BAS 269 Marcus Daly Statue Welcome to Butte, America’s Story. I’m your host, Dick Gibson.

Marcus Daly died November 12, 1900, at age 58. Within weeks, the Marcus Daly Memorial Association was organized with the primary goal of commissioning a monument to the Copper King. The group contracted internationally known sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens, the Irish-born designer of the US $20 gold piece to craft a larger-than-life-size bronze statue of Daly.

The Association raised $25,000 in the first year, enough to cover St. Gaudens’ fee. Dozens of donations came in at $5, but the largest contributions came from the Daly Bank, then owned by Daly’s widow, at more than $8,000, and the Hennessey Mercantile, totaling more than $6,000. St. Gaudens had the first casting done by 1904, but it was destroyed in a fire in his New Hampshire studio. The second casting, by Gorham and Company in Rhode Island, was shipped to Butte for its installation on Main Street in front of the Post Office, today’s Federal Building. The grand unveiling on Sept. 2, 1907, came a month after St. Gaudens died. The Daly statue is his last significant work.

A massive $15,000 granite base was designed by New York architects and stone carvers John Carrere and Thomas Hastings. The granite was quarried at the Welch Quarry east of Homestake Pass and shipped to New York for carving. After St. Gaudens completed the statue of Daly it was shipped to Butte but was stored in a warehouse for a year awaiting the completion of the base. Its final assembly in the summer of 1907 was done by an Anaconda Company engineer, Fred Green.

North Main Street in Butte is a steep climb up the hill toward Walkerville, and the huge island in the middle of the road that held the Daly statue was a problem for vehicles that kept sliding into the base. A local committee promoted the idea of moving the statue to the School of Mines campus, and Daly’s widow, Margaret, agreed. She donated $5,000 to the Butte Pioneer Club to pay for the move.

Despite a remarkable number of people who seem to remember the statue on Main Street as recently as the 1960s, the statue and its base were dismantled and moved to West Park Street on June 25, 1941. Mrs. Daly wanted to see the change accomplished before she died, and it was, but she passed away just three weeks after the move.

The statue itself was loaded into the bed of a pick-up truck which hauled it up Park Street. The new location at the gateway to Montana Tech is still an island in the street, but the base is far smaller than the original on Main Street.

As writer Edwin Dobb has said, "Like Concord, Gettysburg, and Wounded Knee, Butte is one of the places America came from." Join us next time for more of Butte, America’s Story.