

Late News From The Meadows

The Mountain Meadows Association Newsletter

Honoring the Dead • Historic Preservation • Fellowship & Reconciliation

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ANNUAL MEETING IN ARKANSAS

The annual meeting of the Mountain Meadows Association will be held from September 26th through 28th, 2008 in Arkansas. On Friday the 26th, a luncheon has tentatively been scheduled as well as a float trip on the *Bell of the Ozarks*. It will cost \$9.00 for the meal and \$14.00 for the boat ticket. The Friday evening activity will be held in the Eureka County Courthouse, which will hold about 100 people.

On Saturday morning, a guided bus tour will be conducted to some of the important historic sites in the region. In the evening, the Association will hold its annual meeting, which will include a fine, uplifting and informative program.

After a Sunday breakfast, a worship service will take place at Thorncrowne. Many more details of these tentative plans will be advertised in subsequent newsletters and on the Mountain Meadows Association website – www.mtn-meadows-assoc.com.

DEATH OF PRESIDENT HINCKLEY

Recently, President Terry Fancher sent a letter from the Mountain Meadows Association to LDS Church President Thomas S. Monson and expressed our sorrow about the death of President Gordon B. Hinckley. We deeply appreciate the significant contributions he made in building two monuments and in protecting the sacred space and hallowed ground where the victims died in September 1857.

In 1990, Elder Hinckley exerted his influence to build a monument on Dan

Sill Hill and to hold a dedication and memorial service, where the descendants of the victims and the relatives of perpetrators of the massacre held hands in a ceremony of forgiveness. On that occasion, he said the monument represents a bridge “across a chasm of cankering bitterness.” “We walk across that bridge,” he added, “and greet one another with a spirit of love, forgiveness, and with hope there will never be a repetition of anything of the kind.”

In October 1998, President Hinckley met with members of the Mountain Meadows Association and promised that he would spend whatever it cost to build an acceptable monument where Brevet Major James H. Carleton had erected one in 1859. President Hinckley presented three drawings for a new shrine. He asked the Association to review them and offer suggestions. “Make your decision quickly,” he declared, “because I want this monument rebuilt before I die.”

On September 11, 1999, President Hinckley realized this dream. He stood with the warm breeze tossing his silver gray hair and echoed the theme of the memorial service, “I come as a peace maker.”

Even after this eventful day, he successfully acquired additional land for other monuments to be built for those persons who were buried elsewhere in the valley. Unfortunately, his ill health prevented him from attending the 150 year memorial service that was held at the Meadows on September 11th, 2007. But he sent Elder Henry B. Eyring to read a

statement of deep regret for what happened on the tragic day.

LANDMARK STATUS

After collaborating with the Mountain Meadows Massacre Foundation and the Mountain Meadows Descendants Association in December 2007, President Fancher wrote a letter to Elder Marlin Jensen and asked the LDS Church to seek National Historic Landmark designation for Mountain Meadows, because cooperation of the landowner is required. One major purpose for the recognition is to protect and preserve this sacred region from desecration. Late in March 2008, Fancher and the leaders of the other organizations met with Elder Jensen and Richard E. Turley in Arkansas and learned that the LDS Church will seek this designation.

CHANGES IN BYLAWS

On January 19th, 2008, the board unanimously approved a suggestion to remove the current section on term limits for officers. The change would return the wording of this section to the bylaws that were adopted August 28, 2004. The words in Section 3.02 which read, “subject to the time limitation identified in Section 4.02,” will be deleted. Also, the statement will be deleted from this section which reads, “but in any case, the terms of any officer shall not exceed four (4) years.”

The board came to this conclusion for two basic reasons. First, the change will permit the Mountain Meadows Association to have a consistent pattern of leadership for a longer period of time

than the current term limits allow. Collectively, the board identifies the short and long range goals, and these officers will use their skills to reach them. Many of the goals require years to achieve. Second, the bylaws insist that the president of the Association “must be a descendant, descending from any lineal or collateral blood lines of the emigrants.” The bylaws require that the board “shall consist of at least 51% who are descendants.” This limits the pool from which the president of the Association is selected.

BOARD MEMBERS RESIGN

Shirley Pyron resigned after some fifteen years of faithful service. During this time, she not only worked diligently as director on the board but also served as president of the Association laboring to promote its ideals. At the dedication of the new monument at Mountain Meadows, she gave a memorable address that helped bond those who are related to victims from Arkansas with those who are connected with the perpetrators.

Shirley also served the Carroll County Historical Society. As a result, she promoted one of the goals of the Association by preserving many valuable documents and artifacts connected with the massacre.

Also, Verne Lee informed President Fancher that he would “not be a candidate for re-election,” when his term expires in January 2008. In declining to be renominated, Verne mentioned his advanced age, his desire to reduce his responsibilities, and his wish to giving others an opportunity to serve.

Over the years, Verne made a unique contribution to the Association. After Ron Loving came to a Lee family reunion, Verne and Ron became two of

the “founding fathers” of the Mountain Meadows Association in 1988.

For twenty years, Verne served on the board of directors and made many significant contributions. He played a vital role in raising funds and supporting the efforts to erect the monument on Dan Sill Hill. He also worked diligently to get the monument built on the site where Major Carlton erected one. “May these monuments,” Verne declared, “engender feelings of understanding, forgiveness and closure for an atrocity that should never have happened.”

The board commends both Shirley and Verne for the service they have rendered in healing the wounds brought about by the massacre. Members of the board from both sides of this catastrophic event appreciate the efforts of Shirley and Verne in extending their hands of fellowship across the great divide that occurred as a result of the massacre.

NEW BOARD MEMBER SUGGESTION

The nominating committee put forth the name of Jared Smith as member of the board to replace Verne Lee. He is nominated for a position on the non-descendants side of the Association.

ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Frank Hampson took some remarkable photos of the memorial activities during the 150th anniversary services at Mountain Meadows in 2007. To get copies, contact him at fhampson@alltel.net. He accepts personal checks, postal money orders, or cash. To discuss various options, write Hampton Photography, 601 W.

Ridge Avenue, Harrison, AR 72601, or call (870)-365-0909. The company may be able to produce images that can be seen on TV as well as a PC monitor.

Alison Wallner reported that the June issue of *Smithsonian Magazine* will have an article about the Utah War by David Roberts entitled “The Brink of War.” It has not yet been posted on the website www.smithsonian.com but it probably will appear soon.

CARROLL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The MMA board encourages members to participate in the Carroll County Historical Society library project. Visit the Mountain Meadows Association website mtn-meadows-assoc.com/cchs to donate book(s) or DVD(s) to the CCHS Library project. The Association tracks the books that are purchased to avoid any duplications. The shipping address of the CCHS will automatically appear when you order through Amazon.com, and your book donation will be sent directly to the CCHS. Upon receipt of your donation, the CCHS will place a Mountain Meadows Association Library bookplate inside the book with your name as the donor. Donations are tax-deductible through the Carroll County Historical Society.

MMA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Annual membership in the Mountain Meadows Association came due in January 2008. If you have not renewed your membership for 2008, please visit the MMA website at www.mtn-meadows-assoc.com and pay your dues with a credit card or a PayPal account. If you prefer, fill out the following renewal form and mail it with your dues to the address on the form.

Annual Dues and Pre-Registration Forms

Renewal of membership in the Association is due each January (rather than September 11, the date of the Massacre). Please fill out all of the details on these forms at the end of this newsletter. To request an electronic copy of the newsletter, please e-mail Terry Fancher at tnf49@aol.com.

Please cut out the following Membership Form and mail to the Mountain Meadows Association at 12703 Whisper Spring Cove, Draper, Utah 84020. You also now pay your dues online at www.mtn-meadows-assoc.com/dues_form.htm or make a donation at www.mtn-meadows-assoc.com/donations.htm

Mountain Meadows Association Membership Mail-in Form

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone Number(s): _____
E-mail: _____

Dues are \$20.00 per year. Check the following categories:

New Member _____ Renewal _____ Additional Donation \$ _____ for _____

Please cut out this membership form, fill it out, and it mail back to us.