The **Mountain Meadows massacre** involved a mass slaughter of the [Fancher-Baker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_members_of_the_Fancher_party) emigrant [wagon train](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagon_train) at [Mountain Meadows](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows,_Utah) in the [Utah Territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_Territory) by the local [Mormon militia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_militia) on 11 September 1857. It began as an attack, quickly turned into a siege, and eventually culminated in the execution of the unarmed emigrants after their surrender. All of the party were killed, except for a few children under 8 years old. Some infants were killed while in their mothers' arms.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-0) After the massacre, the corpses of the victims were left decomposing for two years on the open plain[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre" \l "cite_note-1" \o ") , their children were distributed to local Mormon families, and many of their possessions auctioned off at the LDS Cedar City tithing office.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-2)

The [Arkansas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arkansas) emigrants were traveling to [California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California) shortly before the [Utah War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_War) started. Mormon leaders had been mustering militia throughout Utah Territory to fight the [United States Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army), which was sent to Utah to restore US authority in the territory.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-3)[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-4) The emigrants stopped to rest and regroup their approximately 800 head of cattle at Mountain Meadows, a valley within the Iron County Military District of the [Nauvoo Legion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Legion) (the popular designation for the [Mormon militia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_militia) of the [Utah Territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_Territory)). [[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-5)

Initially intending to orchestrate an [Indian massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_massacre),[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-6) [Isaac C. Haight](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_C._Haight) and [John D. Lee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_D._Lee), conspired to lead militiamen disguised as [Native Americans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States) along with a contingent of [Paiute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paiute) tribesmen in an attack. The emigrants fought back and a siege ensued. When the Mormons discovered that they had been identified as the attacking force by the emigrants, Col. William H. Dame, head of the Iron County Brigade of the Utah militia, ordered their annihilation.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-7) Intending to leave no witnesses of Mormon complicity in the siege and also intending to prevent reprisals that would complicate the [Utah War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_War), militiamen induced the emigrants to surrender and give up their weapons. After escorting the emigrants out of their hasty fortification, the militiamen and their tribesmen auxiliaries executed approximately 120 men, women and children.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-8) Seventeen younger children were spared.

Investigations, interrupted by the [U.S. Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_War), resulted in nine indictments in 1874. Only John D. Lee was tried in a court of law, and after two trials, he was convicted. On [March 23](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_23), [1877](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1877) a [firing squad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Execution_by_firing_squad) executed Lee at the massacre site.

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| **Contents**  [[hide](javascript:toggleToc())]   * [1 Background](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#Background) * [2 Escalating tensions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#Escalating_tensions) * [3 Conspiracy and siege](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#Conspiracy_and_siege) * [4 Killings and aftermath of the massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#Killings_and_aftermath_of_the_massacre) * [5 Investigations and prosecutions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#Investigations_and_prosecutions) * [6 Media coverage and public relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#Media_coverage_and_public_relations) * [7 Remembrances](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#Remembrances) * [8 See also](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#See_also) * [9 Notes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#Notes) * [10 References](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#References) * [11 External links](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#External_links) |

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mountain_Meadows_massacre&action=edit&section=1)**] Background**

*Main article:* [*Fancher party's and Mormons' backgrounds and the Mountain Meadows massacre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fancher_party%27s_and_Mormons%27_backgrounds_and_the_Mountain_Meadows_massacre)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brigham_Young.jpg)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/skins-1.5/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brigham_Young.jpg)

[**Brigham Young**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigham_Young)  
[*LDS Church*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints)[*president*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_Church)*,  
deposed governor and  
American Indian superintendent of  
the* [*Utah Territory*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_Territory)*,  
regent of the* [*pre-millennial*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennialism) *"*[*Kingdom of God*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_God)*"*

In early 1857, several groups of emigrants from the northwestern [Arkansas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arkansas) region started their trek to California, joining up on the way to form a group known as the [Fancher-Baker party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_members_of_the_Fancher_party). The groups were mostly from Marion, Crawford, Carroll, and Johnson counties in Arkansas, and had assembled into a [wagon train](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagon_train) at Beller's Stand, south of [Harrison, Arkansas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harrison,_Arkansas) to emigrate to southern [California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California). This group was initially referred to as both the Baker train and the Perkins train, but after being joined by other Arkansas trains and making its way west, was soon called the [Fancher train](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fancher_party) (or party) after "Colonel" Alexander Fancher who, having already made the journey to California twice before, had become its main leader.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-9) By contemporary standards the Fancher party was prosperous, carefully organized, and well-equipped for the journey.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-10) They were subsequently joined along the way by families and individuals from other states, including [Missouri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missouri).[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-11) This group was relatively wealthy, and planned to restock its supplies in [Salt Lake City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_Lake_City,_Utah), as did most wagon trains at the time. The party reached Salt Lake City with about 120 members. In Salt Lake, a rumor spread that [Parley P. Pratt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parley_P._Pratt)'s widow recognized one of the party as being present at her husband's murder.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-12)

For the decade prior to the Fancher party's arrival there, [Utah Territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_Territory) existed as a [theocracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theocracy) or [theodemocracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodemocracy) led by [Brigham Young](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigham_Young). As part of his vision of a pre-[millennial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennialism) "Kingdom of God", Young established colonies along the [California Trail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_Trail) and [Old Spanish Trail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Spanish_Trail_(trade_route)), where Mormon officials governed by "lay[ing] the axe at the root of the tree of sin and iniquity", while preserving individual rights.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-13) Two of the southern-most establishments were [Parowan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parowan,_Utah) and [Cedar City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cedar_City,_Utah), led respectively by [Stake Presidents](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stake_President) William H. Dame and [Isaac C. Haight](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_C._Haight). Haight and Dame were, in addition, the senior regional military leaders of the [Mormon militia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Legion). During the period just before the massacre, known as the [Mormon Reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon_Reformation), Mormon teachings were dramatic and strident. The religion had undergone a period of intense [persecution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_persecution) in the American midwest, and faithful Mormons moved west to escape persecution in midwestern towns.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mountain_Meadows_massacre&action=edit&section=2)**] Escalating tensions**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:GeorgeAlbertSmith.jpg)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/skins-1.5/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:GeorgeAlbertSmith.jpg)

[**George A. Smith**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_A._Smith)  
[*Apostle*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostle_(Latter_Day_Saints)) *who met the Fancher-Baker party before touring* [*Parowan*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parowan,_Utah) *and neighboring settlements prior to the massacre*

*Main article:* [*War hysteria preceding the Mountain Meadows massacre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_hysteria_preceding_the_Mountain_Meadows_massacre)

The Mountain Meadows massacre was caused in part by events relating to the [Utah War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_War), an 1857 deployment toward the [Utah Territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_Territory) of the [United States Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army), whose arrival was peaceful. In the summer of 1857, however, the Mormons expected an all-out invasion of [apocalyptic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocalypse) significance. From July to September 1857, Mormon leaders and their followers prepared for a siege that could have ended up similar to the seven-year [Bleeding Kansas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bleeding_Kansas) problem occuring at the time. Mormons were required to stockpile grain, and were enjoined against selling grain to emigrants for use as cattle feed. As far-off Mormon colonies retreated, [Parowan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parowan,_Utah) and [Cedar City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cedar_City,_Utah) became isolated and vulnerable outposts. Brigham Young sought to enlist the help of Indian tribes in fighting the "Americans", encouraging them to steal cattle from emigrant trains, and to join Mormons in fighting the approaching army.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-14)

In August 1857, [Mormon apostle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quorum_of_the_Twelve_Apostles_(LDS_Church)) [George A. Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_A._Smith), of Parowan, set out on a tour of southern Utah, instructing Mormons to stockpile grain. Scholars have asserted that Smith's tour, speeches, and personal actions contributed to the fear and tension in these communities, and influenced the decision to attack and destroy the Baker-Fancher emigrant train near Mountain Meadows, Utah. He met with many of the eventual participants in the massacre, including W. H. Dame, Isaac Haight, John D. Lee and Chief Jackson, leader of a band of Pah-Utes.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-15) He noted that the militia was organized and ready to fight, and that some of them were eager to "fight and take vengeance for the cruelties that had been inflicted upon us in the States."[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-16) While on his return trip to Salt Lake City, Smith camped near the Fancher party on the 25th at Corn Creek, (near present-day Kanosh, Utah) 70 miles north of Parowan. They had traveled the 165 south from Salt Lake City and [Jacob Hamblin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_Hamblin) suggested that the Fanchers stop and rest their cattle at Mountain Meadows which was adjacent to his homestead. Brevet Major Carleton's report records Jacob Hamblin's account that the train was alleged to have poisoned a spring near Corn Creek (near present-day Kanosh, Utah) that killed 18 head of cattle and resulted in the deaths of two or three people (including the son of Mr Robinson) who ate the dead cattle. Most witnesses said that the Fanchers were in general a peaceful party whose members behaved well along the trail. Among Smith's party were a number of Paiute Indian chiefs from the Mountain Meadows area. When Smith returned to Salt Lake, Brigham Young met with these leaders on [September 1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_1), [1857](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1857) and encouraged them to fight against the "Americans" in the anticipated clash with the U.S. Army. They were also "given" all of the livestock then on the road to California, which included that belonging to the Fancher party. The Indian chiefs were reluctant, and at least one objected they had previously been told not to steal, and declined the offer.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-17) Some scholars theorize, however, that the leaders returned to Mountain Meadows and participated in the massacre.[*[citation needed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed" \o "Wikipedia:Citation needed)*] However, it is uncertain whether they would have had time to do so.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

The wagon train may have been joined by a group of eleven miners and plainsmen who called themselves "Missouri Wildcats," some of whom reportedly taunted, vandalized and "caused trouble" for Mormons and Native Americans along the route (by some accounts claiming that they had the gun that "shot the guts out of Old [Joe Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Smith,_Jr.)"[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-18)) and stories of this spread through Mormon communities.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-19) However, it is uncertain whether the Missouri Wildcat group stayed with the slow-moving Fancher party after leaving Salt Lake City,[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre" \l "cite_note-20" \o ") or even existed.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-21) Either way, just a few months earlier, popular Mormon leader Parley P. Pratt was murdered in Arkansas by a man whose wife had left him to join the saints as one of Pratt's [plural wives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polygamy_and_the_Latter_Day_Saint_movement).

Pratt was called on a mission to the southern states and while he was on this mission, a lawsuit was filed by one Hector McLean, who accused Pratt and his wife Eleanor of kidnapping his children. McLean's children had been living with his wife's parents since their mother had (according to McLean) "abandoned" them to become Pratt's "mistress". McLean claimed that Eleanor later changed her mind and decided to "kidnap" the children. Her parents informed their son-in-law that their daughter, with the assistance of the Mormon apostle, had taken the children and fled. McLean caught up with them and recovered his children. But Pratt was exonerated by the court because the laws of that time did not recognize the kidnapping of children by the non-custodial parent as a crime. McLean then pursued Pratt to Alma, Arkansas, where he killed him. He died on 13 May 1857 and was quietly buried at what is now Fine Springs, Arkansas."[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-22) Hector McLean was not charged with the murder of Parley Pratt.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-23)

Rumors of Pratt's death at the hand's of the legal husband of one of his "plural wives" had only recently begun to arrive in Utah.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-24) These rumors, the imposition of martial law, requests from church leaders to limit interaction with wagon trains, threats of war and limited supplies all likely influenced individual Mormons who didn't sell food to the Fancher party.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mountain_Meadows_massacre&action=edit&section=3)**] Conspiracy and siege**

*Main article:* [*Conspiracy and siege of the Mountain Meadows massacre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conspiracy_and_siege_of_the_Mountain_Meadows_massacre)

The Fancher party left Corn Creek and continued the 125 miles to Mountain Meadow, passing Parowan and Cedar City on the trail. As the Fancher party approached, several meetings were held in Cedar City and nearby Parowan by local [LDS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latter_Day_Saint) ("Latter-Day Saints") leaders pondering how to implement Young's declaration of martial law.[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-25) They decided, over the objections of some present, to "eliminate" the Fancher wagon train. Those who objected were placated with the promise of sending a rider, James Haslam, to Salt Lake City with a message to Brigham Young asking for confirmation of their decision.[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-26)

The somewhat dispirited Fancher party found water and fresh grazing for its livestock after reaching grassy, mountain-ringed Mountain Meadows, a widely known stopover on the old Spanish Trail, in early September. They anticipated several days of rest and recuperation there before the next 40 miles would take them out of Utah. But, on September 7 the party was attacked by a group of [Native American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States) [Paiutes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paiute) and Mormon militiamen dressed as Native Americans.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-Shirts.2C_1994_Paragraph_8-27) The Fancher party defended itself by encircling and lowering their wagons, wheels chained together, along with digging shallow trenches and throwing dirt both below and into the wagons, which made a strong barrier. Seven emigrants were killed during the opening attack and were buried somewhere within the wagon encirclement. Sixteen more were wounded. Nearly 12 hours after the attack was initiated, Haslam was sent to Salt Lake City to inform Brigham Young.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-28)[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-Brigham_Young_1986_p._257-29) The attack continued for five days, during which the besieged families had little or no access to fresh water or game food and their ammunition was depleted.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-Shirts.2C_1994_Paragraph_8-27)

Meanwhile, organization among the local Mormon leadership reportedly broke down.[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-30)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mountain_Meadows_massacre&action=edit&section=4)**] Killings and aftermath of the massacre**

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| **Three (of nine)** [**Utah Territorial militiamen**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nauvoo_Legion) **of Tenth Regiment "Iron Brigade" indicted in** [**1874**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1874) **for murder or conspiracy (*Not shown:* William H. Dame •** [**Isaac C. Haight**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_C._Haight) **• William C. Stewart Ellott Willden • Samuel Jukes • George Adair, Jun.)** | | |
| [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/f/f0/John_H._Higbee.jpg/118px-John_H._Higbee.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:John_H._Higbee.jpg) | [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/68/JohnDoyleLee.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:JohnDoyleLee.jpg) | [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/8/88/Philip_Klingensmith.jpg/118px-Philip_Klingensmith.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Philip_Klingensmith.jpg) |
| Maj. John H. Higbee, said to have shouted the command to begin the killings. He claimed that he reluctantly participated in the massacre and only to bury the dead who he thought were victims of an "Indian attack." | Maj. [John D. Lee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_D._Lee), constable, judge, and [Indian Agent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Agent). Having conspired in advance with his immediate commander, [Isaac C. Haight](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_C._Haight), Lee led the initial assault, and falsely offered emigrants safe passage prior to their mile-long march to the field where they were ultimately massacred. He was the only convicted participant. | Philip Klingensmith, a [Bishop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop_(Latter_Day_Saints)) in the church and a [private](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_(rank)) in the militia. He participated in the killings, and later turned [state's evidence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State%27s_evidence) against his fellows, after leaving the church. |

*Main article:* [*Killings and aftermath of the Mountain Meadows massacre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killings_and_aftermath_of_the_Mountain_Meadows_massacre)

On Friday, September 11, 1857, two Mormon militiamen approached the Fancher party wagons with a white flag and were soon followed by Indian agent and militia officer [John D. Lee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_D._Lee). Lee told the battle-weary emigrants that he had negotiated a truce with the Paiutes, whereby they could be escorted safely the 36 miles back to Cedar City under Mormon protection in exchange for turning all of their livestock and supplies over to the Native Americans.[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-31) Accepting this, the emigrants were led out of their fortification. When a signal was given, the Mormon militiamen turned and executed the male members of the Fancher party standing by their side. According to Mormon sources, the militia let a group of Paiute Indians execute the women and children. The bodies of the dead were gathered and looted for valuables, and were then left in shallow graves or on the open ground. Members of the Mormon militia were sworn to secrecy. A plan was set to blame the massacre on the Indians. The militia did not kill 18 small children who were deemed too young to relate the story. These children were taken by local Mormon families. Seventeen of the children were later reclaimed by the U.S. Army and returned to relatives, while one (a girl) was not returned and lived out her life among the Mormons[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre" \l "cite_note-32" \o ").

[Leonard J. Arrington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonard_J._Arrington), an author, academic and the founder of the Mormon History Association and a devoted member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, reports that Brigham Young received the rider at his office on the same day. When he learned what was contemplated by the members of the Mormon Church in Parowan and Cedar City, he sent back a letter that the Fancher party be allowed to pass through the territory unmolested.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-Brigham_Young_1986_p._257-29)[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-33) Young's letter supposedly arrived two days too late, on September 13, 1857.

Some of the property of the dead was reportedly taken by the Native Americans involved, while large amounts of cattle and personal property was taken by the Mormons in Southern Utah. John D. Lee took charge of the livestock and other property that had been collected at the Mormon settlement at Pinto. Some of the cattle was taken to Salt Lake City and traded for boots. Some reportedly remained in the hands of John D. Lee. The remaining personal property of the Fancher party was taken to the tithing house at Cedar City and auctioned off to local Mormons. [[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-34) Brigham Young, appalled at what had taken place, initially ordered an investigation into the massacre but in the end it must be acknowledged that through his own unwillingness to work with Federal authorities contributed both directly and indirectly to the blunder of justice, and was part of the reason two trials were necessary.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-Brigham_Young_1986_p._257-29)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mountain_Meadows_massacre&action=edit&section=5)**] Investigations and prosecutions**

*Main article:* [*Investigations and prosecutions relating to the Mountain Meadows massacre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investigations_and_prosecutions_relating_to_the_Mountain_Meadows_massacre)

Historians still question the role that local Cedar City Mormon church officials played in ordering the massacre and Young's concealment of evidence in its aftermath.[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-35) Young's use of inflammatory and violent language[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre" \l "cite_note-36" \o ") in response to the Federal expedition added to the tense atmosphere at the time of the attack. After the massacre, Young stated in public forums that God had taken vengeance on the Fancher party.[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-37) It is unclear whether Young held this view because he believed that this specific group posed an actual threat to colonists or because he believed that the group was directly responsible for past crimes against Mormons. According to historian MacKinnon, "After the [Utah] war, [U.S. President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._President) [James Buchanan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Buchanan) implied that face-to-face communications with Brigham Young might have averted the conflict, and Young argued that a north-south telegraph line in Utah could have prevented the Mountain Meadows Massacre."[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-38) MacKinnon suggests that hostilities could have been avoided if Young had traveled east to Washington D.C. to resolve governmental problems instead of taking a five week trip north on the eve of the Utah War for church related reasons.[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-39)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mountain_Meadows_massacre&action=edit&section=6)**] Media coverage and public relations**

*Main articles:* [*Mountain Meadows massacre and the media*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre_and_the_media) *and* [*Mountain Meadows massacre and Mormon public relations*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre_and_Mormon_public_relations)

The first published report on the incident was made in 1859 by [Brevet Major J.H. Carleton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Henry_Carleton) who had been tasked by the U.S. Army to investigate the incident and bury the still exposed corpses at Mountain Meadows.[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-40) Although the massacre was covered to some extent in the media during the 1850s,[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-41) the first period of intense nation-wide publicity about the massacre began around 1872, after investigators obtained the confession of Philip Klingensmith, a Mormon [bishop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop_(Latter_Day_Saints)) at the time of the massacre and a [private](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_(rank)) in the Utah militia. In 1867 C.V. Waite published "An Authentic History Of Brigham Young" which described the events. In 1872, [Mark Twain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Twain) commented on the massacre through the lens of contemporary American public opinion in an appendix to his semi-autobiographical [travel book](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Travel_literature) [*Roughing It*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roughing_It). In 1873, the massacre was a prominent feature of a history by T.B.H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints*.[[43]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-42) National newspapers covered the Lee trials closely from 1874 to 1876, and his execution in 1877 was widely covered.

The massacre has been treated extensively by several historical works, beginning with Lee's own *Confession* in 1877, expressing his opinion that [George A. Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_A._Smith) was sent to southern Utah by [Brigham Young](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigham_Young) to direct the massacre.[[44]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-43) In 1910, the massacre was the subject of a short book by Josiah F. Gibbs, who also attributed responsibility for the massacre to Young and Smith.[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-44) The first detailed and comprehensive work using modern historical methods was [*The Mountain Meadows Massacre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mountain_Meadows_Massacre) in 1950 by [Juanita Brooks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juanita_Brooks), a [Mormon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormon) scholar who lived near the area in southern Utah. Brooks found no evidence of direct involvement by Brigham Young, but charged him with obstructing the investigation and for provoking the attack through his rhetoric.

Initially, [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) (LDS Church) denied any involvement by Mormons, and was relatively silent on the issue. In 1872, however, it excommunicated some of the participants for their role in the massacre.[[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-Bagley2002-45) Since then, the LDS Church has consistently condemned the massacre, though acknowledging involvement by local Mormon leaders. In September 2007, the [LDS Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) published an article in its official publications marking 150 years since the tragedy occurred.[[47]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-46)[[48]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-47)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mountain_Meadows_massacre&action=edit&section=7)**] Remembrances**

*Main article:* [*Remembrances of the Mountain Meadows massacre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Remembrances_of_the_Mountain_Meadows_massacre)

Starting in 1988 descendants of both the Fancher party victims and the Mormon participants collaborated to design and dedicate a monument to replace the neglected and crumbling marker on the site. There are now three monuments to the massacre. Two of these are at Mountain Meadows. Mountain Meadows Association built a monument in 1990 which is maintained by the [Utah State Division of Parks and Recreation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_State_Parks). In 1999 the Mormon Church built and maintains a second monument.[[49]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-48)[[50]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-49)[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-50)

A monument placed in the central square of Harrison, Arkansas is a replica of Carleton's original marker maintained by the Mountain Meadows Massacre Monument Foundation.[[52]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Meadows_massacre#cite_note-51)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mountain_Meadows_massacre&action=edit&section=8)**] See also**

* [*The Mountain Meadows Massacre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mountain_Meadows_Massacre) by [Juanita Brooks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juanita_Brooks) (1950)
* [*Brigham Young: American Moses*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigham_Young:_American_Moses), by [Leonard J. Arrington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonard_J._Arrington), University of Illinois Press, (1986)
* [*Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_of_the_Prophets:_Brigham_Young_and_the_Massacre_at_Mountain_Meadows) by [Will Bagley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Will_Bagley) (2002)
* [*September Dawn*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_Dawn) a film by [Christopher Cain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Cain) (2006)
* [*Massacre at Mountain Meadows*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massacre_at_Mountain_Meadows) a book by historians [Ronald W. Walker](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ronald_W._Walker&action=edit&redlink=1), [Richard E. Turley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_E._Turley), [Glen M. Leonard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glen_M._Leonard). (2008)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mountain_Meadows_massacre&action=edit&section=9)**] Notes**