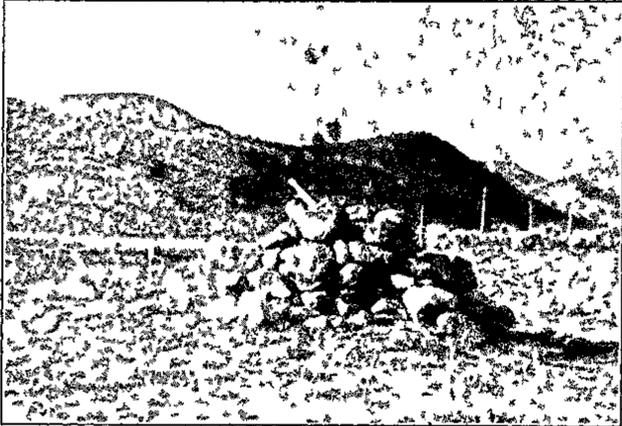


# SEVENTY-FOUR YEARS OF NEGLECT

Third Generation Not Satisfied With Total Indifference, but Wish to Be Placed in Better Light before World.

Demands from Various Sources Beginning to Be Made That Suitable Monument and Fitting Ceremonies Be Held at Mountain Meadows.

LASTING MONUMENT AND SUITABLE INSCRIPTION SHOULD REPLACE THIS PILE OF LOOSE STONES



(Photo of the only existing marker in 1931 at the site of the Mountain Meadows Massacre site—a rude pile of loose stones which any shepherd could gather in a forenoon. Such an inadequate marker felt by all to be a disgrace. In no other state in the Union would such indifference be shown for a spot where so much history was enacted.)

The week of September 17, 1857 this same week, seventy four years ago on the spot upon which this rude pile of stones shown above is the only marker was enacted the most regrettable tragedy that ever occurred in the State of Utah and which has caused more poignant heart burnings to the members of the L D S Church than any other event in its history. On Monday morning of that week firing commenced with an attack almost exactly at that spot where this meager marker stands seven (or possibly ten) emigrants are supposed to lie under this pile. On Friday morning the ruse was enacted—the decoy of the white flag and the butchery done not at this spot but to the north.

That the present generation abhors this infamy just as has every generation past including that of 1857 and wishes to do something in atonement is evidenced by the following clipping from the Forum column of the Salt Lake Tribune of the issue of June 28 1931.

## DESCENDANT WOULD ATONE FOR WRONGS

Editor Tribune

There must be a few alive of the children of the affair of September 11 1857. Let us get them here and have two or three of our most prominent men atone for the deed. It would be a glorious day for all of us.

This is not to criticize the people of those early days. They were surrounded by enemies and had to fight fearful odds to keep their religion and institutions. So with distract and worried minds mistakes were bound to happen. In a few years they will all be dead so let us be brave and do it now. It will be the first time it was ever done in the United States and it will draw thousands of visitors from California and the east.

(Signed)

A Descendant of the Fifty five

(There were fifty four or fifty five white participants in that unfortunate affair and the above from a descendant of one of them shows the heart felt pang of a sufferer of a wrong committed by an ancestor, for which this descendant carries the odium. He (and others) would lift the load off his heart. He would have atonement done—sincere atonement in a spirit of asking the world for forgiveness if any be needed—a gathering an assembly descendants present orators to implore a Power above and a people here to cease to hold it in bitter memory—to forgive and forget or if retained in memory ameliorated with a showing of sorrow for the act in which descendants themselves ask orators among their leaders to set aright their cause (so burdensome to bear) before a still criticising world. This descendant (writer of the above letter) knows the burden he is carrying.

rying he knows that long continued neglect only invites unfriendly comment, that his own lot and the lot of all other descendants of those erring fifty five would be easier were a great assembly held contrition shown a fine shaft erected and dedicated to the noble dead and legislation enacted setting aside an acre there as protected by law from molestation by vandals.

This descendant asks it. He and many others like him would feel better.

To his request came forth again in the columns of the Salt Lake Tribune a reply in the issue of August 6 1931, from which we extract the following.)

## 'UTAH TRAGEDY BRINGS MEMORIAL PLEA'

Editor Tribune

A Descendant of the Fifty five makes a guarded reference to an early day tragedy in southwestern Utah in part as follows:

'There must be a few alive of the children of the affair of September 11, 1857. Let us get them here and have two or three of our most prominent men atone for the deed. In a few years they will all be dead so let us be brave and do it now. (To which the reply is made.)

A finer and more appropriate sentiment was never uttered.

(Then the writer makes mention that maybe the ravages of death in the ranks of the direct children of the fifty five and other obstacles are too great for such atonement. The other obstacles may seem almost insurmountable, but if more of the descendants of the participants demand expiatory ceremonies such ceremonies will be held. It is only necessary for enough demands to be reiterated that fruition will follow.)

(That there is neglect—seventy four years of neglect—is further attested by quoting in continuation of the reply brought forth.)

On a low lying burned sage brush flat surrounded by bleak volcanic hills a monument of loose boulders is the sole reminder of the nearly 74 year old tragedy. With bared heads occasional visitors replace the fallen stones and perhaps drink at the nearby and now deeply sunk on spring. Not for one moment can anyone justly charge this neglect to the residents of southwestern Utah only nor to indifference concerning the deplorable event—not then nor now. All Utahs are indirectly and our state legislature directly responsible for the above indicated neglect.

Heeding the altruism of a Descendant of the Fifty five who from his vantage point of descent extends the olive branch, may we not ignore sleeping prejudices and unite in a demand that our next legislature appropriate a modest sum for the erection of at least a wayside marker—'In Memoriam'?

## A SCOUT MASTER OF A TROOP OF BOY SCOUTS ADDS HIS PLEA

The following comes from a Boy Scout Master himself a member of the L D S Church who took a troop of impressionable boys also largely of that faith to this spot and a letter to me voices his sentiment.

Night before last we camped on the old battle ground at Mountain Meadows. They heard some of the particulars of that terrible tragedy and many expressed the opinion that the common grave should be marked with a better monument. Wont someone start something?

All of us gained much from our experience. We walked over all the points of interest in connection with the historic happening of seventy four years ago. We are all of the opinion that someone of influence in Utah should make some kind of an appropriate marker over the graves of those buried there. The people who were killed there were American citizens and do not deserve to be treated worse than murderers.

That burial spot to those boys is sacred ground, and it would make any American be proud to see how reverently each one carried himself while at the sacred place.

## IT WILL TAKE FORTITUDE, BRAVERY, COURAGE

That it will take fortitude, bravery, courage and a high moral resolve to carry this act of contrition through to a successful termination is shown by the following personal letter to me from a man of considerable influence who also favors such a course.

In reference to marking the Mountain Meadows Massacre field.

Most everyone who has looked squarely into the matter agrees with you—and me—and that includes many of prominence.

It refuses to be forgotten. And this present generation two lives removed from that terrible day, is surely far enough off in perspective to erect a marker. I think it will be done some day maybe not far away PROVIDED.

Provided, you and I and others keep the thing warm. It will help to remove the stigma from the present Mormon generation and to palliate those of the past. And the more generous their participation the more complete will be their absolution.

I admit it may seem to be a bitter pill to swallow—Those who fell in battle in enemy territory are not always commemorated. And for that I do not blame anyone. I say it is a hard thing to do. It takes fortitude, it takes bravery, it demands courage (a high moral courage)—which most of us have in abundance when it does not affect us. But one day Mormons and Gentiles will join in erecting this memorial—and may you and I live to participate!

## IN ALL FRIBDLINESS

This entire article is written in entire friendliness. It should be received in the same spirit. The cause which is dominant in Utah will be aided by a suitable gathering held at the burial spot of the Mountain Meadows there hold ceremonies fitting to a great and noble occasion. Let orators of prominence and church dignitaries speak those words which will place the actors of a crime in a better light and lift a load off their descendants which each implores. Then in a contrite spirit dedicate the ground as a hallowed resting place for the dead thus honored.

Such a course would place Utah in a better light among its sister sovereigns.

From many divergent sources such an act of palliation is asked. The Descendants of the Fifty five now number many each will add Odium bitterness slumbering hatred unfriendly criticism—all this would be benefited by this great noble act which though it would require great fortitude, much bravery, and demand a high moral courage yet it would be worth it all!

The present day generation would like to see it done.

Like Banquo's ghost, bitter remembrances of this deed will not be laid without appropriate ceremony. That such a ceremony will be held a suitable monument erected the spot dedicated and the spirit of the present day be shown in nobility is the object of this presentation. And may that accomplishment be achieved before the seventy fifth anniversary arrives.

Past neglect continued is odious to this generation. It does not set well with the up growing members and certainly invites unfriendly criticism from non members of the Church within whose territory the act occurred.

(The following note was added at the point marked by the star by one to whom this manuscript was sent before publication.)

\*There will always be a Mountain Meadows skeleton in the closet in the recesses of the heart of every

Mormon and especially of every descendant of the fifty five and every resident of Utah's attractive and much visited Southwest until this skeleton is courageously dragged forth and buried with authority and finality so that no one who lives

today nor tomorrow may need hide his ancestry in humiliation nor nurture in his breast a perpetual dread but may frankly point to a lasting monument, and a suitable inscription for reply to every uplifted finger of shame.

—Frank Beckwith Sr Delta