

*Late News From The Meadows*  
The Mountain Meadows Association Newsletter  
Honoring the Dead, Historic Preservation, Fellowship, & Reconciliation  
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**MOUNTAIN MEADOWS ASSOCIATION**  
**ANNUAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 2011**

By Larry Coates, Vice President

**INTRODUCTION**

The meetings held at Mountain Meadows on September 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> filled our hearts with several different emotions. We felt joy as we witnessed the services that celebrated designating Mountain Meadows as a National Historic Landmark. We felt sadness, however, when we walked the path where some 120 men, women, and children were killed 154 years ago. We rejoiced as we felt the bonds of reconciliation when we met old friends and made new ones on both sides of the great divide between the relatives of victims and the perpetrators of the Massacre.

**SATURDAY ACTIVITIES**

Members from the Mountain Meadows Association, the Descendants Organization, and the Foundation enjoyed renewing friendships in the large tent that the LDS Church provided at the siege site in the Meadows. Land owner, Clint Lytle, then conducted a walking tour along the path the victims traveled when they were killed 154 years ago. As we meandered along, Lytle pointed out features in the landscape and wheel marks of wagon trains that still remain on the land. Visualizing and reliving the tragic massacre of 120 men, women, and children filled our hearts with despair, sorrow, and extreme sympathy and empathy for those who died. We also felt compassion for those who descended from the survivors and their friends.



## NORTHERN GRAVES

When we reached the new monument for the men and boys who died at the Northern Grave site, we listened to Barbara Brown and the quilt designer, Anna Rolapp, explain the symbols of reconciliation that appear on the friendship quilt that will be permanently displayed in Cedar City, UT. Each of the quilt blocks expresses words and images of forgiveness and regret for what happened more than a century and one half ago. Acknowledging the serious mistakes the perpetrators made paves the way for the descendants of the victims to extend a hand of forgiveness and friendship to the Latter-day Saints.

## COTTAM PROPERTY

Following this service, we walked along highway 18 and then crossed it onto the land owned by the Cottam family, where the women and children were killed. Recently, the LDS Church hired specialists to study this property in an attempt to locate grave sites. Shannon Novak, who observed this investigation, described how the scientists used ground penetrating radar and sampled the soil for human remains. Novak then discussed several reasons why they failed to identify any graves. Radar, she indicated, only reveals if the land has been disturbed. The sampling of soil can show the possibility of bones being under the ground, she added, but that does not tell us if the bones are from humans or wild animals. She concluded that human burial sites cannot be identified without digging in the grave sites, finding human bones, and examining them. Because we respect the wishes of the families to not dig up the land, we will not be able to locate the graves. Even though we may not find the actual grave sites, historical reports reveal that the women and children were killed in this region. Therefore, we can assume they were buried on the Cottam property.



After visiting the possible sites on the Cottam property, the buses shuttled us back to the tent at the siege site. The LDS Church provided all of us with a free sack lunch. We deeply appreciated the food, the tent, and all of the other facilities that were provided at the Meadows.