

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 24 1975
DATE ENTERED	APR 30 1976

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
 LAND/OR COMMON
Gunnison Massacre Site

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *on the Gunnison River*
Approximately 6 miles southwest of Hinckley NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN Hinckley VICINITY OF _____ CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 2
STATE Utah CODE 049 COUNTY Millard CODE 027

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input 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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Bureau of Land Management
STREET & NUMBER 15 East 500 North
CITY, TOWN Fillmore VICINITY OF _____ STATE Utah

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Bureau of Land Management
STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 11505 Federal Building
CITY, TOWN Salt Lake City STATE Utah

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Utah Historic Sites Survey
DATE 1974 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Utah State Historical Society
CITY, TOWN Salt Lake City STATE 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Although no detailed contemporary account of the massacre site has been found, Josiah F. Gibbs, a long time resident of Millard County, wrote a detailed description of the site in 1894 which was originally published in the Millard County Blade and later, in 1909, reprinted in The Lights and Shadows of Mormonism. According to David H. Miller, the foremost authority on the Gunnison Massacre "...Gibbs' description is important, because the terrain in 1894 had been little altered from its original conditions during the intervening forty-one years."¹

According to Josiah F. Gibbs,

"The small lake first mentioned, is separated from the river by a small strip of ground occupied by grass and willows which abound in the immediate vicinity, both sides of the river (which is only four-six rods wide) being fringed with them. Rising gradually from the lake towards the north and east, the ground is three to five feet higher than the surface of the water, and is covered with a stunted growth of grease wood and 'shad scale,' (the local name given to a low-growing, thorny shrub). Patches of saline land glisten in the sunlight, and under the transformations wrought by the western mirage, are often mistaken for bodies of water.

At the time of the massacre the present lake was marshy ground covered with flags, rushes and a rank growth of grass which extended well towards the higher ground, thus forming an inviting, but dangerous nook.

At the present time nothing remains of the willows on the east and west sides but the dead stumps. In other respects the place and its surroundings have nearly the same appearance as on that fateful afternoon when Captain Gunnison went into camp for the last time."²

Six of the massacre victims were buried at the site and for many years a lone cedar pole was all that marked the site.

In 1927 a bronze marker was placed on a stone monument in commemoration of the massacre victims. Recently the marker, which contained a brief description of the event and the names of the men killed, was removed by vandals.

Today the flags, rushes, grass and shallow lakes are gone. The Sevier River still flows by the site. The vegetation is primarily greasewood, sagebrush, and the shad scale described by Josiah Gibbs. The massacre site is still an isolated location. Access is possible by a two mile dirt road which leaves Highway 50 and 6 approximately six miles west of the community of Hinckley.

¹David H. Miller "The Impact of the Gunnison Massacre on Mormon-Federal Relations: Colonel Edward Jenner Steptoe's Command in Utah Territory 1854-1855." (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Utah, 1968), p. 49.

²Josiah F. Gibbs, Lights and Shadows of Mormonism, (Salt Lake City: Salt Lake Tribune Publishing Company, 1909), p. 179.

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 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

WBL
12/4/75

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Gunnison Massacre Site is significant in its ties to the history of exploration, railroad construction, Indian-white relations and the Mormon experience in the West. The massacre occurred on October 26, 1853. Captain John W. Gunnison, in charge of the 38th Parallel Survey, and seven others were killed by Indians of the Pah Vent tribe. Four members of the party managed to escape.

John W. Gunnison was born November 11, 1812, in Goshen, New Hampshire. He graduated from West Point in 1837 second in his class of fifty. In 1838 he was assigned to the corps of Topographical Engineers. Gunnison was a member of the Stansbury expedition in 1849 and 1850. After the expedition divided into two parties at Fort Bridger, Lieutenant Gunnison commanded the group which went directly to Salt Lake City. He was in charge of the survey from the Great Salt Lake to Fort Hall in the fall of 1849 and the exploration of Utah Lake. The Stansbury expedition wintered in Salt Lake City during which time Gunnison studied the religious doctrines and practices of the Mormon Church. His study, The Mormons or Latter-day Saints in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, published in 1852, is a remarkably insightful and balanced work. In the spring of 1850 Captain Gunnison conducted a survey of the eastern shore of Great Salt Lake and several of the Lake's islands, one of which is named for Gunnison. Following the summer's work, the expedition returned to the East.

The controversy over practical transcontinental railroad routes led Congress to authorize surveys of the four principal routes. Captain Gunnison was given command of the survey along the 38th parallel. Gunnison's appointment was opposed by Senator Thomas Burton of Missouri who sought to receive the command for his son-in-law, John C. Fremont. In 1848 Fremont had surveyed a route along the 38th parallel into the Rocky Mountains. At Fremont's insistence, the expedition tried to cross the Rocky Mountains in December and ten members of the party died from starvation and exposure after they were caught in a snowstorm. Fremont and the other survivors were forced to take refuge in Taos. Despite this tragedy Fremont claimed to have found a satisfactory transcontinental railroad route. Gunnison's route followed that of the earlier Fremont expedition--up the Missouri River from St. Louis to Independence. Here the expedition was divided with Gunnison following up the Kansas River to Fort Riley, then up the Smokey Hill River, then south to the Arkansas River near the mouth of Walnut Creek. Here Gunnison met the second group which,

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Josiah F. Gibbs, Light and Shadows of Mormonism, Salt Lake Tribune Publishing Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1909.
 David H. Miller, "The Impact of the Gunnison Massacre on Mormon-Federal Relations: Colonel Edward Jenner Steptoe's command in Utah Territory, 1854-1855." Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Utah, 1968.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 81 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,2	3,4,6,9,5,0	4,3,4,9,3,6,0	B	1,2	3,4,6,9,3,0	4,3,4,8,7,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,2	3,4,6,3,5,0	4,3,4,8,7,8,0	D	1,2	3,4,6,3,7,0	4,3,4,9,3,8,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

A. Kent Powell/Preservation Historian

ORGANIZATION

Utah State Historical Society

DATE

November 12, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

603 East South Temple

TELEPHONE

(801) 533-5755

CITY OR TOWN

Salt Lake City

STATE

Utah

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

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

November 12, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

4/30/96

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4.29.76

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under the command of Lieutenant E. G. Beckwith, had followed the Santa Fe Trail from Independence. The route then followed up the Arkansas River to its headwaters in the Rocky Mountains. The party guided by Antoine Leroux then crossed the Sangre de Cristo Mountains into the San Luis Valley and across the San Juan Mountains by Cochetopa Pass to the Gunnison River which they followed to its junction with the Colorado River at present-day Grand Junction. Following the Colorado River across the present Colorado-Utah border, leaving that river as it turned southwest. Continuing westward, Gunnison crossed the Green River near the site of Greenriver, Utah, and followed the old Spanish Trail through Castle Valley and across the Wasatch plateau to the Sevier River and west toward Sevier Lake. Captain Gunnison in an effort to finish the survey work around Sevier Lake before winter halted their efforts, divided his command and took a select group with him. It was this group that was attacked by Indians on October 26, 1853. Gunnison was aware of Indian difficulties; in the last letter to his wife, dated October 18, 1853, he wrote, "There is a war between the Mormons and the Indians and parties of less than a dozen do not dare to travel..." The Walker War had begun on July 17, 1853, when one of Chief Walker's Ute braves was killed in Springville in a trading altercation. During August, September and October, ten Mormons were killed. The deaths of Gunnison and his men, however, were not connected with the Walker War, but were in revenge for the death of a Pavant and wounding of two others in an altercation with a California emigrant party on Meadow Creek, five miles south of Fillmore.

It was rumored that the Mormons might have been in league with the Indians, or had actually committed the crime themselves. This generated demands that a military force be sent to Utah and that the Territory of Utah be abolished and partitioned among Nebraska, New Mexico and California. In 1854 a detachment of federal troops was ordered to Utah under the command of Colonel Edward J. Steptoe to investigate the massacre. The Steptoe command was composed of 175 soldiers and 130 "teamsters, ostlers and herders." After lengthy negotiations with Chief Kanosh, Steptoe finally secured the surrender of six Indians, none of whom were the ring leaders.

Three Indians were actually brought to trial in Nephi on March 21, 1855. Despite the judge's charge to find the Indians guilty of murder in the first degree or innocent, the Mormon jury delivered a unanimous verdict of guilty of manslaughter. The verdict was accepted and the Indians sentenced to three years of hard labor in the partially completed territorial penitentiary. The sentence was the most severe permitted for manslaughter by the territorial statutes.

Colonel Steptoe charged that the trial had been staged by Mormon leaders to outwardly satisfy Gentile opinion and that the trial was used, not only to protect the Indians, but to show contempt for federal authority. The charges

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were repeated in eastern newspapers, and set the stage for the "Federal Invasion" by troops sent west in 1857.

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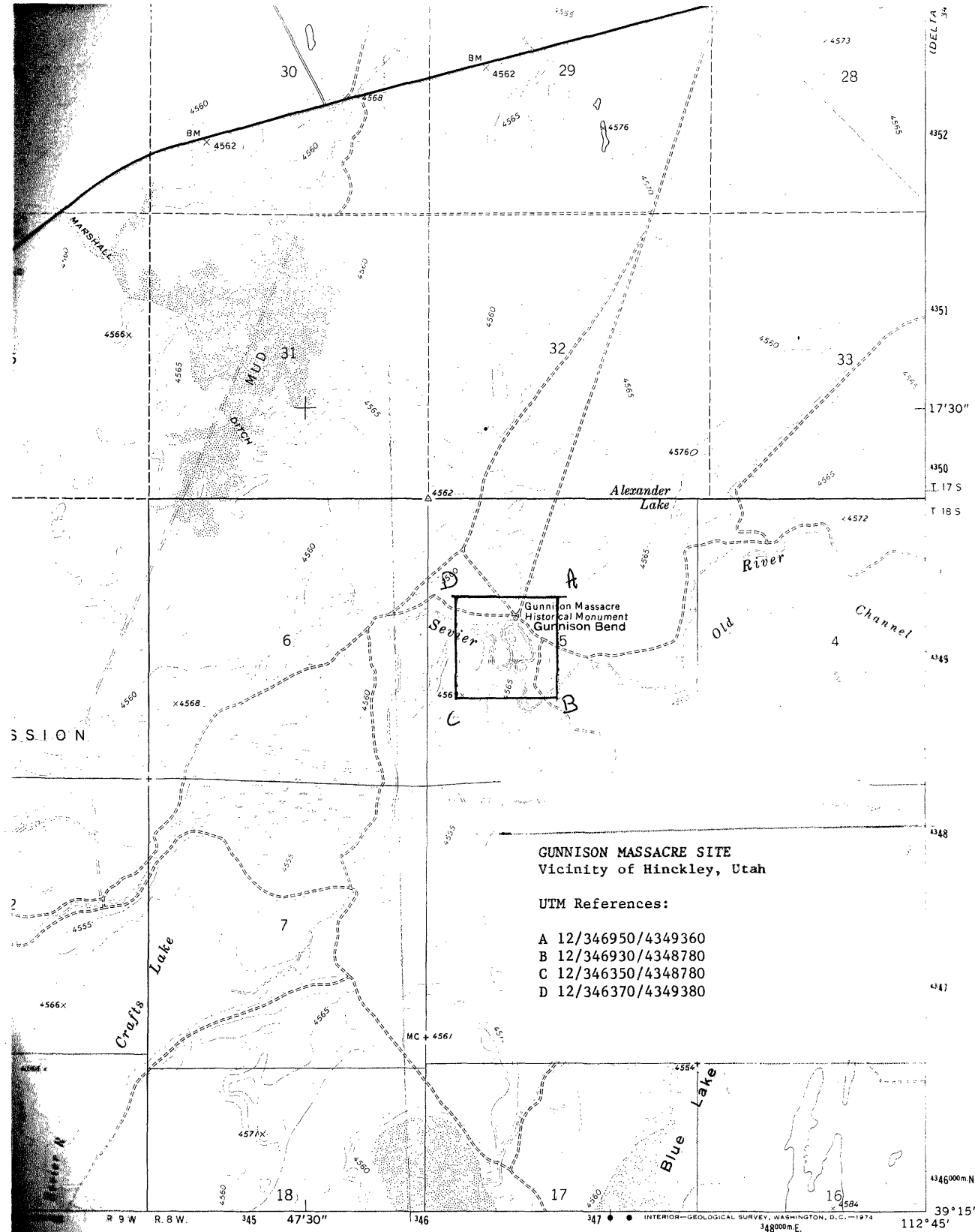
APR 30 1976

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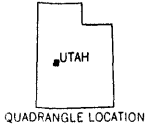
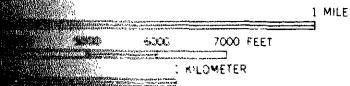
Nolie, Mumey, John Williams Gunnison (1812-1853) The Last of the Western
Explorers, A History of the Survey Through Colorado and Utah With a
Biography and Details of His Massacre, Artcraft Press, Denver, Colorado, 1955.



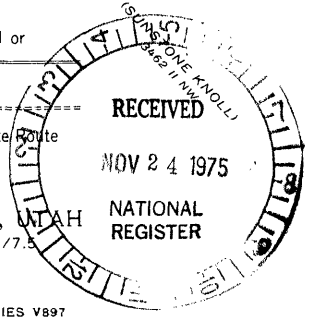
GUNNISON MASSACRE SITE
Vicinity of Hinckley, Utah

UTM References:

- A 12/346950/4349360
- B 12/346930/4348780
- C 12/346350/4348780
- D 12/346370/4349380



- ROAD CLASSIFICATION**
- Primary highway, hard surface:
 - Light-duty road, hard or improved surface:
 - Secondary highway, hard surface:
 - Unimproved road:
 - Interstate Route:
 - U.S. Route:
 - State Route:



CRAFTS LAKE, UTAH
N3915-W11245/7.5

1971

AMS 3462 IV SE-SERIES V897