

The Evolution of Treatment of the Latter-day Saint Past

Edward Leo Lyman

Recently, the leading authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have encouraged a more concerted effort to fully document and clarify one of the most tragic and emotion-laden events of the Mormon past—the Mountain Meadows Massacre. This emphasis points to the culmination of a significant odyssey. For virtually a century after the horrible event occurred in southwestern Utah in 1857, the subject remained almost unmentioned within the region. Many of us grew to maturity—even reading the seminary and institute-adopted versions of our history—and never even heard of the event which has been almost universally mentioned (without accurate details) outside of Mormondom.¹ Certainly, other churches have dealt with the unseemly side of their own past in a similar fashion. In fact, it is quite remarkable that the LDS Church, after so long, has come so relatively quickly to a point that many are not only eager to finally receive what they will accept as the definitive account of the entire tragic situation, but will likely be prepared to deal with its implications. This essay seeks to trace some of the steps of that complex process.

By the late 1880s leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had faced a myriad of assaults from a large variety of sources. Missionaries had been murdered in the American South. The formerly effective Perpetual Emigrating Fund, which had brought tens of thousands of European converts to settle in the American West, had been dismantled by act of Congress, and missionary efforts had become far less productive. Other acts of

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Congress not only sent hundreds of polygamists to prison but also had caused confiscation of a large proportion of Church funds and other property. Soon thereafter, Church members narrowly missed being shackled by a law that would have prevented them from voting if they believed in a Church that condoned plural marriage, even if they did not personally practice polygamy. And similarly, Church leaders recognized in 1890 that some government officials were aiming at confiscation of the four temples in Utah, in which Mormons held great pride, and through which they maintained fervent hopes for spiritual growth and salvation for their extended families.²

After fifty years of existence of their Church, Latter-day Saint authorities yet possessed no means of altering the view of the outside world toward their people and their eventful past, although they had been more successful in molding the historical accounts embraced by their own fellow believers. Naturally these tended to focus on God's chosen people as often beset by persecutions brought about by evil and conspiring men, some of whom appeared to hold positions of trust within the various levels of United States government which dealt with the Latter-day Saints. In these historical treatments there was virtually no mention of misled zeal or retaliation by Church members, a fact that often exacerbated some of the worst situations faced by Mormons during these admittedly trying times. It would take literally another century before many Latter-day Saints and their leaders were prepared either emotionally or intellectually to examine their past without the often blinding defense mechanisms that tended to obscure clear understanding of historical events.

During the late nineteenth century, the "Mormon Question" had loomed among the most often-treated news items in public print and the spoken word. Almost all of this tended toward the negative, much even bitterly so. Plural marriage had emerged as a relatively new subject of discussion as federal legislation and law enforcement efforts escalated in the 1880s. The more vague issue of Church interference in politics emerged as an outgrowth of the long-standing allegations of theocratic dictatorship mainly centered on Brigham Young. In some circles, lurid reports of the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre persisted as one of the dominant continuing themes cited to verify the un-American and uncontrollable nature of the minions of Mormondom. For these and other reasons, members of the Church hierarchy sought means through which public perceptions might be altered.

Book publisher and seller Hubert Howe Bancroft's cordial relationship with leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reached back to 1862 when the Californian sought detailed information on Utah for an almanac of the West he was contemplating. He then promised that compliance with his requests would render "invaluable aid and we shall esteem it a personal favor which we will gladly reciprocate." Some six months later, LDS

Church historian George A. Smith sent a seven page document packed with the information requested.³

More than a dozen years later, when Bancroft became fully involved with the writing of his monumental thirty-nine volume set of western American history, including one on the *History of Utah*, he concluded that the book would be based primarily on original Mormon sources which he considered particularly reliable. He again approached the Church hierarchy for assistance. When the then Church historian, Orson Pratt, learned of the project, he intimated willingness to actually write the entire work, if the California bookman would publish it as presented. Bancroft gently declared his intention to compose that history himself. It was obvious that Church leaders understood the need to get “the best possible representation to the world at a crucial time in its history,” which remained a preoccupation they persistently maintained throughout most of the ensuing years.⁴ As the earliest historian of this project, S. George Ellsworth, has stated, the members of the hierarchy “did not fear for the truth, [but] feared only the want of integrity in those who would write it.”⁵ They had, however, come to trust Bancroft to represent their Church with unusual fairness.

Within several months, Pratt’s advancing age forced him to withdraw from any involvement with Church history. Franklin D. Richards, also a longtime Apostle who succeeded Pratt as Church historian, was assigned by Church President John Taylor to assist Bancroft in any manner desired. Among other advantages to his assignment was that he was one of the few Church authorities not compelled to hide to avoid prosecution for polygamy. In 1880, Richards and his only surviving wife, Jane, traveled to San Francisco, where they remained two weeks, mostly as guests of the Bancroft family. Much of this time was devoted to helping the historian understand the Mormon “faith and works.” When the visit ended, Richards reported to Taylor his host’s “appreciation of the subject [which] is so thorough and his interest in the work so warm, that I feel greatly encouraged. He is doing all that man can do, and I earnestly hope you will not be disappointed in the result.”⁶

Later, during the writing process, apparently after recognizing crucial gaps in the narrative his assistants had drafted, Bancroft and his wife and son made a six-week visit to Salt Lake City. Again, Hubert spent much of his time with Richards and his associates among the General Church Authorities. Dur-



Hubert Howe Bancroft, date unknown, ca. 1880s.

ing this time Bancroft allowed Mormon diarist and Apostle Wilford Woodruff, along with Richards, to read and “correct” his in-progress manuscript. After the stay, the historian noted “there was little the Mormons would not do for us.” He also added, significantly, “There was little we desired at the hands of the Gentiles.”⁷

From the beginning of the project, President John Taylor had been personally cordial and encouraging to Bancroft. Toward the end of the writing process, as Richards made corrections even in the final galley proof sheets, Taylor examined some of the material. He consequently stated, “I am pleased with the tone and manner of the writings of Mr. Bancroft in his *History of Utah* so far as we have received them [the proof pages].”⁸ It was certainly all the Latter-day Saints could hope for from one engaged in such a business who was not of their faith.

There is good indication that Bancroft did far more of the actual writing on the Utah volume than he was accustomed to doing in the huge project. Usually he acted more as an editor of drafts previously written by his team of mostly unnamed staff historians. But as he complained to an associate, William Nemos, he was doing “twice as much work” on the Utah volume as usual.⁹ At least part of this was because of the additional source material he gathered while on his visit back to Salt Lake City.

Although he kept his pledge to offer the Latter-day Saint Church a “full and respectful hearing,” he did not pull his punch on polygamy. And while he certainly gave Brigham Young his due, Church leaders would have hoped the text had made a more positive comment on the current Mormon quest for Utah statehood. But obviously the proprietor had not deemed that to be an issue to deal with in his history.¹⁰

In a very real sense, Church leaders accomplished a major coup in the manner in which Bancroft treated the Mountain Meadows Massacre. While he drew primarily on the report of Indian agent Jacob Forney for an impressively accurate account of many of the events, he completely avoided placing any real responsibility for the tragedy on the Church or its leaders. He followed what had become the current Mormon strategy on the issue, primarily blaming John D. Lee and a few others for the entire tragedy. The book alleged it “was the crime of an individual, . . . one who was a member of the Mormon church, but of whose intentions the church knew nothing.”¹¹ The account admitted that other Church members were among the Indians in disguise, and it mentioned Isaac C. Haight (who much later came in for far more blame) as a local leader, but Lee essentially stood alone as the instigator, including inducing the Indians to participate by promise of booty.¹² The chapter stated the Mormons deplored the massacre and every other incident connected thereto “as earnestly and honestly as any in the outside world.”¹³ It was conceded that

Brigham Young's rhetoric had an underlying impact on subsequent events, but that was not emphasized.¹⁴

Far later, some "revisionist" historians still criticized Bancroft for also allowing the more favorable Mormon version of the 1857–58 Utah Expedition invasion by the United States Army, which they argued had diffused a more accurate and negative view of those crucial events, as a true rebellion against the United States government. One of the most outspoken of these at the 2007 Mormon Historical Association annual conference, Will Bagley, asserted that the less accurate version of these events prevailed because of undue Church influence on Bancroft.¹⁵ This may, in fact, be true. As with Mountain Meadows Massacre, the version of events appears to have been a most significant accomplishment in molding the long-term view of the Mormons by other westerners.

For more than half a century, negative public opinion continued to develop and spread throughout the United States and beyond. A great deal of this had been "artificially stimulated" by a segment of the nation's clergy and the press, usually with close collaboration from their counterparts in Utah. As Mormon hierarchical leaders seriously contemplated Utah statehood as the only manner through which they could attain "political deliverance" or self-government for their domain, they recognized that their greatest challenge would be to remove the "Mormon Question" from the forefront of public consciousness and discussion.

Ecclesiastical officials proved most fortunate to become engaged with an already-existing "public relations machine" of massive proportions, which within two years effectively neutralized what had for decades been an overwhelmingly unfavorable public image. Astute lobby-advisors convinced Church leaders that if the constituents of the numerous congressmen could be persuaded that Latter-day Saints had either altered their religious views and fanaticism, or that they had been previously misrepresented, the votes necessary to enable Utah statehood might be eminently feasible. Over two decades ago, I presented a well-documented chapter-length treatment titled "An Unlikely Lobby," which traced the dramatic alteration of editorial treatment regarding the Mormons in a dozen of the foremost urban newspapers in the United States in 1888. It is clear that Church agents expended at least \$140,000 to encourage the dramatic reversal of the manner in which the subject of the Mormon Church was treated in these papers' columns. The study actually cited numerous instances of the contrasted editorial tone from prior to mid-1887 with the stance followed immediately thereafter.¹⁶ Church-employed agents even approached publishers of magazines and newspapers sponsored by other specific religious denominations. One lobbyist, Isaac Trumbo, made the tantalizing statement: "Cardinal [James] Gibbon has done a good deal more than

ever was promised. Not a man in the city of Washington who is a member of that [Roman Catholic] denomination has a word to say against [the Latter-day Saint Church]. If they can't say something for it they are silent."¹⁷

It would be difficult to find a more effective and successful endeavor to alter public opinion within the United States. The entire episode stands as a most impressive testament to the persistence and wisdom of the continuing efforts by Church leaders to favorably influence the public perception of their institutions and people, which amazingly succeeded within that decade.

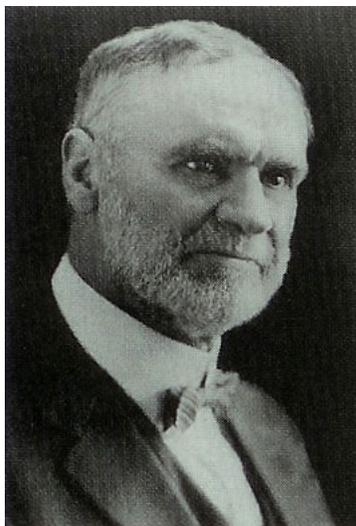
Orson F. Whitney was as close to royalty as anyone in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His mother, Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, had been sealed to Joseph Smith (and thus he would technically be considered a son of the Prophet for the eternities). A talented speaker and writer, he had been a bishop since age twenty-eight. Earlier, LDS Church President John Taylor lavished praise on his ability as a poet, saying he preferred "Whitney to Whittier." Orson also attained considerable recognition for his biography of his maternal grandfather, Heber C. Kimball. While not a General Authority until 1906, he was for a much longer period a frequent speaker before general sabbath congregations at the Salt Lake Tabernacle, often speaking on Church history topics.¹⁸

In 1890, Whitney learned that a former promoter of some of Bancroft's works and other histories, Dr. John O. Williams of Colorado, was projecting a three volume *History of Utah*, along with an apparently lucrative fourth volume that would be biographical sketches and photographs of territorial citizens who would pay to be included in the book. At a meeting with Presidents Woodruff and Smith, along with other interested Church officials, Whitney was "appointed" to be author, at a salary of \$200 per month for the several years the project would take. He recorded naturally, "The history is to be written from a Mormon standpoint and has the full sanction and approval of the authorities of the church."

Williams was aware that the anti-Mormon *Salt Lake Tribune* editor, Charles C. Goodwin, had recently issued a prospectus announcing his intent to publish his own history of the territory, which this new project clearly superseded (his history never appeared). In an interview with Williams a week later, that promoter stated that Goodwin had admitted to him that Whitney "was the only man the Mormons had that could write the *History of Utah* from their standpoint and that he was a very able writer." The usual Church opponent predicted the project would doubtless be a "big success."¹⁹

A month into the Whitney writing process there was considerable delay stemming from derogatory reports concerning Williams and perhaps some of his book subscription salesmen. The Church appointed a committee to investigate, which soon exonerated the accused. But he never really overcame the

negative comments and eventually sold his interest in the project to the semi-official Church publishers George Q. Cannon and Sons.²⁰ At the time of the investigation proceedings, George Q. Cannon, himself author of a biography of Joseph Smith and a longtime newspaper editor, said to Whitney, "I am thoroughly in favor of the work and thoroughly in favor of Orson as the writer of it." He added that his style was "admirable for the purpose," but he did not hesitate to add a caution that "you should also be concise."²¹ However, although the writer promised to do so, his prevailing ambition to be "Mormonisms' great epic poet," precluded his forgoing the inflated literary style against which President Cannon had attempted to caution.²²



Orson F. Whitney, date unknown.

While Church authorities might have been satisfied with a more secularly oriented history of the territory, this work proved to be essentially a Church history, including thirteen chapters covering the period through Joseph Smith's death in 1844, along with other material on the trek west to the Great Salt Lake Valley. The three volumes carried on through the Woodruff Manifesto of September 1890. There were occasions when historical questions were raised either by Whitney or by the supervising committee, including Apostle Franklin D. Richards, appointed to scrutinize the work. On occasion, either Whitney or the supervising committee raised historical questions, as did Apostle Franklin D. Richards. These were occasionally discussed and resolved in regular meetings of the Apostles.²³ Whitney was clearly glad to have the "wide and close criticism," confessing that "in the midst of counsel there is safety" from Church members who might later be offended by statements made therein.²⁴ Some footnotes, and also a considerable number of textual notes, contain excerpts from documents included in the body of the text.

Whitney and his assistant, John Q. Cannon, drew heavily on the interviews with older Mountain Meadows Massacre participants, recently gathered by Assistant Church historian Andrew Jenson, to detail a surprisingly accurate account of that tragedy. This fact was not widely recognized until the authors of the recent new study of those events also used those documents, which have since become available for study.²⁵ Although Whitney intended to include in his work all of the citizens of Utah, his extreme pro-Latter-day

Saint viewpoint virtually assured that some of the content would be offensive to many non-Mormons.

After the work was completed, Church antagonist Robert N. Baskin published a *Reply to Certain Statements by O. F. Whitney in his History of Utah Published in 1916*. The longtime opponent took particular issue with treatment of Mountain Meadows Massacre and coverage of the manner in which the Mormon Battalion was constituted and functioned. As modern Church historians Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton conceded, “current scholarship on almost all, if not all of the topics he mentioned would come closer to his [Baskin’s] interpretation than to Whitney’s.”²⁶ Arrington and Bitton also conceded that it would be a mistake to regard Whitney as “primarily a historian,” implying that he was mainly a Church chronicler and apologist. And indeed he did not display the objectivity demanded of more professionally trained historians of the ensuing generation. However, he did add valuable detailed material to the known record of the territory’s past, and his work stood as the best history the region possessed for an entire generation until the 1930s.²⁷

Andrew Jenson, a young convert to the Church in the 1860s from Denmark, found his employment niche, gathering historical data on individuals, congregations, and the Church—first on his own initiative and then as a Church employee. He also compiled material into massive scrapbooks and began a rather elaborate cataloguing and indexing process that has partly continued to the present time in the Church archives. In the heyday of Church historical production and organization in the 1970s, Historical Department personnel honored Jenson for his contributions and dedication by naming their Friday lunchtime talks and discussions after him. Their leaders, Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton, asserted that he “may have contributed more to preserving the factual details of Latter-day Saint history than any other person.” They also averred that “more than any other person or group of persons he organized the materials of Mormon history.”²⁸ Another major contribution still heavily cited is Jenson’s four-volume *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (recently republished by Greg Kofford Books), which contains sketches of hundreds of local level Church leaders of his day. This encyclopedia fully documents, as nothing else does so well, just how many of the second generation of Church members and officials in Utah were actually emigrants from Europe.²⁹

One of Jenson’s other most significant contributions, not publicly known until recently, was an assignment issued by the First Presidency in 1892 authorizing him to collect individual recollections of people who had information on the Mountain Meadows Massacre. To assist in the endeavor, the First Presidency issued a letter directing interview subjects to cooperate with Jen-

son: “We are anxious to learn all that we can upon this subject, not necessarily for publication, but that the Church may have the details in its possession for the vindication of innocent parties, and that the world may know, when the time comes, the true facts connected with it.”³⁰ The information he gathered eventually became among the most valuable sources used by Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard in their recent study of the *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*.

One of the other early twentieth century employees in the Church Historian’s Office was Joseph Fielding Smith, son of President Joseph F. Smith. During a time when anti-Mormon assaults were again becoming particularly virulent, the younger Smith became designated as the one who would most often answer such attacks, at least for the benefit of concerned Latter-day Saint observers. As Arrington and Bitton explained, Smith “was regarded more as a polemicist and scripturicist than as a historian,” and so he would remain for over half the ensuing century.³¹ When Smith was later appointed Church historian, Andrew Jenson was devastated, as many would be, given the relative historical contributions of each. (There was more than a little nepotism in appointments to such Church offices at the time.)³² Jenson eventually adjusted to the situation and clearly realized that Joseph Fielding’s father was not particularly interested in promoting production of additional Church history. It is also known from correspondence of the assistant historian his opinion that President Smith’s successor, Heber J. Grant, took “no interest in [Jenson’s] labors” or in promoting Church history.³³

Joseph Fielding Smith later wrote *Essentials in Church History*, which became required reading for many LDS missionaries and others, despite the fact that the work was far from interesting to many readers, and that it also lacked in some truly vital content. It is classic as an apology for whatever missteps Church leaders might have made over the first century of Mormonism. Smith did, however, include a chapter on Mountain Meadows Massacre. He wrote, “The deed of enraged Indians aided by a number of white men” loomed as “a crime for which there can be no apology or excuse, a thing treacherous and damnable in the extreme.” While never implicating Church members generally, he asserted it was most unfortunate



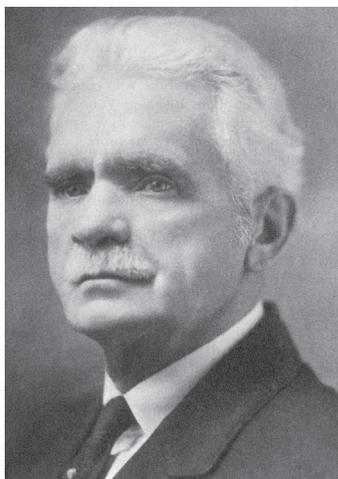
Joseph Fielding Smith, date unknown.

that such members would be so much blamed for the event then and thereafter. He specifically labeled as false the concerted attempts to implicate Brigham Young in the tragedy.³⁴

Smith followed the tactic of Hubert Howe Bancroft and earlier Church leaders of mainly blaming the affair on John D. Lee as an individual. Smith wrote that after the initial onslaught on the emigrants, Native Americans had called upon Lee, who had been “in close touch with Indian affairs,” and urged him to “come and lead them to victory.” Lee supposedly eventually “seemed to partake of the frenzy of the red men,” which implied he led out in the killings. Later, in criticism, Juanita Brooks, a definite Lee admirer, said of this that “even the most superficial research” would show the utter ridiculousness of such a statement.³⁵ Brooks refers partly to the fact that Lee clearly received orders from higher ranking military and ecclesiastical leaders (to be discussed later).

After a notable missionary career and some newspaper experience, Brigham H. Roberts, at age thirty-one, became one of the seven presidents in the First Council of Seventy, the third highest presiding quorum in the Church. He also established a widespread reputation as one of the foremost Church preacher-orators of his generation. In 1902, he published Joseph Smith’s history, primarily centered on the Prophet’s journal, usually kept by scribes, often referred to as the *History of the Church*. However, this was not a professionally edited work, and many alterations from the original sources were retained, along with new changes made. It is currently being more carefully edited and republished.³⁶

In 1909, Roberts commenced his *Comprehensive History of the Church* as a series of articles in *Americana*, the monthly journal of the American Historical Society.³⁷ While he did not consult all the known secondary source materials for this massive work, he did draw on a respectable number of books then available, including some written by non-Mormons. He did not much examine the rather large collection of relevant documents then held in the poorly organized Church archives. The author frankly admitted in his preface to what was later expanded and compiled into a large six-volume set published in 1930, that his bias was entirely with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



B. H. Roberts, date unknown, ca. early 1920s.

Yet he certainly did not portray early Church leaders as faultless or infallible. As Roberts' biographer Davis Bitton clarified, "If such church leaders possessed divine authority," they carried it "in earthen vessels."³⁸ In fact, Roberts may have been privately criticized by his ecclesiastical superiors for admitting that Church members had made crucial mistakes in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, which probably helped lead to conflict in those places. Similarly, he did not excuse Mountain Meadows Massacre as some others, including Joseph Fielding Smith, had done in *Essentials in Church History*. The author commenced his treatment of the massacre by calling it the most lamentable episode in Utah history and the history of the Church. He recounted several of the later allegations of misbehavior among the Baker-Fancher company as it traveled south through Utah, including purported statements of participating in earlier Missouri and Illinois actions against Church members. Roberts concluded that "for the Arkansas emigrants to indulge in boasting of past achievements with armed movements against the saints, to swagger and threaten a repetition of these things was, under all the circumstances, to invite calamity."³⁹ Most, but not all, of these stories would be discounted by the recent study *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*.

To a moderate extent at least, as Bitton observed, Roberts "attempted to portray the complexity of history and to separate fact from myth." In light of the sensitivity of the Church presidents under whom he labored, Joseph F. Smith and Heber J. Grant, this stood as a "signal accomplishment."⁴⁰ However, there were definitely limits beyond which Roberts could not go. He could not concede any measure of honesty or sincere motivation to any non-Mormon opponents, particularly those opposed to polygamy, including his own personal experience with the practice. The historian described Judge Charles S. Zane, whom some consider the most fair of all federal officials in Utah during the era, as "spiteful" and generally demonstrating "prejudice, vindictiveness and unnecessary harshness."⁴¹

He was also over-laudatory of such Church leaders as John Taylor and Lorenzo Snow.⁴² Certainly he did not refrain from presenting his history as the unfolding of the plan and purpose of God. Still, more than any of his contemporaries in the Church Historian's office, including Jenson, Whitney, or Joseph Fielding Smith, Roberts started a natural process toward more accurate information and interpretation that has accelerated since his work was published. The *Comprehensive History* stands as a significant contribution to our knowledge of previous Mormon experience and its treatment. As Arrington and Bitton concluded, it did much to establish and perpetuate the way Latter-day Saints view their own past that has never been completely superseded.⁴³

In the late 1930s, Nels Anderson, a sociologist trained at the University of Chicago, recognized the need to study one of the dozens of "hinterland

communities” heretofore neglected in the examination of Mormondom. In his *Desert Saints*, he offered an insightful study of the Latter-day Saint past from a sociological-historical perspective. Some would argue that the uniqueness of Mormon communities remained intact longer in the places Anderson studied—Utah’s Dixie, for example—than in the more urbanized and easily accessible centers of Church population. Thus the author, who had resided in rural southern Utah for most of a decade, could effectively study some aspects of the Church’s sometimes grudging accommodation to American society.



Nels Anderson, date unknown.

While profitably delving into the considerable documentary materials then stored in a basement vault of the St. George Temple, Anderson confirmed one of his most significant contributions and groundbreaking practices: his extensive use of public documents. His study of reports of the territorial surveyor and other federal land officials helps clarify why the Mormons so much feared those who might interfere with their tenuous real estate holdings and claims. Similar examination of Indian Bureau records proved equally revealing. He did not state that Mountain Meadows Massacre was motivated partly by the fact that the victim company reportedly possessed property worth at least \$30,000, with later estimates as high as \$70,000; his careful study of the manuscript U. S. Census for 1860 revealed that massacre leader John D. Lee then possessed property (probably largely from loot) valued at \$49,500, several times more than that of anyone else then residing in southern Utah.⁴⁴

A number of years ago I cited Anderson’s valuable insight of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball’s emphasis on separateness of Utah Saints from the non-Mormon outside world—using some statements verging on hostility—which made it easier for Church leaders to generate and enhance an illusion of superiority. Quoting Young’s statement that isolated Church members were “the best people in the world,” and Kimball’s that “the Gentiles are our enemies, damned forever,” the Mormon sociologist observed that such “invidious comparisons fostered satisfaction with their insular objectives” and enhanced the value of maintaining purity through non-intercourse with outside society. Anderson asserted that “free association with outsiders would have minimized the differences between them and other people.”⁴⁵

While Anderson did not go so far as to state that Young and Kimball's inflammatory rhetoric had caused the so-called Utah War, he did assert that they used the uncertainty and universally perceived crisis to help stimulate "unrelenting morale-building" and group cohesiveness not enjoyed since the trek west a decade earlier.⁴⁶ Although unmentioned, this fits well with the fanaticism generated by the Mormon Reformation, crucial to understanding the later massacre. On the other hand, the sociologist observed that while prior to the crisis, the Church hierarchy stood at "the zenith of political control, [yet they] ended with the church all but defeated." Anderson was probably referring to the permanent presence thereafter of U.S. Army troops in proximity to Salt Lake City, as well as independent, even hostile, federally appointed territorial officials who conducted the government of Utah from then on. Despite the bravado and success of the Mormon militia's harassment efforts as the army approached Utah, the military superiority of the opposing army troops was beyond argument. Even President Young's concession that the soldiers could remain in the vicinity, compared to his previous incendiary statements, could be taken as a defeat. Anderson also understood that Church leaders sought to maintain some semblance of control through the "Ghost Government of Deseret," but the author was probably the first to conclude publicly that such efforts were a total failure. Brigham Young was usually wise enough to abandon any ventures that failed to serve their desired objectives. The ghost government fit that category and was not actively used after 1870. Church members had also previously surrendered their dream of a large state of Deseret largely independent of federal government control.⁴⁷

Anderson was not nearly as deferential to Church authorities as the previously discussed insider-writers. To him, Brigham Young appeared to be a man who "acted first and prayed [presumably for inspiration] afterward." The Church leader considered himself too busy to be a reader, but the sociologist asserted that he "never entertained feelings of inferiority because of its lack." Yet Anderson was probably the only scholarly writer of his day who generally treated the Church favorably, even if he did once draw from the then-new edition of John D. Lee's diary to support the allegation that Brigham probably misused some Mormon Battalion funds at Winter Quarters.⁴⁸

One of the most valuable insights offered at the time regarded how *Desert Saints* was received by members of the Church hierarchy. While it was not condemned, the author recalled that "it did not draw much praise." However, the most academically oriented of the contemporary Church Apostles, John A. Widtsoe, wrote a rare and rather complimentary book review in the *Improvement Era*, which he co-edited. In my opinion, this was more positive than any notice ever yet offered on any scholarly study by a member of the Church's hierarchy. After summarizing "the conventional consecutive history

of the church,” including offering considerable little-known information of real interest, the Apostle effused that in the final four chapters, Anderson attempted to evaluate “the effects of church belief and practice upon the lives of its members [portraying] Mormons as ordinary human beings but activated by a high faith are pictured here.” Equally laudatory, Widtsoe observed “there is the evident attempt in this scholarly volume, to be absolutely fair in discussing the many controversial issues of early Mormon history. Indeed he is so fair that he frequently leans over backwards, now on one side, then on the other.”⁴⁹

At some point, Elder Widtsoe reportedly personally stated to Anderson, “The book might have been great, if you had written more with the Spirit of the Lord, you would not have included some of the passages which to me seem negative.”⁵⁰ In a very real sense, that had been the common view toward professional historical writing of many faithful Latter-day Saints and certainly their leaders, then and later. There appears to have been no instance where an objective and well-documented negative statement or conclusion about any aspect of Mormondom could be at all acceptable until quite recently. This points to the major cause of the persistent tension during the ensuing era between scholarly treatment of Church history, and the till-then common laudatory versions of the Mormon past. And yet, after three generations of the latter, the exclusively faith-promoting approach would never again be a fully acceptable medium through which the past would (or should) be viewed—even by the faithful—although that debate still continues.

Church leaders would never have considered Nels Anderson a faithful insider. And the story circulated locally, probably after someone discovered he had enjoyed access to records stored in the local temple, that he had tricked his way into seeing them. As he recalled, this was probably aimed as much at the venerable old temple president George Whitehead, who was always with the scholar during his research sessions. Anderson commented that there was certainly little in what he saw that needed to be kept secret, and he “never overstepped the line dividing the sacred from the profane. Both of us knew that there was then no rule to keep [him] from looking at the records under such supervision.” Besides, he had been a baptized Church member for three decades.⁵¹ Stricter rules were probably thereafter imposed on use of such records.

Partly because of an unfulfilled promise to an elderly former Mountain Meadows Massacre participant, Nephi Johnson, Juanita Brooks, another Dixie resident, felt an obligation, including to her fellow Latter-day Saints, to explain the tragedy in terms acceptable to her Church. Some other observers have since criticized her for not probing more deeply into the supposed “dark recesses of the Mormon psyche, with its festering resentments, its latent

violence, and its readiness to visit the sins of fathers upon the children.”⁵² Brooks certainly believed she was doing her Church a service by “trying to present this subject with the desire to tell the truth about the massacre in a manner fellow believers might accept.”⁵³ She was guided in some of her initial writing by Nels Anderson.

Yet while her study, published in 1950, was favorably received and reviewed by the historical profession and its journals, Juanita Brooks recalled that “official Mormondom simply looked the other way” and did

not even acknowledge her contribution. In fact, by her perception, she and her formerly locally prominent husband were even “shunned in church assignments.” Feeling so much hungered for Church approval, if not appreciation, Brooks felt wounded that so many fellow believers, including Church leaders, had chosen to simply ignore her work.⁵⁴ The latter also had earlier been far less than cooperative in offering her access to the relevant documents they alone possessed.⁵⁵

For its day, *Mountain Meadows Massacre* was a most insightful and carefully documented monograph on a subject formerly mainly rumored about, and with few reliable facts. It was not perfect, and critics were probably correct in their assessment that the motivation of the perpetrators remained one of the largest unresolved questions. Brooks’ own predispositions, as well as what she understood about other Mormon readers, precluded her from suggesting participant motivation in terms of fundamental personal or cultural flaws. As her biographer, Levi Peterson, has observed, she felt burdened by a huge risk of proposing any interpretation that “would seriously impugn the moral stature of those cherished pioneers who had established the church in the Rocky Mountains.”⁵⁶

Partly from listening to her stepsons, who at the time had just returned from various theaters of action in World War II, Juanita Brooks broadened her understanding of war psychology and commenced to conceive of the actions of most participants in the Mountain Meadows Massacre as mainly military in nature. As such, as some participants, particularly Samuel Knight, later explained (which Brooks did not cite), they would have been summarily punished had they not explicitly carried out orders given them by superiors.⁵⁷



Juanita Brooks, 1963. Photograph courtesy Utah State Historical Society.

Brooks portrays John D. Lee as following the orders, given ultimately by Isaac C. Haight (although Brooks did not possess sufficient documentation to focus on him, as Walker, Turley and Leonard would later do). More recent authors have determined that Lee's accounts were less than forthcoming about his own actual role in several crucial aspects of the massacre, and he clearly misled Brigham Young about the part he and his fellows actually played in the massacre. Young's later discovery of the misrepresentations led to his distancing himself from Lee in ways Brooks did not understand, nor did she display any patience with Young's seeming betrayal of her favored man.⁵⁸

Even before her work had been published, Juanita Brooks confided to fellow historian, Dale L. Morgan that she felt certain that "as soon as the M[ountain] M[eadows] M[assacre] study is finished I'll be OUT," meaning excommunicated from the Church. That did not occur, as she had long feared.⁵⁹ It was not until later, as her biography of John D. Lee was being prepared for publication, that she experienced her greatest open conflict with members of the Church's hierarchy. By then, perhaps partly because of her recounting of Lee's case in her earlier book, the excommunicated John D. Lee had been posthumously rebaptized and had his former priesthood blessings restored. The author wanted a note to that effect added to the Lee biography, an act that was strongly opposed by Apostle Delbert L. Stapley and others, mainly Arizona residents, including some Lee descendants. After much conflict over the matter, Brooks quietly included the note.⁶⁰ Later, Stapley attempted to initiate excommunication proceedings against her, but David O. McKay, who was then president of the Church, and who had been less than helpful to the author in her quest for Church-held source documents, blocked his efforts.⁶¹

For years, Church leaders continued to discourage any discussion of this most sensitive subject, the massacre. In fact, this aim was achieved with amazing success. However, the Mountain Meadows incident and other controversial subjects gradually filtered into the public consciousness of many Latter-day Saints in the last half of the twentieth century, mostly by second hand reports—although a surprisingly large number eventually read Brooks' work. Indeed, with abundant media-mention in more recent years, it would be virtually impossible to prevent the discussion of Mountain Meadows Massacre among the present generation. Predictably, as was the experience with other churches that became less sensitive to acceptance of certain embarrassing situations in their earlier history, as the LDS Church matured, many Latter-day Saints—institutionally and individually—became more willing to accept even the ugly side of their past. In fact, Levi Peterson and others assert that Juanita Brooks helped members of her Church achieve a greater degree of honesty about their history.⁶² Who can dispute this important conclusion?

Historian Gary Topping was probably correct when he wrote that Brooks' book, and possibly to a much lesser extent Fawn Brodie's biography of Joseph Smith—both of which were exhaustively researched and carefully written—“could not be ignored or shouted down.” There were certainly those within the Church who attempted to do so, although the more usual approach was still to ignore such studies. It is doubtful if the same historian was correct in saying that the two women from opposite extremes of personal faith in the Church actually helped “open the window which allowed light to fall onto some of the “dark recesses of Mormon history,” enabling Leonard Arrington to venture into the field with less restrictions than he might otherwise have experienced.⁶³ In fact, it is more likely that Brodie's access to some sensitive documents from the Church archives, used as they were in mostly negative ways, made it more difficult for others to avail themselves of the opportunity for research there in subsequent years. However, Arrington eventually struggled successfully to achieve such access, which did in fact indicate that progress had continued in the overall process of breaking down traditional barriers.

Whether Arrington followed the lead of Brooks and Brodie (he clearly did not appreciate the latter's work),⁶⁴ or more likely took his own unique course as a committed Latter-day Saint with solid academic training and interests in economic history, Leonard J. Arrington certainly “signaled a new era in Mormon historiography with his willingness to ask critical questions based on thorough research and conceptualizations.”⁶⁵ As he recalled in his 1993 republication of the classic *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900*, he “made every attempt to relate Mormon history and institutions to the wider world of American thought and experience.” Later, close associate Thomas G. Alexander correctly observed that the work “speaks both to those inside the Mormon community and the scholars and lay persons outside the community.”⁶⁶

Arrington's use of Latter-day Saint historical documents stemmed from invaluable advice he obtained from the Mormon Apostle with the most academic background, John A. Widtsoe, who cautioned him that there would be great difficulty gaining access to many items in the LDS Church Archives. But the sympathetic Church leader challenged, it might be possible if the graduate student followed his prescribed steps. He was advised to first request only printed materials, and then demonstrate his persistence and dedication through extended time expended at the Church Historian's Office and library, gradually progressing to perusing theses, scrapbooks, ward records, diaries, and name files. Then, if Arrington continued to patronize the facility regularly and work quietly and professionally, Widtsoe was certain he would eventually be allowed to examine whatever material he desired. Arrington attested that following this course enabled him to obtain access to “a vast array of

documents that had not previously been seen by any professional scholar.⁶⁷ Few others demonstrated the persistence or imagination to follow this lead during the ensuing decade, but largely through his own efforts and later as Church Historian, he literally removed most of the former barriers to access for qualified and patient scholars (at least for the next two decades).⁶⁸ From his early research days, his goal was to someday help make Church historical documents more accessible to others.

As he commenced his graduate studies, Arrington had a most formative experience by meeting a legendary old scholar of economic history, Richard T. Ely, who had visited Utah and recounted to the young graduate student many aspects and contributions made by the Mormons to the western American pioneering experience. Arrington later over stated that his doctoral dissertation was “merely an extension” of what Ely had previously written in a widely circulated article in *Harper’s Monthly*. Both scholars focused far more on Mormonism’s practical than theological facets, although this approach helped Arrington continue to develop his personal religious perceptions and commitments as well. As he continued his research at the LDS Historians Office, he discovered far more relevant material than the staff working there realized they had, including insights into the “humanness” (including their humor) of the people who colonized the Great Basin. Arrington aimed to recapture this “human drama of events,” which eventually tended to be more history than economics. One of the themes that harmonized with his own experience with recent events, including the Great Depression and the Democratic presidential administrations’ handling of economic problems, was central planning by Church leaders and cooperation of their people as all aimed to improve their common situations. This was in expressed contrast to the rugged individualism characteristic of settlement in the surrounding regions of the West.

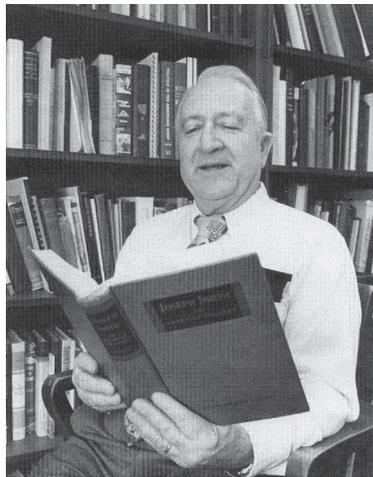
When the much reworked dissertation manuscript was finally published in 1958, in a review in the journal of the American Historical Association, Rodman W. Paul lauded *Great Basin Kingdom* as “easily the most informative single volume yet published on the Mormons in Utah.” A fellow western historian, Paul Gates, was particularly complimentary of “the extent of the research on which it rests, the wide canvass on which the work is projected and the soundness of judgment and clarity of its writing.” Even more significant, Mormon Apostle Harold B. Lee lauded “the book [as] the finest work in Mormon history since B. H. Roberts’s majestic six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church*.” As a later admirer and close associate, Ronald W. Walker explained in his introduction to the fourth edition of the book, it “retains its persistent, resilient appeal,” even beyond its excellent scholarship because readers found that sometimes in contrast some other works then being produced by Latter-day Saint writers, “it provided a believable, acceptably or-

dered version of the [Mormon] past—precisely what good history should do.” Walker observed correctly that partly because of the recent collective Second World War era experience, the book found its greatest influence among Arrington’s own people. The timing was right, since many inquiring Church members were then in the process of “emerging from their cultural isolation.” Arrington’s challenge as he explored and defended his heritage was to assist others and strengthen their religious faith while bolstering their pride in their Mormon tradition. Walker continued, “More important still, for thoughtful church members, it helped make Mormonism intellectually respectable.”

Arrington anticipated the reaction of some Latter-day Saint readers who might have been troubled by his “naturalistic treatment of certain historic themes previously treated as sacred” by earlier church historians and more harshly by other less sympathetic writers. He correctly explained that the “true essence of God’s revealed will” could not be understood without some understanding of the historic conditions surrounding “the prophetic visions and the symbolism and verbiage in which it is couched.” He also conceded that “discussion of naturalistic causes of revelations does not preclude its claim to be revealed or inspired of God,” and that “in practice it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish what is objectively ‘revealed’ from what is subjectively ‘contributed’ by those receiving the revelation.” Letters from historians and graduate students congratulated the author on his work, then asked “ever so timidly, or obliquely” if Arrington were a Mormon. “Some queried that if he were, why was his treatment not more faith-promoting? [And] if [he] was a Gentile, how could he be so even-handed and fair?” He considered these questions and comments to be compliments. His approach was well-received and helped bring many members of the Church closer to acceptance of objectively written Mormon history.⁶⁹ As three of his closest colleagues, Ronald W. Walker, David J. Whittaker, and James B. Allen, later attested, Arrington’s “attempt to find a middle ground between the extremes of secular and religious feeling became hallmarks” of the New Mormon History of which he is considered the primary founder.⁷⁰

In the fall of 1963, after the book had been out five years, I enrolled in a Brigham Young University Utah history course, filled mostly with just returned missionaries. The professor, Gustive O. Larson, introduced *Great Basin Kingdom* to us by stating we might assume from our reading of the work that the author was less than friendly toward the Church. But in fact, Larson informed us that Arrington was then serving in a stake presidency in Logan. Larson further observed that the author’s treatment was what students should expect from good scholarship on such subjects, something perhaps not generally felt at BYU before this time.⁷¹

Arrington's influence as a scholar and as an "entrepreneur" promoting research and writing of Latter-day Saint history became truly remarkable. Through his efforts, and usually with his personal encouragement, an entire generation of mostly young scholars followed his lead and encouragement in producing an amazingly extensive outpouring of books and articles in the *New Mormon History*.⁷² This proliferation of more objective historical scholarship also did a great deal to pave the way for many within Mormondom to become more accepting of some harsh realities of their own collective past.



Leonard J. Arrington, 1975.

Leonard Arrington was one of the most supportive mentors I ever encountered. One of the finest compliments I ever received as a young historian came just after I published an article in *Dialogue* on Apostle Moses Thatcher.⁷³ Leonard said that I could tell a primarily negative story in a positive manner as well as anyone he knew—an ability much needed among some then engaged in contributing to the *New Mormon History*—and he certainly encouraged that skill. His advice and direction to many budding scholars remains one of the fondest recollections of those like myself, who came into contact with him during his "Camelot period" at the LDS Historical Department.⁷⁴

Church officials eventually decided to move the History Division from Church headquarters in Salt Lake City to Brigham Young University to be under a more appropriate academic rubric. Arrington later discovered that the leaders who made the decision acted in the last portion of President Spencer W. Kimball's tenure as head of the Church, partially concerned that if Elder Ezra T. Benson, who was less supportive of the Division, became president before the change, the entire History Division might be dismantled. Arrington perceived that Benson would possibly advocate "safeguarding the [Church] records," which actually meant limiting their use.⁷⁵ This was the case for some researchers for a time thereafter, although eventually access once again normalized, but it was believed that reversals could recur.⁷⁶

In 1990, Gordon B. Hinckley, the public-relations-minded counselor to LDS Church President Ezra Taft Benson, participated in dedication ceremonies for a monument overlooking the Mountain Meadows Massacre site. His remarks during the services included considerable outreach to the descendants

of the Baker-Fancher party families. While his statements were cordial and sincere, some, including within my own family, debated whether he should have more directly acknowledged Church member participation in and responsibility for the massacre, which he did not quite do. However, Hinckley brought the Church stance on involvement of its members to the closest point short of accepting such primary responsibility.

In connection with a similar dedication ceremony nine years later at the massacre burial site, Judge Roger V. Logan Jr., a relative of both victims and survivors of the massacre, reminded listeners (and readers) that the events surrounding the tragedy needed to be carefully examined. He concluded pointedly (even accusingly) that “until the church shows more candor about what its historians know about the event, true reconciliation will be elusive.”⁷⁷ Although at this juncture it is impossible to assess precisely, this may well have been one of the most pivotal of all developments in the long process of breaking open the avenues toward complete candor on such delicate matters. It appears probable that thereafter, President Hinckley made the subject a matter of close personal study, and he likely eventually came to agree that Judge Logan had been correct.

In 2002, Will Bagley, an energetic and resourceful, but academically untrained Utah historian, published a new study of the tragedy, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows*. The book was widely-acclaimed, including by members of the Western Historical Association. But it was received with less enthusiasm by committed Church members trained in historical method. Their objections stemmed primarily from what they perceived to be acceptance of often sensational source documents, which sometimes were not among the most reliable, along with how such materials were interpreted. Speaking from personal experience, I have sometimes had difficulty reading more than a few pages at a time without getting upset at some of the treatments made. Still, the book has been through several large printings from a respected university press, and netted the author considerably more royalties than are usually gained from such efforts. And whether anyone admitted it or not, the book was certainly a stimulus to additional research and writing on the subject.

The year after appearance of *Blood of the Prophets*, three widely respected historians, Ronald W. Walker, Glen M. Leonard, and Richard E. Turley Jr., the latter two employed directly by the Church—Turley as Assistant Church Historian, Leonard as director of Church Museums and Historical Sites, and Walker a professor of history with the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute and Brigham Young University—decided first individually, and then as a team, to write what many Church officials and others hoped would be a truly definitive study of that long-elusive affair. This was definitely not initiated or assigned



Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard, 2008. Photograph courtesy Intellectual Reserve.

by Church authorities, although they later encouraged the entire effort. Mountain Meadows Massacre had persisted in detracting from an otherwise almost untarnished image of the Church for a full century after many other questions had been effectively resolved. Although there is no concrete evidence for the supposition, perhaps the First Presidency were sufficiently chided by Judge Logan.⁷⁸ At least the Logan statement early resonated with the book authors. For whatever reasons, the Church's leadership eventually reversed the tacit policy of more than a century by fully backing the massive historical research effort associated with the new book on the massacre. The authors attested that "Church leaders supported our book by providing full and open disclosure," as well as financially underwriting the entire effort.⁷⁹

Over the ensuing six years, a substantial amount of time and effort by more than a dozen professionally trained historian-assistants to the authors was devoted to locating and evaluating not only what the Church archives and First Presidency's vault then held on the still-sensitive subject, but also what could yet be located in the possession of private individuals and other repositories from across the country and beyond. It would be impossible to assess

accurately the monetary cost of this truly impressive endeavor, but acquisitions, salaries, and travel expenses of Church staff alone might well approach several million dollars in support of the project.

The authors of the book have certainly received comments from some who criticize them for delving once more into the massacre. These persons represent an indefinite number within and outside the Church who do not value further analysis and illumination of such a sensitive and distasteful subject. I can personally attest that writing on this particular subject can be an emotionally depressing ordeal. As Walker, Turley, and Leonard quoted early Assistant Church historian Andrew Jenson's diary statement wherein he stated that gathering eyewitness material from Mountain Meadows Massacre participants had "made me suffer mentally and deprived me of my sleep at nights," they attested that they too completely understood his feelings toward the endeavor.⁸⁰ It can hardly be imagined how physically and emotionally draining this eight-year undertaking (including the final writing) must have been for them.

On the positive side, the initial publication run numbers and sales figures appear unprecedented for a Mormon history book. And reviews, both the formal scholarly and more informal by readers commenting on book distributors such as Amazon.com, appear almost uniformly positive, testifying to the significant contributions made by Walker, Turley, and Leonard. As I wrote in a recent review of their book, there will be some who do not believe that a definitive word on the subject can be offered by Latter-day Saints, but for most this work, at least the portion on the massacre itself, will never need to be redone.⁸¹ It is masterful! Walker, in association with David J. Whittaker and James B. Allen, had earlier observed that practitioners of the New Mormon History "were more interested in examining the Mormon past in the hope of understanding it, and understanding themselves."⁸² This work is one of the truly effective examples of success in that endeavor.

Another important facet of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* is the authors' general writing approach on the admittedly challenging subject. They are often so adept at description and effective at conveying the ideas, with an economy of words, that the work could be considered to be something rarely encountered in historical writing "narrative literature." In fact, I challenge interested readers to examine the authors' turns of phrase as they recount the crucial events at Cedar City just before the fateful attacks. At least partially from the perspective of literary connoisseurs, judge how well the treatment flows and conveys the essential ideas.⁸³ Some others, including me, have written twice as much on the same situations and developments without expressing half as much meaning.

Two years after the Mountain Meadows Massacre book came out, an important comment was made at the May 29, 2010 session of the Mormon History Association meetings at Independence, Missouri. Respected non-Mormon historians, Sarah Barringer Gordon and Jan Shippo, in a session entitled “The Sins of the Fathers: The Mountain Meadows Massacre as an Event in Religious History,” explained that both the Jews and Roman Catholics had built into their religious structure a mechanism through which some type of institutional apology could be promulgated by a larger denominational entity. There was at least some implication that such an act might be desirable to come from authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Commentator Richard L. Bushman conceded that the idea was an important one. However, it is not likely that such an announcement will ever be forthcoming from anyone in the LDS hierarchy, beyond the important statements already made by President Gordon B. Hinckley, and the truly impressive efforts made by the Church over the past decade to acquire property and seek national historic status for the Mountain Meadows area, in full cooperation with family survivors organizations.

There will probably never be complete unanimity within either the general Latter-day Saint Church membership or those of the Church leadership that the giant steps toward full objectivity and candor regarding such sensitive events as Mountain Meadows Massacre has been fully appropriate. But doubtless for most interested observers, within and outside the Church, the slow, yet persistent progress culminating in production of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, illustrates how truly remarkable the extended odyssey on treatment of such subjects has proven to be. The work does much to alleviate a major source of discomfort—if not ill feeling—both within and toward The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The entire evolution of dealing with the tragedy demonstrates as nothing else may do so well the giant steps toward real maturity the Church has recently achieved.

Notes

1. I was raised within 130 miles of the Mountain Meadows Massacre site, took a seminary Church history course using Carter E. Grant, *The Kingdom of God Restored*, and attended an institute Church history course taught by Paul E. Dahl at the College of Southern Utah at Cedar City, and never heard of the tragedy until I was almost twenty-one-years-old while serving an LDS mission in California.

2. See Edward Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 42–46, 126–33, 136, 141.

3. Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, February 4, and July 31, 1862, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

4. S. George Ellsworth, "Hubert Howe Bancroft and the *History of Utah*," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (April 1954), 103–04.
5. Ellsworth, "Hubert Howe Bancroft and the *History of Utah*," 104.
6. Ellsworth, "Hubert Howe Bancroft and the *History of Utah*," 109–12. See also Harry Clark, *A Venture in History: The Production, Publication, and Sale of the Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), 21–22, in which he cites Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Literary Industries* (San Francisco, CA: The History Company, 1890), 638–40.
7. Ellsworth, "Hubert Howe Bancroft and the *History of Utah*," 113–15. Actually, the non-Mormon version of Utah history was recounted in the book's abundant footnote citations. Some readers now regret the lack of footnotes on Bancroft's Mormon sources.
8. Ellsworth, "Hubert Howe Bancroft and the *History of Utah*," 119–120, n. 85.
9. Clark, *A Venture in History*, 21–22.
10. See Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah* (San Francisco, CA: The History Company, 1890), 543–71, for the treatment of Mountain Meadows Massacre.
11. Bancroft, *History of Utah*, 544. See also John W. Caughey, *Hubert Howe Bancroft: Historian of the West* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1946), 208–11, for an excellent assessment by the biographer of the treatment of Utah.
12. See Bancroft, *History of Utah*, 550–54.
13. Bancroft, *History of Utah*, 543–44.
14. A careful reading of Bancroft's introductory of the chapter might seriously implicate Brigham Young for stating publicly that if the conflict with the federal government continued, he would no longer restrain the Native Americans from killing emigrants crossing their common domain. See Bancroft, *History of Utah*, 543.
15. Will Bagley, "'Fooled Everybody': The Historiography of the Utah War," Mormon History Association Meeting, May 26, 2007, Salt Lake City, Utah. David Bigler and William P. MacKinnon held similar views regarding who also participated, and made similar comments at the 2007 conference, and the ensuing conference held in 2008 in Sacramento.
16. See Lyman, *Political Deliverance*, 69–92.
17. Dellie [Isaac Trumbo] to Lulu [Hiram B. Clawson], March 13, 1888, First Presidency Miscellaneous Papers, Church History Library. For a discussion of a related effort by Ambrose B. Carlton, then a federal official assigned to labor in Utah Territory who wrote a public relations-type book on the Mormons, see Edward Leo Lyman, chapter 6 in *Statehood! Utah's Extended Struggle, 1849–1896*, forthcoming from the University of Utah Press.
18. Davis Bitton and Leonard J. Arrington, *The Mormons and Their Historians* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1988), 56–58.
19. Orson Ferguson Whitney Journal, May 17, 20–22, 1890, manuscript copy, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.
20. Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, April 23, June 8–29, 1891, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
21. Cannon, Journal, June 20, 1890.
22. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 65.
23. Cannon, Journal, June 9, and December 3, 1891. The latter entry indicates Whitney attended a regular meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and First Presidency for the purpose of inquiring as to their views concerning Brigham Young and his associates' reasons for settling in Utah Territory.
24. Franklin D. Richards, Journal, December 8, 1892, Church History Library, Franklin D. Richards wrote that he met with Whitney, R. T. Burton, A. M. Musser and J. Jaques

and “heard read chapters 19 & 20 of the second vol. History of Utah.” Franklin D. Richards, *Journal*, December 8, 1892, Church History Library. Others who served on such committees included John R. Winder, George S. Reynolds, Charles W. Penrose, and Abraham H. Cannon. See also Jedediah S. Rogers, ed., *In the President’s Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttall, 1879–1892* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2007), 484.

25. Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley, Jr. and Glen M. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), xi; and Rogers, *Diaries of L. John Nuttall*, 484, which reports that John Q. Cannon, Whitney’s assistant, actually wrote the chapter on Mountain Meadows Massacre. See also Ronald W. Walker and Richard E. Turley Jr., “The Andrew Jenson Collection,” *BYU Studies* 47, no. 3 (2008): 9–44; and Ronald W. Walker and Richard E. Turley Jr., “The David H. Morris Collection,” *BYU Studies* 47, no. 3 (2008): 111–41. The same authors and others are seeking to make available in print all the documents used in *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*.

26. Robert N. Baskin, *Reminiscences of Early Utah, with Reply to Certain Statements by O. F. Whitney*, reprint ed. (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2006), 16–17, 24, reply in back of the book.

27. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 64, 66–67.

28. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 41, 55. Walker, Turley, and Leonard, acknowledge the valuable source materials gathered by Jenson from participants in their old age. See Walker, Turley, and Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, xi.

29. In the author’s “Biographical Sketches” section of Abraham H. Cannon’s diary (to be published by Signature Books) of a hundred Utah churchmen mentioned in the diary for which sketches could be found in the Jenson encyclopedia, fully half were of European birth.

30. First Presidency, Letter, January 21, 1892, in *Autobiography of Andrew Jenson* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), 197–98.

31. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 53–54.

32. Not long after, Apostle Anthon Lund’s son A. William Lund was appointed as an assistant to Joseph Fielding Smith and served as the unrelenting watchman-censor over Church documents (consistently checking researchers’ notes) for an equally long tenure. Another factor, probably major in the Smith appointment, is that the position of Church Historian has usually been filled by General Authorities, and Smith had become an Apostle. Leonard Arrington was an exception to this for a short time, and was one reason given for his subsequent “demotion.”

33. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 54–55.

34. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret News Press, 1922), 511–17. The book sold well, partly because it was the only one-volume historical work for some years, and it was also widely recommended to members, and as preparation reading for missionaries.

35. Levi S. Peterson, *Juanita Brooks: Mormon Woman Historian* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1988), 207–08.

36. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 75–76. *The History of the Church* has been criticized for the unauthorized changes. See Davis Bitton, “B. H. Roberts as Historian,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1968): 30–32.

37. A draft of Roberts’s work appeared in serialized form in *Americana* between June 1909 and July 1915. The galley proof sheets of his later six-volume *Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965) included many extra pages later cut from volume 6 of the set, which are preserved in the Brigham H. Roberts Papers, Church History Library. These have been invaluable to the present author over his years of research on the period.

38. Bitton, "Roberts as Historian," 32.

39. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 4:155.

40. Bitton, "Roberts as Historian," 36.

41. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 6:113–15. See also Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1893), 267–70 for a slightly more favorable view of Zane. Thomas G. Alexander takes the opposite view of Roberts and Whitney, pointing to Zane's judicial fairness. See Thomas G. Alexander, "Charles S. Zane: Apostle of the New Era," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 34, no. 4 (Fall 1966): 290–314. See also Lyman, *Statehood! Utah's Extended Struggle*, chapter 8, forthcoming.

42. Bitton, "Roberts as Historian," 37–38.

43. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 86.

44. Nels Anderson, *Desert Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 187.

45. Anderson, *Desert Saints*, 420–21, quoted in Edward Leo Lyman, *San Bernardino: The Rise and Fall of a California Community* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1996), 161.

46. Anderson, *Desert Saints*, 140.

47. Anderson, *Desert Saints*, 228, n. 7.

48. Anderson, *Desert Saints*, 41, 55.

49. John A. Widtsoe's review of *Desert Saints* appears under the title "On the Rack," *Improvement Era* 45, no. 7 (July 1942): 445. Anderson confided by letter to Juanita Brooks that "he was irritated that the general authorities considered his book anti-Mormon, though he admitted that he had included the last four chapters because he knew 'that much of the material available to me would never again be available.' At the time of his research he had written honest letters of intent to the incumbent temple president and stake president assuring them 'I was going to treat the Saints with respect and all the facts with scientific objectivity.' He had by his light exercised great restraint for 'had I been interested in smearing, I could have done a masterly job with some of the stuff that I did not use.'" Nels Anderson to Juanita Brooks, May 29, 1942, as quoted in Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 126.

50. Anderson, *Desert Saints*, xxii. Leonard J. Arrington neglected to acknowledge Anderson's contributions in his essay "Scholarly Studies of Mormonism in the Twentieth Century," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1966): 15–32; nor did a discussion of Anderson appear in Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*; and Gary Topping, *Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003). This should be considered a major slight. Ronald W. Walker, David J. Whittaker, and James B. Allen, *Mormon History* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), also fail to discuss him. The authors offer abundant discussion of Bernard DeVoto, Wallace Stegner, Fawn Brodie, Juanita Brooks, Dale L. Morgan, Andrew L. Neff, Ephraim E. Erickson, S. George Ellsworth, Eugene E. Campbell, Richard Poll and other professionally trained Latter-day Saint scholars, few of whom did as much to raise historical perceptions long term as did Anderson.

51. Anderson, *Desert Saints*, xxii–xxiii.

52. Topping, *Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History*, 218.

53. Topping, *Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History*, 219. Topping correctly suggested that Brooks "suffered much" by being both ignored and snubbed by Church leaders and members.

54. Brooks wrote, "If no recognition came from the authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, neither did any official condemnation." Juanita Brooks, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1950,repub-

lished Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961, 1966), v.

55. See Topping, *Utah Historians*, 193–194, 199, 218–19; See also Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 158, 176, 179, 185, 193–194, 207, 210, 218–19, 239.

56. Levi S. Peterson, “Juanita Brooks as a Mormon Dissenter,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 8 (1988), 13–29.

57. Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 175–76. For A. H. Cannon’s interview with the aging Samuel Knight, see A. H. Cannon Journal, June 13, 1895.

58. Walker, Turley and Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, 141, 170–71, 228–31; Brooks, *Mountain Meadows Massacre*, 97–210. See also Edward Leo Lyman, *Amasa Mason Lyman, Mormon Apostle and Apostate: A Study in Dedication* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2009), 274–75, 289–94.

59. Juanita Brooks to Dale L. Morgan, June 25, 1946, Dale L. Morgan Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California-Berkeley, Berkeley, California. See also Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 178–79. On the latter page, Peterson observed that over an extended period of time Brooks considered allowing Church officials to somewhat censor her manuscripts mainly because, aside from fear of excommunication, she probably suffered the guilt pangs of disloyalty, against which Mormons at the time were often cautioned. These complex feelings doubtless also troubled other LDS scholars who followed similar courses during the era (my wife has at times recognized such feelings in me).

60. Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 273–77. The highest Church officials had not often been open-minded on Lee. As Brooks wrote in a related letter at the time, previously, LDS Church President Heber J. Grant had appeared before the Arizona legislature to protest the naming of the structure spanning the Colorado River the Lee’s Ferry Bridge expressly because the namesake man was not considered worthy of such an honor, even though the vicinity is still named Lee’s Ferry. It was later named Navajo Bridge. See Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 219. Grant’s cousin and counselor Anthony Ivins attended the bridge dedication and called it the Marble Canyon Bridge, even though that canyon was technically farther downstream.

61. See Greg Prince and William R. Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2005), 54, for a discussion of the McKay’s refusing to follow-up on Apostle Delbert L. Stapley’s recommendation that Brooks be excommunicated.

62. Peterson, *Juanita Brooks*, 422–23. See also Topping, *Utah Historians*, 332.

63. Topping, *Utah Historians*, 332–35.

64. Topping correctly observed that Arrington’s opinion of Brodie’s *No Man Knows My History* was “uncharacteristically caustic.” Topping, *Utah Historians*, 334.

65. See Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958, republished Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1993), xv. The quotation appears in the third edition and was given by former Idaho State University and current University of New Mexico history professor Richard W. Etulain.

66. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, xvi.

67. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, xviii–xix.

68. Arrington once promised me I could see any documents he could see in the LDS Church Archives. Although some later asserted that the archives closed down somewhat after he was dismissed as Church historian, that was not my own experience. I actually examined many sensitive documents in the subsequent years and occasionally received permission to utilize materials that would not have been possible earlier. At a Western History Association conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1975, at the memorable informal session always held in Arrington’s hotel room later in the evening, I recall how touched

veteran LDS historians Eugene Campbell and Richard Poll (who had been away from Mormon history scholarship for a time) were that those then reporting on their current research projects had gained access to so many items formerly unavailable. Both became emotional because of the dramatic changes.

69. See Ronald W. Walker, "Introduction to the Illinois Edition," in Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900*, 4th ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005), xiii, and *passim*.

70. Walker, Whittaker, and Allen, *Mormon History*, 64.

71. Personal recollection of author, October, 1963. Some staff member at the old Church Historian's Office listed Arrington's book in the "anti-Mormon" category, apparently reasoning that if the author was not fully in favor in his treatment, he must be against the Church. See "Walker Introduction," Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 4th ed., xxv–xxvi.

72. Thomas G. Alexander, "Historiography and the New Mormon History: A Historian's Perspective," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19, no. 3 (Fall 1986): 25–49; and Walker, Whittaker, and Allen, *Mormon History*, 60–96. Between mid-1945 and Arrington's death in 1999, "scholars and lay writers wrote almost 450 Ph.D. dissertations; 6,000 articles and chapters in books, and about 1,700 books, . . . which enlarged and changed almost every topic of LDS history." Walker, "Introduction to the Illinois Edition," in Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom* (4th ed.), xxvi.

73. Edward Leo Lyman, "The Alienation of an Apostle from His Quorum: The Moses Thatcher Case," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 67–91.

74. Davis Bitton, "Ten Years in Camelot: A Personal Memoir," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1983): 9–20.

75. Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 158–74, 208–19.

76. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian*, 158–74, 208–19, see also n. 69.

77. Roger V. Logan, Jr., quoted in John Magsam, "Utah Massacre Memorial Dedicated," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* (Little Rock, Arkansas), September 12, 1999.

78. As coauthor Glen M. Leonard stated at the Juanita Brooks Lecture he delivered at St. George in the spring of 2009, the writing team did not have full access to the Andrew Jensen 1892 interviews with massacre participants and Cedar City residents until later in the research and writing process. Reliable heresy information implies that eventually LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley persuaded his counselors, James E. Faust and Thomas S. Monson, that all relevant source materials should be made available to the scholars.

79. Walker, Turley, and Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, xi.

80. Walker, Turley, and Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, xi. Some close to the authors have joked that they can recognize a definite (extra) aging that has taken place in the men over the duration of the project.

81. Edward Leo Lyman, Review of Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley, Jr., and Glen M. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows, an American Tragedy*, in *Journal of Mormon History* 35, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 238–45.

82. Walker, Whittaker, and Allen, *Mormon History*, 61.

83. Pay particular attention to the following subjects: The Cedar City Pioneer Day festivities; President Isaac C. Haight's suggestion that his people might well need the emigrant cattle; Haight's advice that an exorbitant price be charged for grinding flour; accounts of emigrant language and actions at Cedar City; the mounting anger and resentment toward the pioneer travelers at Cedar; the tendency to focus hostility toward an offensive minor-

ity of the larger company; Haight's attitude toward his more passive counterpart, William H. Dame and the summation of factors leading to the final decision to attack. See Walker, Turley, and Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, 129–36.