modern Pioneer Award

The Bountiful Chapter of Sons of Utah Pioneers met at 6:30 pm at The Joy Luck Restaurant in Bountiful, Utah on November 19, 2025. There were twenty-nine people in attendance, about half that number being guests from The Kimball Mill Ward in Bountiful. Conducting was President Alan Hill. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jim Hanks. The opening prayer was offered by Ron Anderson. Next year's Chapter President, Gary Sessions, was recognized and dinner was served. A Bountiful Chapter \$1,000 SUP scholarship recipient, Raquel Daniels, was

introduced. The scholarship included a one year's membership in the SUP. A power-point presentation was given and a time-line sheet was passed out by Robert Blattner of the history of the Heber C. Kimball gristmill on Orchard Drive and Mill Street in Bountiful. The timeline started at 1851 and went to 2024. It was announced that the annual clean up day at the site would be this May before school lets out. Robert Blattner was honored in receiving the Modern Pioneer Award. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

COTTON MISSION CHAPTER - St George, Utah



New Officers

The Cotton Mission Chapter held their monthly meeting on December 16. An appreciation award was given to outgoing president Brad Allen and his wife Dantzelle. President Allen did a fantastic job guiding our chapter during 2025. Our new president for 2026 will be Mark Wells. The new leadership for 2026 was sworn in by area vice president Bob Gurr. After a good meal catered by the Golden Corral restaurant, we had a very professional evening of music provided by the Desert

Hills High School Chamber singers. They presented a beautiful evening of both spiritual hymns as well as some carefully choreographed and entertaining comical numbers. Directed by Joseph A Woolf, the Chamber Singers are a small dynamic auditioned group of thirty-two students. They have a unique look and sound, and they range in age from fifteen to eighteen years. The Chamber Singers rehearse daily at seven o'clock in a zero hour, for credit class.

EAGLE ROCK CHAPTER - Idaho Falls, Idaho



New Officers

Our December Monthly meeting was again well attended with members and guests. Martel Grover, our Area V.P., installed our new Board Members for 2026 with the official swearing in of Past President - Larren Nelson, President - Steve Schellenberg, Secretary - Phil Schow, Treasurer - Adrian Sparks. We then tooted our horn, just a bit, by highlighting some of the accomplishments and progress made by our chapter this year. Roger Dye's Pioneer Minute was a story about a family traveling in a covered wagon with two others. When they ran into trouble with no hope of resolving the problem a stranger

came and provided assistance, then walked behind the last wagon and, when out of sight, disappeared leaving no tracks to be found. Lynn Bradshaw then presented us with a portion the 2024 "Christmas with the Tabernacle Choir, A Season for Shepherds: The True Story of Dr. Charles Mulli" from Africa. This was a brief history of his life and how, over the years, he has helped many young children living on the streets providing them with a loving family environment, a safe place to sleep, eat, and provision for an education. Truly an inspiring story. We later sang some Christmas carols to close out the meeting.

JORDAN RIVER TEMPLE CHAPTER - South Jordan, Utah



Mtn. Ridge HS Madrigals

Here is the picture of 35 members of the Madrigal Choir from the Mountain Ridge High School presenting their inspiring Christmas musical program to our Chapter this December evening. Their musical conductor is Mr. Kelly DeHaan. Every year, this group of Madrigals comes to our

December Chapter meeting and inspires us with their talents, their inspirational music, and displaying each young man and each young women's magnificent future. We thank them once again for coming and inspiring all of us. Indeed, most enjoyable - see you again in a year.

MAPLE MOUNTAIN CHAPTER - Maple Mountain / Spanish Fork



Matt Grey

Our December 4th Christmas Program featured Dr. Matt Grey, a renowned New and Old Testament archaeologist, who presented on the archaeological perspectives of first-century Bethlehem and the Christmas narratives in the gospels. Dr. Grey, a professor of ancient scripture and coordinator of the Ancient Near Eastern Studies program at BYU, brought exceptional expertise drawn from his advanced degrees in Near Eastern studies, archaeology, Jewish studies, and ancient

Mediterranean religions. He has previously taught at Notre Dame, Oxford, Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill, the BYU Jerusalem Center, and the BYU London Centre. At BYU he teaches courses on the New Testament, the Jewish context of Jesus's life, temples in the biblical world, and New Testament archaeology, and he currently serves as an Alcuin Fellow in the Honors Program.

MORGAN PIONEER CHAPTER - Morgan, Utah



Modern Pioneer award

On Monday December 15th, the Morgan Chapter of the Sons of the Utah Pioneers held their Christmas luncheon with their wives, the last gathering of 2025. It was again held at the Rock chapel and a wonderful meal was catered by Larrys-to-Go and his capable staff. Before the meal, chapter member, Gerald Betournay presented the 2025 "Modern Pioneer" award to chapter member Richard Bohman. This recognition is awarded annually by the Morgan Chapter to a member of the community who has exemplified the pioneer spirit throughout their life. Richard was raised in Morgan and attended Morgan High School. He and his wife, Connie, served a Humanitarian Mission to Bolivia. He has served twice as a Bishop and as a member of the Morgan Utah Stake Presidency

Board members of the Morgan Chapter. This included the new assignments for President, Howard Hansen, President-Elect, Richard Bowman, Vice-President, Van Nelson, Past -President Gene Allred, and Secretary Gerald Betournay. Gene Allred was then presented the 2025 Historical binder by Chapter historian Eric Anderton.



New Officers

Following the presentation, outgoing Chapter president Gene Allred, offered a short Christmas message. The National SUP representative, Alan Turner, swore in all of the 2026

Entertainment for the afternoon was performed by talented, local singer, Emily Pfiefer. Emily was born and raised on the North shore of Oahu Hawaii. She has a degree in Music and Vocal Performance from BYU and a master's degree in Choral Conducting from Butler University. She served a mission to Austria. Emily has performed throughout the world and is a founding member of the Morgan Valley Arts Council and Director of the "Messiah" by the Morgan Valley Chamber Orchestra and Choir. All who attended were entertained, inspired and left filled with the Spirit of Christmas.

PORTER ROCKWELL CHAPTER - Salt Lake City South, Utah



Matthew Grow

There's a lot of mystery surrounding the Council of Fifty, organized by the Prophet Joseph Smith in March 1844. Some mistakenly associate it with the Danites; others may liken it to a quazi-Church group that operated clandestinely outside the immediate jurisdiction of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our December speaker, Matthew Grow, Managing Director of the Church History Department, cleared up nearly all questions concerning the legitimacy of the Council. Brother Grow explained the political, economic, and mob environment which moved the Prophet to form the group. He explained four major issues addressed by the Council during its approximately six years of existence: 1) How to blend the Kingdom of God on Earth with secular government at national and local levels; 2)

How to govern the City of Nauvoo during the aftermath of the revocation of the Nauvoo Charter (e.g., no more militia or police, city council, locally directed court system, etc.); 3) Where the body of the Church should move following the martyrdom and expulsion from Illinois – Texas, California, Intermountain West? (No destination had yet been confirmed.); 4) How to govern the Saints upon arriving in Utah, before becoming a Federally administered territory. The Council of Fifty officially disbanded around 1850 as its original purpose was no longer valid. Brother Grow told how we know so much more about the Council, since the Joseph Smith Papers project has provided us with a myriad of facts from those who were contemporaries of the Prophet.

SETTLEMENT CANYON CHAPTER - Tooele, Utah



Tooele Valley Choral Society

At annual December Christmas dinner meeting, the Settlement Canyon Chapter of the Sons of Utah celebrated a wonderful Christmas dinner entertained by the Tooele Valley

Choral Society. Executive Board members supplied turkey, ham, and side dishes. Chapter Members were asked to bring favorite Desert or favorite Christmas dish.

TEMPLE FORK CHAPTER - Logan, Utah



Craig Jessup

Our December meeting was held at the Logan Country Club. Following dinner we heard from our guest speaker, Dr Craig Jessup. Dr Jessup led our song for the night then gave his family history in Cache valley. He talked about how his life has revolved around music in the Air Force, as an educator, as lead conductor of the Tabernacle Choir and for the past 18 years

as Dean of Music at Utah State University. It was fascinating to hear how the choir functions, the miracles and how it touches people around the world. It was a very interesting and informative evening for all who attended.

TIMPANOGOS CHAPTER - American Fork, Utah



Christmas Program

From the opening notes to the closing hymn, our Timpanogos Chapter's December program was a beautiful evening that carried a deep sense of reverence and gratitude for the Savior and for those who came before us. Instrumental selections by the Alpine Air Harp and Flute Duo filled the room with warmth and light, reminding all present that music teaches and testifies in ways words alone cannot. Each familiar Christmas melody felt like an invitation to remember faith, sacrifice, and hope. Vocal selections by Miss Orem, RyLee Ramsey added a powerful witness to the program. Her performances of Mary Did You Know, Breath of Heaven, and O Holy Night were especially moving and drew the audience into the sacred story of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. The blend of harp, flute, and voice created moments of reflection

that lingered well beyond the final note. The evening concluded with a shared moment as the audience joined together in singing Away in a Manger, led by Miss Orem and accompanied by the Alpine Air Harp and Flute Duo. Voices joined as one, echoing the same spirit of unity and faith that undoubtedly sustained our pioneer ancestors through their first Christmas in the valley. It was a program that uplifted, taught, and testified, leaving those in attendance grateful for the message of Christmas and the enduring power of sacred music. As we reflect on the past year, we feel sincere appreciation for President Dewey Garner and the dedication he has shown to the Timpanogos Chapter. We are also thankful for Bruce Frandsen and his willingness to serve and lead the chapter in 2026.

UPPER SNAKE RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER - Rexburg, Idaho



Nina Wilkins

Our chapter was warmed by the spirit and enthusiasm of Nina Wilkins. Her topic was "The Secret Notes and Stories of the New Hymn Book." Nina shared several stories of when music and church presidents intersected in her life. She was blessed to be in the right place at the right time to sit by and talk to these spiritual giants. They probably felt the same thing when they were talking to her! In the development of the new hymn book, the following questions were asked of each of the 17,000 submitted hymns:

- 1) Does it increase faith in and of our Heavenly Father?
- 2) Does it teach the core doctrine of the gospel with power and clarity?
- 3) Does it invite joyful singing in the home and Church?
- 4) Does it comfort the weary and inspire members to endure in faith?
- 5) Does it unify members throughout the Church?

The new hymn book will be digitally published in four languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French. We have all begun to see the new hymns released in our own

congregations. Nina closed her presentation with her feelings about her three favourite hymns and the story of one of them: "All is Well with My Soul." This hymn was written by a grief-stricken father whose wife and daughters had been victims of an ocean-voyage tragedy. The mother lived but all their daughters were drowned in the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean. When one sings this hymn, the father's faith in the Savior is evident. Our program was an opportunity to remember the Savior at this season of Christmas. Warm hearts, warm friends, and warm words.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

January 15th, 2026. Sahar Qumseyeth: BYU-Idaho Professor, native Palestinian, and church member. "Update on All Things in Israel." She will receive the "Modern-Day Pioneer" award at that time.

February 18th, 2026: Mike Hammond: "The Entrepreneurial Spirit: How it is Affecting Rexburg."