



**Name of Property:** Mountain Meadows Massacre Site  
**City, State:** Washington County, Utah  
**Significant Dates:** 1857-1859; September 11, 1857  
**NHL Criteria:** 1, Exceptions 1, 4, and 5  
**NHL Theme:** I. Peopling Places  
    3. Migration from Outside and Within  
    6. Encounters, Conflicts, and Colonization  
IV. Shaping the Political Landscape  
    4. Political Ideas, Cultures, and Theories  
**Previous Recognition:** 1975 National Register of Historic Places  
**National Historic Context:** V. Political and Military Affairs, 1783-1860  
    H. Manifest Destiny, 1844-1859  
    X. Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898  
        D. Westward Trails and Travelers  
            5. Mormon Migration and Settlement of the Great Basin

**NHL Significance:**

- The Mountain Meadows Massacre Site is nationally significant as the location of the September 11, 1857, massacre of 120 emigrants, most of them from Arkansas, at the hands of militiamen associated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, whose members are commonly called Mormons). The factors that led to the



massacre--“exaggeration, misrepresentation, ungrounded fears, unreasoning hate, desire for revenge, yes, even the lust for the property of the emigrants”--are diverse and no one single factor served as the sole spark for the massacre. However, the massacre was the apex of a chain of violence, mistrust, and fear that had begun in the East decades earlier.

- Even as the Latter-day Saints settled in the Utah Territory, where they were seemingly isolated from the rest of American society, westward migration through the Mormon Utah settlements stoked cultural conflicts between Mormons and non-Mormons. The Mountain Meadows site recalls these conflicts which led, first, to the exodus of the Mormons from the East and, ultimately, to the Utah War.
- As tensions between officials in Washington, D.C., and Utah Territory escalated in the months before the massacre, U.S. President James Buchanan declared the territory in a state of rebellion. Calls to put down the “Utah rebellion” resounded in the national press at a time when tensions over slavery were already threatening to divide the nation. Occurring at the height of the Utah War, the Mountain Meadows massacre further exacerbated the long-standing distrust between Mormons and non-Mormons.
- Although the massacre occurred in 1857, the period of significance extends to 1859 when the remains were given a proper burial and a simple cairn was constructed.

**Integrity:**

- The resource retains high levels of historic and visual integrity. It encompasses lands where key events of the Mountain Meadows Massacre took place. Since the nominated lands retain their natural features, vegetation patterns, and vistas, they possess an extraordinary ability to convey their association with the past, and specifically with the events of September 1857 and its immediate aftermath. The appearance of the location and setting remains largely unchanged, evoking the feeling and the emotion of the original events more than a century later.
- The proposed NHL is a discontinuous historic district with two discrete parts: the encampment/siege site and the men’s massacre site. It is not possible, at this time, to evaluate the locations of the massacre site of the women and children, or the entire route taken by the victims from their encampment site to the places where they were massacred. Although those sites are important, even without them the NHL successfully conveys the significance of the events of the siege and massacre in September 1857, and the subsequent burials in 1859.

**Owner of Property:** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Corporation of the President

**Acreage of Property:** 760 acres

**Origins of Nomination:** The nomination comes at the request of both the LDS Church and the three Mountain Meadows Massacre descendant organizations: Mountain Meadows Association, Mountain Meadows Massacre Descendants, and Mountain Meadows Monument Foundation.

The LDS Church coordinated with the National Park Service to produce the nomination.

**Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:**

- Designation of this resource as an NHL will help Americans to better understand the importance of this event in the history of the nation.
- The three descendant groups and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have worked for years to reach this stage in their relationship; in the past few years their combined goal has been to obtain National Historic Landmark designation. Recognizing this site as an NHL would be welcomed by all four organizations.

**Landmarks Committee Comments:**

**Landmarks Committee Recommendation:** Designation. Dr. Allan moved, Dr. Seale seconded; unanimous approval.

**Public Comments Favoring Designation (comments received as of 11/15/10):**

Philip F. Notarianni, Director, Utah Division of State History

Michael W. Homer, Chair, Utah Board of State History and Utah State Historic Preservation Review Board

Wilson Martin, State Historic Preservation Officer, Salt Lake City, Utah

Richard E. Turley, Jr., Assistant Church Historian and Recorder, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (owner)

Mike Beebe, Governor, State of Arkansas

Tyler Andersen, Rexburg, Idaho

Richard O. Lee, Member, Mountain Meadows Massacre Association, Gilbert, Arizona

John F. Berky, Windsor, Connecticut

Brian Patrick, Professor/Director, “Burying the Past—Legacy of the Mountain Meadows Massacre”

**Advisory Board Recommendation:**