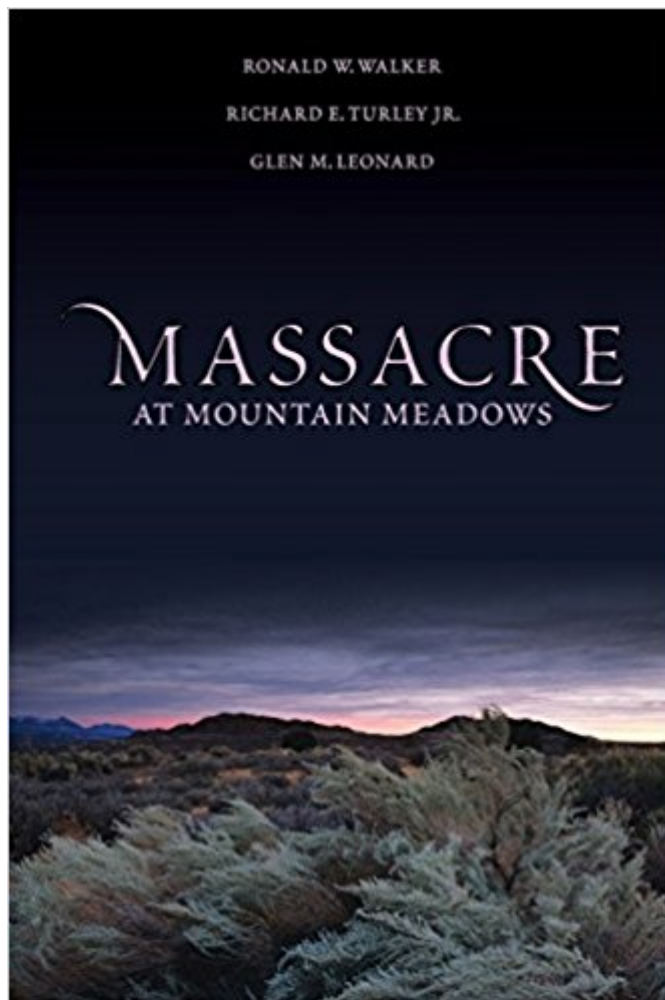


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# Massacre At Mountain Meadows



## Synopsis

On September 11, 1857, a band of Mormon militia, under a flag of truce, lured unarmed members of a party of emigrants from their fortified encampment and, with their Paiute allies, killed them. More than 120 men, women, and children perished in the slaughter. *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* offers the most thoroughly researched account of the massacre ever written. Drawn from documents previously not available to scholars and a careful re-reading of traditional sources, this gripping narrative offers fascinating new insight into why Mormons settlers in isolated southern Utah deceived the emigrant party with a promise of safety and then killed the adults and all but seventeen of the youngest children. The book sheds light on factors contributing to the tragic event, including the war hysteria that overcame the Mormons after President James Buchanan dispatched federal troops to Utah Territory to put down a supposed rebellion, the suspicion and conflicts that polarized the perpetrators and victims, and the reminders of attacks on Mormons in earlier settlements in Missouri and Illinois. It also analyzes the influence of Brigham Young's rhetoric and military strategy during the infamous "Utah War" and the role of local Mormon militia leaders in enticing Paiute Indians to join in the attack. Throughout the book, the authors paint finely drawn portraits of the key players in the drama, their backgrounds, personalities, and roles in the unfolding story of misunderstanding, misinformation, indecision, and personal vendettas. *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* stands as one of the darkest events in Mormon history. Neither a whitewash nor an exposé, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* provides the clearest and most accurate account of a key event in American religious history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

On September 11, 1857, more than 120 men, women and children traveling from Arkansas to California were butchered by Mormon militiamen and Paiute Indians at Mountain Meadows in southern Utah. This study of the tragedy, by three LDS historians, utilizes previously unavailable archival documents to answer the question, How could basically good people commit such a terrible atrocity? The authors find responsibility almost everywhere: in the escalating tensions between the federal government and Mormon authorities, in the 19th-century American culture of violence, in the barbarism of the emigrants and in the unchecked hunger for vengeance the Mormon militiamen felt toward Americans who had opposed their faith. John D. Lee, a fanatical militia leader, receives much of the blame, while church president Brigham Young gets a pass. This first volume covers the massacre itself, not the coverup that some historians have alleged was masterminded by the LDS Church; the authors leave the door open for a possible sequel. But the book's evocative portrayal of the moments leading to the massacre and its careful reconstruction of the lives of the victims makes an important contribution. This is an absorbing, if unsettling, read. (Aug.) ""Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved." --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** Coauthors Walker, Turley, and Leonard provide the fullest account yet of the darkest chapter in Mormon history: the massacre of a wagon train of California-bound immigrants passing through southern Utah in 1857. Readers relive the grim days when local Mormon leaders besieged the immigrants with a force of white militiamen and Paiute warriors and then brutally butchered all but a few young children. To account for the barbarism of attackers who professed a religion of love, Walker, Turley, and Leonard recount the Mormons'™ turbulent history in Missouri and Illinois, where government officials allowed mobs to kill unarmed Mormons and drive others from their homes. Determined to protect their new communities, Utah Mormons seethed with passion when, in 1857, President Buchanan announced plans to send troops to quell a supposed Mormon insurrection. Those passions surged when some immigrants boasted of involvement in earlier depredations against Mormon settlementsâ" and threatened worse. The drama leading up to the massacre brings to view a score of memorable personalities. But the most famousâ" namely, Brigham Youngâ" plays a role of surprising impotence, as his urgent letter directing the militia to let the immigrants pass in peace leaves a Mormon captain lamenting, â"too late, too late.â" • An

essential acquisition for any western history collection. --Bryce Christensen --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

There have been a number of reviews written for this book, and perhaps it doesn't need yet another. I've read some of the reviews, and I think that at least some of the low ratings were from those who found the book disappointing because it didn't demonize the Mormons as they thought it should. Some wanted a story about the cover-up that almost certainly followed the massacre. John Doyle Lee may have been the most zealous of the perpetrators, but he did not act alone. But there have been many cover-ups in history, and this would be only one of many. At any rate, in my opinion, that is perhaps the subject for another book. The factors contributing to the massacre were many. In my opinion, these authors did an excellent job of trying to explain these complex factors and doing it fairly. I am not a Mormon, but I have read several books about the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and this is, by far, the best. Some books have told both sides of the story, but without a lot of detail. Others have gone into so much detail, and so many facts, that it makes for very dry reading. This book describes not only the massacre, the events leading up to it, and the people involved, but tells how the Mormons got started and their persecution in Missouri and Illinois, and the beginning of the fated Arkansas wagon train. It tells about the troubles they had along the trail. The facts are interspersed with short stories that make the book more readable. I particularly liked the prolific maps, paintings and portraits throughout the book, but almost rated the book a 4 due to the fact that no zoom feature was incorporated in the Kindle version. But then I decided that the book deserved a 5 regardless of this one shortcoming.

Mormon history is emotionally charged with those trying to defend the faith and those trying to tear it apart. While published by the LDS Church, this is a mostly dispassionate honest review of the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Where the authors may take a more "faithful" interpretation, they at least present all the data so you can decide for yourself. I strongly recommend.

I read this book because a friend was troubled by the event and I encouraged him to learn more about it, and read it also. As a member of the Church (of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) I found it challenging in many ways. I recognized the members of the wagon train to be similar to the strong and honest frontiersman that came to Texas, where I now live and whose people I genuinely admire. They were resourceful, competent, determined and reliable. Under attack by the natives, they immediately established an effective protected firing position. Some of the mythical and

erroneous stuff I heard growing up was dismissed in this book, and I was glad to learn it. The attribution of the poisoned spring to anthrax, for example, shows the kind of investigative research in this book. It breaks my heart that this sort of thing every happened to anyone, anytime or any place. That is how I view the event and this book -- an event, not a sign of divine displeasure or insidious wickedness by fanatic fugitives of the Republic. Nonetheless, it's a harsh event and a tough comeuppance. I don't blame anyone for having difficulty over this thing. I do appreciate the very thorough research and openness of the book. Quite amazing, the detail of coverage. I strongly recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn about historical research or about the events that took place in contradiction to the proper order of church and community. It can help establish not only the resources available on the massacre but also increase the range of perspectives from which to view it. Those who would like to dismiss it as a product of Church propaganda should look carefully at the sources -- I know there's more available and more to come, but it's still worth a close examination.

A great look at a terrible event. The research builds on all other research done and finds some new information that explains what happened, and maybe a little of the why.

The story of this book is one of the most puzzling and horrendous of any event in Utah, or U.S. history; involving a handful of Mormon militia located in Southern Utah. It brings to light what relatively few people know of the Massacre of a wagon train on its way to California. It was well written and explained the facts as close to the truth as any account of this terrible tragedy as is known.

This is probably as close to the truth of what led up to the massacre as you will find in print. Three LDS authors gave a good look at the circumstances surrounding it and did not seem to lighten the events due to their religious affiliation. It almost read like a novel and was a page turner even though you know the outcome. A very sad tale.

After reading several books on this tragic event, it is apparent that these authors, despite affiliation with the LDS Church, have been objective and balanced in their approach. The structure of the book makes clear that these authors are scholars; controversial statements are supported by specific references, as opposed to general references to reading materials. Situations are analyzed using time frames and motives that lead to logical conclusions, where possible. The authors "call it

like it is" in laying blame squarely at the feet of local Church leaders, fanatics who forsook their covenants and gave into justification of fear and hate. The authors provide proof, not opinion, that Brigham Young took no part in the MMM but did contribute to an atmosphere of fear with his "war sermons". This book ranks well above others written by authors who seem to have "an axe to grind" with the Church.

A lot of time and careful research went into this book. It is not a quick read. It requires slow and thoughtful assessment while reading to fully grasp the characters and their various roles. Possibly the best book that has been done on this subject.

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