

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

# TRUE WEST

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

## The True History Behind American Primeval

*Could it be even more brutal than the series?*

- Was Brigham Young Portrayed Fairly?
- John D. Lee: Monster or Scapegoat?
- Who was the True Hero of the Mountain Massacre?
- The Real Jim Bridger

**PLUS:**

- A Ute Historian's Perspective on the "Utah War"
- Mormons in the Movies

OUR 72ND YEAR  
MAY/JUNE 2025

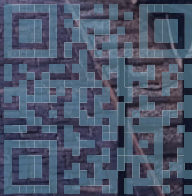
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JUNE 21 - 22, 2025

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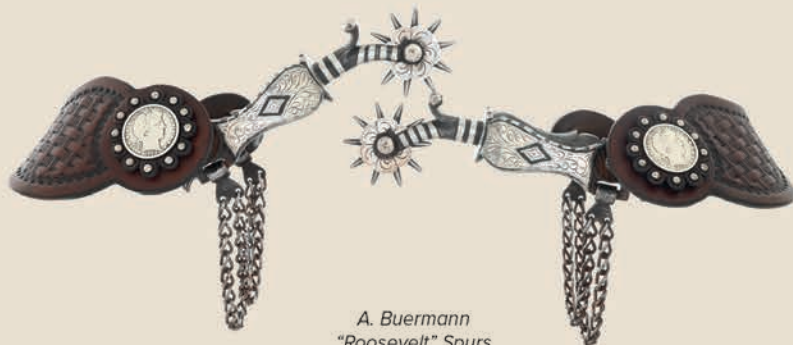
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**OPENING SHOT**

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**BUFFALO BILL AT LEE'S FERRY, CIRCA 1892 (that's Cody in the checked vest)**

Apparently, Buffalo Bill was somewhat anti-Mormon (he appeared in an anti-Mormon play), but he had a change of heart during an 1892 expedition to the Grand Canyon to explore the area as a possible nature preserve; along the way they were hosted by several Mormon families. After the expedition, Cody praised the hospitality and piety of the Mormons. This was the beginning of an evolving friendship that culminated in Buffalo Bill encouraging Mormon settlement in the Bighorn Basin of Wyoming.



True West captures the spirit of the West with authenticity, personality and humor by providing a necessary link from our history to our present.

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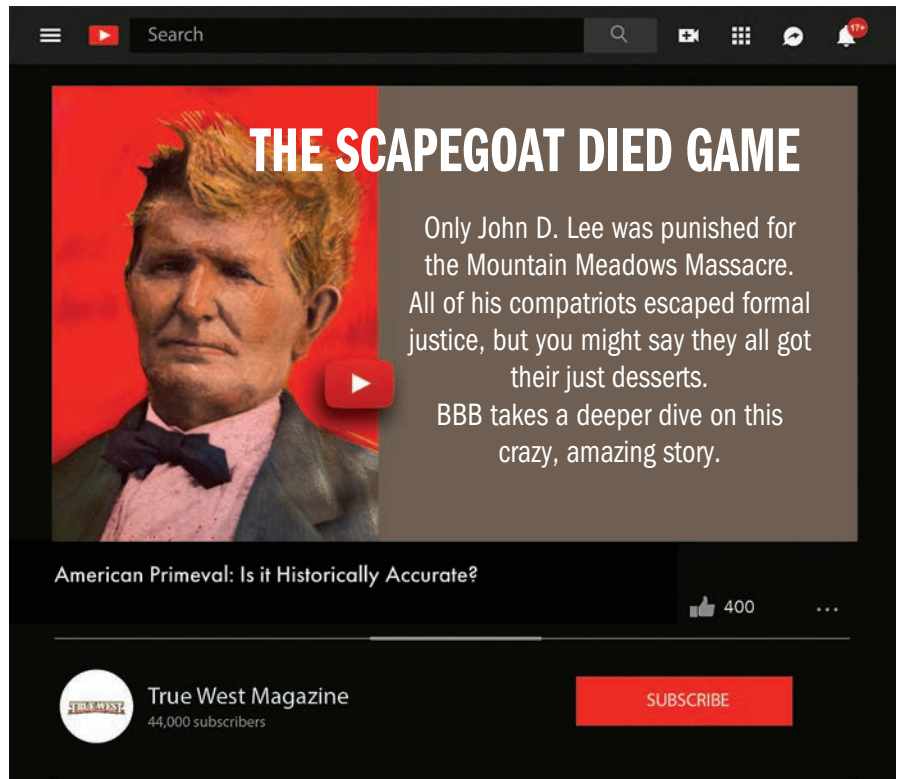
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From Oregon's first missionary clashes to the horror at Mountain Meadows, this sweeping account reveals how religious zeal, disease and division fueled violence in the West—foreshadowing the Civil War's bloody reckoning to come.

—By *Stuart Rosebrook*

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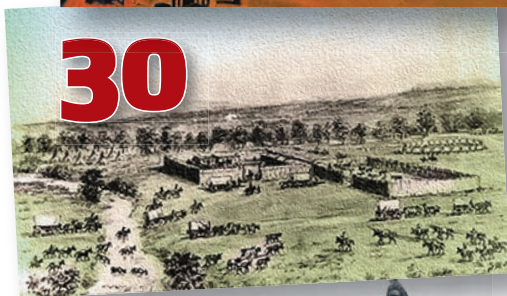


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In 1857, more than 120 emigrants were slaughtered in Utah's Mountain Meadows by Mormon militiamen. Long blamed on Indians, the truth slowly emerged, revealing religious zealotry, conspiracy and one of the West's darkest, most haunting tragedies.

—By *Paul Andrew Hutton*

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—By *Jerry Enzler*

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—By *Forest Cuch*

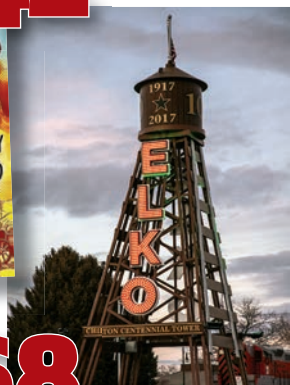
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—By *Henry C. Parke*



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—By *The Editors of True West*

BY BOB BOZE BELL

# Mountain Meadows

*Making peace with a violent past.*

**H**ere is the official response to *American Primeval* by the LDS church:

“Brigham Young, a revered prophet and courageous pioneer, is, by any historical standard, egregiously mischaracterized as a villainous, violent fanatic. Other individuals and groups are also depicted in ways that reinforce stereotypes that are both inaccurate and harmful.

“As to the Mountain Meadows Massacre, which the series inaccurately portrays as reflective of a whole faith group, the church has long acknowledged and condemned this horrific tragedy. It has also taken significant steps to uncover and share the full truth of what happened and promote healing.

“The problem with such deceptive, graphic and sensationalized storytelling is that it not only obscures reality and hinders genuine understanding, but can foster animosity, hate and even violence. This is particularly troubling today when peacemakers are needed more than ever.”

I could not agree more.

Still, we at *True West* want to give the true backstory of the history, events and characters the show is based on.

My favorite aunt was a Mormon and we have staff who are LDS (see photo of Blair) and while this discussion may pain them, I do believe that true understanding can lead



Photo by James Cowlin

to healing. In fact, it's the only way we can heal.

Maybe understanding what actually happened in that remote area of Utah in 1857 will help with that healing. Let's hope so. We could all use some healing grace.



BBB's Mormon kin, Jean Linn

## Lee's Ferry 88 Years After Buffalo Bill

As a cartoonist for *New Times Weekly*, I was assigned to cover The 1982 Recession Artists River Trip put on by two Phoenix College art professors, Merrill and Jeanne Mahaffey. The ten-day trip down the Colorado River and into Grand Canyon National Park was a crazy adventure and, this is a photo of the load in at Lee's Ferry. Yes, we are on the same shore Buffalo Bill's crew were approaching (see Opening Shot). Yes, I am somewhere in this photo loading my gear and no doubt intersecting with the ghost of John D. Lee.



Blair Dallas Richmond in Utah, 2005



For a behind-the-scenes look at running this magazine, check out BBB's daily blog at [TWMag.com](http://TWMag.com)

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*Sheridan*



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# Old Vaquero Sayings

*"The first to apologize is the bravest. The first to forgive is the strongest. The first to forget is the happiest."*



## QUOTES

"Men fight for liberty and win it with hard knocks. Their children, brought up easy, let it slip away again, poor fools. And their grand-children are once more slaves."

—D.H. Lawrence

**"Everything is funny eventually."**

—David Sedaris

**"The problem with government of the people, by the people, and for the people, is the people."**

—Harry Caesar Nipple

"No persons are more frequently wrong, than those who will not admit they are wrong."

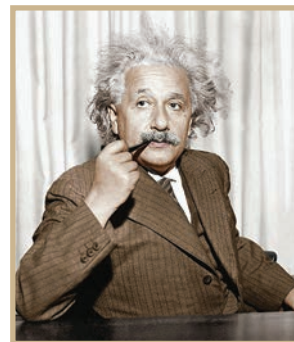
—François de la Rochefoucauld

**"Irony is when someone writes 'your an idiot.'"**

—Squibe Nish

"The difference between stupidity and genius is that genius has its limits."

—Albert Einstein



Courtesy True West Archives



photo courtesy of Scott O'Connor

**"It's very hard to know where you're going if you don't know where you've been."**

—Sandra Day O'Connor

**"There is just as much money to be made out of the wreckage of a civilization as from the upbuilding of one."**

—Rhett Butler

"Most of my wives think I am Mormon."

—Old Horndog Liar

OUR READERS REMIND US OF THE VARIABLES AND VAGARIES OF HISTORIC TRUTHS, "WELL-ESTABLISHED" FACTS, HEADLINES AND HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS.

## AMERICAN PRIMEVAL—PAINFULLY REALISTIC

*American Primeval* does a painfully realistic job of portraying some aspects of life in the real West, but it Hollywoodizes too much for the sake of audience, especially with the characters.

From a historical perspective, the main sin is portraying the Mountain Meadows Massacre as being anywhere near Fort Bridger. They probably did a good job of portraying Fort Bridger, and the tensions of the time between the U.S. and the LDS is a worthy lesson in U.S. history. The beauty and the roughness of the raw landscape is overwhelming. The Native American depictions are great. But that opening train station at the end of the tracks is so far off reality it can't possibly be confused with St. Joseph, Missouri, which sets off doubts. And she's still running around weeks later in the snow in the same hoop skirt?

I guess our appreciation that the popularity of this show is garnering more public awareness and appreciation of life in the pioneer West will just have to outweigh any criticisms of historical detail. Perhaps it will generate questions, which will give you and other historians opportunities to respond.

—John Krizek  
Prescott, Arizona

## AN UNINFORMED PERSPECTIVE

As a proud member of the Writers Guild of America, I participated in and helped to organize strikes against productions filming in the Santa Fe, New Mexico, area in the summer and fall of 2023. Despite what emerged as its rather uninformed perspective on Indigenous history, *American Primeval* took advantage of our state's generous production rebate to shoot on reservation land, off-limits to strikers.

Occasionally, however, the producers would slip their leash and venture onto public lands. Informed of a planned shoot late in production on the storied Bonanza Creek Ranch south of Santa Fe, I was able to summon a small posse of New Mexico-based guild members who successfully blocked the gates and prohibited filming—not only for that day, but for the remainder of production, which shut down pending resolution of the labor dispute.

Word later filtered back to me that the company utilized the shutdown to fine-tune the scripts when production inevitably resumed. Sad to say, I saw no evidence of that in the finished series. As someone who's spent his career in the realm of dramatic history (*Into the West*, *John Adams*, *Franklin*), I was appalled by the lack of even glancing fidelity to the actual occurrences. At least the slights were equal opportunity: Mormons, settlers, Natives and women alike are all maligned and misrepresented.

Should I, as a what's now known as "content creator," begrudge a show—a period piece, and a "Western," no less—that's garnered over 27 million viewers? My answer is: Hell, yes. The failure of *American Primeval* is that, while its creators continue (on Joe Rogan podcasts

and elsewhere) to proclaim their shocking uncovering of the West's violent history, the show itself does nothing but recycle tropes familiar to anyone who saw AMC's *Hell on Wheels* series.

I'm told the next installment in the anthology will center on Custer and the Greasy Grass. Can't wait!

—Kirk Ellis  
New Mexico

## THE BIGGEST KNIFE IN TEXAS

The March/April issue of *True West* could be called "the Texas issue," as it covers the prelude to the Alamo and the incredible saga of Charlie Goodnight. These huge, Texas-size stories feature such legendary characters as William Travis, Stephen Austin, Sam Houston, Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie. The latter is brandishing a formidable Bowie knife in a dramatic accompanying Bob Boze Bell illustration.

Jim Bowie had the biggest knife in Texas, just as Charlie Goodnight had the biggest ranch in the state. This larger-than-life legend did it all. During his long life, Goodnight was a Texas Ranger, scout, Indian fighter, farmer, rancher and inventor of the chuck wagon. About all that's missing is oil man. It's no wonder that Charlie Goodnight was the inspiration for Woodrow McCall in Larry McMurty's *Lonesome Dove*. Like Gus, Charlie never needed a compass because he was never lost.

—Paul Hoylen  
Deming, New Mexico



Kim Coates as Brigham Young  
in *American Primeval*.

Courtesy Netflix



BY STEVE FRIESEN

# Western Art Can be Affordable

*Collectors found reasonably priced gems at the Jackson Hole Auction.*

**T**he prices for Western art have been rising steadily during the 21st century. The prices for paintings by artists like Frederic Remington and Charles Russell have even reached record heights. In 2024, paintings by other “old masters” like William R. Leigh, Olaf Wieghorst and Birger Sandzen sold in the tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars at auctions covered by this column. The same could be said for some of the particularly popular contemporary artists, like Mark Maggione, Logan Maxwell Hagege and Ed Mell. For many, perhaps most, collectors of the West, those prices are simply unreachable. But the careful collector can still find work by great Western artists at affordable prices for his or her parlor walls.

That was demonstrated at the annual winter event of the Jackson Hole Art Auction on February 14, 2025. While the wildlife paintings by Carl Rungius can be quite pricey, three framed wildlife etchings by him sold at prices ranging from \$2,500 to \$3,750. A lovely framed ink and watercolor image of an Indian boy by William R. Leigh sold for \$3,250, while a framed chromolithograph signed by Frederic Remington brought \$2,000. Two framed watercolors of the Colorado Rockies, created by early Colorado artist Charles Partridge Adams, brought in \$950 and \$1,300. And an oil painting of a trail in Montana by Colorado artist Robert Lindneux, known for portraits of his friend Buffalo Bill, sold for \$450.

Most of the over four hundred works of art sold at the Jackson Hole auction were by contemporary Western artists. They offered a great diversity of subjects

and mediums at very good prices. Among these were a framed mixed-media portrait on paper by Donna Howell-Sickles which went for \$2,250, a Southwestern still life oil painting by Jerry Venditti for \$1,100, and a framed watercolor of a Yellowstone landscape by William Matthews at \$1,300. Among the various sculptures available was the representation of an American buffalo by Sandy Scott, which went for \$2,750.

The Jackson Hole Art Auction, presenting Western portraiture, still life and landscape as well as the various media produced by artists in this region, provided an opportunity for collectors who don't have hundreds of thousands of dollars to spend on art. Whether they were from those artists who are gone but not forgotten or artists who are still actively producing, these artworks will grace the homes of some lucky collectors of the true West.

All Images Courtesy Jackson Hole Art Auction

Steve Friesen comes to “Collecting the West” with over 40 years of experience in collecting for museums, including evaluating and acquiring artifacts from the American West.

Carl Rungius' etching and drypoint on paper titled *Above Timberline*, sold for \$3,750. Rungius was an avid outdoorsman and hunter, spending more time than most other artists observing wildlife and then placing them in their natural environment in his art.



William Robinson Leigh was an illustrator for many popular magazines during the early 20th century. He was fascinated by the American Southwest and did a number of paintings and illustrations of the people and places from the region. His sketch of an Indian boy captured \$3,250 at the Jackson Hole Art Auction.





Sandy Scott lives in Wyoming and concentrates on sculptures of animals, mostly those that populate the American West. Her sculpture *American Bison*, one of 75 cast in 2004, sold for \$2,750. Like the buffalo themselves, it projects a rugged appearance.

Titled *The Trapper*, this chromolithograph was made from a drawing by Frederic Remington. He then signed it after it was reproduced with the lithographic process. *The Trapper* sold for \$2,000



## UPCOMING AUCTIONS

**May 2-4, 2025**

Rock Island Auctions May Premier Auction,  
(Rock Island, IL)  
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**June 20-21, 2025**

Prix de West Art Invitational Art Exhibition  
and Sale (Oklahoma City, OK)  
[pdw.nationalcowboymuseum.org](http://pdw.nationalcowboymuseum.org) • 405-478-2250

**June 21-22, 2025**

Old West Show and Auction (Santa Fe, NM)  
[oldwestevents.com](http://oldwestevents.com) • 877-968-8880

**July 25, 2025**

Coeur d'Alene Art Auction (Reno, NV)  
[cdaartauction.com](http://cdaartauction.com) • 208-772-9009



Cowgirls celebrating and enjoying life are the subject of Donna Howell-Sickles' art. She clearly enjoys life in the West herself and has been inducted into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame in Fort Worth. Her mixed-media piece, *It's the Little Things That Make You Laugh*, brought a top bid of \$2,250.



Denver artist Robert Lindneux produced many drawings and paintings, using a style that is almost naïve in its appearance. His most famous paintings were of his friend Buffalo Bill. His autobiographical painting, *Returning from One of My Last Trips in Montana*, sold for \$450.



Charles Partridge Adams moved to Colorado in 1876 and, inspired by the landscape, began painting. Largely self-taught, Adams focuses on the Colorado Rockies. His *South Park Co. from the Midland Railway* sold for 950.



William Matthews is a contemporary Denver artist who focuses his work on the places, people and landscapes of the American West. His watercolor *Fountain Flats*, which sold for \$1,300, depicts the familiar valley in Yellowstone National Park, with its meadows, meandering waters and thermal mists in the distance.

BY PHIL SPANGENBERGER

# Remington's 1875— a Copycat Peacemaker?

*This 1873 Colt lookalike was a solid, hard-hitting revolver, but it never could rival the famed six-gun it emulated.*



Among the trusted sidearms of the Old West, the 1875 Remington—seen here in the hand of the cowboy at right—earned a place on the hip of legendary figures including Frank James, brother of outlaw Jesse James, who favored its solid build and reliability after leaving the outlaw trail behind.

Nicholas Narog Collection

**W**ith the increasing number of emigrants heading to the frontier in the decade after the Civil War, a great demand for sturdy, reliable firearms resulted in a slew of new model firearms—especially handguns—being introduced. After Colt's success in selling its 1873 Single Action Army revolver, popularly known as the "Peacemaker," to the U.S. government, it quickly became evident to the Hartford firm's competitors that they needed to bring out a metallic cartridge "Army" or "holster" single-action revolver of their own. Most of Colt's rival companies manufactured six shooters that differed significantly from their offering. However, one manufacturer boldly entered the field with a revolver that bore much more than a slight resemblance to the popular Peacemaker Colt.



Distinct from its Colt counterpart, the 1875 Remington stands out with its webbed under-barrel assembly, longer frame-to-grip distance and right-side ejector system. Note the ejector housing directly beneath the barrel and the extended cylinder base pin screw positioned in the fore section of the housing—hallmarks of Remington's unique design.

1875 Remington, Courtesy Rock Island Auction Co.

# TEXAS GUN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION



## *Fine & Historic Arms Annual*

SPONSORED BY THE TEXAS GUN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION & ROCK ISLAND AUCTION COMPANY  
(A 2<sup>nd</sup> EDITION OF THE ANTIQUE ARMS ANNUAL OF 1971)



THE TEXAS GUN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION



ROCK ISLAND AUCTION COMPANY



Known as "The Annual" to TGCA members and other collectors, the Antique Arms Annual made our association known throughout fire-arms collector's circles all across the country and in many foreign countries.

In 2021, 50 years after the original publication, members of the TGCA and the Rock Island Auction Company began the task of creating a second edition. We knew there were many high quality, collectible firearms that were not antique but should be include in the new book. We acknowledged the original book really wasn't an annual volume but the name "Annual" had an established value that made it worth repeating. We quickly agreed the new book title should be The Fine & Historic Arms Annual, (A Second Edition to the Antique Arms Annual of 1971).

**IN 1971**, *The Texas Gun Collectors Association* published the first edition of the *Antique Arms Annual*, showcasing some of the finest firearms in the world. It quickly became an indispensable reference book in the libraries of arms collectors everywhere, with beautiful color photographs and informative technical information.

In October of 2024, the *Fine & Historic Arms Annual* was born. It includes 360 pages of the finest collectible weapons on the planet. It is now available in a soft cover version and a hard bound, deluxe version. All members of the TGCA receive a complimentary, soft cover copy of the new Annual. Join the Texas Gun Collectors Association today and get your complimentary copy.

## 2025 FALL SHOW, DISPLAY AWARDS & AUCTION

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- ✦ Our two annual shows where you will find the guns and other tools of the cowboy's trade, the weapons and memorabilia of the American Civil War, WW1, WW2 and other major events in American, and even world, history.

- ✦ You will find antique firearms and related items as well as curio & relic category items such as early Colt or Smith & Wesson double action revolvers and early semi-autos.
- ✦ You won't find any modern guns or modern ammo at our shows.
- ✦ For more information please visit our website: [TGCA.org](http://TGCA.org).
- ✦ Join the TGCA! [TGCA.org/TGCA\\_form.php](http://TGCA.org/TGCA_form.php)



Favored by frontier lawmen like Bill Tilghman and Bass Reeves, the Remington 1875 was a rugged sidearm issued to Indian Police and peace officers across the West, prized for its solid frame and reliable performance.

Lawman With 1875 Remington, Courtesy Dr. Edward Feldman Collection

It was 150 years ago that E. Remington & Sons, of Ilion, New York, introduced its “New Model 1875” or “No. 3 Revolver”—almost an exact Peacemaker clone. In the fall of that year, with the hopes of competing with, or at least taking advantage of the ’73 Colt’s instant popularity, its 1875 model combined the lines of its sturdy cap-and-ball New Model Army and Navy

revolvers with those of the 1873 Colt. The final result was a handsome marriage of the two designs. Actually, the biggest visibly significant differences between the two were the Remington’s webbed under-barrel assembly and a longer distance from the back of the frame and hammer area to the grip. Other variations include Remington’s ejector housing underneath the barrel, rather than at an angle off the barrel’s lower right side as on the Colt, and the ’75 Remington’s ejector head and rod operated from the right side of the barrel, rather than from the left as with the Colt. Finally, Remington’s longer cylinder base pin retaining screw is located in the fore-section of the ejector housing as opposed to the Colt’s shorter version, housed in the front of the frame itself.



Phil Spangenberg, who died last year, wrote for *Guns & Ammo*, appeared on the History Channel and other documentary networks, produce Wild West shows, was a Hollywood gun coach and character actor. He was *True West*’s “True Westerner of 2022.” He will be missed.

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The Remington New Model 1875 blended elements of the company's earlier cap-and-ball New Army and Navy revolvers with the Colt 1873 design, creating a handsome competitor to the popular Colt Peacemaker.

1875 Remington, Courtesy Paul Goodwin

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# The War Before the War

THEY BROUGHT SIN WITH THEM.

**AS** the sun rose across the United States on September 12, 1857, the winds of hate and chaos were swirling from coast to coast. In southwestern Utah, buzzards would have glided on the updrafts above the bloated, torn and twisted bodies of 120 or so Americans, who the day before were dreaming of a new life in California. What was left of their hopes and dreams—once packed into their wagons that had traveled for months from Arkansas—was left sprawled and scattered across the grassy plains of a haunted place that would become known as Mountain Meadows. The lonely, sorrowful fate of the Southern emigrants looking for their own New Zion was violence without mercy at the hands of Brigham Young's Mormon zealots.

The massacre symbolized a nation's moral fibers unraveling in an uncontrolled downward spiral toward Civil War. But the Meadow Mountain Massacre wasn't the first 19th-century massacre in the Far West brought on by religious zealotry. Utah was not even the first Western American territory settled by missionaries; Oregon was. With the waning of the fur trade in the 1830s, the Second Great Awakening of Christian faith in New England, and a need for new lands to farm, Christian churches began forming and funding missionary societies to go to Oregon. And with them they brought sin—and settlements. For many decades the fur trappers of France, England and America came and went across the West. The mountain men and the trading posts of empire made alliances with the Western tribes. They trapped and traded, but they did not stay in great numbers. They did not farm or fence beyond their outposts and they did care about sin. But the missionaries did. They also brought disease and fear along with the promise of salvation. Those first missionaries were also the first to take a cart of any kind across what would become the Oregon Trail. They settled across the Oregon Territory. The Whitmans and Spaldings built their missions respectively among the Cayuse and Nez Perce people, in what is now eastern Washington. Tensions grew between the tribes and missionaries as more settlers followed the Oregon Trail to a new "land of milk and honey" in the lush river valleys of Oregon. The settlers brought prejudice and

fences—and, of course, they also brought disease and sin. The Whitmans and Spaldings, the earliest of the Eastern missionaries, found themselves at odds with their Cayuse and Nez Perce converts. What they preached seemed counter to their actions—or at least the actions of the hundreds of new settlers filling their Native lands. And Catholic missionaries began to compete with the Protestants for the souls of the Native people.

On November 29, 1847, the Whitman Mission was attacked. The Cayuse tribal leaders, upset over many issues of mistrust with the Whitmans, but especially with a measles epidemic that killed many of their tribe—especially children—killed Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and nine others, and kidnapped 50 others. The Protestant Mission movement in Oregon was effectively over, as the settlers went to war against the Cayuse tribe, and Oregon became a territory in 1848. Some of the perpetrators of the attack were hanged in 1850. Nearly a decade later, abolitionists and secessionists were in unceasing battle for the hearts and minds of citizens, north and south, east and west. From Florida to the Puget Sound, Americans were at war with neighbors and Native tribes. They fought over race, religion, resources and land. In Kansas and Missouri, Americans were killing each other over slavery and states' rights. That summer, the 1857 Economic Panic created desperation for tens of thousands across the country, especially in the West. In the East, the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision ruled that Black Americans were not citizens and nullified the limits of slavery under the Missouri Compromise. President Buchanan was failing on every front.

In July 1857, the president ordered 2,500 troops to Utah to confront the rebellious Brigham Young and his self-proclaimed colony of New Zion. Buchanan's bravado against the zealous Latter-day Saints helped spark the misguided Massacre at Mountain Meadows that had been building for well over two decades—Americans killing Americans without regard for honor or sin. And four years later, America was aflame with the Civil War—the most primeval of violence ever to soak our lands with sin and the blood of our countrymen.



*“He who is without sin  
can cast the first stone..”*

John 8:7

**THE WHITMAN MASSACRE**

Illustration by Bob Boze Bell



BY PAUL ANDREW HUTTON

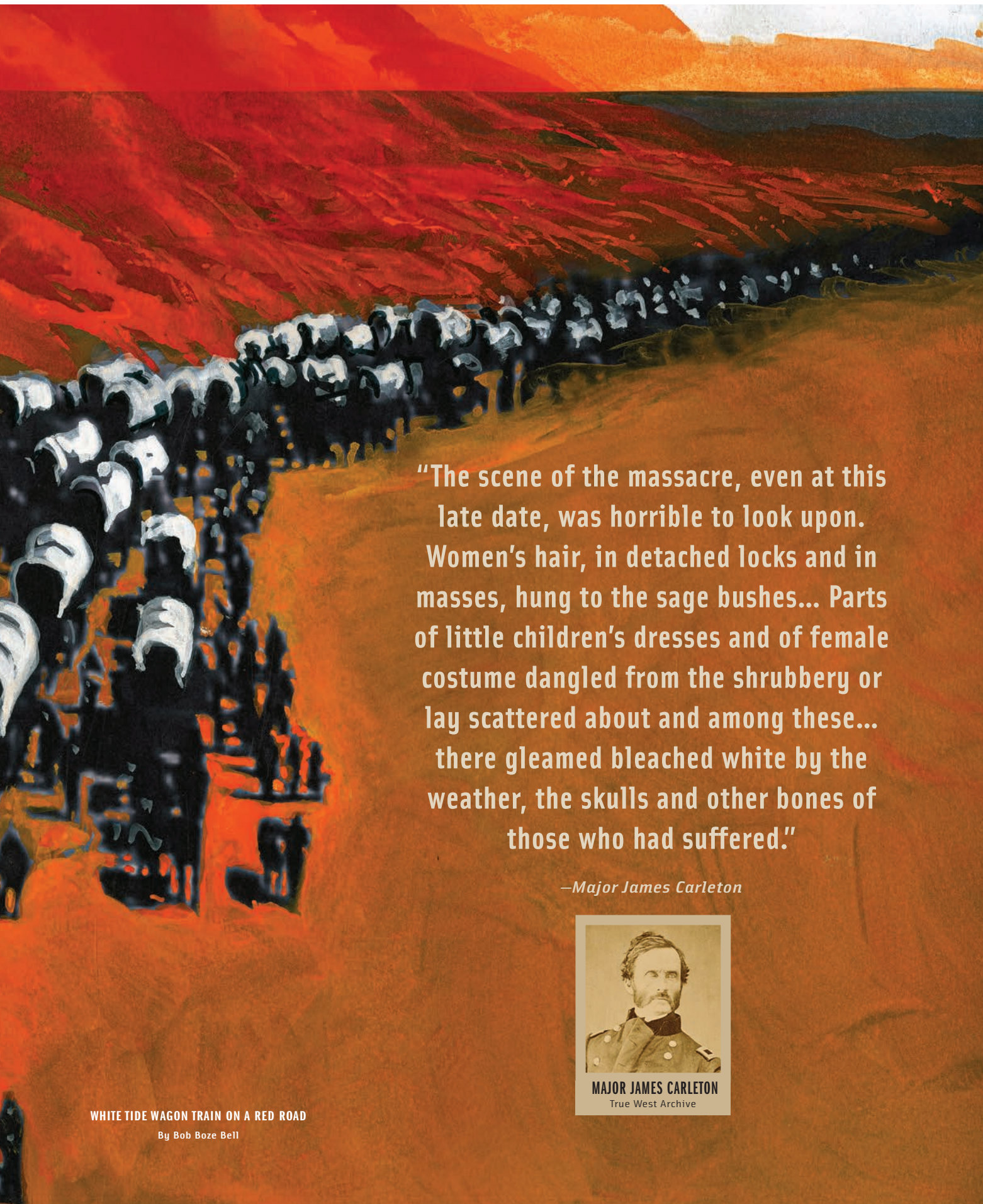
# The Ghosts of Mountain Meadows

**I**n September 1857, the members of the Fancher Wagon Train, enroute from Arkansas to southern California via the Old Spanish Trail, encamped in an idyllic oasis high in the mountains of southwestern Utah Territory, on the very cusp of the Great Basin. It was a well-off party of over 120 souls, rumored to be carrying a large sum of gold coins, and they needed to rest their horses before the terrible desert crossing to the Meadows (Las Vegas) that lay before them.

At dawn on Monday, September 7, as the emigrants awakened to boil coffee and cook breakfast, they were suddenly attacked by unknown assailants from the surrounding hills and ravines. The determined pioneers corralled their wagons and drove back the assailants. Without water and with many dead and wounded to contend with, the Fancher party boldly defended their position from attack after attack, inflicting heavy casualties on their supposed Indian foes. They sent messengers out under cover of darkness to the Mormon settlements to the north and to the trail toward California to the south. They were all killed.

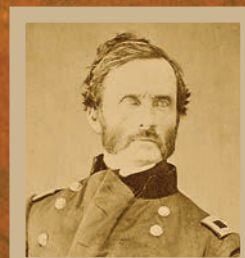
Finally, on September 11, 1857, Captain John D. Lee of the local Mormon militia approached the desperate defenders under a white flag. He promised to protect them from the Paiutes if they will surrender their arms and accompany his militiamen to nearby Cedar City. The emigrants were divided, but with no water, little remaining ammunition, many dead and several wounded companions, and over 80 women and children to care for, they accepted Lee's promise of protection. Divided into three groups by Lee—with the wounded and youngest children in wagons—the women emigrants were marched a few hundred yards before a command was given, a single gunshot fired, and a ghastly slaughter ensued. All—save 17 children (under the age of six)—were murdered by the Mormons.





"The scene of the massacre, even at this late date, was horrible to look upon. Women's hair, in detached locks and in masses, hung to the sage bushes... Parts of little children's dresses and of female costume dangled from the shrubbery or lay scattered about and among these... there gleamed bleached white by the weather, the skulls and other bones of those who had suffered."

—Major James Carleton



**MAJOR JAMES CARLETON**  
True West Archive

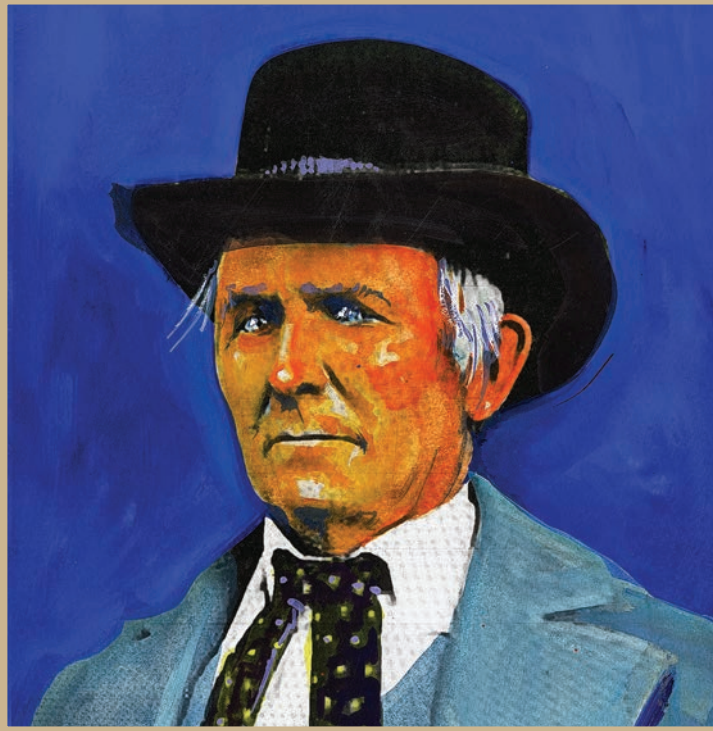
**WHITE TIDE WAGON TRAIN ON A RED ROAD**

By Bob Boze Bell

The loot and cattle from the train were divided amongst the murderers and their Paiute allies, and the young survivors were adopted into local Mormon homes. It is the only large wagon train ever wiped out in all of Western history and the greatest mass murder of the 19th century, yet it remains little remembered today.

Only one man—John D. Lee—was ever punished for the crime. An elaborate cover-up protected the murderers and those who gave the orders for 140 years. Then, in August 1999, a backhoe operator employed by Mormon Church officials to repair a deteriorating marker at the site unearthed a mass grave of 28 victims. The bones were taken to the University of Utah where forensic anthropologist Shannon Novak and her team made some surprising discoveries before the governor of Utah (a descendant of the murderers) ordered the bones immediately reburied. But the ghosts of Mountain Meadows had already spoken—casting a new light on a forgotten atrocity. Now, through Novak's studies, as well as books by Will Bagley (*Blood of the Prophets*, 2002), Sally Denton (*American Massacre*, 2003), and Jon Krakauer (*Under the Banner of Heaven*, 2003), a new story had emerged—one that made it clear that White men, not Indians, were the killers at Mountain Meadows, and that the order for the great September 11 mass murder may have come from the highest of religious authorities.

Brigham Young, a charismatic and powerfully built New York carpenter, emerged as the leader of



JOHN D. LEE

All illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

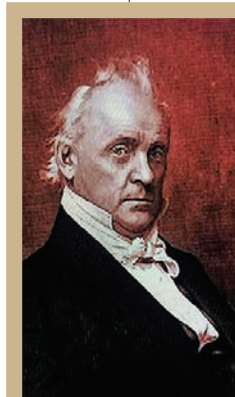
the Mormons after a bitter power struggle after the murder of church founder Joseph Smith. This American Moses led his people westward to the Salt Lake Valley of Utah—then Mexican territory—in 1847. The people, more zealous than ever after Smith's martyrdom, followed Young to the new Zion in one of the most remarkable and heroic human migrations in history. In the vast wasteland of the Great Basin, Young attempted to form his perfect theocracy apart from the evil and corrupt U.S. government to the east. He sent settlements south to control the trails and streams of southwestern Utah, and to convert the Lamanites (as the Mormons called the Indians—who they considered the Lost Tribe of Israel).

But the United States soon caught up with Brigham Young. The American victory over Mexico in 1848 added Utah to the new continental nation, and the newly elected President Zachary Taylor was

stridently anti-Mormon. His sudden death in 1850 put the weak Millard Fillmore in office, and he appointed Young territorial governor, thus legitimizing the theocracy already in place. President Franklin Pierce continued Fillmore's policy so that Young's power in Utah was totally unchallenged.

The California gold rush allowed the Mormon settlements to prosper as they

furnished supplies to the emigrants passing through, but it also led them into conflict with the "Gentiles." In 1853, Captain John Gunnison and his seven-man surveying party were killed in southeastern Utah, supposedly by Indians, but it was widely rumored that the murderers were Mormons disguised in warpaint and feathers. President James Buchanan, anxious to divert attention from the heated sectional



JAMES BUCHANAN

rivalry over slavery and outraged by the flight of all federal officials from Utah in 1856, ordered General Albert Sidney Johnston (soon-to-be-famous Confederate officer) to Utah with 2,500 troops to suppress the Mormon rebellion and reestablish federal authority. At the same time, Brigham Young was exhorting his people to a grand "reformation" of their faith. Religious fervor was never higher as Young's so-called "Avenging Angels" moved through the settlements, enforcing conformity. Into this simmering cauldron came the Fancher wagon train, some 40 wagons



**BRIGHAM YOUNG**

by Bob Boze Bell

strong, in August, 1857. They encamped near Salt Lake City hoping to resupply, but nobody would sell them anything. A Mormon emissary approached Captain Alexander Fancher and urged him to turn south where they would find good grazing for their stock. On August 5th, the wagon train headed south out of the Salt Lake Valley.

Brigham Young felt assailed by enemies from every quarter in the dark winter of 1856-1857.

Apostates within his own church—which he ruled with absolute, unquestioned power as “Prophet, Priest and Revelator,” answerable

only to God—were challenging his authority, recalcitrant federal officials had fled the territory claiming their

Salt Lake City Wagon Train: local merchants were told not to sell anything to the Arkansas wagon train.

True West Archives

lives to be in danger, and now a 2,500-man federal army was marching westward to enforce federal rule over the Utah theocracy. Young struck against enemies both internal and external. Whipping his followers into a religious frenzy with a “reformation,” with backsliders and apostates to be eliminated by his special army known as the Danites, or “Avenging Angels.” While Danites burned down Fort Bridger and the Wyoming grasslands to slow the army, others in the south—most notably John D. Lee and Jacob Hamblin—were ordered to ensure that the local Indians would fight alongside their Mormon friends against the American enemy.

Into this climate of hate and paranoia blundered the Fancher wagon train. Many considered this the wealthiest party to ever cross the plains, for the Fanchers and Bakers had converted everything into gold and cattle—with \$100,000 hidden in their wagons and a large number of cattle and horses to stock new herds in California. “A prize to tempt unscrupulous men,” noted one Arkansan. The party of 40 wagons was mostly made up of the families of Alexander Fancher and John Baker from Arkansas. They found the locals hostile and suspicious. Salt Lake City had become the resupply center for wagon trains on both the Oregon and California Trails and indeed the city’s prosperity was built around this commerce, but now no one would sell anything to the Fancher party. Mormon hostility to outsiders was at a fever-pitch, but further compounded for the Fancher train by the arrival a month before news of the shocking murder of Parley Pratt—one of Joseph Smith’s original 12 apostles—in Arkansas (although shot by a jealous husband whose wife he had seduced and married, Pratt was promptly anointed by Young as a new martyr to the Mormon faith). A leading Mormon, Charles Rich, approached Fancher and ordered the train to leave the next day. He urged them to depart from their planned route westward across to the Sierra and instead take the southern route where they would find better grass. Twenty years later Young would claim that Rich had said just the opposite—it is a critical point, for some believe that the order to unleash Indians on the Fancher train had already gone south. Certainly Apostle George A. Smith, who had originally organized the southern Utah militia left Salt Lake City on the day the Fancher train arrived with orders from Young for all settlements to hoard their provisions and crops, not trade with any gentiles, collect their guns and ammunition, and prepare for war. Smith and John D. Lee met with Paiute leaders some 35 miles west of Mountain Meadows

to make certain that they would join with the Saints against the Americans. Smith left satisfied with the loyalty of the Indians and the burning fervor of the southern Mormons.

The Fancher train departed Salt Lake City on August 5 (with four wagons splitting off and heading west). At Lemhi, Provo, Nephi, Fillmore, and every other town they were denied supplies. Finally, at Corn Creek, the Pahvant Indians sold them 30 bushels of corn. Mormons would later accuse the emigrants of poisoning the Indians with tainted cattle, but the story has no foundation.

On September 1, Paiute chiefs who had come with Apostle Smith to meet with Brigham Young departed Salt Lake City for the south. They seemed in a hurry.

Smith’s party had camped but a few yards from the Fancher train at Corn Creek. Fancher met with Jacob Hamblin, inquiring why the Indians were traveling with his party. By now the Fanchers had been joined by several apostate Mormons seeking passage to safety in California and they were quite wary. The Fancher train picked up its pace, moving rapidly southward, although they now faced the difficult climb to the 6,000-foot mountain passes that would deliver them beyond the Mormon settlements and into the Mojave Desert.

At Parowan they again tried to purchase supplies without success. Little did they know that within the walls of the nearby earthen fort William Dane was drilling the local militia in preparation for battle. Pushing on to Cedar City, they found a Mormon who agreed to grind their Indian corn. He was ordered to stop by the local Mormon bishop, and when he refused, he was excommunicated. The wagon train hurried on, crossing the rim of the Great Basin on Friday, September 4, and reaching the much-anticipated oasis of Mountain Meadows the next day. Captain Fancher, as if overwhelmed with the joy of

reaching the supposed sanctuary of the meadows, allowed the wagons to make camp far apart, posted no guards, and settled in for a much-needed rest under a full moon.

Fancher planned to rest and refit at the meadows before pushing over the final mountain pass to the great desert beyond. His people enjoyed a restful sabbath, praying together in a large tent they transported solely for that purpose. The cattle and horses grazed while the people prayed and sang. In the surrounding hills, John D. Lee and members of the Mormon militia carefully painted themselves to look like their 100 Indian allies.

At dawn on Monday, September 7, as the emigrants cooked breakfast, the Mormons and Indians attacked. At least seven men fell in the initial volley with another 20 wounded—including Captain Fancher. Strung out and completely taken by surprise, the pioneers nevertheless rallied under the command of Fancher’s son and drove the enemy back. They quickly corralled their wagons and dug rifle pits. Assuming that they had been attacked by Indians, they prepared to defend themselves until rescue came from the nearby Mormon settlements. Atop a hill above the meadows, John D. Lee counted his casualties—which included two of the Indian chiefs, and contemplated his next move.

The Mormons contented themselves with long-range sniping and with making off with the cattle herd on Tuesday. On Wednesday, the emigrants—cut off from water and running low on ammunition—sent two messengers north to Cedar City for help. They escaped only to be attacked by Mormons near Richards Spring. One was killed but the second man, although wounded, made it back. Now the emigrants had a new and even more terrible understanding of their predicament.

John D. Lee’s Indian allies began melting away. Siege warfare was not their style. Soon with but 40 warriors left, he called for reinforcements. At least 100 members of the Mormon militia joined him, while others



waited in reserve at Jacob Hamblin's nearby ranch.

Late Thursday evening, three of the healthiest and boldest of the defenders crept through the enemy lines with the forlorn hope of reaching California-bound trains to the southwest and seeking help. Lee's Paiutes were soon hot on their trail. Two men were killed quickly, but the third made it to the Mojave before the Paiutes caught him.

On Friday, September 11, John D. Lee came into the emigrant stronghold under a white flag. He told them that he has come with a rescue column of Mormon militia and that the Indians have agreed to let them take the Whites away if they will give up their arms. Captain Fancher, desperately wounded and near death, gasped out a last order not to surrender. The desperate pioneers, grasping at whatever straw

was available, simply cannot imagine that what they believed to be fellow Christians would not protect them. They agreed to Lee's proposition.

All the children under the age of eight—the Mormon doctrine age of so-called "innocence"—were placed in a wagon. The wounded men were placed in a second wagon and were directed north by Lee. The women and children follow. The final group of men are each escorted by an armed Mormon militiaman. They walk a few hundred yards toward a nearby hill rising out of the meadow.

"Halt—do your duty!" came the command, accompanied by a single pistol shot. Each militiaman turned and shot his prisoner. Nephi Johnson recalled that it all took less than five minutes.

Mormons, some of them disguised as Indians, with their few remaining

Map showing the route taken by the Fancher wagon train.

By Tom Jonas

Paiute accomplices, descended on the women and children and butchered them.

Lee personally directed the murders of the wounded men, women and children in the wagons.

Lee expended considerable energy making sure that his Paiute allies did not make off with much treasure. His orders are clear that the wealth from the Fancher train is to enrich the Church. Later emigrants will notice the great improvement in clothing, furniture and armaments of the once-impooverished Mormon settlements around Cedar City. But the wealth is concentrated in the hands of but a few ecclesiastical leaders. Resentment over this, and horror over what has

happened in the Meadows, led many to soon depart the settlements for California.

Lee wrote a report of the horrible massacre at Mountain Meadows and sent it north to Brigham Young. He blamed everything on the Indians, but was so careless that he misdated the massacre by a week. He had only recently received a written order from the Prophet not to molest any wagon trains. Young had negotiated a deal with the U.S. Army to avoid bloodshed and now wanted no trouble.

But why does he need an order not to attack them unless there was an original order to attack?

After stripping all the bodies of clothing and valuables and carefully collecting the goods from the wagons, the Mormons gathered around their Bishop—Philip Klingensmith—to take a blood oath to blame the massacre on the Indians alone, to never speak a word of what had really happened—and to kill any man who did.

The 18 children from the train were taken to Hamblin's nearby ranch (where one died). Some of the little children are wounded. One of the Mormon murderers recalled how bothered he was that the children cried all night long. Among them was Christopher "Kit" Carson Fancher, age five, who had witnessed his father shot as he lay in his cot, and his mother hacked to death with an axe, while his six brothers and sisters were being slaughtered nearby. Two years later he recalled: "My father was killed by Indians. When they washed their faces they were white men."

The secret could not be kept for long. Major James Carleton proceeded from Fort Tejon, California, with a company of U.S. dragoons, under orders to bury the dead at Mountain Meadows, arriving on May 16, 1859. It had taken months for rumors of the crime to reach the outside world, and far longer for its



A PAIUTE FAMILY  
True West Archives

**MAJOR JAMES CARLETON'S REPORT NAILED THE REAL PERPETRATORS, BUT IT WENT UNHEEDED BECAUSE OF THE CIVIL WAR**

enormity to sink in. It was difficult for Americans to believe such a thing was possible. Much effort was expended in rescuing the children. By 1859, 17 were returned to relatives in Arkansas. Brigham Young billed the federal government for the two-year food

and lodging provided to the children. The government paid, the indecisive Buchanan administration having no stomach for conflict and facing a far greater challenge from the restless South over slavery.

While his government might lack conscience, Major Carleton did not. The scene at Mountain Meadows horrified him.

"The scene of the massacre, even at this late date, was horrible to look upon. Women's hair, in detached locks and in masses, hung to the sage bushes... Parts of little children's dresses and of female costume dangled from the shrubbery or lay scattered about and among these... there gleamed bleached white by the weather, the skulls and other bones of those who had suffered."

Nearly every skull Carleton retrieved in his careful examination of the field "had been shot through with rifle or revolver bullets." This was no pell-mell Indian massacre, it was a carefully planned mass murder, the major concluded.

Carleton had his troopers gather all the bones. He interred them and raised a 12-foot rock cairn above the mass grave upon which was written: "Here 120 men, women, and children were massacred in cold blood early in September,

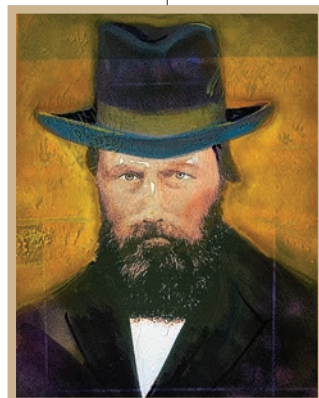
1857. They were from Arkansas." A rough-hewn cross was placed over the grave on which was carved "Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord."

But there was to be no vengeance, or justice. As the nation plunged into the Civil War, the Utah troubles were quickly forgotten. Brigham Young, delighted with the destruction of the Union, traveled to Mountain Meadows in May 1861. Seeing Major Carleton's cairn, Young responded to the inscription by declaring "Vengeance is mine and I have taken a little." He then gave a Danite signal

by raising his right arm toward the sky, and one of his aides threw a rope around Carleton's cross and pulled it down. Within minutes the cairn was dismantled. A year later, U.S. soldiers would rebuild the rock cairn, only to have it again dismantled by the Mormons.

Efforts to erase the past, however, proved ineffectual even for Brigham Young. Much to the prophet's chagrin the

Union triumphed in the Civil War, and the victorious Republicans had little use for Mormonism. Young, ever the survivor, now distanced himself from his adopted son John D. Lee. He



by Bob Bore Bell

PHILIP KLINGENSMITH

His confession, after being kicked in the head by a horse, started the unravelling of the coverup.

ordered the 58-year-old to depart his prosperous ranch near Cedar City and move south to the Arizona desert. In 1870, Lee—a devout Mormon for 32 years—was excommunicated. All but seven of his 19 wives deserted him as he moved to the confluence of the Colorado and Paria Rivers to operate a ferry. Today, the place still bears the name Lee's Ferry.

Lee's fate had already been sealed by the confession of Bishop Klingensmith on April 10, 1871, in the Nevada district court (where he had fled for safety). He revealed that it was the Mormons, not the Indians, who had killed the emigrants. The leader of the Mormon militia, reporting directly to Brigham Young, was John D. Lee. The official Church party line that the Indians did it crumbled, and the authorities in Salt Lake City now focused on a new villain—that unfortunate zealot John D. Lee.

Brigham Young died soon after in 1877, leaving behind 23 wives (out of 56), 57 children, and a deeply troubled legacy. The question of who ordered the murders at Mountain Meadows died with him. The question of how to deal with the historical legacy of the murders did not.

The Church believed that in sacrificing Lee they had solved their problem. Indeed, the massacre faded almost entirely from national memory. To dredge it up smacked too much of religious intolerance to 20th-century Americans. Utah finally abandoned polygamy and was admitted to statehood, as Mormonism moved from outside the American mainstream to embracing the most American of values. No one wanted to rock the boat.

In 1932, the Utah Pioneer Trails and Landmarks Association erected a neutrally worded monument at Mountain Meadows. Strangely, the state provided no road signs to the site and soon the dirt road to it became impassable.

The massacre haunted southern Utah. The ghosts could not rest. In 1919, young schoolteacher

Juanita Leavitt—a descendant of a participant—was approached by old Nephi Johnson. He wanted to tell her a story and he wanted her to write it down before he died. But they never found the time. She heard that Johnson was dying and

## THE TRUE HERO OF MOUNTAIN MEADOWS



JUANITA LEAVITT BROOKS  
True West Archives

rushed to his home. She found him delirious. "Blood! Blood! Blood!" he cried, over and over. The teacher asked a relative what was the matter for he acted as if he were haunted. "Maybe he is," came the reply, "for he was at Mountain Meadows." Nephi Johnson died at age 86 on June 6, 1919. He never fully told his story. But the schoolteacher who he confided in went on to write a book that challenged the authority of the church she loved and brought a forgotten tragedy back into the public conscience. Juanita Leavitt Brooks spent nearly five decades researching the story of the Mountain Meadows massacre. She suffered the condemnation of her neighbors and of the Church authorities, but her 1950 book—*The Mountain Meadows Massacre*—restored that fatal moment in time to the historical record. Eastern publishing houses turned it down, but Stanford University Press finally published it. When a movie deal

seemed eminent, Church authorities applied pressure to kill the deal. But the book had legs, remaining in print to this day. Despite her hesitancy to blame Brigham Young, and her too ready acceptance of the lies of Indian complicity, Brooks' efforts to vindicate John D. Lee and expose the collective guilt for the tragedy became a classic. Interest in the tragedy was renewed, although many historians preferred to ignore such an unpleasant story. Among Mormon historians, the party line remained that "the Indians made us do it." In 1961, Lee was restored to the Mormon Church, Brooks had won her battle, but a greater one remained.

Everyone still puzzles over the simplest of questions—the one that defied an answer— Why? The doctrine of blood atonement? Religious fanaticism? The orders of Brigham Young? Simple greed? How could such supposedly decent, devout men commit such an unspeakable crime?

Standing on the hill above the green valley known as Mountain Meadows, one has a sense of loneliness and isolation. Looking down, you can see the sterile but elaborate 1999 LDS memorial already sliding into a rapidly eroding ravine. Bones occasionally appear in the ravine. Looking to the north, you can follow the path from the wagon siege site (where the monument is) to the low hill where the militiamen murdered their victims. The hush is chilling. The ghosts of Mountain Meadows remain—still seeking justice.



**Paul Andrew Hutton**, author of *The Apache Wars*, is Interim Curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum in the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, Wyoming, and Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of New Mexico. His new book, *The Undiscovered Country*, will be published by Dutton/Penguin Random House, on August 5.

BY JERRY ENZLER

# THE MOUNTAIN MAN AND THE MORMON MOSES

## PATHFINDER JIM BRIDGER TANGLES WITH PROPHET BRIGHAM YOUNG



Fort Bridger drawn by William Henry Jackson

**J**im Bridger was one of the most skilled mountain men in American history. In 1822, when he was 18, he joined Andrew Henry and William Ashley's Enterprising Young Men "to ascend the river Missouri to its source, there to be employed for one, two or three years." After 21 years, he decided it was time to build a more permanent home. In 1843 he and his partner, Louis Vasquez, built Fort Bridger on Blacks Fork of the Green River. It was an oasis, with mountain trout swimming in gurgling streams, "beautiful out of all reason, like a charming but improbable stage setting with the snow-topped Uinta Mountains to the south." Bridger could neither read nor write, but a scribe wrote this for him:

"I have established a small store with a Black Smith shop, and a supply of Iron in the road of the immigrants on Black's Fork, Green River, which promises fairly. They [the emigrants] in coming out, are generally well supplied with money, but by the time they get there, are in want of all kinds of supplies. Horses, Provisions, Smith work, &c. brings ready Cash from them and should I receive the goods hereby ordered [I] will do a considerable business in that way with them."

### BRIDGER AND YOUNG MEET

In 1847, Bridger was traveling with two of his men near the Little Sandy where it flowed into Green River, and he saw a large group of pioneers moving west. There were 143 of them, an advance party of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

(Mormons) led by Brigham Young. He was likened to an American Moses trying to find a place where his people wouldn't be persecuted. Violent Americans had run them out of Palmyra, New York; Kirtland, Ohio; Independence, Missouri; and Nauvoo, Illinois.

Jim Bridger and Brigham Young seemed to get along well, and they prepared to camp their men together that night. Young was interested in settling in the Great Basin in Mexico, away from the United States. Young hoped Bridger would guide them over the Wasatch Range, but Bridger said he couldn't because he was going to Fort Laramie, where "the Upper Gentry want to take advantage of me" about a delivery of beaver pelts.

Bridger described the land they would encounter, but Mormon Howard Egan did not believe what Bridger said. "From his appearance and conversation, I should not take him to be a man of truth.... It is my opinion that he spoke not knowing the place."

Mormon William Woodruff, a future president of the LDS church, had more belief in the mountain man, writing that he "found him to be a great traveller, possessing an extensive knowledge of nearly all of Oregon and California.... Bridger said it [the basin] was his Paradise, and that if these people settled in it he would settle with them."

The next morning, Bridger was impressed when the Mormons prepared breakfast, and he remarked, "There is more bread on the table than I have before seen for years.... We live entirely on meat. We dry our deer and buffalo to eat, and also cook fresh when we can obtain

it." The mountain man invited the Mormon party to stop at his fort. Although his blacksmith shop had recently burned down, Bridger said they could use the anvil to shoe their horses and repair wagons.

Young gave Bridger a pass to use a ferry that the Mormons built to cross the Little Sandy. The Mormons struggled through a difficult crossing over the Wasatch, and when they finally reached Salt Lake Valley, Young declared, "This is the place."

Young had every right to protect his people from persecution. He told them, "We do not intend to have any trade or commerce with the gentile world.... I am determined to cut every thread of this kind and live free and independent, untrammelled by any of these detestable customs and practices." The Mormons built their home there and began to prosper. But the very next year the Mexican-American War ended. Brigham Young's settlement and Bridger's fort became part of the United States. Young still remembered what he had said to his people when they set out toward the West: "We don't calculate to go under any government but the government of God. There are millions of the Laminates [Indians] who, when they understand the law of God and the designs of the gospel, are perfectly capable of using up [killing] these United States. They will walk through them and leave them waste [dead]."



Legendary Mountain Man Jim Bridger found his home, then lost it. He said he was Brigham Young's "friend," but Young said, "Bridger is death on us."

Tensions arose when Bridger learned that Young thought he was encouraging Indians to attack the Mormons. Bridger had someone write this letter addressed to "The President of the Salt Lake Valley" and dated July 16, 1848:

"I am truly sorry that you should believe any reports about me having said that I would bring any Indians or any number of Indians upon you or any of your Community. Such a thought never entered my head.... Believe Mr. President, I am desirous of maintaining an amicable friendship with the people in the valley and should you want a favour at my hands at any time I shall always think myself happy in doing it for you. From your Friend and well wisher James Bridger."

The July letter appears to have calmed Young and in December he wrote Bridger and Vasquez that he was open to their advice. In April Vasquez wrote the Mormon leader that he should be careful sending Mormons out to establish new settlements. The Indians "are badly disposed toward the whites.... They have been fighting with some Americans in the direction of Taos, and there have been sum of them kild, and to mind the matter, you have killed four this Spring. Last October, Mr. Bridger was at the Uinta for the purpose of staying the winter with them. Their conduct alarmed him so that he had to return to this place to winter."

Vasquez wrote Young that the Bannock Indians think a Mormon murdered one of their people, stole two horses and the Indians might attack Salt Lake City. The council read Vasquez's letter out loud, and Young surprised them by declaring, "I believe I know that Old Bridger is death on us, and if he knew 400,000 Indians were coming against us, and any man were to let us know, he would cut his throat."

While the "President of the Salt Lake Valley" spoke fondly of Vasquez, he appears to have selected Bridger as a target for wrath. He announced to his council, "I believe Bridger is watching every movement of the Mormons, and reporting to [Senator] Thomas Benton at Washington. As to the affair [murder and stolen horses] it is a backhanded man that can't be understood. That letter is all bubble and froth. Bridger and the other mountaineers were the real

cause of the Indians being incensed against the Saints, if they really were incensed."

Peg-Leg Smith, who was not on good terms with Bridger, told Young that a Bannock was not killed, it was a Shoshone. Smith said Bridger and Vasquez did not kill the Indian because they "were not brave enough, but they may have caused it to be done, to bring on a fuss between the Indians and our people, Bridger and Vasquez being jealous of them [Mormons] trading with the Indians."

Salt Lake City continued to grow with the addition of 1,500 Mormons in 1849. By 1850, the city had mills, stores, schools, factories, blacksmiths and dentists. While Brigham Young had initially wanted to avoid trade with the "gentile world," he allowed gentile merchants Louis Vasquez and Livingston & Kinkead to open their stores there.

## FORCED OUT

There were several conflicts between Salt Lake City authorities and Bridger and the other mountaineers. One law required that brands on livestock had to be reversed when sold. In 1852, four men each purchased a horse from Fort Bridger without reversed brands, and Utah officials seized their horses. The men had no choice but to sue Bridger and Vasquez, which they did for the amazing sum of \$35,000. Arbitrators reduced it to \$904, still almost three times what the horses were worth.

The number of emigrants traveling west more than doubled, with 60,000 travelers in 1852. Green River ferries became very profitable, and in January 1852, the Utah territorial legislature gave Green River ferry rights to Thomas Moor for one year. In 1853, the legislators gave Daniel Wells an exclusive three-year charter for the ferries. Bridger and other mountaineers had established Green River ferries through relationships with the Shoshones. When Brigham Young and his legislators passed laws pertaining to ferries, it disturbed both mountaineers and Indians.

Many Mormons had moved to southern Utah against the wishes of several Utes. Ute strongman Walkara attacked several church settlements, and Governor Young suspended all licenses to trade with the Shoshones, Utes and other Indians. Young also

suspended Tavern Keeper licenses for Fort Bridger and Green River, which had been granted by U.S. Ute Indian Agent Jacob Holman.

Bridger did not support Indian treachery. But on August 17, 1853, Utah Judge Leonidas Shaver issued a writ for Bridger's arrest, stating that he "on the 1st day of August 1853 unlawfully aided and abetted the Ute Indians, and supplied them with arms and ammunition for the purpose of committing depredation upon and making war on the citizens of the United States."

Mormon Bill Hickman described it this way. "It was rumored that Jim Bridger was furnishing the Indians with powder and lead to kill Mormons. Affidavits were filled out to that effect, and the sheriff was ordered out with posse."

The charge was treason and could be punished with death. Governor Brigham Young was the master planner for the "Ft Bridger and Green River Expedition." He instructed James Ferguson to "raise fifty men fully equipped for service with rations for twenty days."

Bridger found a concealed spot and, with a spyglass, kept an eye on his wife, Mary, and the large militia. The militia were unable to capture Bridger, and the attorney for Utah Territory, Seth Blair, suggested a scheme to have several people sue the mountain man for damages and confiscate the fort to cover payment. He said, "I can draw up declarations and forward them in & the Surpoenas can be Sent out & coppies left at his Residence & it is most probable--that judgment will go by default."

Judge Shaver said Blair's scheme would not work to get his fort, but they might take his fort if they charged Bridger for selling "spiritous liquors" and rum to Indians. Young suggested that Ferguson befriend Washakie who might be "influenced to bring Mr. Bridger in, or to give some information concerning his whereabouts."

Bill Hickman was part of a posse that rode to Green River and killed two or three mountaineers operating the ferries. He remembered it was a bloody job that left him scarred in mind and body. The posse reported, "Bridger was either gone for good or, if he returned, his influence would be diminished."

The posse occupied the fort for two months and confiscated 400 to 500 head of stock as well as anvil, iron, guns, powder, steel and food-stuffs. They inventoried the total at \$2,736. Strangely, the inventory was signed and verified with "given under my hand this 25th day of February 1854. James Bridger." But James Bridger could not have signed it, as he was in Washington, D.C. in February 1854. The Mormons tried to keep Fort Bridger, but they were repelled by mountaineers, and the Mormons established Fort Supply about 12 miles southwest instead.

By this time, Bridger was considered a national icon, and several newspapers wrote articles about him. The famous mountaineer headed east with his family to Westport, Missouri, to find a home for winter. On Christmas Day he set out for Washington, D.C., where he asked Secretary of War Jefferson Davis to submit his claim to President Franklin Pierce. Bridger's lawyer said, "Mr. Bridger utterly denies that he has, in any instance, violated the laws in question and alleges that the process of the Court was improperly obtained, irregular in form, and illegal in substance." Davis forwarded the petition to the attorney general of the United States, Caleb Cushing.

Bridger brought his case to members of Congress and implored help from Sen. Stephen Douglas. His committee was suggesting a bill to transfer the Fort Bridger and Green River area to Nebraska. Brigham Young was livid and wrote to Douglas that Bridger "had become the oracle to Congress in all matters pertaining to Utah."

But Bridger was not able to win the day. Jefferson Davis wrote that the president had no authority to entertain Bridger's claim. The Kansas-Nebraska Act passed and Fort Bridger and Green River were still part of Utah Territory. Bridger came back to his new home, Westport, Missouri, and tried to make sense of his new world. He missed the mountains and people like Washakie.

Washakie missed Bridger. In June the Shoshones were upset over "Bridgers being runoff who always had furnished them with



Brigham Young

such things as they needed." Washakie was at the Green River ferries, showing his anger at the Mormons: "This is my country, and my people's country. My fathers lived here, and drank water from this river, while our ponies grazed on these bottoms. Our mothers gathered the dry wood from this land."

In response Brigham Young wrote to Washakie that Bridger should not have hidden from the posse. If he had not "fled or resisted the officers but stood his track, perhaps he might have got clear and not even been fined." Bridger could not be sure that was true.

In the summer of 1855, James Bridger was back in the mountains guiding Sir St. George Gore, an adventurer from Sligo, Ireland. At the same time, he was wondering if he could ever reclaim his fort. Was the warrant for his arrest still standing? He rode to Fort Bridger and met Green River County Sheriff Bill Hickman who found Bridger "verry carless and indeferent about Selling." The mountaineers encouraged Bridger to hold on, saying that "he had better keep the Place."

Lewis Robison was a purchasing agent for the Mormon Church, and he hoped to

close a deal. With funds from the church, he offered to buy the fort for less than the \$8,000 they had discussed. Bridger held firm, and they finally agreed on \$4,000 in August 1855 and \$4,000 in November 1856.

Bill Hickman was there with the men who carried the heavy gold which was marked "United States Assay Office of Gold San Francisco California." Attorney H. F. Morrell signed for Louis Vasquez, and Bridger marked his X. The deal was done. When Mormon official Heber Kimball heard of the deal, he wrote to an acquaintance in England with the message: "The Church has bought out Bridger Ranch.... Bridger is gone."

## THE UTAH WAR

John C. Fremont ran in the 1856 presidential election on a stance to abolish the "twin relics of barbarism: slavery and polygamy." Stephen Douglas, hoping to be the Democratic nominee, called plural marriage "an ulcer in the land that had to be cut out." The federally appointed Utah surveyor general, David Burr, said, "These people repudiate the authority of the United States...and are an open rebellion against the general government."

The Mormons wanted to control Utah Territory with religious leaders. Brigham Young said he would "sooner see any Gentile from the States buried deep in hell before he would relieve him from starving; let them all die the death of dogs," according to the *Chicago Tribune*.

James Buchanan won the presidency and appointed Alfred Cumming, not a Mormon, as the new governor of Utah Territory. Buchanan ordered up to 2,500 troops under Gen. William S. Harney to escort Cumming to Utah. Brigham Young vowed, "If Harney crossed the South Pass the buzzards Should pick his bones. The feeling of Mobocracy is rife in the 'States' the constant cry is killed the Mormons. Let them try it." Mormon leader Heber Kimball said, "God almighty helping me, I will fight until there is not a drop of blood in my veins. Good God! I have wives enough to whip out the United States."

The country was ready for war, and the U.S. Army hired Brigham Young's nemesis,

Jim Bridger, to be the chief scout. It the largest assembly of troops in the United States at that time. Jim Bridger began leading the first federal troops toward the mountains on September 3, 1857.

These were dangerous times in Utah. Brigham Young preached the practice of “blood atonement” for faltering Mormons, and some were so grievous that the sinner should beg their brethren “to have their blood spilt upon the ground...as an offering for their sins.... Will you love that man or woman [who has committed sin] well enough to shed their blood?... This is loving our neighbor as ourselves.” For those who violated church covenants, he said, “The blood of Christ will never wipe that out; your own blood must atone for it.”

In southern Utah, the Fancher and Baker wagon train from Arkansas was being attacked on September 11 at Mountain Meadows, not only by the Paiutes but by local Mormons. John Lee was ordered to “decoy the emigrants from their position and kill all of them that could talk.” Lee led a group of Mormon militia as if they were coming to the emigrants’ rescue. The emigrants lowered their rifles and then were killed. Although some accused Young of orchestrating the murders that occurred at the Mountain Meadows Massacre, historical evidence demonstrates that the almost-unthinkable tragedy was perpetrated at the behest of local Latter-day Saint leaders. Brigham’s orders to let the emigrants go unharmed arrived too late.

Bridger guided Col. Edmund Alexander and his troops to Hams Fork, then returned to Laramie to guide Col. Albert Sidney Johnston, the overall commander. The army troops and supply trains were spread out over the Oregon Trail. The travelers soon learned that snow came early to the mountains. Maj. Fitz. John Porter recorded:

“Near the Rocky Mountains, snowstorms began to overtake us, but Bridger, the faithful and experienced guide, ever on the alert, would point in time to the ‘Snow-boats’ which, like balloons sailing from the snowcapped mountains, warned us of

storms; and would hasten to a good and early camp in time for shelter before the tempest broke upon us. At South Pass a cold and driving snowstorm barred progress for a few days, but permitted the gathering of trains, which assured protection.”

Washakie was at South Pass and said Brigham Young had asked them to fight the soldiers, even suggesting the army might kill the Shoshones after they annihilated the Mormons. Washakie said the Shoshones could fight for the army, and Johnston refused. They should not have anything to do with the conflict.

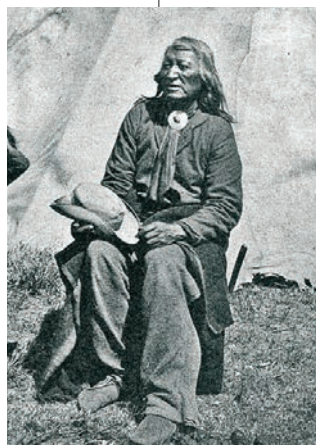
Brigham Young discouraged Mormon engagement with the federal troops if faced with a dangerous threat. He ordered them to “annoy them in every possible way... Stampede their animals and set fire to their trains. Burn the whole country before them and on their flanks. Keep them from sleeping by night surprises, blockade the roads by falling trees and destroying fords... Set fire to the grass on their windward.”

Mormon Lot Smith and his raiders attempted to burn much of the forage between South Pass and Fort Bridger. When Smith encountered a federal supply train, the U.S. Army captain pleaded, “For God’s sake don’t burn the trains!” Smith responded, “It’s for His sake I am going to burn them.”

Colonel Johnston and Colonel Alexander joined forces at Hams Fork. Bridger told them they should move to Blacks Fork for less wind and more timber. Colonel Johnston was very pleased with Bridger’s foresight, and that evening he gave Bridger the title of major. When they

did reach Blacks Fork, they found that the Mormons had burned Fort Bridger to the ground so the army could not use it.

Shortly after he saw the burnt fort, Bridger walked up the hills overlooking the valley. He saw the trees along Blacks Fork and the distant outline of the Wind River Mountains. Capt. John Phelps was also looking at the countryside and was moved when he saw the old mountaineer standing by himself looking pensively at the land that had once been his. He wrote:



Washakie Chief of the Shoshones by William Henry Jackson

“It is 35 years since he first came here.... He traded with the Indians, sending the furs which they brought from the mountains to St. Louis once a year and returning with a supply of goods.... He was a perfect monarch of all he surveyed, at one time having the control of 500 men, and never dreamed that his kingdom would ever be disturbed....so remote was it from the United States.... But the Mormons came. Mr. Bridgers reign was ended. They seized upon this point and ejected its ancient owner.”

With spring approaching, the passes were suddenly open. Bridger had spent years traveling through this country and probably knew it better than anyone. He met with Colonel Johnston several times to strategize how and when to cross the mountains to Salt Lake City.

Brigham Young had said many times that he would never let the gentiles take their city. But he was defeated and could not thwart the army. Young invited Cumming to cross the mountains ahead of the soldiers, and at the same time Young evacuated the city. The new governor entered Salt Lake City on April 12, 1858, and the former governor hoped it did not look like a defeat.

Colonel Johnston, marching his troops through Echo Canyon, insisted the army would march through the empty city with the sounds of “the music of the military bands, the monotonous tramp of regiments, and the rattle of the baggage wagons.” When the army finished its march, it camped on the west side of the Jordan River.

Brigham Young’s dream of a theocracy was over. Jim Bridger carried sorrow in his heart for the loss of Fort Bridger.



**Jerry Enzler** is the author of *Jim Bridger: Trailblazer of the American West* which received the *True West* 2022 Best of the West Readers’ Choice Award for Biography and was a Spur Award Finalist from Western Writers of America. In 2023, the book was the # 1 Amazon Best Seller audio for Adventurers, Explorers, and Survival biographies. It also ranked as #19 in the larger category of Amazon Best Seller in U.S. History in all formats. Enzler also was the founding director and exhibit developer of the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium, a Smithsonian Affiliate in Dubuque, Iowa, which has now served over 5 million visitors. He can be reached through his author website: [www.jimbridger.com](http://www.jimbridger.com).

BY HENRY C. PARKE

# SHOWDOWN: BRIDGER VS. BRIGHAM

DOES AMERICAN PRIMEVAL TELL THE TRUE STORY?



Kim Coates as Brigham Young and Shea Whigham as Jim Bridger

Courtesy American Primeval

**T**he two most compelling characters in *American Primeval* are, not coincidentally, the two based on frontier legends: Jim Bridger and Brigham Young. Young took over the Church of Latter-Day Saints from its assassinated founder, and led the Mormons through hell, to found Salt Lake City; Bridger had so many adventures, from mountain man to building Fort Bridger, that INSP has a series, *The Tall Tales of Jim Bridger*; just about his famous exaggerations!

Kim Coates, who plays Brigham Young, is probably best known for playing Tig Trager on seven seasons of *Sons of Anarchy*, but he also has a remarkable Western career. Beginning with the classic *Open Range*, Coates has spread villainy through *Black Fox*, *Gunfighter's Pledge*, *Dead Man's Gun* and *Godless*. "I was a farm boy in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan," he says, "and I've always loved horses. And I've got that craggy kind of face that can suit period pieces. Yeah, I've done a few Westerns, though to me, *American Primeval* isn't a typical, pure Western; it's more of a history lesson." Young is an atypical role for him. "I didn't carry a gun; I didn't shoot anybody; I didn't get shot. What a turning of events for Kim Coates *that* is!"

In addition to playing Eli Thompson in *Boardwalk Empire*, and G. Gordon Liddy in *Gaslit*, Shea Whigham has starred in five movies nominated for a Best Picture Oscar: *Silver Linings Playbook*, *American Hustle*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, *Vice* and *Joker*. But he'd never done a Western until he did two back-to-back, playing George Reeves, the title character's slave-owner in *Lawmen: Bass*

*Reeves*, and playing Jim Bridger in *American Primeval*. The characters could not have been more different. A man who offers a slave freedom, then tries to swindle him out of it with a crooked poker hand, "George is probably the most difficult character I've played," remembers Whigham. "Jim Bridger was such a unique human; a Renaissance man, a hunter and fur trapper. And the way that he survived and kept his fort going, I found him fascinating. I knew it was going to be difficult, but Mark's writing really helped me out a lot."

Both men made deep dives into historical research; Whigham is a longtime history buff, and Coates remembers, "I was going to be a history teacher; that was my major for the first two years of college, and then I switched to drama." When he was offered the role of Brigham Young, he "looked at photos and paintings of him. He's 56 at the time, famously long crimson blond hair, wide in the shoulders, piercing blue eyes—had a stare that could go right through people—and a calmness and strength about him. So, physically, I was certainly the guy."

Still, an actor can know too much. Whigham explains, "You can do too much research if you're not careful. I don't want to be out too far ahead of my character." Asked if he sees Bridger as the voice of reason in the story, Whigham replies, "I think that's pretty apropos. I talked to

[screenwriter] Mark L. Smith almost daily. I always try to find some way in, on any character I'm playing. One thing that really helped me out was answering the question of how does he keep this insane fort together in these unbelievable times? How does he survive into his 70s? And I think it's through levity and humor. It's through the carrot or the stick—or the shovel. He's almost Mark Twain-esque in his dealings with the Native Americans and the Mormons and everyone."

Coates' approach to playing Brigham Young was quite different. "It is different playing someone real for me. Usually, I work from the inside out, and this time it was definitely the opposite. I had to find out how he looked, how he dressed, and we did all of that, with Virginia Johnson for costumes, and Johnny and Howard for hair and makeup. We dove into this man." Coates and Whigham have nothing but praise for each other's work. They stayed in character for the entire shoot. Coates recalls, "He was Bridger, I was Governor Young. And [director] Peter Berg was the maestro—Shea called him that."

Another element that helped with performances was the accuracy of the set. "That fort was the exact dimensions of Fort Bridger," Coates recalls. "From the drawings, from the journals. So you can imagine getting dropped off in a van, getting on my horse, Phoenix, and trotting into that set where there was nothing modern other than the cameras around me."

With the Fort Bridger set still standing, the idea of a follow-up story certainly appeals to Whigham. "I would love to do that, whether it's a prequel or after *American Primeval*."

# THE BATTLE AXE AND A RAW DEAL

A UTE ELDER SHARES  
HIS THOUGHTS ON  
THE SO-CALLED  
"UTAH WAR."

**P**rior to the arrival of Mormons in 1847, thousands of Shoshonean people occupied northern Utah. No actual population number has been assigned, but my guess would be approximately 10,000, mostly Ute and Northwestern Band Shoshone, and a lesser number of Goshute Indians (desert-dwelling Shoshone). Most scholars estimate that throughout the Western Hemisphere, disease and warfare reduced the native population by 90 percent by the turn of the 19th century.

My understanding is that both the Ute and Shoshone tribes knew about the Mormon entrance in the area and monitored their movements. If the Native people were as savage as some believed, they would have attacked the Mormons in the narrows of Immigration Canyon, where they would have been an easy

target for Indian warriors. My understanding is they did not attack because they were aware that most of the growing number of wagon trains were passing through enroute to California, especially those following the Oregon Trail. The word "passing through" is significant, because in the case of the Mormons, they did not pass through: they were there to stay.

Several books on Utah/Indian history state that both tribes visited the Mormons shortly after they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. Like

**"We cannot be good, we must be Paiutes...  
we want to follow our old customs."**

*—Tutsegabit*

the Wampanoag and Narragansett on the East Coast, the tribes visited the newcomers with the purpose of accessing firearms to use against each other. According to Shoshone

lore (Ontko), they were all one big nation at one time. At some point, different bands began breaking away from their original homelands near the Blue Mountains of northeast Oregon and settling in other parts of the West. Over time, languages began to change, and the bands' relationships began to weaken and eventually dissolved. Consequently, they would fight over territory when they encountered each other. During this time, the Ute and Shoshone people fought numerous times over territory and raided each other for horses.

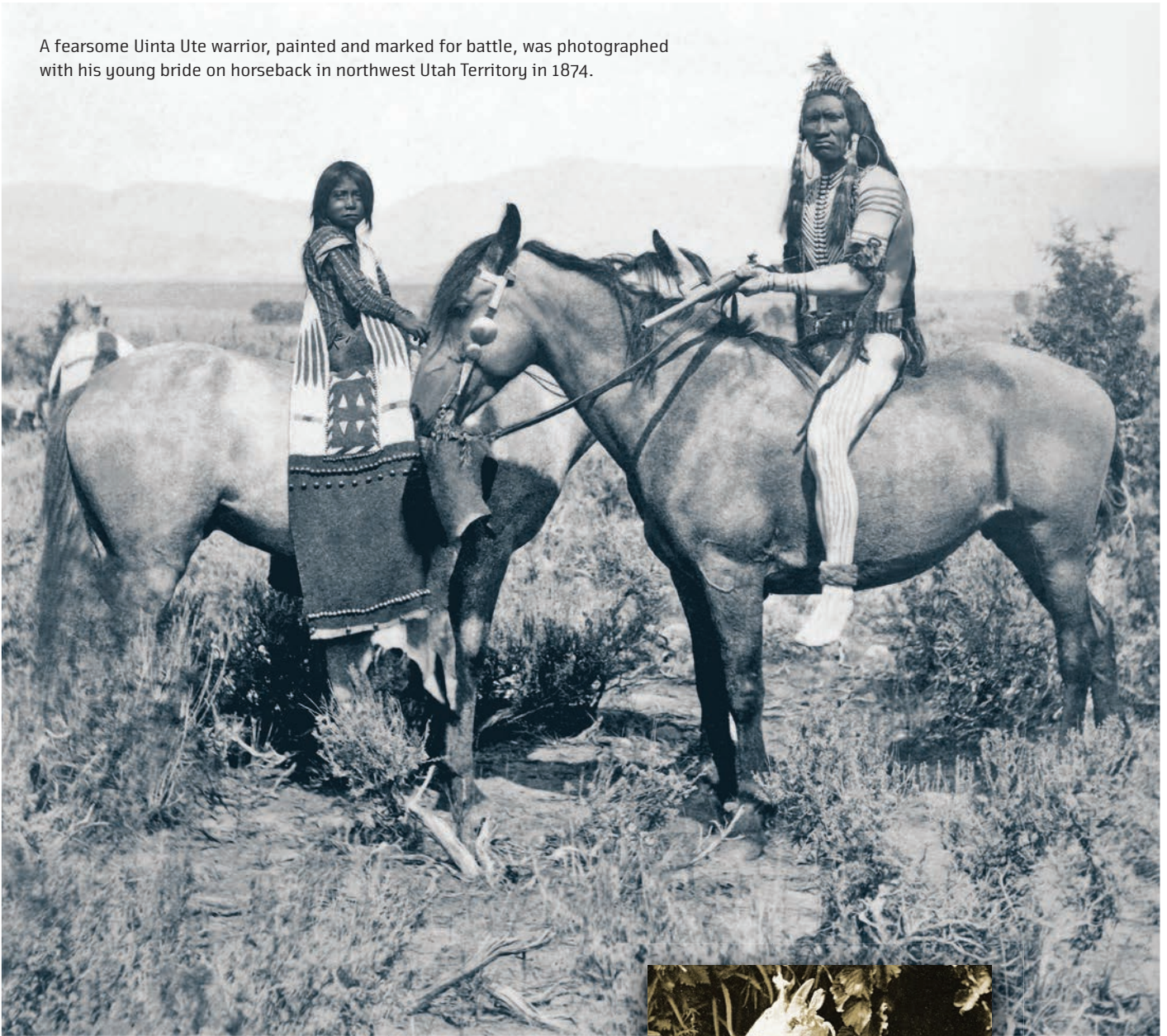
The Utah War (1857-'58) is known by many names. It was an armed confrontation between Mormon settlers and the armed forces of the U.S. government.

However, I feel it should be more aptly named "No Utah War" because there were, to my knowledge, no standing battles between the Mormon settlers and the U.S. military. In 1857, tensions were



A skilled Paiute hunter demonstrated his marksmanship in 1873. Although the Paiutes initially welcomed Mormon settlers in 1851, their arrival also resulted in numerous epidemics. Some bands of Paiutes lost over 90 percent of their population to various diseases throughout the decade that followed.

A fearsome Uinta Ute warrior, painted and marked for battle, was photographed with his young bride on horseback in northwest Utah Territory in 1874.



brewing in Utah between Brigham Young and Mormon Church members and the federal government over governance and autonomy within the territory. By declaring himself governor, Brigham Young was acting independent of the United States. Because of this fight for control, President Buchanan sent armed forces of the U.S. government to quell “the escalating tensions.” Although the war featured no significant battles, it included the Mountain Meadows Massacre, in which Mormon militia members and Mormon

settlers disarmed and murdered about 120 pioneers traveling to California on September 11, 1857.

The Fancher and Baker parties from Arkansas were traveling through a remote part of southwestern Utah when they were attacked. The Mormons claim that one of their esteemed apostles, Parley Pratt, was unjustly killed by someone from Arkansas and this



An elderly Southern Paiute (Nuaguntit) named E-NU-INTS-I-GAIP (One of the Ancients) was photographed in southwestern Nevada in 1874. One can only imagine the many stories he could have told.

All photos by John K. Hillers

precipitated the attack. There remains the possibility that Pratt may have contributed to some of this hostility by his personal behavior.

I quote my old friend, Will Bagley: “As the Fancher and Baker parties trekked west, they may have heard that an aggrieved husband had killed Parley Pratt, one of the original apostles of the LDS church, in western Arkansas some two weeks after they left the state. Hector McLean, outraged at Pratt’s appropriation of his wife, had tracked the apostle up and down the Mississippi Valley and brutally murdered him on the Arkansas border near Fort Smith. No one in the Fancher or Baker parties had anything to do with the affair, but it would forever be linked to their fate.” Unfortunately, Mormon settlers believed the tale that Pratt was killed by someone in Arkansas, and this angry sentiment was passed on to Mormon settlers from town to town up and down the Utah corridor. Because of this misconception, the Mormons were forbidden to sell food and supplies to the Fancher-Baker party and branded them as murderers of the beloved Parley Pratt.

During this time, several attempts were made to entice the Utes to join the Mormons in the war against the U.S. government, the “Americats.” According to the Book of Mormon, Indians were considered “the battle



An impressive-looking Uintah Ute posed for a photograph with his affectionate canine companion in Utah Territory, 1874. Many Native Americans prized the company of their dogs on the frontier.

axe” of the church. The Utes declined to join the war. War-Chief Wakara/Wookara was suspicious, especially since the tension was building between him and Brigham Young as the Mormons pushed farther into traditional Ute territory. By this time, the settlers had already pushed the Utes out of Utah Valley and had taken over and began destroying the Utes’ valuable fishery at Utah Lake. The lake was a fish resource that, according to historian Jerod Farmer, a professor of History at University of Pennsylvania, contributed 30 percent of the Ute people’s diet at one time. It

is believed that this growing conflict would eventually lead to the death of one or both leaders in the years to come (Bagley and Mueller). As for the invasion of Mormon crops by a plague of locusts—now referred to as Mormon crickets—the Goshute had adapted to this phenomenon long ago by making the locust a key source of their diet—as much as 20 percent, according to Gavin Noyes, who spent many years working with the Confederate Tribes of Goshute.

In short, the Indians, neither Ute, Shoshone nor Paiute, were active participants in the Utah War. The Indians refused to be implicated or serve as the “battle axe” for the LDS church. And although some Indians were recruited to join the Mormon Militia (called Nauvoo Legion) and take the blame for the bloody Mountain Meadows atrocities, those Indians were likely renegades, splinter groups of Southern Paiutes from Nevada, or Shoshones from out of the state. The official position of the Paiute Tribe of Utah is that they had no part in the massacre. Although it was supposedly the job of the Indians to kill the women and

Southern Paiutes posed for a photograph in 1874. For many decades, Paiutes were blamed for most of the carnage that occurred at the Mountain Meadows Massacre in September 1857. Today, many scholars believe that Paiute involvement in the tragedy was minimal. One participant, a war chief named Jackson, disappeared after speaking to James Carleton in 1859. Another participant named Tutsegabit became a Mormon missionary to the Apaches in the Arizona Territory.



children of the Fancher-Baker party, my understanding is that the main killers were members of the Mormon Militia and Mormon settlers, some of whom were dressed up as Indians. Recently, forensic examination of the remains of individuals from the Fancher-Baker party revealed that some of the victims were shot execution-style at the base of their skulls, according to discussions with Kevin Jones, former Utah State Archeologist. If the renegade Indians were enticed to attack the wagon train for the spoils, they received very little if any

of the real loot and had to scavenge what was left on the wagons. Some of the Fancher and Baker members were well off and carried valuables with them on their journey west. That loot was acquired by Mormon settlers and included precious metals of gold and silver, cattle, racehorses and other valuable items necessary for resettlement in another part of the country.

In the end, it was the Indians who got the raw end of the deal. They were blamed for the massacre, and generation upon generation was raised with this perception. This was

the narrative that was told to me in the seventh grade at West Junior High School, Uintah County, in northeastern Utah.



**Forrest S. Cuch** is a Ute Elder and member of the Ute Indian Tribe, belonging to the Uintah Band, the band that is native to the state of Utah. He graduated from Westminster College with a bachelor of arts degree in behavioral sciences in 1973. Forrest served as education director for the Ute Indian Tribe from 1973 to 1988. He was later employed by the Wampanoag Tribe in Gay Head, Massachusetts, as a planner and tribal administrator. He became the director of the Utah Division of Indian Affairs in 1997. Mr. Cuch served as the editor of *A History of Utah's American Indians* in 2000. He also co-authored *A Native Way of Giving* in 2021.

## An Indigenous Consultant Ensures Accuracy

She assembled artisans, historians and linguists to keep their three Nations' portrayals accurate.



*American Primeval* portrayed take-charge female characters, including a rare female chief.

Not so long ago, in many Western films, all Native tribes, their manner of dress, and dances were considered interchangeable, and they all spoke the same language: “Indian.” More recently, movies have employed Native consultants, but it was only a starting point. “Even with *Dances with Wolves*,” recalls Julie Okeefe, Indigenous cultural consultant on *American Primeval*, “there were consultants from that tribe, but they weren’t in the spotlight. The movie was, but not the Natives who contributed.”

That began to change with *Killers of the Flower Moon*. “Honestly, I believe it started there,” Okeefe says, reflecting on her role as the Osage clothing consultant. Director Martin Scorsese wanted authenticity, so he brought in eight consultants from the Osage Nation—experts in language, clothing and props. The consultants gained more attention during the film’s promotion, as the Screen Actors Guild strike prevented the usual talent from participating. “Apple turned to the Osage Nation, and we helped promote the film and tell the story. It was a pivotal moment that highlighted the different layers of the story.”

Okeefe’s work on *American Primeval* began with the script. “I call it the recipe card: what’s everything we need?” The story involves three different Nations, so Okeefe created departments for each, working with people from their reservations and homes. The team worked closely with Shoshone, Paiute and Ute consultants, including a historian and two linguists. She had 3,500 items made by consultants in these nations, drawing on collections like those at the Smithsonian. “I had them send a portfolio of pictures, not just for costumes and props but everything. Then I distributed the info to whoever needed it.”

Typically, filmmakers would rent clothes and props from places like Western Costume. For *American Primeval*, much of the wardrobe was made from scratch. “Virginia Johnson, the costume designer, rented pieces from *The Revenant*,” Okeefe says, “and I

helped decide what was appropriate for the Shoshone story.” Some pieces, like a buckskin dress, were replicated from Smithsonian items, and beadwork was done by Lakota artist Molly Murphy Adams.

Having consultants also helps avoid cultural mistakes. Okeefe reached out to Randy’L Teton, a Shoshone consultant and the model for the Sacajawea dollar coin, to review the script. Teton flagged a character named Pine Leaf, pointing out that the name wasn’t authentic in Shoshone culture. “We renamed her Winter Bird, a real Shoshone name.”

Okeefe also helped ensure the teepees were accurate. “A true high teepee needs 37–40 hides,” she explains. Production designer Renee Read asked for a buffalo hide teepee, a rare and expensive request. Okeefe knew who could help: “Dude Perry, in Idaho, brain-tanned the hides. They made three teepees—two elk and one buffalo hide—and the rest were canvas.”

Director Peter Berg insisted on authenticity but was also eager to “burn things” in the film. One night, Okeefe woke up terrified that the precious buffalo-hide teepees would be destroyed. “Luckily, only the canvas ones burned,” she laughs.

While cultural consultants are vital for accuracy, Okeefe stresses that their role isn’t to dictate what filmmakers can and can’t do. “It’s not my job to tell the director how to do their job. I provide them with the right people and accurate information. They decide how to use it creatively.”

Regarding the controversial subject matter in *American Primeval*, Okeefe believes in not sugarcoating history. “As for the incest scene, it’s a horrific topic today, and it was just as horrible then. But we can’t ignore it. When you read Native accounts of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, the violence depicted in the show is tame compared to what actually happened. If we showed everything, everyone would need therapy.”

BY HENRY C. PARKE

# MORMONS IN THE MOVIES

FROM MORMONSPLOITATION TO EDIFICATION, LATTER-DAY SAINTS CINEMA RUNS THE GAMUT.

**THE** early screen portrayals of Mormonism were not flattering, especially in their focus on the perceived evils of polygamy. Mormon evangelists had made themselves so unpopular in Denmark that by 1911, they had a mini-industry of anti-Mormon films, with others made in France and England in addition to the United States. Similarly themed silent versions of Zane Grey's *Riders of the Purple Sage*, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* were not likely to produce converts.

The first important film about Mormons, and Brigham Young in particular, was 20th Century Fox's 1940 release, *Brigham Young*, which starred handsome Tyrone

Power—not as Young, but as a sort of Mormon “everyman,” with Linda Darnell as a non-Mormon “everywoman.” Fox President Darryl F. Zanuck was one of the few non-Jewish studio heads, but he was very socially conscious. Concerned about the abuse of Jews in Germany, he wanted to present the story of the Mormons as a sort of parable to what Jews were going through. Delighted at the chance for a positive portrayal, Zanuck received the wholehearted assistance of the Mormon Church. Director Henry Hathaway was less enthusiastic: “The two dullest things in the whole world are a wagon train and religion. Now you take them and put them together.”

But with a script by Fox's top screenwriter, Lamar Trotti, and cinematography

DARRYLE ZANUCK'S  
Production of

# BRIGHAM YOUNG

BY  
*Louis Branfield*



TYRONE  
**POWER**

LINDA  
**DARNELL**

BRIAN  
**DONLEVY**

JANE  
**DARWELL**

JOHN  
**CARRADINE**

MARY  
**ASTOR**

VINCENT  
**PRICE**

JEAN  
**ROGERS**

ANN  
**TODD**

DEAN  
**JAGGER**

*Directed by*  
**HENRY HATHAWAY**  
*Associate Producer*  
**KENNETH MACGOWAN**  
*Screen Play by* LAMAR TROTTI

AS BRIGHAM YOUNG  
20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY-FOX PICTURE

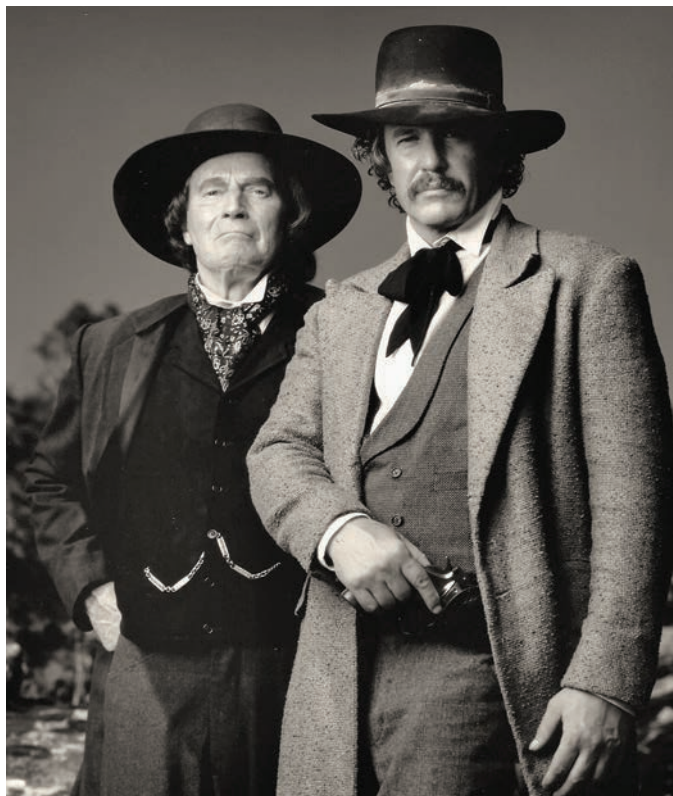


by three-time Oscar-winning black-and-white master Arthur Miller, Hathaway made a thrilling, timeless adventure. An important production, it was shot not only at Fox's soundstages and their Malibu Ranch, but at Big Bear, Lone Pine and other California locations, plus Elko, Nevada, and Kanab, Utah.

The film begins with an unprovoked attack on a social gathering of Mormons, leaving Power's and Darnell's fathers among the dead. Soon after, Joseph Smith, founder of the LDS Church, is convicted of treason in a kangaroo court and lynched, but not before handing the religion's reins to Brigham Young. When an attack on the Mormon city of Nauvoo is imminent, Young tells the populus to follow him, abandon the settlement in the dead of night, cross a frozen river, and head west to find somewhere they can live and be free, at length reaching Salt Lake.

The cast was full of fine actors in uncharacteristic roles. Joseph Smith was a pre-horror Vincent Price. Dean Jagger, future Oscar-winner (for *12 O'clock High*) and future Mormon convert, played Brigham Young, and his courtroom speech defending freedom of religion is magnificent. Although played somewhat humorously, John Carradine portrayed Porter

Tom Berenger plays bodyguard to Charlton Heston's Brigham Young in *Avenging Angel*. Mormon characters figure prominently in the musical *Paint Your Wagon*, and John Ford's *Wagon Master*.



Rockwell, a real lawman and bodyguard to Young, who had killed so many men in his work that he was nicknamed The Destroying Angel. Brian Donlevy played the fictional Angus Duncan, a Mormon villain who is willing to appease his enemies and sell out his brethren, if profitable.

*Brigham Young* didn't avoid the question of polygamy entirely, but they soft-pedaled it. When Jim Bridger meets Young, he asks, "Say, how many—?" "Twelve," Young replies before Bridger can finish the sentence: doubtless, many viewers never realized what the question was. In spite of that number, Mary Astor is the only wife he speaks to; Jean Rogers is

billed as another wife, but that relationship is easy to miss, and the other 10 are never seen. And, for the record, the true number of wives Young had in his lifetime was probably 56. When the unmarried Tyrone Power proposes to Linda Darnell, she's angry at the idea that he might want other wives, despite his assuring her that if she accepts, he couldn't possibly want any brides besides her.

One of the most startling inclusions is that when things are at their worst, with Mormons dying of hunger, Brigham Young wonders if he's being punished for lying about God telling him to take charge in the first place! It is only after the "Miracle of the Seagulls,"

when the birds unexpectedly appear and eat the locusts that are destroying the harvest, that Young is convinced that he has definitely received a sign from God.

Polygamy was even more controversial in the Old West than elsewhere, because in a region where there were so few women, the thought of a man taking more than one wife was infuriating. It was an issue dramatized in many Western TV episodes of the 1960s and '70s, and a major subplot in the *How the West Was Won* series.

*Hell on Wheels*, the AMC series about the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, ran for five seasons, from 2011 to 2016, and Anson Mount as Cullen Bohannon had numerous dealings with Mormon characters, from trying to put tracks through their land, to dealing with the decidedly villainous Brigham Young (Gregg Henry). There were also several episodes in which the psychotic killer known as The Swede (Christopher Heyerdahl) impersonates a Mormon bishop.

After *Brigham Young*, feature films about Mormons were pretty rare, none of note appearing until the 1976 Goldie Hawn, George Segal Western comedy, *The Duchess and the Dirtwater Fox*. Segal plays a swindler, and Hawn plays a prostitute impersonating a duchess, and trying to become



*Young Guns* director Christopher Cain went gunning for Brigham Young (Terence Stamp) with *September Dawn*.

the seventh wife of a wealthy Mormon, presuming she'd only have to "work" one day a week.

Beginning in 1980 with the short, *Joseph Smith, The Man*, director and cinematographer T.C. Christensen has demonstrated increasing skill and artistry making nearly 30 Mormon faith-based historical films, including *17 Miracles*, *Ephraim's Rescue* and last year's *Escape from Germany*, many of which are Westerns, at least by setting.

In 1995, Ted Turner produced the Western thriller TV movie *The Avenging Angel*, with Charlton Heston as Brigham Young, and James Coburn as Porter Rockwell. Tom Berenger stars as a bodyguard for Young, who foils an assassination attempt, inadvertently

exposing a conspiracy to take over the church. Young is shown in a largely positive light here, but it's also clear that Berenger's duties to him include being an on-call assassin.

Hardly noticed when it was released, *Young Guns* director Christopher Cain made *September Dawn* in 2006. With British Oscar-nominee Terrence Stamp as Brigham Young, and *Coming Home* Oscar-winner Jon Voight as Jacob Samuelson, Young's fictional right-hand man, this is probably the first movie-telling of the Mormon Meadows Massacre. It's mostly seen from the points of view of star-crossed lovers, Samuelson's son (Trent Ford), who is having a crisis of faith, and a young girl on the wagon train (Tamara Hope). Unlike *American Primeval*, the massacre is the core of this story, and shown more accurately here as taking place over several days. While not as bloody as *American Primeval*, it is jarringly brutal, and both films place the blame for the slaughter on Brigham Young's shoulders.



**Henry C. Parke**, Western Film and TV Editor for *True West*, is a screenwriter, and blogs for the INSP Channel, and at [HenrysWesternRoundup.blogspot.com](http://HenrysWesternRoundup.blogspot.com). A book based on his *True West* columns, *The Greatest Westerns Ever Made*, was recently published by TwoDot.

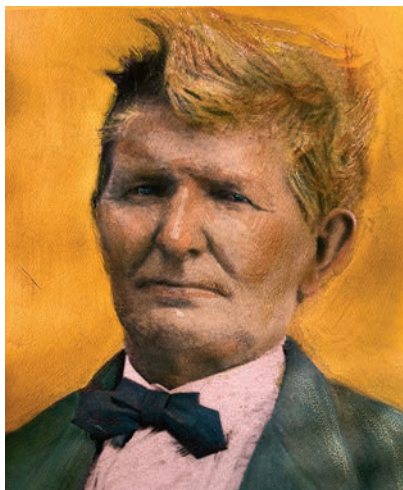
TRUE WEST EXCLUSIVE

# CLASSIC GUNFIGHTS

## MOUNTAIN MEADOWS SCAPEGOAT

### JOHN D. LEE VS A FIRING SQUAD

“CENTER MY HEART, BOYS!”



John D. Lee

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Map by Tom Jonas

Based on the research of Will Bagley and Juanita Brooks

Illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

MARCH 28, 1877

The execution of John D. Lee was supposed to be a secret, but as Marshal William Nelson and U.S. Attorney Sumner Howard loaded their prisoner into a closed carriage and drove south from the jail at Beaver, Utah, at least 20 citizens followed the carriage because Howard had alerted the press. A separate group—about 20 soldiers under Lt. George Patterson—left Fort Cameron and waited for the carriage at Leach Spring, and shortly before dawn, the two groups met and travelled on together to Mountain Meadows, arriving at 9:30 p.m. John D. Lee slept soundly in the carriage, and in fact, his snoring kept several others awake. At dawn on March 28, the officers deployed pickets in the surrounding hills and drew three wagons in a semicircle about 100 yards east of the location of Colonel Carleton’s cairn. When Lee awakened, he got out of the carriage, wearing a red flannel shirt and sack coat. He partook of a hearty breakfast and a cup of coffee. He told the assembled reporters he had not been on this ground since 1857. As the word spread, the crowd of civil-

ians grew to about 75, most of them eager to see the morbid spectacle. Contrary to later reports, none of Lee’s relatives were present. After the coffin was built and placed in position, Lee walked over to it and sat down.

Note the bemused grin. The guy had sand. The authorities parked three wagons in a semicircle, then hung blankets between the wagons to create a blind from which the firing squad would stand in the center and shoot the guilty party. For his part, John D. Lee sat on a coffin of rough pine boards (built on the spot with wood hauled out to the site in a wagon). Lee sat on the coffin facing his executioners. They were reportedly armed with nonmilitary Springfield “needle guns.” After a prayer by a Methodist minister, Marshal William Nelson put a blindfold on Lee. When the time came, eyewitnesses said Lee raised both hands above his head and reportedly said, “Center my heart, boys!” At exactly 11:00 a.m. Nelson gave the order, “Ready, aim, fire!” and a “line of flame shot out from the wagons.” There was no moan or yell; John D. Lee simply fell quietly into his coffin, his feet still resting on the ground.



U.S. Army sharpshooters stood in the enclosure of three wagons parked in a U-shaped semicircle. Tarps were wrapped around the wagons and the exposed corners to help conceal the shooters’ identities. Sitting on his coffin, Lee had a hood placed over his head, and he raised his arms high and said, “Center my heart, boys!” After the command of “Ready. Aim. Fire!” the shooters did just that, and Lee fell backwards into his coffin.

All Images Courtesy True West Archives



A photograph of John D. Lee looking at the camera moments before his execution. After the exposure was taken, Lee reportedly called the photographer over and asked him to be sure and send a couple prints to his "two favorite wives." Of all his many wives, only Caroline, Emma and Rachel stayed with him to the end, so it's interesting that out of the trio, he still had two favorites.



#### **The Gawkers**

Note the wagon tongue at right which is part of one of the wagons used to conceal the shooters.

#### **Back to Mountain Meadows**

After the second trial and several appeals on behalf of Mr. Lee, the U.S. government finally got a guilty verdict, and it was decreed that the alleged ringleader of the Mountain Meadows disaster should be driven to that exact meadow and shot to death by a firing squad. It was supposed to be a secret, but one of the attorneys alerted the press, and you know how that goes: everyone has one person they can trust, so the next day as the U.S. troops and their prisoner arrived at the execution site, so did 75 or so gawkers.



#### **One Final Irony**

*It's the old Gypsy curse: may you be found among lawyers!*

John D. Lee, seated at right, with his legal team, including Wells Spicer over Lee's left shoulder. Spicer, of course, would find himself at another legal circus, I mean hearing, in Tombstone, A.T. in November of 1881 presiding over the Fremont Street Fight, later to be made famous as the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral.

## A Recipe for Disaster

On January 1, 1856 Brigham Young appointed John D. Lee “Farmer to the Indians.” In this capacity Lee was a federal government agent and it was his job to protect the Southern Paiutes and emigrants from each other and to teach them to farm. Lee was paid a \$600 annual salary, paid in gold, which was a fortune in that time and place. There were also rumors that the Mormons were arming their Paiute allies. Lt. Sylvester Mowry of the U.S. Army claimed they were “all armed with good rifles. Two years ago they were armed with nothing but bows and arrows of the poorest description.”

Author Will Bagley makes the claim, “The Mormons came to regard the Indians as a weapon God had placed in their hands.” And that the Indians would help to fulfill Joseph Smith’s Lamine prophecies, and “avenge the blood of the prophets.” Patriarch Elisha H. Groves prophesied as he blessed Col. William Dame in 1854, “The angel of vengeance shall be with thee.” Many of the Southern Utah Saints believed the war at the end of time had already begun and the Saints believed the Indians were a weapon God had placed in their hands.

As the conflict between the U.S. government and Mormons increased, so did harassment of travelers. Into this cauldron of resentment the Fancher wagon train proceeded tragically. Add to that the belief in blood atonement, and you have a recipe for the slaughter that followed.

The Southern Utah Saints saw themselves as Old Testament people. As one of them, Jedediah Grant, put it, “We would not kill a man, of course, unless we killed him to save him.”

Add to all of this, the brutal assassination of Mormon apostle Parley Platt in Arkansas at the hands of a vengeful husband, which did nothing to endear the Saints toward wagon trains from Arkansas traveling through their region.

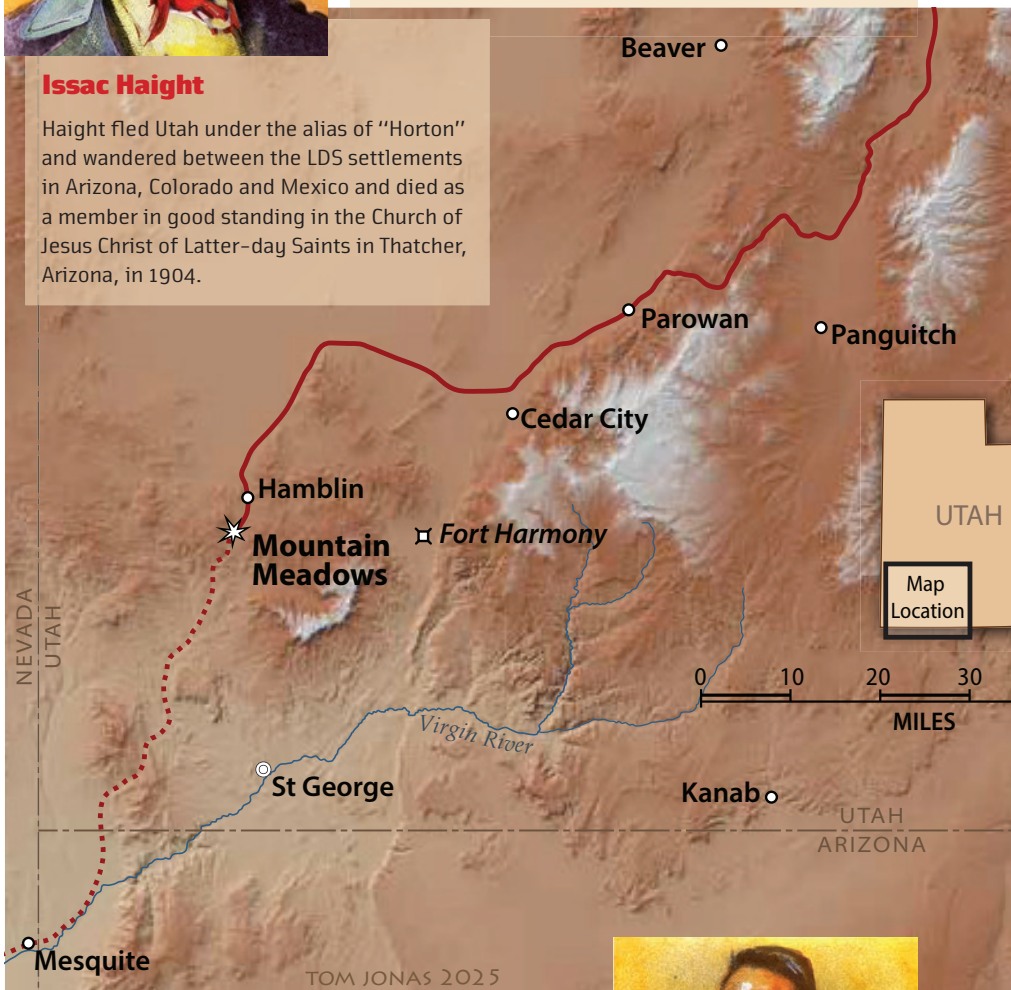


### Issac Haight

Haight fled Utah under the alias of “Horton” and wandered between the LDS settlements in Arizona, Colorado and Mexico and died as a member in good standing in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Thatcher, Arizona, in 1904.

## GUILTY AS SIN

A short list of what happened to the remaining Mountain Meadows co-conspirators who were known derisively as “The Mountain Meadows Dogs.” This notorious pack included Lee, Haight, Higbee and Stewart, among others.

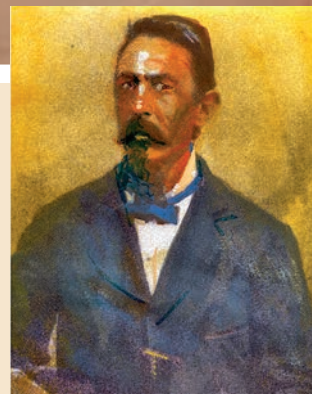


TOM JONAS 2025

### John B. Higbee

The field commander at Mountain Meadows, John Higbee, saw his career blossom after the massacre and was elected mayor of Cedar City from 1867 to 1871. Brigham Young appointed Higbee president of the town’s United Order in 1874. After Lee’s arrest in 1874, Higbee went into hiding. Using the alias “Bull Valley Snort,” Higbee wrote a document for his family, giving his version of the massacre in February 1894. At the end of his self-serving excuses—his basic claim is “the Indians made us do it”—

Higbee said the massacre had left him “damned, his family scattered, some dead, others grown up and strangers to him.” He died in Cedar City in December of 1904.



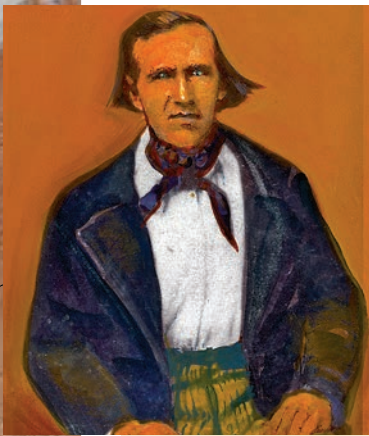
*“It seems Somebody has contracted a Great debt.”*

—Bull Valley Snort



### Colonel William H. Dame

Col. William H. Dame was the mayor of Parowan, Utah, and he controlled the military in Iron County. He was also a stake president of the LDS church in Parowan. Although he was arrested and spent time in jail for his role, Dame was subsequently acquitted of his charges—the prosecutor dropped charges against Dame as part of a deal to convict Lee—and Dame went on to hold other offices. At the end of his life, Dame refused to clear Brigham Young and died of paralysis, actually a second stroke, in 1884. He was 64.



### Jacob Hamblin

Jacob Hamblin was in Salt Lake City meeting with Brigham Young at the time of the massacre, and Young allegedly instructed Hamblin about the Paiutes, that they “must learn to help us, or the United States will kill us both!” Hamblin was away when the massacre happened, but he met John D. Lee on the trail and Lee admitted his roles in the killings. After the massacre, the surviving children were initially taken to Hamblin’s ranch, and three of them resided

there for the next two years. A year after the massacre, Hamblin went on a mission to the Hopi Mesas in Arizona, where he took a Hopi wife. (He eventually had four wives and would father 24 children.) Hamblin also advised John Wesley Powell’s second expedition into the Grand Canyon. Following the Edmunds Act of 1882, an arrest warrant was issued for Hamblin for practicing polygamy. From then on, he continually moved to avoid arrest, moving from Arizona to New Mexico and then Chihuahua, Mexico, where he died on August 31, 1886.



### Philip Klingensmith

Klingensmith was kicked in the head by a horse and soon after lost his position as leader of the LDS church in Cedar City. After fleeing to Nevada, he confessed his involvement at Mountain Meadows and named names. Afterward, he was forever fearful of being assassinated. Rumor says he died in either Nevada or Mexico.

## Aftermath: Odds & Ends

Lee’s body was transported north to Paragonah, and then on to Panguitch, Utah. It was a two-day trip and the body was so decomposed the family put his temple clothes over his corpse and buried it in the local cemetery. Local tradition is that the family feared grave robbers, so they reburied Lee in the basement of Caroline Lee’s home.



Rumors almost immediately circulated claiming that Lee was not killed by the firing squad and that they used blanks and allowed him to escape. Some versions of these rumors exist to this day, claiming he made his way to Mexico and lived out his days there.



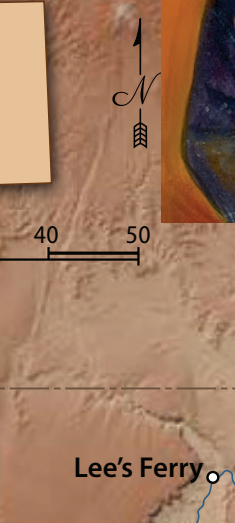
John D. Lee had 19 wives and 56 children, and they sure ran up the scorecard on civil servant achievement. One of his descendants became Senator Mike Lee of Utah, and another became a Utah Supreme Court justice, Thomas R. Lee. Another descendant, Gordon H. Smith was a U.S. senator from Oregon. Then we get U.S. representative Mo Udall and Stewart Udall from Arizona, and their respective sons, Senator Mark Udall and Tom Udall from Colorado and Senator Tom Udall from New Mexico.



Perhaps due to the incredible political clout of the abovementioned offspring, John D. Lee was reinstated into the church membership and temple blessings on April 20, 1961. He had been excommunicated in October 1870 for his involvement in the Mountain Meadows Massacre and the only participant who had been banned.



**Recommended:** *Blood of The Prophets: Brigham Young and The Massacre at Mountain Meadows* by Will Bagley.





## CLASSIC TRUE WEST FROM THE TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

**Editor's Note:** If you'd like to read more of Will Bagley's and Ron Walker's articles, like "Did Brigham Young Order a Massacre?" from the April 2003 issue, please go to [TrueWestMagazine.com](http://TrueWestMagazine.com) and subscribe for full access to more than 70 years' worth of exciting issues. Ron Walker died in 2016, and Will Bagley in 2021.

# Did Brigham Young Order a Massacre?

BY WILL BAGLEY AND RON WALKER

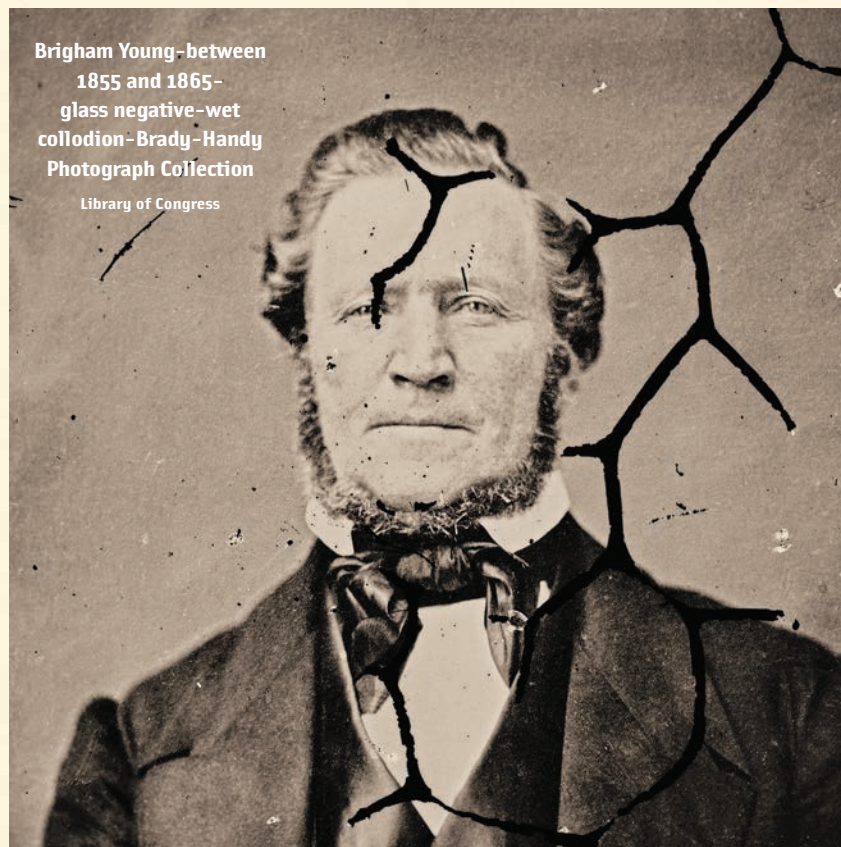
Columnist Will Bagley and Brigham Young University Professor Ron Walker present opposing viewpoints to the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

In September 11, 1857, 120 men, women and children—pioneers from Arkansas headed for California—were massacred after being promised safe passage through a Southern Utah valley known as Mountain Meadows.

They were murdered by a small Mormon militia and its Indian allies in a horrible ploy: after a four-day gun battle with their attackers, the pioneers accepted a truce that turned out to be a deadly lie. They were clubbed, stabbed or shot at point-blank range, then stripped and left to be scavenged by wolves and buzzards. The only ones spared were 17 children under the age of eight, who were taken in by local Mormon families, and would later testify they saw their parents' clothes and jewels being worn by locals.

The nation was and remains horrified by what happened at Mountain Meadows. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has steadfastly denied responsibility. At first, it blamed Indians; later, it claimed a rogue church official was responsible—and after two trials, Mormon militia leader John Lee was hanged in 1877 for the killings.

But now, a new book, which has been a bestseller in Utah since it appeared last summer, claims the massacre was ordered by Mormon Prophet Brigham Young. Anxiously awaited is a book due to be published in 2004 by three Mormon church historians that will exonerate Young.



Brigham Young—between  
1855 and 1865—  
glass negative-wet  
collodion—Brady-Handy  
Photograph Collection  
Library of Congress

*True West* asked the authors of both books to lay out their claims. Will Bagley, a history columnist for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, is the author of *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* published by the University of Oklahoma

Press. Ron Walker is one of the three Mormon historians writing the upcoming rebuttal to be published by Oxford University Press.

Their face-off begins on the next page.

## Brigham Young Did It.

BY WILL BAGLEY

There are two ways to interpret the evidence about who ordered the brutal murder of 120 men, women and children at a remote Utah oasis on the road to California on September 11, 1857. Fifty-three years ago Juanita Brooks' classic study, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, concluded the crime was the result of one unfortunate circumstance after another. (She also established "from the most impeccable Mormon sources" that Brigham Young had obstructed a murder investigation for 18 years, which made him guilty of felony murder.)

The second explanation is that the massacre was a calculated act of vengeance.

After five years researching and writing about this horrific atrocity, I doubted I'd ever find a definitive answer to the question, "Did Brigham Young order the murders at Mountain Meadows?"

I was wrong.

To my surprise, I found evidence that convinced me beyond a shadow of a doubt that Brigham Young issued orders (probably verbal) to kill everyone in the Fancher party except those of "innocent blood"—children under eight years of age—to fulfill his sacred vow to "avenge the blood of the prophets" Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and more specifically, Apostle Parley P. Pratt. As one of John D. Lee's wives put it, "The Mormons were so insulted and indignant over the death or murder of Pratt that they Raked untold Vengeance on the poor Emigrants."

When I began writing about the massacre, I realized trying to "prove" anything about this appalling crime would prove only that I was an idiot. The evidence has been so corrupted—suppressed, destroyed, and fabricated—it's hard to determine the date the murders took place, let alone trace all the ins and outs of the conspiracy behind the crime. Writing a polemic trying to blame Brigham Young would be self-defeating, just as

writing an apologia to clear his skirts would ultimately have to justify murder. Instead I tried to tell the story as honestly and accurately as possible and let readers make up their own minds about who ordered the slaughter of more than 80 women and children—and why.

Apparently I succeeded, since critics in the employ of the LDS Church claim I don't "prove" Brigham Young ordered the murders. People make what they want of the facts in my book, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, but

## He said he did it.

Shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War, Brigham Young and his entourage visited Mountain Meadows for the first time since 1857. He stopped at the cairn the U.S. Army's First Dragoons had raised in 1859 over the grave of the emigrants whose scattered bones they had collected and buried. Young read the Bible verse the soldiers had inscribed on a cedar cross atop the monument: "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord."

"It should read," he said, "Vengeance is mine, and I have taken a little." Young then directed the desecration of the



for most readers, the evidence about who ordered the massacre is overwhelming.

As any attorney knows, the problem with a guilty client is he acts guilty, and after the massacre Brigham Young never behaved like an innocent man. Young's fiery discourses calling for blood and vengeance, his encouragement of Indian attacks on wagon trains and the lies he told to cover up the crime all show he was intimately involved in fomenting a vicious act of vengeance.

grave. "Within five minutes," recalled massacre participant Dudley Leavitt, "not one stone stood upon another."

A few days later Young justified the massacre as a necessary act of righteous vengeance. "The company that was used up at the Mountain Meadows" included the fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters "& connections" of the men who murdered the prophets, he told John D. Lee, and "they Merited their fate." The only thing that ever troubled Young "was the lives of the Women & children, but

that under the circumstances [it] could not be avoided.”

“But,” I can hear Mormon historians object, “this is purely circumstantial evidence Young actually ordered the killings.” Could be, but it’s no more circumstantial than the evidence O.J. Simpson murdered his wife.

Why did Brigham Young allegedly send a message telling Southern Utahns NOT to kill the emigrants unless he was countermanding previous orders? Why didn’t he use his powers as territorial governor to hunt down the men who committed this despicable crime? Why did he do nothing to return the stolen property of the 17 surviving orphans? Why did he threaten honest men who called for justice in the matter? Why did he shield the murderers and allow the church’s newspaper to blame the crime on the Paiutes for a dozen years after Jacob Hamblin told him Mormons were involved? And why does the *Deseret News* continue lying about Mountain Meadows to this day?

Finally, why has so much evidence been destroyed or purged from Mormon archives, and why has so much evidence been suppressed?

There’s one answer to all these questions: Brigham Young ordered the murders as a righteous act of vengeance.

Learning how Eleanor McLean Pratt got to Salt Lake City convinced me Brigham Young “did it.” The 12th Mrs. Pratt had buried her polygamous husband Parley in Arkansas the previous May, and she was obsessed with exacting vengeance from his murderers. She believed God’s “legions” would “hunt them down in every land & place.” With help from Mormon apostles in Missouri, Eleanor arrived in Utah on July 23, 1857, where she allegedly charged that men in the Fancher party had helped her first husband murder Apostle Pratt. She demanded Mormon authorities listen to “the cry of his blood” and take swift vengeance against the Fancher train, which had left Arkansas long before Pratt was killed.

## How did the widow Pratt cross 1,500 dusty miles in a mere 21 days?

That question stumped me for years, and like many other Mormon mysteries the clues have been carefully purged from the records of Utah’s past. When I learned that Orrin Porter Rockwell, the notorious Mormon lawman and “Danite,” had rushed Mrs. Pratt across the plains in record time, I knew what happened at Mountain Meadows.

Why? The great historian Harold Schindler spent 40 years learning everything there was to know about Orrin Porter Rockwell, Man of God/Son of Thunder (the title of his definitive biography). Hiding Rockwell’s role in expressing Eleanor to Utah from my late friend Hal was evidence that had been carefully suppressed. And “the suppressing of evidence,” Andrew Hamilton said in 1735, “ought always be taken for the best evidence.”

Brigham Young did it.

## No He Didn’t.

BY RON WALKER

Americans enjoy a good mystery, and they like conspiracies. They are also fascinated by stories of murder and especially murder on a grand scale. It’s no coincidence, then, that pulp fiction and Hollywood have used these ingredients—mystery, conspiracy and mass murder—for years. So do some

authors who’ve written about the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

There is a logic to this. It creates a sensation and sells books. But it’s not a formula for good history.

Good history must be based on facts. Stubborn facts. Not theories. Not circumstantial evidence. Not historical conspiracies created by authors speculating about the past.

The following are a few facts necessary for an understanding of this terrible event in Western and Mormon history.

## Brigham Young tried to stop the massacre.

“In regard to emigrating trains arriving and passing through our settlements,” he wrote in a letter designed to restore calm in Southern Utah, “We must not interfere with them.” These clear and difficult-to-misread words were rushed to Cedar City after Young received an express from local settlers there telling him of pending trouble. Tragically, Young’s letter arrived two days after the massacre, despite one of the epic rides in Western history. James Haslam, who rode the 500-mile circuit in six days, recalled, Young “told me [when riding back south] . . . not to spare horseflesh.” He didn’t.

Copies of Young’s letter exist both in rough draft and final draft form. The latter is filed in sequential order in Young’s well-preserved and bound letter books. Witnesses later testified about Haslam’s dramatic arrival in Salt Lake City, the writing of the letter and its dispatch South. In short, Young’s letter must be taken at face value: It was a determined, almost frantic, attempt to stop the massacre.

## No credible evidence exists that Young wanted the massacre.

Of course, anti-Young historians say otherwise. For motives, they point



An anti-Mormon mob killed Joseph and Hyrum Smith in Carthage, Illinois. After this attack, Smith’s successor, Brigham Young, led the Mormons West.

True West Archives

to the persecution of the Mormon people and to the earlier killing of Mormon leaders Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Adding fuel to Mormon rage, they argue, was the killing, a few months before the massacre of Apostle Parley P. Pratt. Pratt had been murdered in Arkansas, where the Baker-Fancher party had its origin. Wouldn't these events have kindled Young's anger and led him to seek revenge? Critics assume, yes.

But history is not assumption. The facts are these: Young spoke out against revenge killings. Justice for his people's wrongs was heaven's responsibility, not his, he said. Nor did Pratt's death stir blood lust. "The seeing of our faithful Elders slaughtered in cold blood," he wrote after his friend's death, is "at times almost to[o] greivous to be borne, but as the Spirit within me whispers, peace be still." This advice was never changed.

Logically, the idea of ordering a massacre as 2,500 U.S. troops marched upon Salt Lake City is absurd. Young was too clever—and too religiously devout—to have destroyed the emigrants and thus irreparably harm the reputation of his people. The crisis of the Utah War demanded that he husband moral authority and public opinion.

### **Young was not complicit in planning or executing the massacre.**

With no additional evidence, some historians have pointed to a Native American council held in Salt Lake City on September 1, 1857. The council sought to create a Mormon-Indian alliance, and to make such an arrangement attractive to the Indians, Young allegedly told them that he would no longer stop them from stealing emigrant cattle on the California Trail.

While this Indian council is important and requires extended scholarly discussion, this much can be said: No evidence suggests the council's focus was the Baker-Fancher party, much less its destruction. No evidence exists that the Indians at the council agreed to attack. Finally, it is also a matter of historical record that none of the Indian leaders at the Salt Lake council were later at Mountain

Meadows, except the Southern Ute leader, Ammon, who tried to prevent the massacre.

### **Evidence exculpates Young.**

Because the historical past will always be opaque, historians must seek the weight of evidence, and in this case, the preponderance suggests Young's innocence. Particularly telling is the testimony of those who did the killing at the Meadows. These men later insisted that no orders had come from Salt Lake City, and this testimony included that given by those who in later life left Utah and Mormonism. Some testimony came in private interviews when there was no motive to lie.

Likewise, John D. Lee, the only man convicted of the murders, was repeatedly offered leniency in exchange for incriminating Young—the last offer was made just moments before his execution. Despite a growing bitterness toward his former mentor, Lee refused. "Matters have & are being delayed with design of Cohearce [to coerce] me to Make a statement beyond what I know," he wrote in his diary. But "I am determined by the help of God never to bear false witness against My Neighbour." Later, he complained that those who questioned him wanted lies, not truth. Rather than provide them with what they wanted, Lee "chose to die like a man then [than] to live a villain."

### **The events at Mountain Meadows do not suggest a conspiracy, and certainly none involving Young.**

While several reasons for this statement may be suggested, most persuasive is the ebb and flow of the local decision-making during the weeklong event. In this period, militia leaders at Cedar City and at Mountain Meadows changed their minds several times whether the killing should go forward. They were reacting to events as they took place. Even on the day of the slaughter, couriers were reportedly hurrying from Cedar City—30 miles to the east—to call it off. In short, the massacre is best explained by cascading local events in a setting of extreme excitement and fear. When it was over, men quarreled over responsibility, and

many vowed that no one should ever know of their deadly work, including, presumably, Brigham Young.

### **Young was not a man of violence.**

While the church leader's temper and strong words at the pulpit earned him a reputation for coercion, in truth, those who knew him best often spoke of his caution and his abhorrence of bloodshed. Militia orders to the Mormon army carried Young's words on the reverse: "Shed no blood."

"When the books are opened in the day of judgment," declared an associate who was at his side in 1857, "these things will be proven to heaven and earth."

The Mountain Meadows Massacre was a horrible atrocity, and the conduct of some Mormons involved in it was deplorable: strong words from the Tabernacle pulpit, Saints seeking vengeance because of their past persecution, Young's risky Native American alliance, senseless acts by some local Mormon leaders, Utah's troubling episodes of extralegal violence and most awful, the terrible killing at Mountain Meadows. But we only make the tragedy worse by saying that it was something other than what it was—by trying to fit events into a pre-conceived theory of conspiracy. That admonition includes charging Brigham Young with crimes that he did not commit.



## **TRUE WEST ARCHIVES**

For the first time ever, every issue of *True West* magazine is now online, including the original unabridged article by Will Bagley and Ron Walker as it appeared in the April 2003 issue. To learn more about how you can read all of Walker's and Bagley's articles and subscribe to *True West* Archives, go to [TrueWestMagazine.com](http://TrueWestMagazine.com).

**Our past awaits you!**

## From the Lone Star West to San Juan Hill

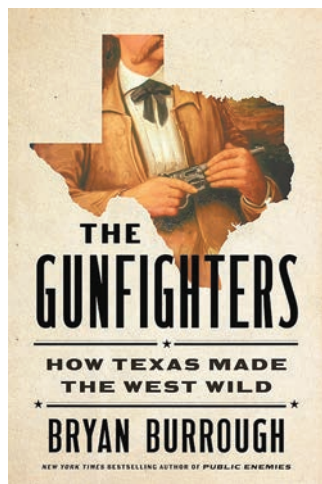
Three new books on Texas, Davy Crockett and the Spanish-American War, plus a classic Western anthology on Mexico and a revealing new history of the Mexican *ciboleros*.

**T**exans like to take a lot of credit for creating the American West. Bestselling author Bryan Burrough's *The Gunfighters: How Texas Made the Wild West* (Penguin Press, \$35) will definitely affirm that idea for anyone who has Lone Star State roots, and many more who read the Austin, Texas, author's latest well-crafted and well-researched American history.

Burrough's *The Gunfighters* is an extremely well-organized, well thought out narrative history that is carefully crafted to prove his theory "about the role of honor on the 19th-century frontier, and about how one state, Texas—which produced far more gunfights and far more gunfighters than any other—disproportionately influenced its parameters. Because killing to defend one's honor? Duels? Feuds?"

It all feels a little, well, Southern," he wrote.

The Texas author marches the readers forward through 18th-century American history, the spread of the American empire across the West and the influence of the British dueling and Scot-Irish culture on the Southern American code-of-honor. As Burrough states, "the duelists' legacy in the Old West was less about the



physical structure of an armed confrontation than the reasons underlying it. Thousands of Southerners flowed west in the 1800s, and with them went their honor codes. ...On the way west, this mindset evolves into something new, something explosive, thanks in large part to that ultimate frontier

Southerner, the one who first meddled the passions of the Old South to the six-shooter: the Texan."

Researchers and scholars of Western frontier gunfighter and outlaw history will want to read Burrough's comprehensive study of the role of Texans in the history of violence in the American West. From frontier Texas to New Mexico, Arizona and the Rocky Mountain West, Burrough expertly demonstrates the influence of Texans on almost every major historical gunfight still analyzed and debated by current scholars, including the Earp-Clanton feud and the Lincoln County War.

I highly recommend Burrough's *The Gunfighters* and believe it is one of the most important books written on the American West in many years. His bibliography, author narrative notes and endnotes are a great resource for readers and scholars. Burrough has

established himself as one of America's finest journalists and literary historians. But beware, if you meet a Texan who has read *The Gunfighters*, you will just have to agree that the Wild West begins and ends in Texas—or you're sure to face a showdown over the facts.

—Stuart Rosebrook

### Dawn of a New Century

Many Western historians' interest in the Spanish-American War begins and ends with the Rough Riders. Scholar Matthew Bernstein's *Team of Giants: The Making of the Spanish-American War* (University of Oklahoma Press, \$36.95) reminds us of the individuals who violently catapulted the United States into the stormy waters of imperialism. Bernstein, who is the editor of *The Wild West History Journal*, expertly weaves the intriguing and world-changing influence of media mogul William Randolph Hearst, military and political hopeful Theodore Roosevelt and U.S. Congressman Joseph "Fightin' Joe" Wheeler on President William McKinley's decision to lead the United States into war against Spain in the Caribbean and the Western Pacific. Bernstein is an excellent researcher, and he writes with an entertaining literary





Photo by Robert Ray

## WESTERN WRITERS OF AMERICA HONORS CRAIG JOHNSON

Author **Craig Johnson**, whose novels about a Wyoming sheriff named Walt Longmire have made *The New York Times* bestseller list and inspired a popular TV series, is the 2025 recipient of the Owen Wister Award for Lifetime Contributions to Western Literature.

The award, given annually by **Western Writers of America**, will be presented at the WWA's 2025 convention, on June 21 in Amarillo, Texas.

Previous Wister recipients include historians Will Bagley, David Lavender and Robert M. Utley; novelist-poet N. Scott Momaday; and bestselling novelists Rudolfo Anaya, Tony Hillerman, Elmore Leonard and Lucia St. Clair Robson.

Johnson started his series, published by Viking, with *The Cold Dish* in 2004. *Another Man's Moccasins* (2008) and *The Longmire Defense* (2023) won Spur Awards from WWA, and *Any Other Name* (2014) was a Spur finalist. *Return to Sender*, the 21st novel in the series, will be released in late May.

Today, two decades since his first of 20 full-length Longmire novels, Johnson is an ambassador of Western literature and is considered one of the most influential authors of modern Western mystery writing in the 21st century.

"With my ranch only 15 miles from the Occidental Hotel here in Wyoming where the Virginian got his man, the weight and width of Owen Wister's works cast a broad shadow across Western literature, and I'm simply stunned at having my name uttered alongside his," said Johnson, who lives in Ucross, Wyoming, with his wife, Judy.

—Stuart Rosebrook  
with Johnny D. Boggs

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Order *When Cimarron Meant Wild* from the University of Oklahoma Press, online book sellers, or your local bookstore.

style, which readers first enjoyed in *George Hearst: Silver King of the Gilded Age*. Bernstein rightfully thrusts Hearst back into the center of the story in *Team of Giants*, as his influence is still relevant to understanding the role of the modern press in American domestic and international politics.

Seizing the moment and opportunity for glory and power, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt audaciously thrust himself onto the national stage and organized the soon-to-be legendary Rough Riders. Bernstein's portrait of Roosevelt in *Team of Giants* leaves the reader wanting more on the future president and his Rough Riders, who are as intriguing as ever in the fast-paced narrative.

Bernstein's decision to profile former Confederate and U.S. Congressman Joseph Wheeler is also a great reminder of the role of redemption in American politics. In a foreshadowing of the coming 20th century, Congressman Wheeler used his domestic position in the House of Representatives in the nation's international affair, which catapulted him back into the U.S. Army as a major general and commanding officer of Roosevelt.

Researchers of the era will want to own *Team of Giants* for Bernstein's valuable annotated end notes and bibliography. Students of wartime journalism will also value Bernstein's research on the rise of the modern press and the Hearst corporation's influence on American history, as well as his narratives on the rivalry between journalists Stephen Crane and Richard Harding Davis. We can only be patient as we wait for Bernstein's next volume of American history.

—*Stuart Rosebrook*

### Timeless Western Classic

First published in 1953, *The Burning Plain* (El Llano en llamas) by Juan Rulfo (University of Texas Press, \$21.95) has earned its place as Mexico's most significant and widely translated collection of short fiction. Set primarily in the harsh, unforgiving region of El Llano Grande in the state of Jalisco, the anthology's 17 stories offer an unfiltered glimpse into life

after the Mexican Revolution (1910–17) and the Cristero Revolt (1926–29). In these spare yet powerful tales, a father carries his dying son through the darkness in a desperate search for help. A young girl watches helplessly as a flood carries away her beloved cow and her family's entire harvest. Elsewhere, a group of *campesinos* spend an exhausting day crossing the vast, barren Llano—the land the government has allotted them to farm. Through each story, Rulfo avoids sentimentalism and moral judgment, instead presenting an unflinching portrait of a landscape and people scarred by violence, hardship and injustice, and survival, resilience and the harsh realities of rural life in post-revolutionary Mexico.

—*Erik J. Wright,*  
 assistant editor of  
 The Tombstone Epitaph

### The Hispanic Hide Hunters

The well-worn saga of the "Great Buffalo Hunt"—filled with rugged commercial hide hunters and the tragic ecological toll on one of North America's most iconic animals—has long occupied a place in the narrative of the American West. In *Ciboleros! Hispanic Buffalo Hunters on the Southern Plains* (Museum of the Fur Trade, \$50), Clive G. Siegle reminds us of buffalo-hunting pioneered by Hispanic hunters known as *ciboleros*. Spanning nearly two centuries, their hunting culture stretched from northern Mexico to present-day Colorado, leaving a profound mark on frontier life. The *ciboleros* adapted Spanish equestrian and military techniques to the hunt, developing a unique and highly effective strategy. Often relying on lances, they pursued buffalo in thrilling mounted *corridas* that rivaled the drama of medieval cavalcades. Riding horses specially bred for speed and endurance, they organized communal hunts that resembled annual pilgrimages onto the Llano Estacado—a vast, unforgiving landscape teeming with millions of buffalo.

—*Erik J. Wright,*  
 assistant editor of  
 The Tombstone Epitaph



## AN AUTHOR'S FIVE ESSENTIAL WESTERN HISTORY BOOKS

We asked Western scholar and expert on the Buffalo Soldiers **John P. Langellier** to share from publishers' backlists five must-reads for Old West historians. His latest book is *Buffalo Soldiers in Arizona* (The History Press, 2025).

- 1 ***Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Black Cavalry in the West***, Revised Edition by William H. and Shirley A. Leckie (University of Oklahoma Press): The first release helped open the floodgates of scores of publications that treat this now popular topic. Although somewhat dated, the title still deserves a place on the bookshelf.
- 2 ***Black Infantry in the West 1869-1891*** by Arlen L. Fowler (University of Oklahoma Press): While William Leckie concentrated on the African American horse soldier, this study concentrated on the African American foot soldier on the frontier. The text is brisk and straightforward.
- 3 ***Black Regulars, 1866-1898*** by William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips (University

of Oklahoma Press): A masterful exploration of Black soldiers from their emergence after the American Civil War through combat in Cuba, the authors dispel myths and present meticulously researched facts. They set the gold standard for serious students of the Buffalo Soldiers.

- 4 ***Black Valor: Bufalo Soldiers and the Medal of Honor, 1870-1898***, by Frank N. Schubert (Roman & Littlefield): What Robert M. Utley is to the overall military history of the post-Civil War West, Schubert is to African Americans in late-19th-century U.S. Army. His numerous monographs and articles elevate him to the same respected stature. This work illustrates that point.
- 5 ***New Mexico's Buffalo Soldiers, 1866-1900***, by Monroe Billington (University Press of Colorado): One of a few narratives focused on Black soldiers in a specific state or territory, the New Mexico story includes the Lincoln County War and the grueling campaign against the formidable Victorio.



Courtesy John Langellier

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# AMERICAN PRIMEVAL —GOOD AND EVIL

*The Mountain Meadow Massacre is center-stage in this brutal and enthralling pioneer docudrama.*



**A**merican Primeval takes no prisoners—especially audience members: a close-up is almost always a tip-off that someone is about to get shot in the face, or scalped, or have their throat slit. Netflix's notice at the beginning warns not generally of violence, but specifically of "gore." Not that one could tell this story well without spilling blood. It's set in 1857, against the background of the Utah War,

specifically the Mountain Meadows Massacre, in which a Mormon army, disguised as Indians, slaughtered 120 members of a wagon train.

Betty Gilpin plays Sara, who has taken her young son Devin (Preston Mota) into this hellish vision of Zion, to reunite with his father at Crooks Spring. Their first guide gets them as far as Fort Bridger before he is murdered, and their second guide, James

As played by Taylor Kitsch, below, swinging the rifle, White-born, Shoshone-raised Isaac's existence is an endless fight for life in the unforgiving frontier beyond Fort Bridger.

All images Courtesy Netflix

Director Peter Berg prepares to take one of the countless hand-held shots from atop a horse.



Beckwourth (a great historical figure who is often mentioned but never appears), has stood Sara up for being many days late. Jim Bridger (Shea Whigham) tries to help by hooking her up with Isaac Reed (Taylor Kitsch), a Shoshone-raised White man, but he refuses to take them. But he's so concerned that the beyond-her-depth Sara will get her son killed, that he tails them when she joins a wagon train, and is there to rescue them when the slaughter begins. But their problems are only beginning, and Isaac has no inkling that Sara is fleeing bounty hunters.

The six-hour, six-episode *American Primeval* is a very entertaining, very violent miniseries that focuses on a rarely dramatized and fascinating period of pre-Civil War Western history. The true history is as controversial today as it was in the 1850s, and most of the show's choices are viable, if not provable. Shot in New Mexico, a massive undertaking and an artistic and logistical triumph, director Peter Berg notes, "This show was the hardest thing I've ever filmed. We shot for 130 days, and about two of those days were interiors—so we spent about 128 days up in the mountains. We were out there driving an hour to different locations, national parks,

different reservations, going into extremely isolated areas. The weather was intense, the action was intense." In 2020, Berg, whose previous successes include the films *Friday Night Lights* and *Deepwater Horizon*, read an article about the massacre, saw its potential and brought the idea to Mark L. Smith, who'd written the outstanding screenplay for *The Revenant*. "He had the kind of sensibility to capture a historical story," Berg recalled, "and to figure out a way of putting a lot of adrenaline into it; making it a great history lesson, but also very entertaining and very emotional."

And together Smith and Berg have certainly succeeded: the events of the story are so compelling that wondering and dreading what will happen next drives the audience's attention throughout. The massacre sequence is an astonishing triumph of direction, acting, photography—by cinematographer for the *Purge* movies Jaques Jouffret, editing, and presumably a mix of both physical and computer-generated visual and audio special effects which leave the viewer terrified, thrilled and exhausted.

Notes Smith, "Pete Berg charged me with a hatchet the first time that we spoke about [the project], because that was, to him, representative of the

Top: In-demand Native actors, Tokala Black Elk plays Buffalo Run here, guested on *Yellowstone*, *1883* and *Outer Range*, and is a regular with Reba MacIntire on *Happy's Place*. Derek Hinkey, *American Primeval's* Native male lead as Red Feather, plays Shorty Bowlegs on *Dark Winds*, and a Papago Scout on *Horizon—Chapter One*.

Center: Isaac, against his better judgment, is determined to protect young Devin (Preston Mota) and his mother, Sara (Betty Gilpin).

Bottom: A pair of fish out of water, they take a lot of protecting.



French-born cinematographer Jacques Jouffret creates a nightmare world of slaughter, and editor Hugo Diaz thrusts the viewer into its center.



A disguised Mormon assassin cuts away, but the camera does not! Whether it's the near-scalping of Jacob Pratt (Dane DeHaan), a pioneer woman's throat being slit, or an arrow piercing flesh, the camera goes in for sometimes stomach-churning realism, eschewing the Old Hollywood tradition of discreetly turning away.

world, the violence, the fight for this land. There was so much conflict coming from so many different angles that there was no way to tell a story without the violence—not in a way that would be true to the time, anyway.”

And those angles include not just Mormon vs. pioneer violence. Shoshone, Ute, Paiute, the U.S. Army, and depraved outlaws all take part.

Smith had become fascinated with Jim Bridger while writing *The Revenant*—a young Bridger is a character in that film—and had written a script about him in 2016. It's what he presented to Berg at their first meeting. As Bridger, Shea Whigham, so memorable as the enigmatic slave-owner in *Lawmen—Bass Reeves*, who offers Bass his freedom over a hand of poker, then cheats him, is here the moral center of the tale, even as Fort Bridger



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A beautiful view of a ghastly site, for dramatic reasons, the film portrays the Mountain Meadows Massacre as a single attack. In truth, the slaughter took several days.

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A popular leading man and *Chicago Hope* star before becoming a director, Peter Berg cast himself as the real historical figure of Fancher, leader of the ill-fated wagon train.

is the geographic center. In fact, despite not being one of the leads, Whigham walks away with the series, as Bridger is the character who is most compelling.

Although they get more screentime because they are so busy with action rather than character, we never get to know the emotionally closed-off Sara. We do grow to respect the gutsy Abish (Saura Lightfoot Leon), the Mormon bride who barely survives the massacre; Red Feather (Derek

Hinke), the Shoshone who takes her; and Jacob (Dane DeHaan), the half-scalped Mormon groom whose search for Abish pushes him toward madness.

Besides Bridger, the other most-compelling character is the diabolical Governor of Utah and head of the Church of Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young, played as an oily, homicidal narcissist in a bravura performance by *Sons of Anarchy* star and seasoned Western villain Kim Coates. Indeed, one of the great raging debates among historians even today is whether

From *Open Range* to *Godless*, Kim Coates is always a sinister presence, but never before with the terrifying power he wields as Brigham Young, here meeting with church elders.



Brigham Young ordered the slaughter or attempted to prevent it.

Still, it's jarring to see such a major religious figure portrayed as a monster, but Mormons have historically been remarkably patient when abused in the various entertainment media. There was nary a complaint when the hit Broadway musical comedy *The Book of Mormon* portrayed them as naïve boobs. One doubts a musical comedy based on the Koran, or the Old or New Testament, would be so politely tolerated. More than a decade ago, when the AMC Western series *Hell on Wheels* raked Mormons over the coals, an article by television critic Scott D. Pierce in the *Salt Lake Tribune* said, "You can be insulted by the historically inaccurate, inflammatory and rather ridiculous way Mormons have been portrayed. Or you can roll your eyes...realizing that it's lazy fiction that not much of anybody is watching."

Perhaps the fact that *American Primeval* is an inarguable hit has necessitated a response among believers. In an article on RNS, The Religious News Service, respected historian and

LDS member Barbara Jones Brown takes on the series in an article titled "What 'American Primeval' gets wrong about Mormon—and American—history." She cites several notable errors, although others—such as geographical mistakes, or whether Brigham Young bought Fort Bridger intending to burn it, or decided to later on—most audiences would accept as artistic license.

While admitting and regretting the slaughter, she dismisses Young's threats as "bluster," and dismisses the idea that the Mormon Militia wore Klansman-like hoods for their attack. "They did not need to, because they massacred all of the emigrants except for 17 children ages six and under." Notably, she never addresses the question of whether Brigham Young ordered the slaughter.

While the violence is jarring and shocking, perhaps more troubling is the overwhelming cynicism that seems to pervade the story. Every character, young or old, kills someone—if not on camera, we are told about it. We meet a teenaged Shoshone, Two Moons

(Shawnee Pourier), in the opening minutes, when she steals a knife. Later in the episode, her drunken father attempts to rape her, and she carves him up, while her mother cries that now they have nothing! Incidentally, she has no dialogue because her tongue has been cut. Why is everything so dark? Executive Producer Eric Newman says, "*American Primeval* very much lines up with my own worldview, which is that we are populated not by good guys and bad guys, but more by bad guys and very bad guys." Surprisingly, there is no mention in the series of John Doyle Lee, a Mormon Elder who was excommunicated, convicted of mass murder and executed by firing squad for his role in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. It was a long way from justice for 120 souls, but at least it was a something.



**Henry C. Parke**, Western Film and TV Editor for *True West*, is a screenwriter, and blogs for the INSP Channel, and at [HenrysWesternRoundup.blogspot.com](http://HenrysWesternRoundup.blogspot.com). A book based on his *True West* columns, *The Greatest Westerns Ever Made*, was recently published by TwoDot.

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BY PETER CORBETT

# Pendleton, Oregon

*This "Real West" town kicks up its boot heels for rowdy rodeo.*

**P**endleton, Oregon, has come a long way since it was a dusty outpost on the Oregon Trail in the 1850s, but it holds tight to the reins of its Western heritage.

The eastern Oregon town 200 miles from Portland claims the title of "the Real West." And why not? Pendleton Woolen Mills has been weaving its colorful, virgin wool blankets in town since 1909. The company's distinctive blanket designs honor Nez Perce Chief Joseph, President Harding and a series of national parks. Pendleton is a sixth-generation, privately held company founded in 1863 by Thomas Kay, an English master weaver.

In the early 20th century, the town of Pendleton put itself on the map when it launched the Pendleton Round-Up, a rodeo with the slogan "Let' er Buck."

The first Round-Up was described in 1910 by the *Eastern Oregonian* newspaper as a "frontier exhibition of picturesque pastimes, Indian and military spectacles and cowboy racing and bronco busting for the championship of the Northwest." The rodeo and pageant are still going strong 115 years later.

During the Round-Up, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indians



Nobody better knows the history of this 100-year-old rodeo than the folks at the Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon Hall of Fame. The exhibits they've put together show off the rodeo's souvenir programs (see the 1917 program at left).

Courtesy Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon Hall of Fame Collection

Below: An aerial view of tipis at the Pendleton Powow

Courtesy Crook County Museum





Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon Hall of Fame Museum

Photo by Lora Thorson, Courtesy Crook County Museum

come to Pendleton to camp in hundreds of teepees. They also perform in the Happy Canyon Pageant, depicting their way of life, the journey of Lewis and Clark and the arrival of pioneers on the Oregon Trail. "Everyone just knows the second week of September it's Round-Up season," said Justin Waldron, Travel Pendleton director. "The town grows from about 17,000 to over 70,000 for the week. It's massive. There's just a spirit here and it's so much fun." Waldron is partial to the

Round-Up since his parents met in Pendleton during the annual rodeo.

The Pendleton Round-Up, he says, highlights "the heritage of Western culture, design and life. That's what Pendleton is. It's the lifestyle like the 1860s, 1880s and 1890s."

Other vestiges of the old West in Pendleton have included the Severe Brothers Saddlery, Hamley & Co., Rainbow Cafe and Pendleton Underground tours.

The Severe Brothers, saddlemakers Duff and Bill, hosted rodeo cowboys for a half century during the Round-Up in a bunkhouse above their now closed shop. It was called Hotel de Cowpunch. The only rule was cowboys had to leave behind a signed photograph of themselves pinned on the wall.

Hamley & Co., established in 1883, promotes its business as "Purveyors of Fine Saddles, Fine Food and Fine Whiskey." It includes a Western store





As seen on *Yellowstone*

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Cowgirls in front of Sculptor Stanley Wanlass's famous bronze, *Let 'Er Buck* in Pendleton, Oregon.

Courtesy Pendleton COC

with clothing, hats, boots, saddles, blankets and tack. The Hamley Cafe and Wine Bar is next door, adjacent to the Hamley Steakhouse and Saloon.

Pendleton's Rainbow Cafe has been operating in the same brick building since 1883 and is arguably the oldest tavern in Oregon.

"You cannot not go to the Rainbow," Waldron said of the cowboy bar.

The back bar features rainbow neon, and the place is full of Round-Up memorabilia and Pendleton ephemera going back a century. The 'Bow, as it's known, serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Pendleton's Underground Tours lead visitors through the tunnels and basement rooms built below its historic downtown buildings. It

### *Nothing But Blue Sky*

By J. Laptad, Courtesy Pendleton Round-Up



includes the Shamrock Card Room, Hop Sing's Laundry, Empire Meat Market, a Duck Pin Bowling Alley, a jail and opium den. Visitors climb 31 stairs to view the "Cozy Rooms" in one of Pendleton's 18 bordellos. There they learn the story of the town's foremost madam — Stella Darby (1902-77). She was known as an astute businesswoman who took good care of her working girls and provided bookkeeping and financial advice to her love-starved patrons. Darby is memorialized with a life-sized bronze statue on South Main Street between Dorion and Emigrant avenues. If all that isn't enough, Pendleton also is home to the Pendleton Center for the Arts in a 1916 Carnegie Library building. Plus, the Wildhorse Resort and Casino and Ta'maststlikt Cultural Institute are on the nearby reservation of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indians.



**Peter Corbett** has explored the West for a half century and worked as an Arizona journalist for more than 35 years..



Tillie Baldwin trick-riding at the Round-Up  
True West Archives



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# JOURNEY THROUGH TIME: SADDLE UP FOR THE ULTIMATE WESTERN ROAD TRIP

The American West wasn't built in silence—it was forged in the clatter of wagon wheels, the thunder of hooves and the hiss of steam engines pushing ever onward.

Today, those echoes still ride the wind, inviting modern travelers to hit the road and trace the very trails that shaped a nation. From Nevada's storied Cowboy Corridor to the wilds of Washington and the outlaw-haunted hills of Wyoming, this self-guided adventure isn't just a road trip—it's a full-blown plunge into the pulse of the past.

Follow the ruts of the Oregon Trail, where thousands of pioneers risked it all for a new life in the West. The route may be paved now, but the stories still rise from the earth like dust on a wagon track. Continue through Nevada's Cowboy Corridor, where every mile along Interstate 80 tells a tale of grit and gold, cattle drives and railroad dreams. It's here that ghost towns and ranching outposts stand as proud reminders of a frontier spirit that never faded.

Head north into Washington's wild interior, where the iron rails of old train lines snake past frontier saloons and weathered homesteads. This is the land of fur traders, fearless lawmen and legends born in dusty street duels. And no Western journey would be complete without a ride through Wyoming, where outlaws like Butch Cassidy once roamed and where the West's raw, untamed energy still hums beneath the open sky.

Whether you're chasing history, scenery, or a little bit of both, this road trip promises more than postcard views—it delivers a chance to walk (or drive) in the footsteps of legends. So pack your bags, fill the tank and ride with the ghosts of the frontier. The story of the West is still being told—one mile at a time.



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**ELKO, NEVADA**

## JOURNEY THROUGH TIME: A Historical Road Trip Along Nevada's Cowboy Corridor

Nevada's Cowboy Corridor, stretching along Interstate 80, isn't just another highway—it's a living, breathing testament to the Old West. This route was carved out by fortune seekers, cattle drivers and rail tycoons in the 1800s, and today, it's your gateway to experiencing the legends that built the frontier. Saddle up, because this is no ordinary road trip—it's a full-throttle ride into history, where every town, trail and tumbleweed tell a tale of grit, glory and gold.

### Start Your Journey in Carson City

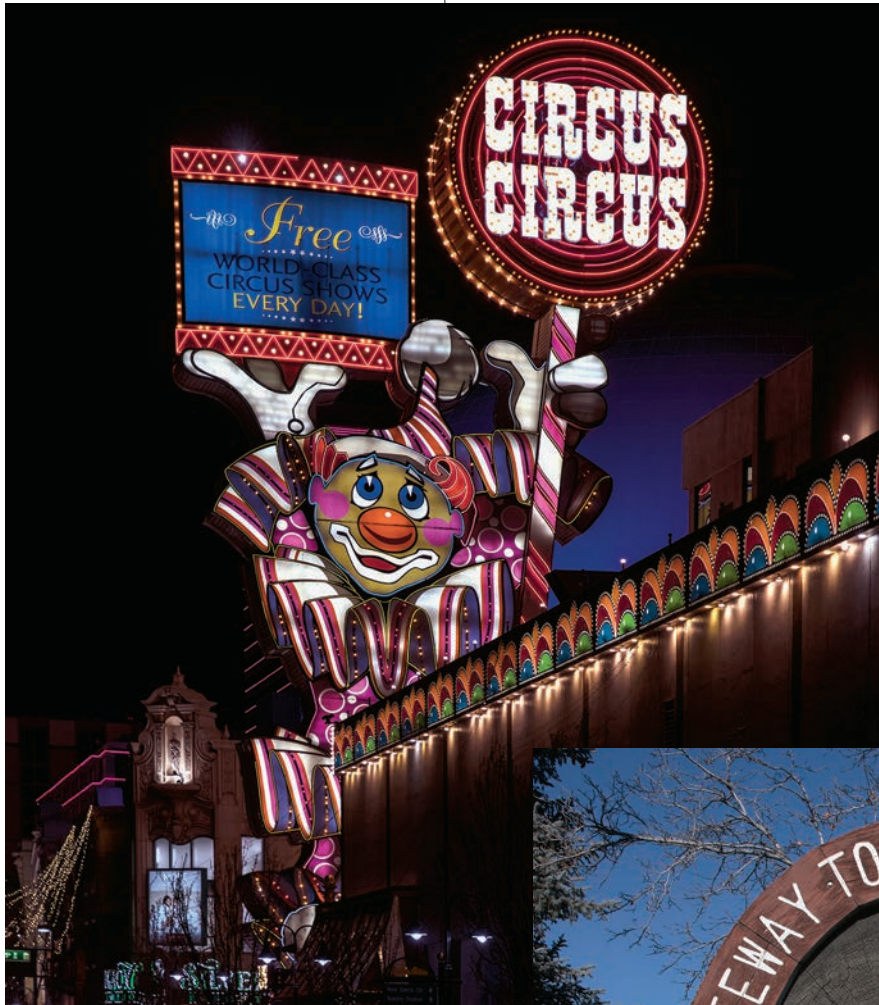
Begin in Nevada's capital, where the echoes of the 1800s still ring through the streets. Kit Carson's namesake town became the beating heart of the Silver State when the discovery of the Comstock Lode in 1859 ignited a bonanza that turned miners into millionaires overnight.

Step inside the **Nevada State Museum**, once the U.S. Mint, and see where silver from the nearby mines was pressed into coinage that fueled the West. Stroll the **Kit Carson Trail**, a walking history lesson featuring stunning 19th-century homes and landmarks. Then, make tracks to the **Nevada State Railroad Museum**, where the iron horses that once ruled the frontier still roar to life, puffing steam and nostalgia.

Cactus Jack Casino's namesake figure in Carson City, Nevada



The Circus Circus casino in Reno, Nevada



## Onward to Winnemucca: Outlaws and Overland Trails

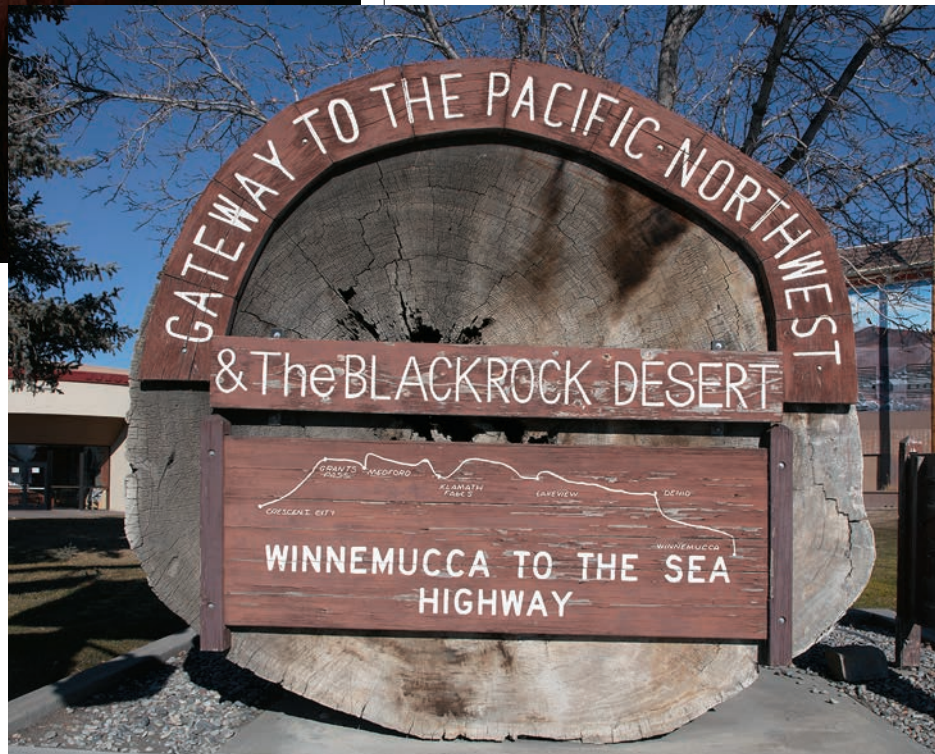
From Reno, punch eastward for 165 miles on I-80 to Winnemucca, where pioneers once stopped to rest their weary bones along the California Trail in the mid-1800s. The Central Pacific Railroad sealed its place in history, but Butch Cassidy might have put it on the outlaw map in 1900 when he and his gang allegedly held up the First National Bank and made off with \$32,000 in broad daylight.

Dig into the town's past at the **Humboldt Museum**, where Native American artifacts and pioneer relics from the 1800s paint a picture of life on the frontier. Then, time your visit with

## North to Reno: From Railroads to Riches

Roll 30 miles north to Reno, where the Central Pacific Railroad transformed a dusty outpost into a booming trade hub in 1868. While today's Reno thrives on neon and gaming, its past was built on the backs of 1800s railroad men, ranchers and risk-takers.

Visit the **Lake Mansion**, a relic from Reno's early days, or lose yourself in the **National Automobile Museum**, where carriages and Model Ts tell the story of travel before interstates. For a glimpse at the West through an artist's eyes, the **Nevada Museum of Art** showcases paintings that capture the rugged beauty of the frontier.



This marker, in Winnemucca, Nevada, denotes the beginning of a highway that stretches from northern Nevada and across California to the Pacific Ocean, near Crescent City.

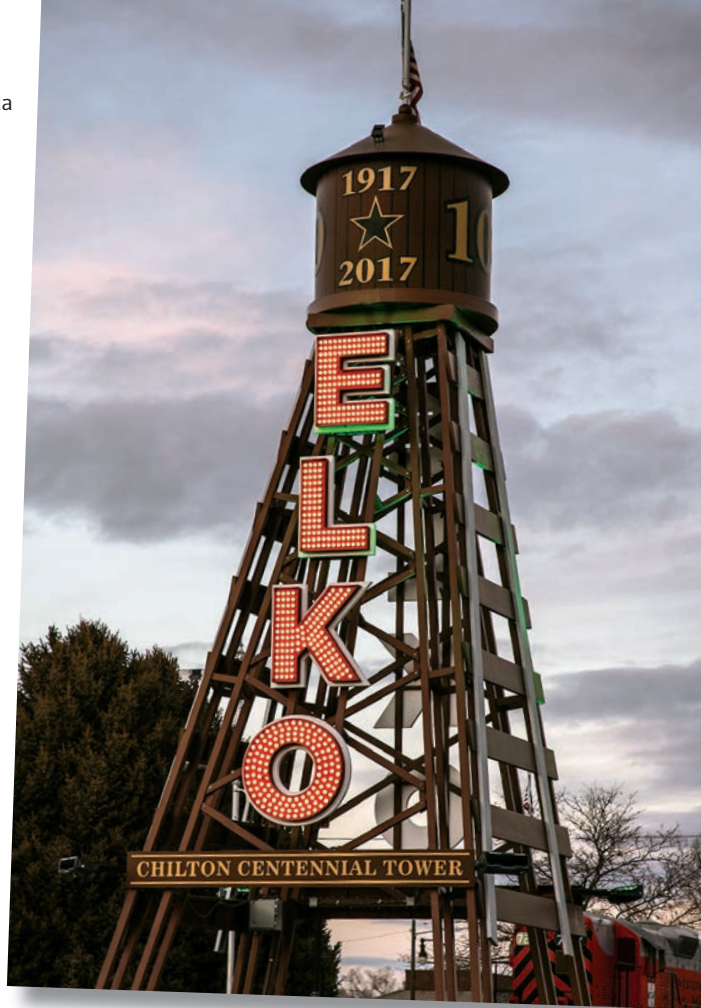
the **Winnemucca Ranch Hand Rodeo**, where modern cowboys put their skills to the test in bronc riding, cattle roping and rawhide racing under the vast Nevada sky.

Neon welcome sign in Elko, Nevada

## Onward to Elko: Nevada's Cowboy Capital

Drive 124 miles east to Elko, where cowboy culture isn't just a memory—it's a way of life. This is the land of spurred boots, dusty trails and hearty cattle drives that stretch to the horizon. Founded in 1868 as a railroad town, Elko has been home to cattlemen, prospectors and Basque sheepherders for generations.

Get a taste of the town's history at the **Northeastern Nevada Museum**, or step inside the legendary **Star Hotel**, a Basque boardinghouse dating back to the late 1800s, for a meal like the sheepherders of old enjoyed. Swing by **J.M. Capriola Co.**, a saddle shop crafting cowboy gear since 1929, then plan your visit around the **National Cowboy**



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**Poetry Gathering**, where stories, songs and poetry keep the frontier spirit alive.

Just outside of town, the **California Trail Interpretive Center** immerses visitors in the triumphs and tribulations of westward pioneers, while the **Cowboy Arts & Gear Museum** showcases the craftsmanship that outfitted the legends of the range.

### The Final Stop: Wendover, A Crossroads of History

From Elko, drive 110 miles east to West Wendover, a border town where history meets adventure with the force of a desert thunderstorm. During the 1800s, this region was part of the great **Overland Stage Route** and the transcontinental railroad expansion, playing a key role in westward migration. Later, during World




Wendover Will in Wendover, Nevada

War II, this remote desert town became the training site for the Enola Gay crew, the B-29 bomber that changed history.

Snap a photo with **Wendover Will**, the giant neon cowboy welcoming travelers since 1952, his glowing outline a beacon for road warriors. Then, step inside the **Historic Wendover Airfield Museum** to walk the halls of a base that helped shape the modern world. If speed is your thing, the nearby **Bonneville Salt Flats** offer a surreal landscape where land-speed records have been shattered for over a century—stand on the same

salt where history was written in tire marks and pure adrenaline.






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## BLAZING THE OREGON TRAIL: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE PAST

The trail was long, the dangers many, and yet, they came—thousands of souls seeking a new life. From the plains of Missouri to the Pacific's crashing waves, the Oregon Trail was more than a route—it was the backbone of westward expansion. Today, the road is smoother, the rivers bridged, but the stories remain, waiting for those who dare to follow them.

### Baker City: The Crossroads of Gold and Grit

Baker City was a vital stop for pioneers before they faced the untamed West. At the **National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center**, you can stand atop Flagstaff Hill and take in the same sweeping views that greeted wagon trains rolling across the valley. Inside, immersive exhibits bring to life the struggles of starvation, disease, and river crossings.

A night at the **Geiser Grand Hotel**, built in 1889, puts you in the footsteps of gold barons and frontier aristocrats. The stained-glass ceiling still glows above the grand staircase, where whispers of long-gone gamblers and ladies of the evening linger.

Nearby, the **Sumpter Valley Railroad** offers a ride on an 1890s steam locomotive, carrying passengers through gold country. Just beyond, the abandoned logging town of **Whitney** stands as a reminder of boomtowns that faded into dust.



Specked Trouble  
Courtesy Crook County Museum



Pendleton Happy Canyon Indian and Wild West show

Courtesy Crook County Museum

## Pendleton: Cowboys, Outlaws and the People Who Came Before

Pendleton is a town where history runs deep. The Pendleton Round-Up, held every September since 1910, is one of America's most famous rodeos, showcasing the grit and tradition of the American cowboy. The thunder of hooves, the crack of a bullwhip and the

roar of the crowd make this event an unforgettable spectacle. But the Round-Up isn't just about cowboys—it also honors the Native American tribes who have called this land home for centuries.

A must-see is the *Happy Canyon Show*, an iconic part of the Pendleton Round-Up. Since 1916, this dramatic, large-scale production has told the story

of the American West, from its earliest Indigenous inhabitants to the arrival of settlers and the clash of cultures that followed. Hundreds of performers bring the past to life, showcasing the resilience and traditions of Native American tribes, the dangers faced by pioneers, and the rowdy lawlessness of frontier boomtowns.

At the Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, the voices of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla tribes tell a different story. Unlike the typical pioneer museums, this center shares the Indigenous perspective—of lands taken, traditions upended and resilience through the generations.

Beneath the city, the **Pendleton Underground Tours** reveal a world of hidden tunnels once used by Chinese laborers, bootleggers and bordello owners. Shadowy passageways lead to abandoned gambling halls, secret opium dens and remnants of a wilder time.

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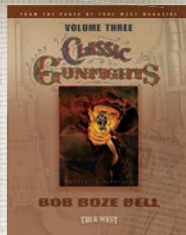
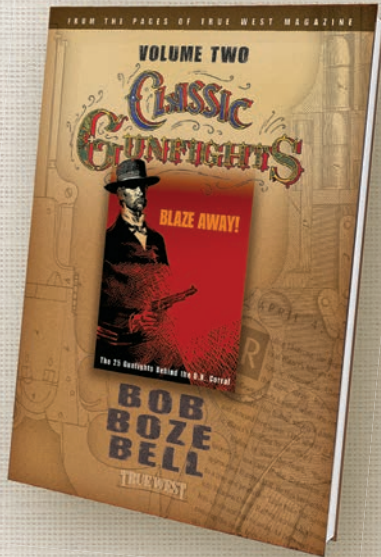
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Before leaving town, stop at **Hamley Steakhouse**, part of the legendary Hamley & Co. saddle shop, where cowboys have been outfitted since the 1800s.

### La Grande: A Pioneer's Respite

Nestled in the Grande Ronde Valley, La Grande was a haven for weary emigrants preparing for the perilous Blue Mountains. The **Union County Museum** shares stories of the settlers who braved the trek, while **Hot Lake Springs**, once a grand resort in the 1860s, still offers steaming mineral baths.



Street clock in The Dalles (whose name rhymes with "gals"), Oregon.

Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

### The Dalles: Where the Trail Met the River

For pioneers, The Dalles was a place of decision. Here, wagons faced their final obstacle—the Columbia River. Some built rafts, risking the rapids in a desperate bid to reach the Willamette Valley. Others waited for a ferry, paying a fortune for safe passage.

At the **Columbia Gorge Discovery Center**, you can stand before a recreated wagon raft and hear stories of those who lost their lives in the current. The river was both a highway and a graveyard.

Long before the Oregon Trail, The Dalles was a hub for Indigenous tribes who gathered at **Celilo Falls**, fishing

for salmon in one of the richest fisheries in North America. Though the falls are now buried beneath **The Dalles Dam**, the stories remain, passed down by the people who still call this land home.

Nearby **Fort Dalles Museum**, housed in an 1856 military post, recalls the days when soldiers were stationed here to keep peace between settlers and Native tribes. The town was also a lawless frontier outpost, where saloons filled with fortune-seekers, gamblers and outlaws looking for one last chance at wealth.

### Barlow Road: The Last, Treacherous Passage

Those unwilling to risk the river took the **Barlow Road**, the first overland route through the Cascades. It was no easier than the rapids. Wagons braced for the harrowing descent over **Barlow Hill**, where emigrants locked their wheels and dragged their wagons by ropes to keep from tumbling into the ravines.

You can still drive sections of the original Oregon Trail's last great challenge, where the forest echoes with the sounds of breaking wagon axles and the desperate prayers of those who had come so far, only to face one final trial.



Barlow Road marker

True West Archives

### Oregon City: The End of the Trail

At last, the road ended. For thousands of emigrants, Oregon City was the promised land. The **End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center** tells the story



Sculptor Stanley Wanlass's bronze *End of the Trail*, in Seaside, Oregon, commemorates the Lewis & Clark expedition

Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

of those who arrived weary, broke and often broken. Some found prosperity, others hardship, but all carried the weight of the journey.

Dr. John McLoughlin, a former Hudson's Bay Company official, welcomed settlers and helped many survive their first Oregon winters. His home, now a historic site, stands as a tribute to the man known as the Father of Oregon.

### Seaside: The Last Western Frontier

The true end of the journey lies not in Oregon City, but at the Pacific. Here in Seaside, where Lewis and Clark arrived in 1805, the ocean marked the final frontier.

The Seaside Museum & Historical Society tells of the Clatsop people, the traders, and the Victorian tourists who followed in the footsteps of pioneers. Nearby, the Salt Works site still stands, where members of the Lewis and Clark expedition boiled seawater to make salt—a small but critical act of survival.

Walking the Seaside Promenade, let the wind whip across your face and the sound of the surf fill your ears. The pioneers stood here, too, gazing out at an ocean that stretched farther than their dreams.



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# FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF LEGENDS: A JOURNEY THROUGH WASHINGTON'S WILD FRONTIER

The road ahead is rich with history, where every town holds the stories of those who came before. This is a land of iron rails and cattle trails, where frontier lawmen upheld justice, outlaws carved their names into legend and fortunes shifted hands over a game of cards in dimly lit saloons. The echoes of the past whisper from weathered buildings, ring in the distant call of a train whistle and stretch across the open plains, where pioneers once carved out lives on the edge of civilization.

This journey isn't just about seeing history—it's about stepping into it. Every mile traveled uncovers a new chapter in Washington's past, from the fur traders who first navigated its rivers to the Native nations who shaped its land, the cowboys who tamed the frontier, and the railroad barons who laid the steel tracks of progress. Whether exploring forts that once defended the wilderness or tracing the path of steam engines that connected distant towns, this route through Washington invites travelers to experience the grit, determination and spirit that built the Evergreen State.



Portland Pioneer Square

## Portland to Vancouver The Fur Trade Gateway

Cross the Columbia River and arrive in Vancouver, just 10 miles north of Portland. This is one of the Pacific Northwest's oldest settlements, where history lingers in the air. Start at **Fort Vancouver**, the 1825 Hudson's Bay Company trading post that became the heart of the fur trade. Stand where trappers and traders once bartered their goods and imagine the bustle of frontier life. Walk the shaded streets of **Officer's**

**Row**, where stately 19th-century homes still stand as silent witnesses to the past. Explore the **Clark County Historical Museum's** collection of pioneer artifacts before hopping on the **Chelatchie Prairie Railroad** for a scenic ride through landscapes once ruled by steam locomotives.



Kennewick Clover Island Lighthouse

## Vancouver to Kennewick – The Columbia River Crossroads

Follow the mighty Columbia River eastward, tracing the 185-mile route once navigated by steamboats and settlers. Arriving in Kennewick, step into the past at the **East Benton County Historical Museum**, where relics from the steamboat era bring river trade to life. Walk along the waterfront and take in the stunning views from the **Cable Bridge**, a modern span over a river that has shaped the destiny of countless travelers. Feeling hungry? Settle in at **Cedars at Pier One**, a restaurant steeped in history, where

meals are served with a view of the very river that fueled the region's growth.

## Kennewick to Walla Walla – Wagon Trails and Forts

Turn east for 55 miles toward Walla Walla, where Oregon Trail pioneers once sought refuge. Explore the **Whitman Mission National Historic Site**, where a tragic clash of cultures left a lasting mark on the region's history. Then visit **Fort Walla Walla Museum**, where original military buildings transport visitors back to the 1800s. Stroll through downtown, where historic brick buildings and restored saloons tell tales of boom and reinvention. Beyond history, Walla Walla is famous for its fertile soil. Sample renowned sweet onions and world-class wines at one of the boutique tasting rooms before checking in at the **Marcus Whitman Hotel**, a 1928 landmark. Then, dine at the **Walla Walla Steak Co.**, a classic steakhouse in a historic rail car facility, serving premium Northwest beef with rustic charm.



Lobby mural at the landmark Marcus Whitman Hotel in Walla Walla, Washington

## Walla Walla to Toppenish – Murals of the Wild West

Head west for 75 miles into Toppenish, a town where history is quite literally painted on the walls. Known as the **City of Murals & Museums**, Toppenish invites travelers to take a self-guided tour of its stunning outdoor murals, each depicting a moment from the town's past—cattle drives, steam locomotives and Native heritage brought to life in vivid color. To deepen the experience, visit the **Yakima Nation**



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416 N. Pearl St., Ellensburg, WA  
509-962-6416 ClymerMuseum.org  
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Historic Occidental

Museum & Cultural Center and explore the stories of the Indigenous people who shaped the land long before settlers arrived. Then, step into the Northern Pacific Railway Museum and Yakima Valley Rail & Steam Museum, where historic locomotives stand as a testament to the iron roads that transformed the region. If staying the night, check in at Legends Casino Hotel for a mix of history and modern comfort.

### Yakima to Ellensburg – Cattle and Commerce

Continue west for 35 miles and arrive in Ellensburg, a town where the cowboy



Downtown Ellensburg, Washington  
Courtesy Ellensburg, Washington

way of life is still alive and well. Wander through its historic downtown and visit the Kittitas County Historical Museum, where frontier relics and Western memorabilia bring the past into focus. Art enthusiasts can stop at the Clymer Museum of Art to admire paintings of the untamed West by renowned artist John Clymer. If traveling over Labor Day weekend, experience the adrenaline of the Ellensburg Rodeo, one of the nation's top rodeo events. Feel the energy as bronc riders, ropers and barrel racers compete for glory.



The Clymer Catalog

Courtesy Ellensburg, Washington

The Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame is dedicated to preserving the rodeo's history and traditions and well worth a visit. It celebrates the legends, champions, and thrilling moments through dynamic exhibits, artifacts and storytelling.

### Ellensburg to Centralia – A Pioneer's Legacy

Head south for 100 miles, where the town of Centralia offers a glimpse into the resilience of early pioneers. Founded in 1875 by George Washington—a Black pioneer who overcame the odds to establish a thriving community—Centralia remains a testament to determination.

Visit George Washington Park & Statue to learn his incredible story. Walk through Centralia's historic downtown, where the echoes of the past still resonate. Grab a drink at McMenamins Olympic Club Hotel & Theater, where Old West charm meets modern hospitality. Before moving on, step inside the 1912 Centralia Depot, a railway station still connecting the town to its past.

### Centralia to Vancouver and Back to Portland

Complete the loop with an 85-mile drive south, returning to Vancouver and eventually crossing the Columbia River back into Portland. As the journey ends, reflect on the footsteps followed along the way—fur traders, pioneers, railroad barons and cowboys who shaped the land. Washington's history isn't just preserved in museums—it's alive in the streets, painted on the walls, and felt in the rumble of passing trains. The spirit of the Old West lingers, waiting for the next traveler to bring it roaring back to life.



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## THE WILD FRONTIER TRAIL: A JOURNEY THROUGH WYOMING'S OUTLAW HISTORY

There's a wildness to Wyoming that never quite disappeared. The ghosts of outlaws, lawmen and restless cowboys still linger in the wind sweeping across the open plains. This is a land where Butch Cassidy planned his next heist, where Tom Horn faced justice and where cattle wars sparked gunfights that shaped the frontier. To travel through Wyoming is to follow the hoofprints of history, where adventure and danger once went hand in hand. Buckle up for a road trip that takes you deep into the heart of the Old West.



### Cheyenne – Where the Railroad Met the Outlaws

Start your journey in Cheyenne, the state capital and a former hub of railroad expansion and frontier lawlessness. The **Cheyenne Depot Museum**, built in 1887, showcases the role of the Union Pacific Railroad in shaping the West and tells of outlaws like Butch Cassidy and



Manager's house and original station-hotel of the Cheyenne-Black Hills stage line.

Courtesy Library of Congress

The oldest locomotive in Wyoming

By Matthew Idler, Courtesy Visit Cheyenne

Sundance Kid, who passed through looking for their next opportunity. In the 1860s, Cheyenne was known as “Hell on Wheels,” a lawless town teeming with gamblers, saloon owners and drifters looking for opportunity—or trouble. Stay at the Nagle-Warren Mansion, a Victorian-era hotel dripping with Old West charm. Before leaving town, grab a drink at the Accomplice Bar, where the frontier spirit still lingers in every toast.

## Detour – Fort Laramie National Historic Site

Before heading to Laramie, take a short detour 90 miles north on US-85 to **Fort Laramie National Historic Site**, one of the most significant military outposts of the 19th century. Established in 1834, this fort played a crucial role in the Indian Wars and westward expansion. Walk the same grounds where soldiers, traders and settlers once stood before returning south to Cheyenne and continuing west on I-80 to Laramie.

## Laramie – Law and Order on the Frontier

Head west on I-80 for about 50 miles to Laramie, a town once known for its rough reputation but later a symbol of law and order. The infamous Big Nose George Parrott, an outlaw lynched in 1881 for murdering lawmen, left behind a gruesome legacy—his skin was used to make shoes now displayed at the **Wyoming State Museum**. Visit the **Laramie Plains Museum** to learn how this wild settlement tamed itself. For a historic overnight stay, book a room at the **Albany Hotel**, an establishment with deep roots in Wyoming’s past. Need a break? **The Coal Creek Coffeehouse and Pub** is the perfect place to relax while soaking in the Old West ambiance.

The annual Jubilee Days festival in Laramie, Wyoming

Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress



Cheyenne Depot Square

Courtesy Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce



The Historic Governor's mansion

By Matthew Idler, Courtesy Visit Cheyenne

## Medicine Bow – Butch Cassidy's Old Haunt

Continue west on US-30 for about 60 miles to Medicine Bow, a town with deep ties to Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch. Stop at the **Medicine Bow Museum**, where exhibits detail the outlaws who found refuge here. Nearby, the **Virginian Hotel**, built in the early 1900s, immerses you in the Old West experience. The town was also immortalized in Owen Wister's 1902 novel *The Virginian*, which defined the cowboy archetype and inspired future



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The Medicine Bow National Forest is popular for hiking, fishing, camping and backroad adventuring.

Courtesy Wyoming Tourism



Western tales. Walk through **Old Medicine Bow**, a preserved site offering a glimpse of how outlaws once lived on the fringes of society.

### Side Trip – Martin's Cove

History enthusiasts should take a 50-mile detour west on WY-220 to **Martin's Cove**, a significant site on the Mormon Trail where pioneers endured a brutal winter in 1856. The visitor center tells the harrowing story of their survival. Head back east to reconnect with your route to Casper.

### Casper – Trails, Trains and Tom Horn

Follow US-30 and WY-487 north for 90 miles to Casper, a city once vital to the Oregon Trail and later a notorious outlaw stop. The **National Historic Trails Interpretive Center** tells the story of westward expansion, including Wyoming's lawless days. **Independence Rock**, located about 50 miles west of Casper, was a famous landmark where pioneers carved their names into the granite, leaving behind an enduring record of their journeys. Visit the **Tom Horn Cabin**, where the infamous hired gun spent his last days. After exploring, unwind at **The Office Bar**, a saloon



Scotts Bluff, Gering, Nebraska

Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

with a history stretching back to the early frontier days.

### Kaycee – The Legacy of Chris LeDoux and Outlaws

Take I-25 north for 65 miles to Kaycee, a small town with a big outlaw past. Stop at the **Hoofprints of the Past Museum**, where exhibits highlight the notorious Johnson County War and legendary cowboy singer Chris LeDoux, who called Kaycee home. The war, fought between cattle barons and homesteaders in the 1890s, left a deep mark on Wyoming history. Raise a glass at **The Longhorn Saloon**, a favorite watering hole that echoes with stories of cattlemen and outlaws alike. Adventurers can seek out





Saloon in Buffalo, Wyoming

True West Archives

**The Hole in the Wall**, currently part of the Willow Creek Ranch, an active cattle and horse ranch located about 30 miles southwest of Kaycee. Ranch guests can take a dirt road to the valley leading up to the pass and then hike a half-mile trail up to the top of the Red Wall to get a glimpse of where members of the Hole-in-the-Wall Gang spent their time.

## Buffalo – The Johnson County War

Continue north on I-25 for 45 miles to Buffalo, a key battleground during the Johnson County War. Visit the **Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum** to learn about the deadly clashes between cattle barons and settlers. Take a side trip to **Fort Phil Kearny**, where in 1866, the Fetterman Massacre saw an entire detachment of U.S. soldiers ambushed by Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors. End your day with a stay at the **Historic Occidental Hotel**, where

outlaws, lawmen and even President Teddy Roosevelt once checked in.

## Sheridan – Where Outlaws and Cowboys Crossed Paths

Farther north on I-90 about 35 miles, sits Sheridan at the crossroads of outlaw



The Sheridan Inn hotel in Sheridan, Wyoming

Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

history and cowboy culture. Stop at the **Sheridan County Museum**, which explores Wyoming's notorious criminals and the lawmen who pursued them. **King's Saddlery**, a world-famous cowboy gear store, offers a look into ranching heritage. **The Mint Bar**, operating since 1907, is a must-visit for an authentic Old West drink.

The 1882 Willow Creek Ranch offers rides throughout the outlaw hideout at Hole-in-the-Wall.

Courtesy Willow Creek Ranch



The Scout

Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

## Side Trip to Cody – Buffalo Bill's Legacy

No outlaw tour is complete without a side trip to Cody. Take US-14 west for 150 miles to this town founded by the legendary Buffalo Bill Cody. Visit the **Buffalo Bill Center of the West**, five museums in one, covering everything from frontier firearms to outlaw legends. Stay at the historic **Irma Hotel**, built by Buffalo Bill himself in 1902. **The Cody Firearms Museum** boasts one of the largest collections of American guns, showcasing weapons used by outlaws and lawmen alike.

For entertainment, don't miss the live music and cowboy atmosphere at **The Cody Cattle Company** before heading back to Sheridan via US-14.

## The Final Stretch – Legends Live On

From Cheyenne's bustling railroad past to the remote hideouts of the Wild Bunch, this journey through Wyoming brings the Old West back to life. As the sun dips behind the rugged peaks and the wind carries whispers of gunfights and galloping hooves, you realize Wyoming isn't just a place—it's a legend. It's a land where history breathes and the spirit of the frontier rides on, waiting for the next traveler to answer its call.



BY THE EDITORS AT TRUE WEST

All images courtesy True West Archives unless otherwise noted

# *Opulence and* **OUTLAWS**

## **HISTORIC HOTELS OF THE AMERICAN WEST**

Step across the threshold of time into grand lobbies, across creaking floorboards and down shadowed corridors where legends once walked. From opulent frontier parlors to rugged retreats, these historic hotels are far more than places to stay—they are living museums, steeped in tales of outlaws, lawmen and the untamed West.

Whether you're savoring the past in a dusty, sunlit lobby or resting in a bed once slept in by gunfighters and statesmen, each hotel is a doorway to the rugged yet refined world of Western heritage.

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La Posada Hotel

## La Posada Hotel

A true gem of the Santa Fe Railway, La Posada Hotel opened its doors in 1930 as the last grand Harvey House. Designed by legendary architect Mary Colter, its Spanish hacienda-style design made it the perfect stop for the golden-age railroad traveler. Today, the hotel still exudes luxury, with original tiles and art deco touches offering a tangible connection to a bygone era when steam engines ruled the rails. Stand in the lobby, and you might just imagine the



The Cosmopolitan Hotel & Restaurant

bustling crowds of passengers awaiting their next adventure through the desert landscape.

303 E. 2nd St., Winslow, AZ 86047  
928-289-4366  
laposada.org

## The Cosmopolitan Hotel & Restaurant

The Cosmopolitan Hotel in Old Town San Diego began its journey as

a private adobe home in 1827 before evolving into a luxury hotel and stagecoach stop in 1869. This historical treasure welcomes visitors to its shaded courtyard, where the scent of rich adobe walls and the rustling of palm fronds evoke the spirit of 19th-century

elegance. A stop for cattle barons, politicians and adventurers, the Cosmopolitan was once an essential point on the travelers' map of the Old West. Enjoy the taste of history with a meal in the same space where notable figures dined.

2660 Calhoun St.,  
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619-297-1874  
oldtowncosmopolitan.com

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## Wortley Hotel Bed & Breakfast

The Wortley Hotel, built in the 1870s, served as a critical point during the Lincoln County War. Billy the Kid famously escaped the jail across the street, leaving a trail of bloodshed behind.

Once owned by Pat Garrett, the lawman who ultimately took down the infamous outlaw, this B&B carries the weight of Wild West history in every creaking floorboard. Its antique furnishings and rustic charm provide a haunting glimpse into a world where every guest might have a story to tell, if the walls could talk.

585 Calle la Placita, Lincoln, NM  
575-653-4300 • wortleyhotel.com

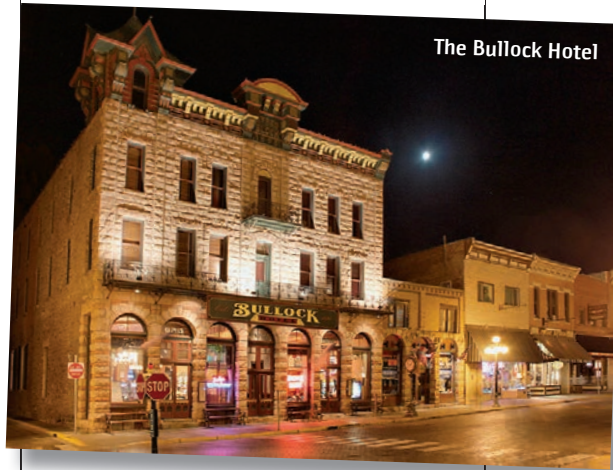


The Wortley Hotel

the hotel blends Old West charm with modern comforts. Step inside, and you'll feel the same sense of history that has been preserved in its luxurious rooms and stately lobby.

## The Bullock Hotel

In Deadwood, South Dakota, the Bullock Hotel stands as a proud testament to the elegance and grit of the Old West. Built in 1895 by Seth Bullock, Deadwood's first sheriff,



The Bullock Hotel

Known for its grand staircase and old-time saloon, it remains a cherished landmark in this town once ruled by notorious figures like Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane.

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## The Historic **DOW HOTEL** Established 1923

Lone Pine, California



**T**he Dow Hotel was built in the early 1920s. Even then Hollywood was looking for movie locations where there was a variety of scenery. Where better than the Owens Valley, with its snow-capped Sierra, its ancient Alabama Hills, its deserts and mountain lakes and streams. And when they came on location, they needed lodging. Mr. Walter Dow, a Lone Pine resident, could see ahead and knew what it could mean to the valley to have the big movie business, so he built the Dow Hotel.

The Dow Hotel still bears that refined, graceful air of its Hollywood heyday. It is constantly being restored to its original charm. It is well known throughout Europe and the Far East for its history, cozy quaintness, fair prices and friendly service.



### The Dow Hotel

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Lone Pine, California 93545

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USA (800) 824-9317

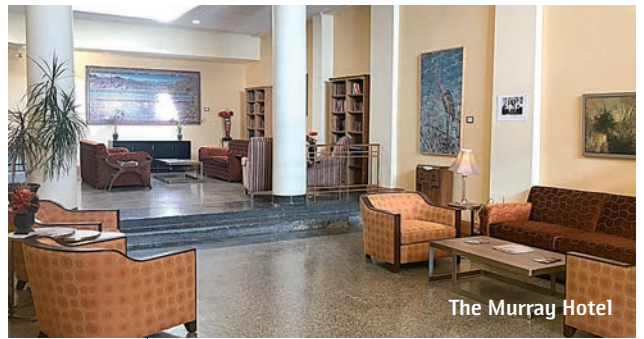
Fax: (760) 876-5643

Email: [dowvilla@lonepinetv.com](mailto:dowvilla@lonepinetv.com)

## The Murray Hotel

In Livingston, Montana, The Murray Hotel has stood as a beacon of Western hospitality since 1904. Originally designed to cater to the throngs of railroad travelers on their way to Yellowstone, the hotel quickly became a stop for tycoons, adventurers and Hollywood celebrities. With its Victorian charm and rich history, it's a place where the echoes of the past still resonate through its elegant hallways and classic furnishings. For those who dream of the frontier days, the Murray Hotel offers a rare opportunity to experience history while sipping their favorite whiskey by a roaring fire.

201 W. Park St.,  
Livingston, MT 59047  
406-222-1350 • [murrayblock.com](http://murrayblock.com)



## The Strater Hotel

Located in Durango, Colorado, the Strater Hotel has been a symbol of Victorian-era luxury since 1887.



## La Fonda on the Plaza

La Fonda on the Plaza is not just a hotel—it's a living legend. Serving guests in Santa Fe since 1607, this adobe masterpiece is a portal to New Mexico's colorful history. From Kit Carson to Georgia O'Keeffe, many famous figures have passed through these doors, drawn by the hotel's unparalleled charm. Its vibrant atmosphere, Southwestern cuisine and intricate design make it a must-visit for anyone seeking a deep dive into the past. If the walls could talk, they would tell of ancient traders, artists and revolutionaries who found sanctuary in this storied establishment.

100 E. San Francisco St.,  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
855-516-1092  
[lafondasantafe.com](http://lafondasantafe.com)



La Fonda on the Plaza

Popular with railroad travelers, cowboys and townsfolk alike, the hotel retains much of its original charm, especially in the Diamond Belle Saloon, where you can imagine Louis L'Amour sipping a whiskey as inspiration for his legendary Western tales. When

you're enjoying a drink under the ornate chandelier, you can't help but feel the weight of history pressing down on the oak wood of the bar.

699 Main Ave.,  
Durango, CO 81301  
800-247-4431  
[strater.com](http://strater.com)



Buffalo Bill's Irma Hotel

## Buffalo Bill's Irma Hotel



Cody, Wyoming, owes much of its founding to Buffalo Bill Cody, who built the Irma Hotel in 1902 as a social and commercial hub for his growing town. This historic hotel is famous for its cherrywood bar, a gift from Queen Victoria herself. Guests of the Irma have included some of the Wild West's most famous characters, including Annie Oakley and countless adventurers and outlaws. Standing in the lobby, you can almost hear the clink of spurs and the soft laughter of cowboy tales being spun over a cold drink.

1192 Sheridan Ave.,  
Cody WY 82414  
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## The Occidental Hotel

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John F. Kennedy  
Strater Hotel,  
June 1960





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the Occidental Hotel in Buffalo, Wyoming, has been the site of many historic gatherings. Butch Cassidy, Buffalo Bill and even Theodore Roosevelt once graced its saloon, adding to its storied legacy. Its rustic charm and atmospheric saloon will transport you back in time, where the scent of leather and wood mingles with the ghosts of the past.

10 N. Main St., Buffalo, WY  
82834307-684-0451  
occidentalwyoming.com

## The Meeker Hotel

The Meeker Hotel, a cornerstone of Western charm since 1896, has hosted dignitaries and adventurers alike, including Theodore Roosevelt and John Wayne. With its hunting lodge atmosphere and rumors of hauntings, it stands as a relic of Colorado's frontier past. Whether you're seeking adventure or just a peaceful night's sleep, the Meeker offers a rich blend of the old and the new, with the added allure of its legendary guest list.

560 Main St., Meeker, CO 81641  
970-878-5255 • meekerhotel.com



The Meeker Hotel

## Historic Sheridan Inn

The Sheridan Inn, built in 1893, is a legendary stop on Wyoming's Western frontier. It was Buffalo Bill Cody's headquarters and the original audition site for his Wild West Show. Annie Oakley and Calamity Jane passed through here, and it was a haven for outlaws and icons alike. With its grand architecture and rich history, the Sheridan Inn offers more



The Western Hotel and Spa

than a place to stay—it's an immersion into the frontier spirit.

856 Broadway St.,  
Sheridan, WY 82801  
307-674-2178 • sheridaninn.com

## Western Hotel and Spa

In Ouray, Colorado, the Western Hotel has stood as a beautifully

preserved Victorian-era landmark since 1891. Once a bustling stop for miners and travelers, it now offers a retreat for those seeking rest in the heart of the San Juan Mountains. With antique furnishings and a classic saloon, the Western Hotel preserves the spirit of the Old West, making it an ideal stop for those seeking relaxation and history.

210 7th Ave., Ouray, CO 81427  
970-497-1057  
thewesternouray.com



The Historic Sheridan Inn



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# Cavalcade of Ask The Marshall



Marshall Trimble, Arizona's official historian and the beloved, now-retired writer of *Ask The Marshall*, has shared countless stories over the years. We asked him to select a handful of his favorites to feature in 2025. This collection showcases some of his top picks.

*Lessons I have learned during more than a quarter century of "Ask the Marshall."*

## What kind of poker was Wild Bill Hickok playing at the time he was shot?

James Summerlin  
Lawrenceville, GA

Nobody seems to know what particular poker game they were playing at the Number 10 Saloon in Deadwood that day.

Joe Rosa, Hickok's late biographer, never saw it written anywhere. The late Bob DeArment, author of *Knights of the Green Cloth*, said, "I've never seen a reference to the particular poker game Bill was playing at the time, and I don't think anyone else has either. From things I have read by students of poker history, five-card stud and draw were the games played in the West." So it may have been one of those. I doubt if anyone thought it was very important at the time.

## What was the truth behind the truth behind the OK Corral shootout?

Alexander Durvin, Jr.  
Washington, MD

Truth is in the eyes of the beholder. Most historians (and the court at that time) agree that Virgil Earp and his deputies were acting in the line of duty. Ike Clanton had made death threats on several occasions. The "Cow-boy" element in Cochise County, including the Clantons and McLaurys, had been involved with rustlers, either in stealing cattle or dealing in stolen livestock. These are proven facts.

Ike Clanton drunk  
Illustration by Bob Boze Bell



Dead Man's Hand  
PhotoShop illustration by Robert Ray

Some months before the confrontation, Wyatt Earp and Ike Clanton entered into a tentative, secret agreement. Ike would rat out some of his Cow-boy cohorts who had pulled off a stage robbery. Wyatt would make the arrests, then give Ike the reward money. Earp hoped this would enhance his chances of being elected sheriff. But Ike became paranoid, afraid that Earp would reveal the secret. The deal fell through, with bad feelings on both sides.

The night before the gunfight, Ike had been making threats against the Earps and Holliday. He continued the morning of October 26. The Earps took that seriously.

And it's also true that several of the Cow-boys—including the McLaury



brothers and Billy Clanton—were armed at about 3 p.m., when they lingered in the empty lot behind the OK Corral. They may have been preparing to leave town, but they took too much time. The lawmen went to disarm them.

It's unclear who fired the first shot(s). But after 30 seconds and 30 bullets, three Cow-boys were dead. Three of the lawmen were wounded. Ironically, Ike Clanton, whose words and actions facilitated the battle, ran away while the guns were going off and was unhurt.

**Old West books indicate that there were two main reasons why cattle didn't eat on pastures where sheep had passed: one, because sheep ate the grass to the roots, leaving nothing of it to the cows; two, that the scent of the sheep kept cattle away and prevented the cows from eating any grass. Which one is the right one? Can both be true statements?**

Mario Raciti  
Aci Catena, Sicily, Italy

Today it's common to see cattle grazing with sheep flocks nearby, but a century ago that wasn't thought possible. Historically, cattlemen believed that sheep had a gland between their hooves that exuded a substance that sterilized the ground. They also believed that sheep, with their sharply pointed hooves, cut the range grasses and made the ground stink so the cattle wouldn't use it. Cattlemen also believed that sheep grazed the grass so close to the ground that there was nothing left for grazing.

Cattle ranchers eventually came to realize that sheep and cattle could



Victims of the Wyoming range war  
True West archives

share the grazing ranges and there were advantages to raising them. They could be sheared once a year. There is always a market for wool. But for some ranchers, the old ideas still hold sway.

### Who was the gunfighter Matt Dillon shot at the opening scene of *Gunsmoke*?

James Mendez  
Red Rock, AZ

Arvo Ojala, an expert on guns and the quick draw, was the one gunned down during the black-and-white days. Ojala said the royalties paid for several new Cadillacs, so the money was good while it lasted.

In Season 12, 1966-1967, *Gunsmoke* went to color. Blackie Storm became the man in black who faced off against Matt Dillon every Saturday night. Blackie, whose real name was Kenneth Stevens, was an ex-rodeo cowboy who was “discovered” by Robert Mitchum while filming *The Lusty Men*. Blackie, who stood 5 feet 7 inches, used to say, “I had a heck of a time slowing my draw so Arness, who stood six feet seven, could gun me down.”



Arvo Ojala was at the far end of the street in every episode for 20 years. The pistol master taught almost all Hollywood actors of the time how to shoot single action Army revolvers.

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# What HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME

**If I could have lunch with** any Native American historical figure, it would be a toss-up between the great Shawnee Chief, Tecumseh, and War Chief Wakara or Wookaroo.

**Don't get me started on** Utah politics!

**For my money, the best Western (movie)** is *Dances With Wolves*.

**I wish White folk understood** that Native people are human beings too.

**History has taught me** that most folks do not know their history.

**The dumbest thing I ever did** was drink like a fish.

**The best way to find the truth** is to do the research!

**What most people don't know about the Utes** is they were one of the first tribes (our Southern Colorado cousins) to acquire the horse from the Spanish.

**If there's one thing I can't stand** it's ignorance.

**I wish I had a dollar every time** someone asked me what's a Ute?

**My favorite Native American actor** is Floyd "Red Crow" Westerman.

**If I were president**, I would surround myself with smart people.

**The funniest thing I ever saw** was two guys on two different occasions passed out drinking and the women folk ratted their hair and painted their faces with lipstick. You got to be careful when you drink around Native women, ha!

**As a child**, I was always on the go.

**A perfect day for me** would include catching some fish for once on a beautiful day!

**The best book for my money** is *1493* by Charles C. Mann.

**I absolutely hate** racism.

**My pet peeve is** lecturing and drinking coffee. Start finish.



## FORREST S. CUCH

Forrest S. Cuch was born in 1951 and raised on the Uintah and Ouray Ute Indian Reservation in northeastern Utah. He graduated from Westminster College with a bachelor of arts degree in behavioral sciences in 1973. Forrest served as education director for the Ute Indian Tribe from 1973 to 1988. He was later employed by the Wampanoag Tribe in Gay Head, Massachusetts, as a planner and tribal administrator. He became the director of the Utah Division of Indian Affairs in 1997. He was a trustee representing American Indians on the Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. Forrest also played a key role in the PBS/KUED sponsored curriculum project called "We Shall Remain," which features a video series of the histories of the Utah tribes with accompanying materials. In 2012, he served as CEO for the Ute Tribe's business enterprises and is a co-founder of Rising American Indian Nations (RAIN), an Indian operated nonprofit organization established to empower American Indian people. His published works include *A History of Utah's American Indians* and *A Native Way of Giving*.





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