

# Our Madonna in Springerville:

## A Story of Honor, Dedication, Restoration, and Rededication

By Sallie Lovorn



“What more could there be?” I thought as I began the New Horizons Course module on the series of 12 Madonna of the Trails Statues. The erection effort was led by NSDAR from 1911-1929. Most of us have heard that they stand for all of the brave pioneering women who moved west with what [roadsideamerica.com](http://roadsideamerica.com) describes as “their crazy husbands.” If we’ve heard a program or read an article about these monuments, we know they mark spots on the Old Trail Roads from Maryland to California, are 18 feet tall, and weigh 17 tons.

Many of us recall the efforts of Arizona DAR to restore our Madonna of the Trail Monument in Springerville, Arizona, led by State Chair of the Madonna of the Trail Committee, Susan North (first of Mogollon Chapter and then of Saguaro Chapter) to raise funds to restore our Madonna and get her back in the pink. We opened our purses donating dollars and coins and raised \$25,000 under the 2004-2006 administration of State Regent Dawn Long Hines (first of Charles Trumbull Hayden Chapter and then of Cactus Wren Chapter). The fundraising and restoration effort was completed under the guidance of Chair North during the 2006-2008 administration of State Regent Martha Beeching Jones (Anasazi Chapter). Our restored Madonna of the Trail Monument was rededicated September 23, 2006 at 11 am. Mrs. North presided. Speakers at the ceremony included: Mrs. Jones, Arizona State President of the Children of the American Revolution Chris Miller, Springerville Mayor Kay Dyson, and Phillip J. Hansen, a 5<sup>th</sup> generation Arizonan and former member of the Arizona House of Representatives.

Oh, there is so much more than this! This wasn’t the first time our Arizona Madonna of the Trail was rededicated. The first rededication of our Madonna was in 1998, when Elizabeth Hansen Bugbee (then of Grand Canyon Chapter, now of Black Mountain Foothills Chapter) was State Regent (1998-2000) marking the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication ceremony.

Arizona's Madonna of the Trail statue was first dedicated on September 29, 1928, under the administrations of Mrs. Grace Brousseau, President General NSDAR, and Mrs. Mabel Wakefield Moffitt (Tucson Chapter), Arizona State Regent (1928-1930). Mrs. Moffitt was unable to attend the dedication ceremony and sent greetings. Interestingly enough, while not a Madonna of the Trail, Mrs. Moffitt was a child of the trail. Born October 18, 1875, in Bozeman, Montana, she journeyed overland with her parents to Springerville, Arizona, in 1884 before moving to New Mexico and eventually to Tucson.

Speakers at the dedication ceremony were Arizona Governor George W. P. Hunt and President of the Old Trails Road Association Harry Truman. The honor of unveiling the statue was given to Eliza Catherine Rudd. Some think she could have been the model for the statue.



Eliza Catherine Rudd (1836-1933) arrived by ox team in Round Valley (now Springerville) August 25, 1876, at about 2 pm after 3 months and 16 days on the trail with her husband, Dr. William Mann Rudd, and 8 of their 12 children. Mrs. Rudd vividly recounted her journey westward to Arizona and the early days of her life here in her biography. She expressed no regret of the circumstances of her life. It was her desire to live a life that would be an example for her children when she was gone.

Eliza Catherine Mann Rudd was a real-life Madonna of the Trail, whether she served as the model for our Madonna of the Trail Monument in Springerville, AZ or not. If you have an extra moment, perhaps you would like to read her fascinating life story as she told it. It's only 20 pages (10 transcribed and 10 handwritten):

“Biography of Eliza Catherine Mann Rudd” April 2016 by Brandon King,  
<https://archive.org/stream/BiographyOfElizaCatherineMannRudd18361933/BiographyOfElizaCatherineMannRudd1836-1933-Final#page/n7/mode/2up>

Our Madonna in Springerville  
Selected Bibliography

Kirchner, Bill. “Madonna of the Trail.” The Historical Marker Database. June 16, 2016.  
< <http://www.hmdb.org/Marker.asp?Marker=36380> > (accessed 7 February 2017)

King, Brandon. “Biography of Eliza Catherine Mann Rudd” April 2016  
<<https://archive.org/stream/BiographyOfElizaCatherineMannRudd18361933/BiographyOfElizaCatherineMannRudd1836-1933-Final#page/n7/mode/2up>> (accessed 14 Feb 2017)

Baty, M. Danette & Andress, Jo Beaver. Arizona DAR in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the First Decade 2000-2010.  
Blurb Inc. 2010

Haynes, Beth Jordan. One Hundred Year History of Daughters of the American Revolution in Arizona, 1900-2000. ASDAR Star Projects. 2002.