

the 1960s. The documents were transferred to the Young Office Files in the late 1970s or early 1980s, being made available to the public in 2000. Our thanks to Brian Reeves at the Historical Department Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (LDS Church History Library), for bringing this use and history of the document to our attention.

2. Richard E. Turley Jr., email to Jonathan Stapley, June 12, 2008, printout in our possession.

3. Roy F. Baumeister, *Evil: Inside Human Cruelty and Violence* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997); Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Stanley J. Tambiah, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). The authors also referenced Regina Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983); and Rosa Brooks, "Killings in Iraq by 'Bad Apples'? Probably Not," *Deseret News*, June 18, 2006, which included analytical perspectives drawn from the work of Yale psychologist Stanley Milgram.

4. For Bagley's treatment of the Huntington journal and Young's meeting with Paiute leaders, see his *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 112–14, 379; for his treatment of "blood atonement," see pp. 50–52, 379, and 397 note 63; on Lee's implicating of Young and the authorship controversy surrounding *Mormonism Unveiled*, see pp. 271, 318–19, and 430 note 17. Bagley deploys the relevant evidence in a consolidated, analytical argument for Young's complicity on pp. 376–82.

5. Walker, Turley, and Leonard rarely rebut specific claims, preferring to narrate the story without reference to previous work; however, W. Paul Reeve and Ardis E. Parshall demonstrate that Bagley misread a crucial word in the Huntington diary. See their review of *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* in *Mormon Historical Studies* 4 (Spring 2003): 152.

Mountain Meadows: Not Yet Gone

Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard. *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy*. New York:

Oxford University Press, 2008. 430 pp. Notes, illustrations, appendices, index. Hardback: \$29.95; ISBN: 0-195-160-347

Reviewed by Robert Goldberg

After more than thirty years as a historian and after writing dozens of book reviews, I confess that this one has been the most difficult response that I have ever had to write. Perhaps it is because of the horrific event that the book describes. I am troubled also because my friends and colleagues divide vehemently in continuing and acrimonious historical debate. Nor is the struggle over this distant event confined to academic circles. The Mountain Meadows Massacre, after almost a century and a half, remains hotly contested ground in a state still bloodied by religious warfare.

The facts are well known. The crime occurred on September 11, 1857, in southwestern Utah not far from Cedar City. Mormon militia units and their Paiute Indian allies had besieged an emigrant train destined for California and composed of men, women, and children primarily from Arkansas. With John D. Lee in the lead, the settlers were lured from their improvised wagon-fortifications under a flag of truce and a promise of safe conduct. Unarmed and vulnerable, more than 120 emigrants were then brutally slaughtered at close quarters and their property dispersed to the murderers. Only children too young to expose the guilty were spared. What is not, and may never be, fully understood is why this happened and who was responsible.

The massacre drew extensive contemporary newspaper coverage and much attention from historians. Juanita Brooks published her landmark work *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press) in 1950, and Will Bagley's *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press) appeared in 2002. Scores of journal articles focused on the massacre or the larger context in which it occurred. If this research has added much to our understanding, there has long been the sense that the collections of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints contain materials that would shed light on the event and its perpetrators. Much may have been lost or destroyed. Missing data are the lot of historians. But the perception and the reality of restric-

tions on the use of such documents have fostered conspiracy theories not only about historical actors, but modern authorities. The massacre at Mountain Meadows bequeaths a bitter legacy, not only because of the horrific nature of the event, but also because the crime remains unpunished.

Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley, and Glen M. Leonard, associated with Brigham Young University and the History Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, offer *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, an interpretation that benefits greatly from unrestricted access to a large body of materials owned by the Mormon Church. The authors found ward and militia records valuable sources for reconstructing events. Also important, they discovered in the Mormon Church's First Presidency's archives the full body of work collected by assistant Church historian Andrew Jenson who, with official approval, interviewed in 1892 the massacre's surviving persons of interest.

The book weaves a complex plot. It argues that "both victims and perpetrators were decent but imperfect people whose paths crossed in a moment of history that resulted in a terrible tragedy" (xiii). The year 1857 in Utah was a moment rife with fear and portending conflict. Building up the kingdom of God had proven a frustrating and difficult task. Bad weather, insect plagues, and poor crops brought near-famine and tested settlers' faith. Dissenters and apostates weakened the ranks and brought "sermons like peals of thunder" (26) demanding reformation and a cleansing of sin. Gangs of zealots enforced such preaching and intimidated the wavering to firm up commitment. Meanwhile, the persecution that recently dogged Mormons in Missouri and Illinois darkly colored their perceptions of outsiders and made them intolerant of any slight.

Into this setting of tension and uncertainty came news that President James Buchanan had sent a U.S. Army expedition to bring the Saints to heel, arrest their leaders, and impose martial law on Utah. With visions of the last days ever present in their minds, Mormons and their leaders prepared for war, spinning scenarios of armed resistance and scorched earth to resist the forces of Babylon. Not only would the Saints stockpile weapons, ammunition, and food, but they would also encourage their Na-

tive American allies to fulfill prophecy and join in holy war against their common enemy.

As the U.S. Army approached and Mormons prepared for the end of time, the Arkansas emigrant train traveled south through Utah on its way to California. Out of supplies and pressing their cattle onto nearby grasslands, they repeatedly generated friction with Mormon settlers. The seeming wealth of the travelers also chafed Mormon sensibilities and brought a covetousness that exacerbated the tensions.

These Saints had already been primed for confrontation firsthand by Brigham Young's emissary George A. Smith, an apostle. As a latter-day Paul Revere, Smith went circuit-riding through the small towns of southern Utah and delivered "war sermons" (53) calling the rank and file to arms against the coming army invasion. In the rush to war, who could distinguish between the American emigrants and the forces marching on the Mormon kingdom? The makings of tragedy were now assembled: The "other" had been demonized and dehumanized, authorities had trumpeted the causes of war and conspiracy, local leaders pressed for obedience and were not denied, peers demanded conformity, and small sparks of personal conflict had found ready tinder in isolated and economically deprived southern Utah. Once action commenced, the human and unforeseen dictated events. The tragedy had been spun, write the authors, in a "complex web of fear, misunderstanding, and retribution" (128).

Massacre at Mountain Meadows is an important addition to the literature on one of the most significant events in Utah history. The authors' research has brought to light key sources that *persuasively* answer questions about the how, who, what, and when of the massacre. John D. Lee may have been the only person executed for his role in the tragedy, but the authors do not hesitate to name his co-conspirators. President Young and George Smith were guilty of warmongering and setting a policy of wartime alliance with the Paiutes, but they were not accomplices before the fact.

The authors have also done an excellent job in recreating the religious, military, political, and economic context of the events of September 11, 1857, and placing Utah at that period in a broad national frame. The book, in addition, offers a detailed timeline

and scenario of events both at the site of the tragedy, in local councils, and in the office of Brigham Young. With a sturdy and clear prose style, the authors have made this history accessible to a large audience. The book's short chapters act to accelerate the momentum of a gripping narrative.

If excellent in its detail work, however, the book does suffer from conceptual weaknesses. The authors maintain that they presented their information "by narrating it, largely foregoing topical or critical analysis" (xii). They also insist on the notion of "letting the events speak for themselves" (xv). But, of course, historians are not passive in telling their tales. They make judgments and offer interpretations based upon evidence and logic. Even textbooks, which appear to be mere compendiums of facts, are value-laden in regard to the information that their authors deem valuable and necessary to include and exclude. The prior commitments of the authors of this volume are, inevitably, apparent in some places: The first chapters of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* read like a defense brief for the Saints, their church, and their leader. The authors present character witnesses for everyone except, tellingly, John D. Lee. George A. Smith is unaware of the consequences of his acts. Local leaders Isaac Haight and William Dame are portrayed as honorable men caught in circumstances beyond their control. Later chapters prove far more balanced in assigning responsibility and offering realistic appraisals of perpetrators. Occasionally, some interpretive comments are jarring. Federal officials in Utah territory are likened to "carpetbaggers" and "scalawags," (23) with the authors seemingly unaware that such terms deny the complexity of the northern migration to the South after the Civil War and denigrate southerners who supported black rights and the Union while opposing secession and treason. Nor can federal authority be derided as simply "colonial rule" (28). When interpretation is offered, it is neither fully explained nor nuanced. Thus the authors rely on Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram's research on obedience to authority, but handle the interpretation in just two short paragraphs and cite as references two newspaper articles and none of his studies.

While the authors have considered the literature on violence, group psychology, and conspiracy thinking, it was surpris-