RECOLLECTIONS
of the
Mountain Meadow Massacre

Being an account of that awful atrocity and revealing some facts never before made public.

BY

B. G. Parker.

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PLANO, CAL.
Fred. W. Reed, American Printer.
1901
PREFACE.

The Mountain Meadow massacre which took place in Southern Utah early in the fall of 1857 was undoubtedly one of the most fiendish outrages ever committed in the United States, or within the civilized world; here a whole train of emigrants, about one hundred and thirty men, women and children, were most brutally massacred by the Mormons, assisted by Indians.

This emigrant train was from Carroll County, Arkansas. The writer of this history was raised in the same County and State, and many of the victims of the foul crime had been old schoolmates of his.

I have long wanted to write the true facts in the history of the cruel affair, as I know them but for reasons hereafter explained, it has been postponed till now.

Some of those who were in the massacred train travelled in the same train as myself at the start, as I was then making my second trip across the plains, and one of the men who was killed in the massacre had made the trip with me in 1857.

I was in Southern Utah, and at Moutain Meadows, on business, in 1877, at the time John D. Lee was executed as one of the leaders of the awful butchery, and I now have in my possession quite a number of letters from persons who, as small children, were saved from the massacre by the Mormons, and afterwards rescued by Captain James Lynch, who was sent out by the U. S. Government for that purpose in 1859, and were taken by him to Salt Lake City where they were turned over to Major Carleton, and by him conveyed to Leavenworth, Kansas; at which place Colonel William C. Mitchell received them and took them on to their relatives in Arkansas. My report is that there were seventeen of these small children saved from the massacre, and they ranged in age from twelve months to five years.

I also have letters from Capt. Lynch, who in after years married one of the children he had rescued but the greater part of my information was obtained from an apostatized Mormon when I was in Utah in 1877. From him I learned some particulars that have never before
been made public.

With this knowledge I now think myself at liberty to give the history of the massacre; I have not done it before as I was under a solemn pledge to the Mormon not to divulge for twenty years, what he told me, for, at the time of the massacre, he was living near by. He dare not let the Mormons know that he had told me what he knew, so I was pledged to secrecy.

I am now at liberty to give the details and to the best of my ability, have done so in the following pages.

I cheerfully submit the same.

B. G. PAKER
There was also a married daughter of Capt. Baker's, and her husband.

Quite a number of their neighbors joined the train and when the outfit was complete, it was a credit to Carroll County for those times, and in addition to the fine outfit it is supposed the train had with them a considerable amount of cash.

Among others who went with Baker's train, and were my old schoolmates and friends, were Captain Aleck Francher, Mrs. Tackett who was a widow, with her son, and a daughter married to William Jones; also Jesse and Dow Dunlap, who were brothers, each with large families.

Jesse Dunlap had five children, three sisters of them surviving the massacre, the youngest of them being most brutally shot through the arm, breaking all the bones, then having little or no care for nearly two years, she lost the use of it for life. I still receive letters from her and one may be found in the appendix of this book.

In purchasing the outfit for my own train I had to get most of it in the adjoining County to the South of us and had to cross the Boston Mountains to get there, and then cross over again into Carroll County to strike the route we were all going to travel.

The two trains started out about the same time, Baker taking the road for the West and I to the adjoining county for the rest of my outfit.

According to agreement, however, the two trains met again in the Cherokee Nation then travelled leisurely along. Frequently the two trains camped close together and the folks visited back and forth. Sometimes my train was in the lead, and sometimes Baker's was.

My train consisted of about twenty wagons and some fifty or sixty souls but it was a very good outfit to start for California.

The Baker train reached Salt Lake City two days ahead of mine, and on inquiry I learned that they had left just the day before I got there and I soon learned they had the enmity of the Mormons for Bakers train was almost threatened in my presence.

Captain Baker and myself had talked some of travelling what was known as the South Pass route, but when I reached Salt Lake, I soon abandoned all ideas of going that route.

Having lost sight of the Baker train, never to see it again, I have since then, unceasingly kept note of everything I could learn as to what the train had done for the Mormons to feel offended at.
As soon as I discovered that the Mormons were angry, I made some inquiries as to the cause, but, of course, could only learn one side of the story, but the substance of it was that the Mormons claimed that the emigrants of Bakers train had insulted their women, and had accused the Mormons of poisoning the water that had killed some of the emigrant's cattle.

It must here be remembered, however, that this was about the time when the U. S. Government was sending soldiers to Salt Lake City to bring the Mormons into subjection to the United States, and Parley Pratt, a mormon leader, had been killed near Fort Smith, Arkansas, but a short time before, so that both Missouri and Arkansas emigrants had to be on their good behavior when passing through Utah.

I also understood that Brigham Young preached a sermon in the Tabernacle at Salt Lake, in which he said that if the U. S. Government sent troops to govern the Mormons, he would notify the Government to stop all emigration through Utah to California, for he would no longer hold the Indians by the wrist, but would turn them loose on the emigrants.

And to me, at that time, it looked like it, for there were large bands of indians in the City, when I was there and they seemed bent on mischief, for they made an effort to stampede my band of cattle with their dogs and very nearly succeeded, but I went up to Bill Hickman, although I knew at the time, that he was one of Brigham Young's destroying angels, for I had just bought some very fine stock from him, then speaking as though nothing had happened I said, "Will you please tell those Indians to keep their dogs from among my cattle, they might stampede them, and do great damage to the city, as well as myself." Hickman then spoke to the Indians, and their dogs were kept out after that, but I think their original intention was that I should kill some of their dogs, to give them an excuse for quarreling with us.

But whatever their plan was I can now see that I was in a very close place just at that time and it can easily be seen that the way they acted with the Baker train, all they wanted was to create a disturbance as an excuse to slaughter the entire train, and I can now see that the Mormons were cleverly planning a shield for themselves in allowing the Indians to be the public aggressors, and on whom they could throw the blame of the awful crime they intended to commit at Mountain Meadows a few days.
later, for there is every reason to believe that the Baker party was doomed to destruction before it left Salt Lake City.

As to myself, at that time I managed to keep my temper and appear cool, so managed to get through without much trouble in the city, but after leaving the settlement I found another trap set for me. We had made what was called a "dry camp" and drove the stock some six or eight miles further to find grass and water.

We found nice feed so did not guard the cattle very close, but in the morning when they were driven up I saw they were short, so after getting the train ready to start, I counted the cattle and found there were twenty head missing. I told my wife to take the train and go on to the next water, and camp there until she heard from me again.

Taking one man with me, we started out and soon struck the trail which we tracked to the settlement when it turned up a dark looking canyon, rather too dismal and dreary for me so we turned and rode up to a small cabin near by.

A man came out and looked at me rather suspiciously, but I told him, as quietly as possible, that about twenty head of my stock had strayed off during the night, and that we had followed their trail to the mouth of the canyon; then I said: "You know this country much better than I do; Now here is twenty dollars that I will give you to bring my cattle here to me. I don't think it will take you more than an hour or two to complete the work, but my horses are tired and need a rest." The man accepted the offer and started out after the cattle, and in about half an hour brought them back, but I thought I was getting them pretty cheap, even for the twenty dollars, as I valued my herd and fire arms for much more than that to say nothing of myself and 'pard and our outfits and families.

We overtook my train during the next day, and I thought I had made one of the best deals of my life. I cannot help but believe that that twenty dollars just about saved our lives.

But I will now return to the history of the Baker train which had started on the Southern Pass Route, while I, just one day later, had taken the Humboldt Route.

I have often wondered what the result would have been had I arrived at Salt Lake City in time to meet Captain Baker. Would his train have escaped its cruel fate?
From all the information I could get concerning Baker's train, from Salt Lake to near Cedar City, they had but little trouble, but when on Corn Creek, or Provo, one or both places, the emigrants wanted to buy some provisions to last them to California, also some corn to feed to their best stock while crossing the desert.

It was reported that the Mormons refused to sell at any price, and that the emigrants threatened to take it by force, and the Mormons then swore out a complaint against them, but the emigrants resisted the officer. But when I was in Utah in 1877 I learned that the train did purchase what grain they wanted at Cedar City, and had some of it ground.

While camped at Corn Creek the emigrants met Mr. Hamblin and several other Mormons, of whom they inquired where the best place was to rest and recruit their stock.

The Mormons all told them to stop at the spring just over the hill from Mountain Meadow.

We naturally suppose these Mormons were simply spies to find out how strong the train was, and where it would stop before starting across the desert.

Hamblin asked what was the strength of the train and was told "about fifty that would do to tie to" but it is my opinion that the train was short of ammunition, for I know they were unable to buy any from the Mormons who had offered me almost any price for fire-arms and ammunition; and I know the Baker's train people were very wasteful of their ammunition: on the plains game of all kinds was abundant, and the emigrants could not resist the temptation of killing considerable of it.

From Cedar Creek the train went on to the spring across the hill from Mountain Meadows, and on Saturday evening went into camp intending to rest several days and let their stock gather strength for the hard trip across the desert ahead of them.

On Sunday they held Divine service in one of their large tents, and everything seemed to be perfect peace and content.

Monday morning, just as daylight began to appear, the emigrants were getting up and beginning to prepare for cooking breakfast, when suddenly they were fired on by a band of Mormons and Indians in ambush.

At this first murderous assault, coming without warning and totally unexpected, about twenty of the emigrants were killed or wounded and for a few minutes the confusion and con-
consternation rendered them helpless, but their situation soon recalled them to the fact that immediate action was needed. They soon saw they were attacked and nearly surrounded by an enemy of perhaps ten times as many as themselves, and their assailants concealed in the brush: then as soon as it was light enough they saw that all their stock, except a few favorites that were staked near the wagons, had been run off.

Just think of the anguish and despair of those mothers and little children, wives and sweethearts: Consider, what must have been the thoughts of the survivors as they realized that twenty of their comrades and friends were dead or dying, and expecting every moment to receive the same fate themselves! They were alone, one small band of humans, far from their home and kindred. They were surrounded by a horde of human fiends who thirsted for their life's blood; And yet, desponding as their thoughts were, little could they realize the hideous end of their long, toilsome journey.

They were in a desperate plight and as soon as possible corralled the wagons and commenced throwing up intrenchments so as to get what protection they could, and for a time doubtless felt that they could make a brave fight for their lives, as the intrenchments rendered some protection, but they were soon made aware that untold agony was before them, for they were cut off from the water, and although the spring was within sight, yet it was certain death to attempt to go to it.

The emigrants fired whenever an Indian or a Mormon appeared in sight, but this was seldom as the besiegers were very careful to keep out of sight, while, with the exception of the wagons the emigrants were on open ground.

By Monday evening this ill-fated train began to suffer for want of water, especially the little children and the wounded persons.

For four days and nights the emigrants were kept within their camp, as to leave it meant certain death.

On the evening of the fourth day, what appeared to be a ray of hope came toward them, but it was destined to be the most base betrayal of human confidence, ever, perhaps, encountered in the history of any part of the civilized world.
CHAPTER TWO

The Emigrants Surrender. Their Betrayal The Frightful Butchery.

I have described the journey of the Baker train from its start until they were camped at Mountain Meadows, and had been besieged for four days and nights.

The Mormons found it a hard task to capture those people without exposing themselves and this, such cowardly fiends would not do.

At last John D. Lee, James Hamblin and two other Mormons named Higby and Haight, procured three wagons and came driving down the road leading from Salt Lake toward the fortified camp of the emigrants. This sight filled the suffering camp with wonder, and a hope of deliverance cheered their souls.

What did it mean! Was it a messenger of relief or destruction? They dressed a little girl in white and sent her out with a flag of truce; the Mormons in the wagons waved a flag in return, then Captain Francher, one of the leading men of the emigrants, went out to meet the Mormons.

They told him that the Indians were very hostile, and the Mormons were afraid to pass by them, because the Indians accused the emigrants of putting poison in some dead cattle and giving it to the Indians to eat, thus causing the death of two chiefs. Nothing but the blood of the emigrants and the possession of the outfit would appease the Indians.

The Mormons also added that "the Indians now have possession of most of your stock and are living off them, and we are powerless to get the stock back from them, however, we want to compromise with them and save the lives of you emigrants. We think that if you will give up your fire-arms to our Mormon soldiers, that the Indians will understand you do not care to fight any more, and will allow you to go in peace. We will guard you out about two miles to Mr. Hamblin's, tonight, and from there on to Cedar City we will see that you have protection. then, if you wish, you can go on to California, or back to the home you left, just at you wish."

Francher asked them to drive into camp and give the terms; the Mormons did so, then the emigrants began talking among themselves as
to what was best to do. To stay as they were meant sure death; to continue on to California without teams or fire arms was out of the question; "What shall we do?" they asked each other. They were still in doubt when a Mormon rode up in a great hurry, and cried out:

"For God sake decide at once. I cannot keep the Indians quiet any longer."

The emigrants then said, "Tell them that we surrender to the Mormons, and give up all our fire-arms, and ask for mercy."

The fire-arms were then all put into one of the Mormon's wagons, and the wounded and sick emigrants into another, and some of the smaller children into the third wagon.

The women marched in front, and the men in the rear with the wagons between. The men were guarded by Mormon soldiers who were kept in ambush for that purpose.

The march then began.

There had been but little firing that day, the Mormons waiting to see if they could not betray the suffering camp, and now their plans were so well carried out the result will be described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE.


The emigrants were ordered to march single file, but they had not advanced more than some sixty or eighty rods until they had entered a thicket of sage brush and dwarf oaks. In hiding here were the Indians and Mormons.

Suddenly one of the Mormon leaders fired off a pistol and shouted, "Do your duty." At this signal nearly five hundred Indians bounded from the brush, in among the unarmed emigrants, and with guns, pistols, knives and clubs began their deadly work, all the time keeping up the most horrible war-cries, yells and fiendish laughter, as they brained their helpless victims, and cut the throats of innocent babies.
Think of the terror of those helpless men, women and children! Driven like rabbits into a corral for slaughter! I can almost imagine I hear the wild shrieks of agony and despair as the victims were being butchered. Think of those women and their children, the men powerless to protect them; they had no one to look to but their God. Not over thirty minutes was taken to complete the frightful deed.

Then what an awful sight appeared. More than one hundred mutilated bodies were piled in heaps, just as they fell, here and there, in and out through the sage brush; left to be devoured by wolves or birds of prey.

It is said that three men escaped at the time of the massacre, but were hunted down and killed. My informant, however, said that while none escaped from the massacre, two young had escaped before the surrender. They had crawled out one dark night, and made their way to Muddy River, some eighty miles away, but were overtaken by some Mormons and decoyed back until they met some Indians, by whom they were killed. The Mormons and Indians then rode back together.

In the big massacre, the most heartrending scene was that through which the little children had to pass; trampled under foot, splashed with human blood, deafened with the cries of the murderers and the shrieks and groans of their friends or parents, and so frightened they knew not what to do or where to go. Two girls who had been captured by an Indian chief were brought to John D. Lee. The Indian asked what should be done with them, and Lee replied “You know what your orders are.”

“They are too pretty to kill,” said the chief.

“They know too much.” answered Lee.

The chief then shot one of the girls, while Lee deliberately cut the other one’s throat and threw the quivering body from him.

A young lady was brought before Maj. Higby and she fell upon her knees begging for mercy for him to spare her life. She would work for him! She would be his slave! Anything if he would only save her. When the dead were gathered up this girl’s body was found with the skull crushed in.

Two Mormon teamsters, named Shultz and Tullis, the latter being a son-in-law of Hamblin were ordered to kill the sick and wounded who still lay in the wagon; the two men were heard to exclaim, as they proceeded to their ghastly work: “O Lord receive their spirits, it is for the
good of the Kingdom of Heaven that we do this deed.” and then they killed the helpless prisoners, one by one.

The little children who remained alive, were then gathered up. One of the little Dunlap girls, now Mrs. Evans, wrote me not long since, all she knew of the terrible time. She was between five and six years old at that time and remembers a little about it. In writing she says:

“While the massacre was going on, myself and one younger sister hid among the sagebrush. After it was all over, it then being dark, I heard my little baby sister crying. I listened and could not hear any Indians around so we ventured out of the brush and went to my baby sister. I found her with one arm around our dead mother’s neck, the other poor little arm was nearly shot off. I saw a man collecting up the children and putting them in a wagon. I ran to him and begged him to save my two little sisters and self. He put us in the wagon and took us all to his house.”

There were seventeen little children gathered up by the Mormons; they were all frightened nearly out of their senses, hungry, covered with blood, clothing all torn, amid cruel strangers, no beds, no comforts and above all no kind words to soothe them in their grief.

The next morning John D. Lee started to Cedar City with all the children except Jesse Dunlap’s baby girl — the one whose arm was broken — who he intended to leave with Mrs. Hamblin, but the affection of the three sisters was so great that the Mormon’s wife persuaded Lee to let all three of them remain.

He then took the others to Cedar City to distribute among other Mormon families.

Just as they were entering the city a little girl who was riding behind Lee, on his horse, pointed to some of the stock they were driving, and said; “That is my mamma’s cow.” Lee reached around and seizing her by the hair, dragged her around in front of him, and said, “You know too much” then cut her throat, and threw the body in the street in Cedar City.

A band of men was then sent out to gather up the bodies of the emigrants, and throw them into a deep ravine or washout. It was done with the aid of horses, and long ropes to drag the bodies to the ravine. One report said that no dirt was thrown over them, but my informant told me that just enough dirt was thrown over them to hide the bodies, but the wolves and vultures dug them up.
The bodies were stripped of all valuables and even the clothing, but what became of these is hard to tell. The Indians afterward complained that they did not receive half what was promised them. My informant told me that there was about four hundred head of nice American beef cattle sold at some place on the Jordan River, to our Government soldiers, the following winter. It is generally understood that the Mormons got most of the booty, and these cattle were supposed to have been the emigrant’s.

The statements made in this book were told me as true facts, while I was in Utah and near Mountain Meadows in 1877, but I was put under the most solemn pledge not to repeat it for twenty years. As the time is up I want the public to know the truth, for I feel sure from all I have read or heard, that this is the most correct history of the affair ever published.

I publish this in justice to the memory of the dead, and to those living who were dear to those gone before. I want this to be a living witness against the Mormon Church forever.

This history has long been neglected. Its events happened a few years previous to the Civil War, which lasted four years, and as so many things happened during that time, the fate of these unfortunate emigrants seemed to become dim in the memory of all but those whom it most concerned.

After I met that Mormon, and was convinced that he told me facts, I determined that if I lived over the twenty year limit, I would publish the facts for the benefit of the public.

It may be of interest to know how I fell in with this Mormon.

In 1877, I took a band of sheep from California to Southern Utah. I came to a settlement near Mountain Meadows; this was just at the time John D. Lee was executed at Mountain Meadows for being one of the perpetrators of the massacre. I left the sheep on a fine range in care of the herders, while I was engaged in looking for cattle to trade the sheep for.

One day while going from one settlement to another, I overtook two young ladies walking along and leading a horse. I thought it strange so rode up and asked if they were in trouble.

On account of having lived most of their life in that wilderness, they were bashful and afraid to talk, but finally one of them said their horse had thrown them off and would not let them on again, and that one of them had been dragged several rods by her foot hanging in the stirrup.
I at once offered to loan them my horse and I would ride their's for I knew mine was safe to ride. They were willing, so the saddles were changed. We then rode some twelve or fifteen miles to where they were going, and I then saddled my own horse again and proceeded on my way, never expecting to see them again.

Several days later I reached a very lonely settlement just at dark, and asked for lodgings at one of the houses. I was invited in, and was surprised to see the two young ladies again.

They treated me well and I soon learned from their father that he was no Mormon.

He had come to that part of the country with the first emigration of the Mormons, and settled in that place. "Of course I had to join the church for self protection," he said.

He had brought considerable property with him, but the Mormons schemed to get it all and coaxed him into a mining speculation, and in a few years the Mormon Church had all his property except the worthless mine.

When I saw him he was working for wages to get enough money to enable him to leave the country.

He was thankful to me for the kindness to his daughters' and wanted me to stay a week or two with him, but as I was there not entirely for my health, I respectfully declined his kind invitation.

As he was an old settler I ventured to ask if he had ever heard of a train of emigrants being killed by the Indians, near there.

He said he knew of a train of emigrants that was massacred at Mountain Meadows nearly twenty years before.

He said he knew it was going to be done and also as soon as the emigrants were besieged.

I asked him to give me the particulars, and he asked if I really did want to know.

I told him that many of those emigrants had been old schoolmates and friends of mine, and that we had started across the plains together.

He said if I would promise, in the presence of his family, not to make the matter public for twenty years, he would tell me the truth about the massacre. I promised, and he then narrated the facts as I have given them.

It will be seen that his account differs from that in Bancroft's History, and the official reports to the Government from Major Carlton and Colonel Mitchell. The report of Captain Lynch was as accurate as he was able to get it but he did not get it all.
He was one of the men who rescued the children from the Mormons, and saw them safely to their grand-parents. He afterward married Sarah Dunlap, one of the children he had rescued thirty-five years before. She was the little baby who was found with her arm almost shot away, and her eyesight destroyed forever.

All reports differ from the Mormons', and it will probably never be known how many emigrants perished in the slaughter.

The massacre occurred in September, 1857 and not in March, as one writer states.

My Mormon informant said that shortly after the massacre, the bones of the unfortunate victims were scattered over almost a section of land, until gathered up by Colonel Forney in 1859. These bones were buried, and a monument of rough stone built over them.

The monument was twelve feet high and thirty feet in circumference, with a cross of cedar timber hewed out, and this inscription on it:

"Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord."

There was neither monument or cross there in 1877. It had been torn down.

CHAPTER FOUR

Mistakes In Other Histories. Appendix.

Bancroft's History of the Mountain Meadow Massacre contains many mistakes. It says the execution of John D. Lee took place in March, 1877. I know it was in September, for I was near, at the time, and saw the fresh bloodstains on the wagon that took the body to the grave.

Lee's confession tends to lay the blame on the dignitaries of the Mormon Church, but Bancroft seems to think them clear, or is inclined that way. I think if Bancroft had seen as much of the Mormons as I did in 1857, he would change his opinion.

In a history called "Conquering the Wilderness" it is stated that Brigham Young's death occurred just five months to a day, after the execution of Lee. In 1877 I got to Utah about Sept. 1, and left about Nov. 29 and know there was little, if any more than two months, between the death of Lee and Young.
Other histories speak of the Indians and the Mormons making two desperate charges, this mistake is apparent from the fact that there were no Mormons hurt and only one Indian killed and one wounded.

It is doubtful whether a full account of the massacre will ever be had, as the rescued children were too young to remember much, and the Mormons will not tell what they know.

I thought at one time of writing a full history of the massacre, but think I am now too far advanced in years to undertake so much, so I merely submit these few pages.

B. G. PARKER.

APPENDIX

Extract from letter of Capt. J. Lynch.

"I served our country throughout the Mexican war and was in many battles, but never shed a tear till I visited the site of the Mountain Meadow Massacre, in 1859, for the purpose of rescuing the surviving children. x x x When the children came to our hands they were in a most horrible condition, almost destitute of clothes, and in a starving condition. x x x At that time my wife was three years of age, and suffering in the extreme from the wound she had received two years previous, nothing having been done for her relief. Her hand was merely hanging to her arm by the skin, and her eyes were so badly injured that they have never recovered."

Extract from letter of Sarah Lynch, written by Jas. Lynch.

"At the time Higby ordered his men to fire at the women, Mrs. Dunlap was shot down with the rest of the women and children. Sarah E. Dunlap was a babe in her mother's arms. One
of the butchers ran up and shot her in the right arm, on her dead mother's breast, and the flash of the gun injured her eyesight. At the time of the rescue, the Mormons had never done a single thing for the child, for the period of two years. The seventeen children saved themselves by hiding in the brush."

Extracts from Official Report of Maj. Carlton

"A Pah-Ute chief, named Jackson, who was one of the attacking party, and had a brother slain by the emigrants from their corral, says that orders came down in a letter from Brigham Young that the emigrants were to be killed. Jackson says there were sixty Mormons led by Bishop John D. Lee, and a man named Haight, all disguised as Indians. x x x The property of the emigrants was brought to Cedar City and sold at public auction. The clothing stripped from the corpses, bloody and with bits of flesh in it, was placed in the cellar of the tithing office where it remained three weeks.

The Mormons say the children were in the hands of the Indians, and were purchased by themselves for rifles, etc. but the children say they have never lived with the Indians at all."

The End.