

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	WJ
DATE ENTERED	AUG 28 1975

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Mountain Meadows Historic Site

AND/OR COMMON

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Utah Highway 18; 7 miles S of Enterprise

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2

STATE

VICINITY OF

CODE

49

COUNTY

Washington

CODE

053

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

multiple ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Washington County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

St. George

Utah 34770

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Utah State Historic Site Survey

DATE

1973

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Utah State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Salt Lake City

Utah

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mountain Meadows are located in southwestern Utah approximately seven miles south of Enterprise and thirty miles north of St. George. Utah highway 18 passes along the foothills on the eastern edge of the site. A dirt road leads from the highway to the valley area. The site is surrounded on all sides by rounded mountains which rise to heights of 1000 feet above the valley floor. Originally the valley was a wiregrass meadow which surrounded numerous small springs in the lower parts of the valley with a dry or grass meadow covering the upper portions and brush grass on the foothills. In 1862 Mormon pioneers began grazing livestock in the meadows. The overgrazing and a ten-year drought during the 1870's and 1880's caused severe deterioration of forage. The spring of 1884 was marked by heavy storms which cut deep washes across the almost barren valley. The meadow was replaced by sagebrush, rabbitbrush, Russian thistle and junipers. In 1932 the Utah Trails and Landmarks Association in cooperation with local citizens erected a low stone wall around the pile of stones which had been originally placed over the graves in 1859. The east wall parallels a deep wash which cuts through the spring from which the Fancher Party obtained water. The wall is of stone set in cement; it is four feet high and approximately thirty feet wide by thirty-four feet long. Stone steps with an iron-pipe rail lead over the wall to the west; to the south of the steps is a bronze tablet.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

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### SPECIFIC DATES

### BUILDER/ARCHITECT

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Strategically located, Mountain Meadows has been an important site in the history of Western Travel. It was a principal stopping place on the Spanish Trail and the Salt Lake to Southern California Emigrant Trail. In 1857 Mountain Meadows was the site of the massacre of the Fancher wagon train by Mormons and their Indian allies.

The area also serves as an excellent example of overgrazing and erosion common to many western meadow lands. (This is discussed in the description.)

As early as 1805 traders on the Spanish Trail had used the Mountain Meadows as a resting place for their animals. By 1830 the 1200-mile-long Spanish Trail had been established between Los Angeles and Santa Fe. The trail was most heavily used during the 1830's and 1840's when caravans of pack mules carried woolen blankets from New Mexico to trade for California horses and mules. Mountain Meadows lies about 400 miles from Los Angeles. The caravans would usually spend a couple of weeks at the lush meadows either recovering from or preparing for the crossings of the Las Vegas and Mojave Desert. John C. Fremont, who traveled the Spanish trail in 1844, described the Mountain Meadows:

As we rose towards the head of the creek, the snowy mountain on our right showed out handsomely--high and rugged with precipices, and covered with snow for about two thousand feet from their summits down. Our animals were somewhat repaid for their hard marches by an excellent camping ground on the summit of the ridge, which forms here the dividing chain between the waters of the Rio Virgen, which goes south to the Colorado, and those of the Sevier river, flowing northwardly, and belonging to the Great Basin. We considered ourselves as crossing the rim of the basin; and, entering it at this point, we found here an extensive mountain meadow, rich in bunch grass, and fresh with numerous springs of clear water, all refreshing and delightful to look upon. It was, in fact, that Las Vegas de Santa Clara, which had been so long presented to us as the terminating point of the desert, and where the annual caravan from California to New Mexico halted and recruited for some weeks. It was a very suitable place to recover from the fatigue and exhaustion of a month's suffering in the hot and sterile desert. The meadow was about a mile wide, and some ten miles long, bordered by grassy hills and mountains--some of the latter rising two thousand feet, and white with snow down to the level of the vegas. Its elevation above the sea was 5,280 feet; latitude, by observation, 37°28'28"; and its distance from where

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Juanita Brooks, The Mountain Meadows Massacre, 2nd ed., University of Oklahoma Press, 1962.  
 Juanita Brooks, John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer, Builder, Scapegoat, The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1962.  
 Juanita Brooks, "The Mountain Meadows: Historic Stopping Place on the Spanish Trail," Utah Historical Quarterly, Spring 1967, Vol. 35, No. 2.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 3000 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

	Latitude	Longitude
NW	37°30'00"	113°38'38"
NE	37°30'00"	113°36'37"
SE	37°28'01"	113°37'28"
SW	37°28'01"	113°40'00"

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kent Powell, Preservation Historian

ORGANIZATION

Utah State Historical Society

DATE

January 31, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

603 East South Temple

TELEPHONE

801-328-5755

CITY OR TOWN

Salt Lake City

STATE

Utah 84102

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL XX

STATE     

LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*Melvin T. Smith*

TITLE

Melvin T. Smith, State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

Feb 10, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Ernest R. Campbell*

DATE AUG 28 1975

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*W. M. ...*

Asst. Director, Professional Services

DATE AUG 28 1975

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we first struck the Spanish trail about four hundred miles.

After 1847 and the arrival of the Mormons in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, a southern route to California was established which avoided the treacherous Sierra Nevada mountains. The Mountain Meadows served as an important resting spot for travelers on this trail.

It was the use of this southern route in the late summer of 1857 by the Fancher party, a group of California-bound emigrants from Arkansas and Missouri, which has given Mountain Meadows its greatest fame.

On July 24, 1857, ten years after the arrival of the first pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley, the Mormons gathered at Brighton in Little Cottonwood Canyon were informed that a federal army was on its way to Utah. President James Buchanan, in response to complaints from non-Mormon territorial officials that the Utah Mormons were disloyal and in open rebellion against the United States, had appointed Alfred Cummings of Georgia territorial governor, replacing Brigham Young who had served as the territory's chief executive since its establishment in 1850. Buchanan ordered 2,500 federal troops to march with Cummings to insure compliance with his orders.

Shortly after the announcement that the army was on its way to Utah, Apostle George A. Smith visited many of the southern Utah settlements with orders for the local militias to prepare for the impending conflict and stirring memories of the Missouri and Illinois persecutions through his eloquent sermons. Mormons were warned to protect their food reserves and not sell any to the California-bound emigrants. The Fancher party, consisting of approximately 120 persons, arrived in Salt Lake City the first part of August, 1857. They were apparently the first group of the season to use the Southern Route to California. Many sources report the belligerent conduct of the party as it made its way through Utah. Oxen were named Brigham Young or Heber C. Kimball and cursed as they passed the Mormon settlements. When they were refused in attempts to buy provisions they retaliated by popping the head off a chicken with a long bullwhip or turning their cattle into the Mormon fields. Some boasted of participating in the execution of Joseph Smith and threatened to lead an army back from California to put the Mormons in their place. It was also reported that they poisoned a spring and a number of cattle died from drinking the poisoned water. The Indians ate some of the meat and several Indians died from the effects.

A meeting was held in Cedar City in which the fate of the emigrants was debated. Unable to reach a decision, it was voted to send a messenger to Brigham Young to inquire what shall be done. In the meantime, the Indians, whose help against the invading federal army had already been solicited by Brigham Young,

decided that here was a good place to begin to help with the war. Accordingly the Indians attacked the encampment at Mountain Meadows with casualties on both sides. Three men decided to go back to Cedar City and ask for help. The men were killed; two by Indians and one by a white man. Perhaps feeling that now the emigrants would know the Mormons were involved and thus have good cause to return with an army from California, it was decided to carry out the extermination of the party before the messenger returned with Brigham Young's answer. After a five-day siege by the Indians, the desperate emigrants accepted a Mormon offer to escort them from the entrapment. With the younger children sent up ahead, the women and older children followed the wagons. They in turn were followed by the men who, having disarmed themselves at the request of the Mormons, were to be protected by an individual escort with a loaded rifle. At the command "Halt! Do your duty!" each armed Mormon guard was to shoot the emigrant at his side, while the Indians, who were hiding in ambush, would attack the women and children and finish off those men who were not shot by the Mormon escorts. The massacre went according to plan and was completed in a matter of minutes. The number killed is estimated between 65 and 123. Eighteen small children were spared and lived with Mormon families for two years until they were gathered up and sent to relatives in the east. In 1859 the scattered bones were collected and buried under the direction of Judge John Cradlebaugh. His men erected a twelve-foot high stone cairn over the mass grave and placed a large hand-hewn cross with the inscription "Vengeance is Mine, Saith the Lord. I will Repay." The monument was torn down in 1861 when Brigham Young visited the site. It was rebuilt again in 1864 by federal soldiers only to be torn down again. In 1877 the last act of the Mountain Meadows tragedy was performed when John D. Lee, who was charged with responsibility for the massacre, was taken to the massacre site and executed. Although Lee had participated in the massacre he was in actuality a scapegoat for all who had been involved and a pawn in the larger Mormon-Gentile conflict which flamed with intense fervor during the last half of the Nineteenth Century.

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W. P. Cottam and George Stewart, "Plant Succession as a Result of Grazing and Meadow Desiccation By Erosion Since Settlement in 1862," Journal of Forestry, Vol. 38, No. 8, August 1940.

Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence, editors, The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont, Travels from 1838 to 1844, University of Illinois Press, 1970.