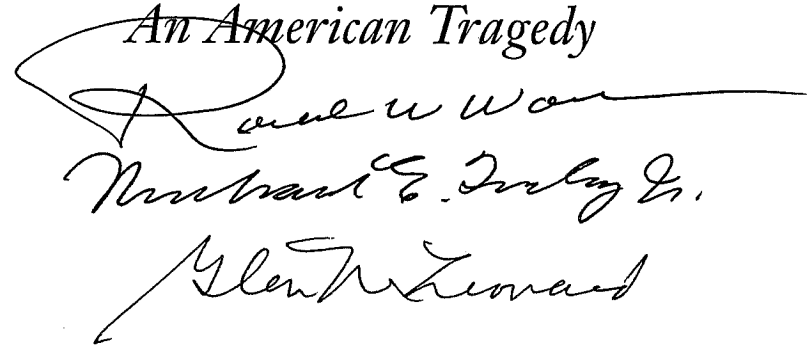
RONALD W. WALKER

RICHARD E. TURLEY JR.

GLEN M. LEONARD

MASSACRE AT MOUNTAIN MEADOWS

An American Tragedy



OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS
2008

CHAPTER TWELVE

Finish His Dirty Job

Parowan to Mountain Meadows, September 7–10, 1857

James Haslam's ride north through Parowan late Monday afternoon brought Dame word that the emigrants had gotten into a difficulty with Indians at Mountain Meadows. Whether Dame believed the message or read between the lines is unclear.[1] But he heard enough to summon a council for advice that evening. The Parowan men "decided to render aid and protection to the emigrants, should they call for assistance," remembered one of the council participants. "Otherwise it was considered just, in view of the threats and insults the company had offered to the Saints in passing through the settlements, to let them fight it out with the Indians as best they could."[2]

The council's decision reflected rumors circulating about the emigrants. It may also have reflected its members' understanding of Brigham Young's Indian policy, announced August 16, that Mormons not jump into disputes between emigrants and Indians. In any case, Dame knew of the need for an Indian alliance in the coming war. Salt Lake City headquarters had made that point emphatically with the southern commander.[3]

At two o'clock Tuesday morning, September 8, an Indian runner reached Parowan with new details. "The Indians had attacked the emigrant company at Mountain Meadows" and had killed two or three of its members, said the runner, who had come to recruit Paiutes around Parowan. The news, of course, was of Monday's attack, but the reported killings and plea for reinforcements made the situation more serious. Dame told local Paiutes not to go but wanted more information about exactly what was happening at the Meadows.[4]

He called on one of his counselors, twenty-three-year-old Jesse N. Smith, to get answers. An express rider found Smith harvesting wheat on his farm at Paragonah, four-and-a-half miles north. Smith hurried to Parowan, where Dame told him to go "to Cedar City and ascertain the truth about the matter." Smith traveled with Edward Dalton, a Parowan man with a well-deserved reputation for moderation and good judgment.[5]

When the pair reached Cedar City on Tuesday, Haight waved them off. When they asked about the reported attack at Mountain Meadows, he told them, vaguely, that he too "had heard the same rumor" but offered nothing more.[6] In fact, Haight knew of the attack, and even the killing of Aden, but was unwilling to share this information with Dame's emissaries.[7] Haight also held back that he had just sent a group of men to the Meadows under Higbee's command, including Stewart, White, Klingensmith, high councilman Charles Hopkins, and former British army officer William Tait.[8]

Lee later said these men came to the Meadows "merely to see how things were."[9] Haight needed more details about the situation at Mountain Meadows, but the men he dispatched on Tuesday were on more than just a reconnaissance mission. From what Stewart and White must have told him when they reached Cedar the night before, Haight knew that at least a few emigrant men were outside the besieged corral. Unless something was done to stop them, they might spread word of the attack to other California-bound companies.

Some fourteen miles west of Cedar, Higbee's westbound group met Joseph Clewes, the courier Haight had sent to the Meadows the day before. After delivering Haight's message to Amos Thornton, Clewes had spent the night at Hamblin's ranch and started for home Tuesday morning. When they met, however, Higbee ordered Clewes to turn around and go with him; he might need the courier. "I had to obey," Clewes said. "There was no other alternative." It would be the great regret of his life.[10]

Higbee and his party continued west along Leach's Cutoff toward the Meadows. After nightfall in the cedars near Leach's Spring, some—if not all—of the men dispatched that day from Cedar City "met two other men coming from the emigrant camp and going to Cedar to

obtain help," Ellott Willden later learned. Thinking the Cedar men would be their saviors, the two emigrants excitedly told them that Indians had surrounded their "camp on the previous Monday, that the camp was still surrounded by the savages, and that they had been sent to obtain help from the settlements." In response to the plea for aid, some of the Cedar men "immediately commenced firing," killing the two emigrants. Willden said Klingensmith was one of the killers. The Cedar City men then went on to Hamblin's ranch to spend the night.[11]

If Clewes witnessed the killings, they must have left him badly shaken. When he delivered Haight's message to Pinto the day before, he had "felt relieved," believing it would put an end to the violence.[12] He could not have been more wrong.

Besides sending Higbee's group west on Tuesday, Haight sent out at least one other man. Isaac Riddle was an Indian missionary who lived in Pine Valley, where a few emigrants had gone to make pine tar before Monday's attack. Riddle was at the Cedar City mill on Tuesday "to get a grist of flour." As he later put it, Haight approached him and said "that there was a fuss in the country" where Riddle lived and that he should go home and attend to his "affairs." Riddle left his wagon, wife, and grist in Cedar and "shucked out for home." He overtook Higbee and the others on the trail, and rode with them as far as Pinto before turning south toward Pine Valley.[13] The record is silent on what Riddle's "affairs" were—and what part Higbee's men may have played—but nothing more was ever heard of the pine tar gatherers.[14]

Hours before Riddle and Higbee's men left Cedar City, more violence had erupted at the besieged emigrant camp four miles south of Hamblin's. As Lee and the Washington men traveled north from their camp in Santa Clara canyon to the Meadows on Tuesday morning, they "met a small band of Indians returning with some eighteen or twenty head of cattle." The Paiutes were upset. One had been shot in the shoulder and appeared to have broken ribs. "He had no shirt on" and was "bleading very bad," reported William Young.[15]

Arriving at the Meadows, Lee said he "found about two hundred Indians...in a high state of excitement," including the "two wounded chiefs, Moqueetus and Bill," from Cedar City. The Paiutes, their numbers strengthened Monday night by Indian reinforcements from the south, had "attacked the emigrants again, about sunrise...Tuesday, and had one of their number killed and several wounded."[16] One Paiute leader from the Santa Clara—Jackson—said "that a brother of his was killed by a shot from the corral at a distance of two hundred yards, as he was running across the meadow."[17] Things were not going as Lee had promised when he lured the Paiutes to the Meadows and, not surprisingly, they were upset.[18]

The Paiutes had killed dozens of cattle and wanted to kill more, either out of anger or just to collect their promised reward. Lee, Carl Shirts, and Indian missionary Oscar Hamblin "succeeded in getting the Indians to desist from killing any more stock that night."[19] Lee had his own designs on the emigrants' livestock and would eventually get control over most of the herd as farmer to the Indians.[20]

One of Lee's sons later said that his father "traded the Indians out of some very fine work horses which the Indians did not prefer because of their weight, and an excellent race horse."[21] The racehorse may have been Tillman Cameron's "One-Eye Blaze."[22] Interpreter Nephi Johnson gave a slightly different story. During the week of the massacre, some Paiutes told Johnson that Lee had promised them "all the horses, and now Lee had sent some of the best to Harmony, and they were going to kill Lee if he did not return them."[23]

That was not all that bothered the Paiutes. After Tuesday morning's attack Lee received Haight's message via Thornton "to keep the Indians off the emigrants and protect them from harm until further orders."[24] Following Haight's direction, Lee at first reversed his earlier course and with his companions from the south told the Paiutes to hold off on further attacks. But the white men's vacillation may have seemed nonsensical—if not two-faced—to the Paiutes, and "the attack was renewed that night by the Indians, in spite of all we could do to prevent it," Lee said.[25]

In an account that seemed to borrow from his close call on Monday, Lee later claimed he was miraculously spared again as he and two other white men ran toward the Indians to stop Tuesday night's attack. "The bullets came around us like a shower of hail," Lee said. While others "threw themselves flat on the ground to protect themselves from the bullets I stood erect and asked my Father in Heaven to protect me from the missiles of death and enable me to reach the Indians. One ball passed through my hat and the hair of my head, and another through my shirt, grazing my arm near the shoulder....The cries and shrieks of the women and children so overcame me that I forgot my danger and rushed through the fire to the Indians."[26] That was Lee's later version of events.

The Indians saw it differently. Paiutes told Nephi Johnson about "three different attacks, in the third of which"—on Tuesday evening—"Lee led the attack in person, and received one bullet

through his hat, and one on each side of his body through his shirt, but his skin was not broke."[27] In one of the earliest records of the massacre, Paiutes reported that Lee "prevailed on them to attack the emigrants," which they did, being "repulsed on three different occasions."[28] Lee's earliest accounts align more closely with the Paiute version. Just days after the massacre, Lee said he was forced to lead Tuesday night's attack "to save his life," because the Paiutes "was very mad" at him "for getting them into the scrape" and "wanted him to help to use up that company."[29] The Paiutes said "they was not going to do the dirty work alone," reminding him that "he had taken them there."[30]

Whatever the case, Lee said he broke down in tears and begged the Paiutes to desist, evoking their contempt.[31] That, Lee claimed, was the origin of his Paiute nickname "Yauguts," or "crying man," which he would never lose. Tears flowed freely for him throughout his life—both before and after the massacre.[32]

Some of the Santa Clara Paiutes threatened to kill Lee and his companions, calling Lee "a squaw" who "did not have the heart of a brave." According to Lee's account, Jacob Hamblin's brother stepped in to rescue him. "I owe my life on that occasion to Oscar Hamblin, who was a missionary with the Indians....Hamblin shamed them and called them dogs and wolves for wanting to shed the blood of their father (myself), who had fed and clothed them."[33] James Mangum, an interpreter from Washington, said it was Lee's adopted Paiute son, Lemuel, who saved them. "Had it not been for an Indian boy that John D. Lee raised, the Indians would have killed John D. Lee, Oscar Hamblin and myself," he said.[34] Whatever Lemuel said to spare the men's lives apparently cost him his trust with those Paiutes. The next day an Indian runner would plead with Nephi Johnson to come interpret for them at the Meadows because "they were tired of Lees Indian Boy Interpeter [as] He Lied to Them so Much."[35]

According to Lee, he and the interpreters were finally able to convince the Paiutes at the Meadows "to suspend hostilities" on Tuesday evening and return to their camp, promising they "would hold a council" and "send for big Captains to come and talk." They said Dame and Haight might come and "give them part of the cattle and let the company go." They told the Paiutes "they had punished the emigrants enough, and may be they had killed nearly all of them."[36]

The Tuesday night incident gave Lee the excuse he would use the rest of his life. Denying he participated in the first attack on Monday, Lee would claim he did not arrive at the Meadows until Tuesday, when he did everything in his power to save the emigrants from angry Indians. It was a self-serving story built on half-truths and a persistent effort to make the Paiutes responsible for what Lee and the Cedar City leaders started.

Before anyone from Higbee's party reached them, Lee and the men at the south end of the Meadows "held a council and decided to send a messenger to Haight." Lee later claimed a tenderhearted reluctance. "Tell Haight, for my sake, for the people's sake, for God's sake, send me help to protect and save these emigrants, and pacify the Indians." The message, without its later varnish, recommended the offensive be called off for good and asked for "further instructions." The courier was probably George Adair, whose regular work included carrying mail between Washington and Parowan.[37]

When the massacre was over, firebrands like Lee said they tried to stop things, and at this point it appears Lee really did.[38] But crime has its own momentum. Once begun, its perpetrators find it hard to draw back, if only to hide what has already taken place.

At noon on Wednesday, with nothing to do but await Haight's decision, Lee slipped across the valley toward the ridge northwest of the corral to reconnoiter. On his way, he said, "the company recognized me as a white man and sent two little boys about 4 years old to meet me." Lee quickly hid himself and the boys turned back, but the emigrants persisted in their attempts at communication, hoisting "a *white* flag in the middle of their corral."[39]

From the ridge, Lee could easily see the emigrants' chained wagons and the pit they had dug inside. "The only show for the Indians was to starve them out, or shoot them as they went for water," he later said, as though the Paiutes were solely responsible for what was happening.[40] The best the emigrants could do was to wait for someone to rescue them—or for their attackers to grow weary and leave. Trapped inside their wagon fort, the survivors had little or no kindling for cooking, no fresh water, and no milk for the children. A rumor later reached Cedar City that when one emigrant woman slipped from the fort to milk a cow, a sharpshooter killed her.[41] Though the concerted attacks had stopped, fitful "shooting between the emigrants and Indians was continually going on."[42]

From his hidden perch northwest of the corral, Lee may have noticed a commotion east of him on the low-lying hill that concealed the Indian camp. Paiutes were crowded "pretty thick" around two white men, "pull[ing] and push[ing]" them to the top of the ridge. The two were Ellott Willden and Joseph Clewes.[43]

Wednesday morning at Hamblin's ranch, Higbee had sent the two brothers-in-law to the south end of the Meadows "to find out how the Indians were acting and how many there were." Obediently, Willden and Clewes found the Indian camp, which was concealed between "two low ridges" northeast of the emigrant corral. They saw Paiutes "lying around on every side," wounded among them. The Indians were still upset with Lee. They had not seen him all day and resented that he "had left them with their dead and wounded," Willden said.[44]

At one point—perhaps after getting bullet holes in his clothing—Lee had told the Paiutes "that the bullets of the emigrants would not hurt the 'Mormons' the same as the Indians." Seeing Willden and Clewes, the Paiutes decided to test Lee's claim. They "demanded that Willden and Clewes should put on Indian attire and run unarmed past the emigrant camp within easy range of their rifles, to a neighboring point about a hundred yards distant." It may have been the same route Jackson's brother took when he was shot. The two white men concluded they would have to "take their chances" in doing what the Indians demanded "or risk being killed by them. So they ran, amid a shower of bullets from the emigrant camp and reached the opposite point in safety." The men then returned to the Paiute camp, where they "were heartily cheered for their bravery after their perilous run."[45] Soon, said Clewes, "we were hailed from a ridge on our left; we looked around and there stood John D. Lee."[46]

Lee told the Indians to return to their camp—"pacif[ying] their feelings by making explanations to them"—then sat down to talk with Clewes and Willden. "Willden asked Lee if he had received the express taken out by Clewes and Thornton," the one in which Haight told Lee to back off. Lee said he had, but that "it was too late, the break on the Indian camp having already been made." Willden chided Lee for angering the Paiutes, nearly costing him and Clewes their lives as they were forced to run through emigrant gunfire. Lee told the young men they "were getting some valuable experience, and besides it was no worse for them than for him." He then showed them the bullet holes in his clothing.[47]

After their talk, Lee "went over the ridge," and Willden and Clewes met up again with Higbee and his men.[48] Higbee looked the situation over and later used it to advantage in trying to blame the massacre on Paiutes. Higbee's account bristled with danger. It was "bedlam or hell," he said of what he found Wednesday at the Meadows. Dead horses and cattle were scattered about, a scene from the "Infernal regions," as "deamon like as Could be imagined." Higbee inflated the number of Indians to between three and six hundred, calling them "blood thirsty and crazy" savages "determined...to accomplish the destruction of the Company if they had to fight all the Mormons in the Southern Country." The Paiutes were in war paint, he recalled, as were a couple of unnamed white men in disguise—Willden and Clewes. "Lee was trying to Pasify [the Indians] and have them Scatter and go away and let the Emigrants go," Higbee wrote.[49]

Although Higbee exaggerated the pandemonium at the Meadows, there was debate in the Mormon ranks about what to do. Young James Pearce from Washington remembered the emotions. Some of the leaders "talked as though they [the emigrants] must be put out of the way," Pearce later testified. Others said "it never would do."[50]

The leaders from Cedar City on the field met to decide "what Should be done," and their decision was far-reaching. The Haight-Lee plan had been designed to be an Indian and not formally a militia affair. Now, "after a good deal of deliberation," the Cedar men agreed that calling out the militia under Col. Dame's orders to assist was the only way to end the standoff quickly. Higbee, Klingensmith, and Hopkins returned to Cedar City to report to Haight.[51]

Now there was nothing for the men who remained at the Meadows to do but wait. Some of them spoke of the humdrum routine, seemingly oblivious to the suffering of the corralled emigrants. The Mormon settlers and Indians "were engaged in broiling beef and making their hides up into lassoes," Lee recalled. Other men shot at targets. Joel White said he slept and lounged after his arrival. Pearce described a diet heavy in meat that led White and some others to Hamblin's ranch for buttermilk and salt.[52] Three Cedar City men killed time pitching quoits near Hamblin's house.[53]

With the lull, some Paiutes took their spoil of cattle and left, though many remained. Pearce remembered Indians "pow-wowing around," mixing with the whites.[54] White recalled a "good many Indians" milling around the Mormon wagons and resting in the brush and shade. He thought "they were friendly."[55] Like the Mormon settlers, many of the Paiutes were reluctant to get too close to the wagon fort. "The emigrants had long guns and were good shots," they said.[56] At night, the valley was quiet, except for "the Indians whooping and yelling—maybe hollering around," racket perhaps aimed at keeping the emigrants on edge. "Nothing more than that," White said.[57]

Higbee arrived at Cedar City by Wednesday evening and consulted with Haight. The situation had become more tangled than anyone imagined at the outset. People had been murdered and survivors

would talk. The emigrants had seen Lee and recognized him as a white man in spite of any disguise he might have worn. Even if they hadn't, the man who witnessed Aden's murder and returned to the wagon corral "of course would give the alarm in camp."[58] If the emigrants were allowed to go on to California, Cedar City residents would pay a price. And where would it stop? With anti-Mormon feeling already running strong in the country and an army marching on the territory, the lives of the entire community might be at risk.

The Cedar City leaders believed they had to do something to bring events to a conclusion—fast.[59] It was emigration season, and they knew more travelers on the California road were bound to reach southern Utah and the Mountain Meadows soon. They had also been told that U.S. soldiers might enter the region at any moment. James Haslam was expected to return eventually with Brigham Young's response, but could the matter wait that long? And although Haight had convinced himself he was acting in behalf of the Saints, what if Young disagreed?

Events were coming to a head, and the conspirators saw just two chilling options. They could lift the siege and let the emigrants carry word of the attack to California, which they feared would unleash aggression on the southern Mormon settlements. Or they could leave no emigrants alive who were old enough to "tell tales."[60] The Paiutes could not kill the remaining emigrants on their own, and the militia could not be ordered to commit such an act without the consent of their commanding officer, Dame.

Late Wednesday evening Haight left for Parowan in a light wagon, taking his counselor Elias Morris with him. "His face and countenance indicated that something weighed heavily on his mind, and he desired to go and talk with Col. Dame, his superior in military command," Morris later said circumspectly.[61] In truth Morris knew what was going on. The two men had to get Dame to give the order that would bring the Mountain Meadows matter to what they thought was its inexorable conclusion.

Haight must have also been worrying about Smith and Dalton, the men Dame sent to investigate the Indian report of an attack at the Meadows. Unable to get the information they needed from Haight in Cedar on Tuesday, the two men had gone to Pinto, where they learned that the "emigrants were undoubtedly attacked." Smith said he and Dalton were advised to go no farther because Mountain Meadows "was filled with Indians." The two men returned to Cedar City on Wednesday and, after resting from their hard riding, took off for home.[62] By the time Haight and Morris reached Parowan, Dame would know that Cedar City leaders had blatantly disobeyed his directive to let the emigrants pass unharmed.

But Smith and Dalton's report was not Dame's only headache on Wednesday. Dame had been busy that day trying to calm another emigrant crisis. According to Turner company member Peyton Welch, the Pahvants were upset when his group of emigrants reached Corn Creek several days before. Perhaps the "poisoning" was beginning to take its toll in the area: anthrax spores would have had enough time by then to start doing damage. Or perhaps members of Turner's company were responsible, after all, for reported insults and threats in the Fillmore area, and Fillmore bishop Lewis Brunson had made good on his promise "to set the Indians" on them. If so, like Haight at Cedar, Brunson may have taken advantage of what he saw as Young's new Indian policy. At stake were the safety of "twenty-three wagons, 450 head of loose cattle, and 107 men, women and children."[63]

Tuesday evening, Philo T. Farnsworth, Beaver's bishop and militia captain, learned from a local Indian that Pahvants were preparing to attack the Turner company near Beaver. Farnsworth sprang into action, first visiting Dukes's party, which had pushed ahead to a camp just below Beaver earlier in the day, leaving Turner about six miles back at Indian Creek.[64]

Farnsworth urged Dukes to turn back to help protect Turner's group, but he refused. Members of his company "were so demoralized he could do nothing with them," he said.[65] Farnsworth offered to detach some of his own men to rescue the Turner company if Dukes would do likewise, and Dukes finally agreed. By the time the combined rescue party got to Indian Creek, Pahvants had tried to run off the emigrants' cattle, and Turner's men had shot an Indian.[66]

As the rescuers escorted Turner's group south to the Dukes camp, the Pahvants kept firing on the company's cattle—they could then use the abandoned carcasses for food.[67] Turner's men wanted to return fire, but the Mormon rescuers stopped them, positioning themselves between the two groups. "From this," one of the emigrants complained, "we became more apprehensive of the [Mormons] than of the Indians."[68] Their position in the middle epitomized the Mormons' dilemma. In rescuing Turner and his men, they pleased neither the distrustful emigrants nor the Pahvants whose friendship they needed in the coming war. Young's new Indian policy had warned about avoiding just such a situation.

Soon the Turner company was camped with the Dukes party just outside of Beaver, but the fighting was not over—and the Mormons

at Beaver remained in the middle. When emigrant leaders Turner, Dukes, and Wilson Collins visited the town Wednesday morning, an Indian named Sissix shot Turner, hitting him "just above the hip."[69] Collins ran for the safety of the blacksmith shop, only to be pushed back into the open by an occupant who either had no sympathy for the outsider or felt threatened by the sudden intrusion. Collins then sustained a serious gunshot wound to the arm, while Dukes, also in the open, was "grazed by two or three bullets."[70] Farnsworth, who was eating breakfast when the shooting began, ran out into the street between the emigrants and the Indians, telling Sissix to get out of town.[71]

Farnsworth quickly sent word of the attack to Col. Dame at Parowan, thirty-five miles south, and Turner, Dukes, and Collins returned to their combined train. Soon they had "corralled their wagons and made rifle pits and were in self defense," their cattle scattered on the plains—a scene eerily similar to the one at the Meadows.[72]

Farnsworth's express reached Parowan as Dame was meeting with Mormon freighters Sidney Tanner and William Mathews. Traveling with them since Beaver was George Powers's three-wagon company. Powers had been traveling with the Dukes party but was hopping wagon trains, hoping to catch up with his fellow Arkansans in the Fancher company.[73]

The Tanner-Mathews train had already passed through Parowan, but Dame had sent an express after it, requesting the train "not...proceed any further that day" and that Tanner, Mathews, and Powers come back and meet with him. When the three spoke with Dame in Parowan on Wednesday, the southern commander talked of the Tuesday morning message about an Indian attack at the Meadows and advised Powers to return to the Dukes company further north. Though he made no mention of it, Dame had sent Smith and Dalton to investigate what was going on at the Meadows, and if Mormons were involved in the attack, he didn't want any California-bound outsiders stumbling into the situation.[74]

"I asked him" said Powers of Dame, "if he could not raise a company, and go out and relieve the besieged train. He replied, that he could go out and take them away in safety, but he dared not, he dared not disobey counsel.[75] Dame was unwilling to oppose the Monday night decision of the Parowan council, which had voted to help the emigrants "should they call for assistance." Otherwise, given the "threats and insults the company had offered to the Saints," they would simply "let them fight it out with the Indians as best they could."[76]

Before Tanner, Mathews, Powers, and Dame could finish their conversation, Farnsworth's express came in, requesting help and "stating that the Indians had attacked my train in the streets of that place," said Powers. Dame hastily convened another council of leaders to discuss this latest crisis. The council did not change its policy on the situation at the Meadows—Smith and Dalton had not yet returned from their fact-finding mission. But it responded to Farnsworth's express by sending ten militiamen north "to assist in the protection of the emigrants and settlers in Beaver from the hostility of the Indians." They arrived at Beaver "very late in the night."[77]

The crisis at Beaver was soon peacefully resolved. The influential Ute leader Ammon, who attended the important Indian meeting in Brigham Young's office on September 1, had returned to the area late Wednesday afternoon. Ammon told the Pahvants "they must not touch another man." He and Farnsworth went together to the emigrants' corral and "assured them they should not be molested."[78]

Ammon's good offices came at a price. He wanted the emigrants to give up "six head of cattle" and a horse they had received in trade with the Indians. The emigrants complied.[79] Ammon was well positioned to work a deal. He had influence not only with his camp at Beaver but also with the Pahvants. He "had great control over the Indians," said Farnsworth.[80]

After the council meeting at Parowan, Dame met again with Powers, Tanner, and Mathews and reversed his earlier advice that Powers return to the Dukes company. Because of the attack on Powers's former train, he could continue on with Tanner and Mathews—but only under certain conditions. When "passing through the Indian country," Powers reported, "it might be necessary for me to be laid flat in the wagon and covered with blankets, for two or three days, as the Indians were deadly hostile to all Americans." Powers agreed to the terms.[81]

Late Wednesday, Smith and Dalton reached Parowan, where they "expressed much disgust over what they had seen and learned, as John D. Lee and other white men were assuming a very hostile attitude toward the emigrants in connection with the Indians." In addition, Smith and Dalton probably reported Haight's stonewalling. The Pinto missionaries would have told them of the couriers coming and going from Cedar City.[82]

Dame finally retired to his home on Wednesday night, but his long day was not over. Just before midnight, Haight and Morris knocked on his door. For the second time in several hours, Dame convened a council. Calvin Pendleton and Jesse Smith, Dame's two counselors,

were present, as were Parowan resident William Barton and other "leading men in the settlement."[83]

"The subject discussed," read Morris's carefully phrased account, "was concerning the Arkansas company, who had been attacked by Indians at Mountain Meadows"—nothing about the role of Haight and Lee, which must have been the quiet subtext for everything said. Morris's words hardly hinted at the crosscurrents present.[84] The meeting was the first between Haight and Dame since the crisis began, and everything smacked of insubordination. If the point needed to be made, Smith, just back from Pinto, was in the room and could make it.

Although the Monday night Parowan council had decided to let the emigrants handle the Indian troubles on their own, based on what its members had since learned, the council now reversed its decision. "A propos[i]tion made by Pendleton was adopted," said Barton, "to the effect, that a company should be sent out from Parowan...to call the Indians off, gather up the stock for the company, and let them continue their journey in peace."[85]

Haight later admitted to Barton, "I would give a world if I had it, if we had abided by the deci[s]ion of the council." Instead, Haight asked Dame for a private session immediately after the meeting. If he could get the district commander on his own, away from his council, Haight knew Dame might relent. The two men, along with Morris, walked to a pile of tanning bark lying near Dame's barn by Parowan's east gate. Barton, who attended the just-ended council, watched from a distance. He could not hear the words, but he later learned their significance. It was "right there and then" that the "whole programme and plan was changed," Barton said.[86]

What would become known as the "tan bark council" lasted about half an hour. While Dame and Haight later argued bitterly about what was agreed upon, the gist of their talk was more certain. Haight probably shared with Dame details he was unwilling to mention at the earlier council: the emigrants' recognition of Lee as a white man, the wounded man making it into the corral after witnessing Stewart's murder of Aden, perhaps even the killing of the two emigrant messengers who asked for help. Mostly the conversation was about covering up the white men's role in the killing in order to protect their people from what they feared would be harsh retribution. Haight also implied that most of the fighting was over, sharing Lee's assertion that the Indians had killed nearly all the emigrants.[87]

Dame must have shared some new information of his own. The Missouri company—Turner, Dukes, and Collins—was at Beaver and would soon be heading south. Sidney Tanner and William Mathews's freighters, traveling with Powers's small train of outsiders, were even nearer the Meadows, waiting at Summit south of Parowan. How long would it be before any of these California-bound parties reached the Meadows and discovered the truth?[88]

"It seemed to become necessary to kill all [the Arkansas emigrants] to silence the rest," Ellott Willden summed it up. "Hence the tan Bark Council and other councils."[89] In a rare account of his meeting with Haight, Dame later told Jacob Hamblin that the final decision was about consequences. "L[ee] & the Indians had commenced it and it had to be done," he said. "For if it should come to the ears of President Bucanann, it would endanger the lives of the Bretheren."[90] When their talk ended early Thursday morning, Haight, anxious for a resolution, took what he wanted from the discussion. Whether he really believed it or was just protecting himself, he told his stepson, Daniel Macfarlane, that Dame gave him "the final order to destroy the entire company."[91]

Later on Thursday, Dame left for Beaver to see if the problems there were resolved, only to learn along the way that the Missouri company crisis had been settled. Because of Ammon's and Farnsworth's mediation and the arrival of the Parowan militia, the emigrants at Beaver were out of immediate danger and ready to move on.[92] "Had J. D. Lee taken this course," Farnsworth later wrote, laying the blame to only one conspirator, "the Mountain Meadows Massacre would never have been."[93]

Haight, meanwhile, reached Cedar City early Thursday morning feeling he had authority to call out the militia and move ahead with the killing, not waiting for Haslam to return with Young's reply.[94] He would make the most of his agreement with Dame. "Returning to Cedar City Haight called the brethren of that place together," said Macfarlane.[95]

Several of the men who mustered at Cedar later claimed they were called to the Meadows to "burry the dead." They did "not know that they must first make the dead," Haight said privately.[96] Yet only a fraction of the men took shovels or spades with them, and most took guns.[97] When private John Bradshaw, a thirty-eight-year-old English brick maker, showed up at the mustering grounds with just a spade, Haight wanted to know why he was not carrying a gun. Where was his ammunition? "I told him I didn't know that it required a gun to bury dead people," Bradshaw replied. "He...called me a fool; told me I didn't know anything about it, didn't understand things." Haight dismissed Bradshaw, sending him home.[98]

Many of the men who went to the Meadows were militia officers or had attended Sunday's council in which the emigrants' destruction was proposed. Most likely these men saw the euphemisms and untruths for what they were and only later claimed to be unaware of their true meaning. In crime, the first casualty is often truth.

Nephi Johnson certainly knew what was going on. Haight still needed Johnson and his Paiute language skills. After Haight sent Johnson home on Monday, the young interpreter hoped to avoid getting involved. When an Indian came asking for his help interpreting at the Meadows on Wednesday, Johnson refused. "I Did Not Want Anything to Do with killing the Emigrants," he said, "for I was Determined in my Own Mind that I would Keep Away from them." But on Thursday Haight gave him no choice. Two express riders arrived at Johnson's home with written orders, telling him Haight required him to go to Cedar City whether he "wanted to or Not."[99]

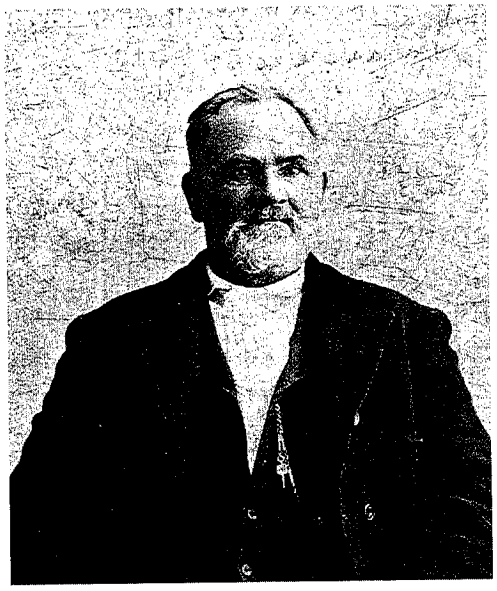
During Johnson's second meeting with Haight, he was told the recent details. Haight said Lee had gone to the Meadows to kill the emigrants. There had been three attacks, but "the emigrants were better fighters than...expected," and some Indians had been killed or wounded. Haight said "the indians were getting tired of the job" and threatened Lee, and "Lee had suggested letting the emigrants go." Now Haight wanted the situation to come to an end. Haight told Johnson that he "had sent word for [Lee] to finish his dirty job, as he had started it." Johnson was to help him. He wanted the Indian interpreter to go to the Meadows with the militia to help end the siege.[100] Both men understood what that meant.

The situation in which Johnson found himself became a common theme after the massacre. One man after another said he had gone to the Meadows because of military orders—they had been coerced. For some it was probably true; but it was also true that many men did not go, giving rise to a healthy store of folklore—proud families telling stories of how their ancestors refused to participate in the crime. "Old Joseph Walker...when told to go to the Meadows, put his fist in Haights face and told him to go to hell and do his own dirty work," said one account.[101] Another man claimed that his stepbrothers "hid in the furrows of a potato patch until the Cedar party went on."[102] Peter Nelson reportedly concealed himself in a bin of grain and escaped the soldiers' detection by breathing through a straw.[103] Yet another man supposedly dodged service by claiming to be ill, first lying in a pile of hot bricks to simulate a fever.[104] Legend had it that the men who refused to go felt that the emigrants "had gone on"—they were old history—"and that their threats about returning with an armed force was all wind."[105] While there may have been some conscientious objectors, the operation did not require most of the militia to go. All told, less than one-fifth of Cedar City's militiamen went to the Meadows.[106]

The men mustered out on Thursday left for their grim task at the Meadows around midday, led by Major Higbee.[107] At 2:00 that afternoon, leaders of the Cedar City Female Benevolent Society held their regular meeting. "Sister Haight" reported she had been visiting some of the Cedar women and "taught them the necessity of being obedient to their husbands" and not to be fearful in these "troublesome" and "squally times." "We ought to attend to secret prayer in behalf of our husbands, sons, fathers, & brothers," she said. She instructed the women to teach their children "the principles of righteousness, and to implant a desire in their hearts to avenge the blood of the Prophets." Additionally, "Sister Hopkins" and "Sister White," whose husbands had gone to the Meadows on Tuesday, said they had advised the women they visited "to attend strictly to secret prayer in behalf of the brethren that are out acting in our defence."[108]

As the women held their meeting and the militiamen set their sights on the Meadows, James Haslam was barreling south through the Salt Lake Valley, carrying Brigham Young's response to Haight. The last three days since he left Cedar City had been grueling. After passing north through Beaver on Monday night, Haslam faced delay in Fillmore. Bishop Brunson was off hunting, and Haslam had to wait hours for him to return, only to receive a horse that did not make it far. Returning to Fillmore for a better horse, Haslam pushed on to Payson and the home of Charles Hancock, the local bishop. Could he sleep on the porch? Haslam asked. "I made a bed for him and he fell asleep quick," Hancock remembered. A short hour later, Hancock got some cold water to wake and brace him, and after downing coffee and "vituals," the express rider was once again on his way. Hancock had a fresh horse saddled and waiting by the gate.[109]

At Provo and American Fork, Haslam again found fresh mounts. Traveling through the night, the exhausted rider finally arrived in Salt Lake City about noon on Thursday. He had ridden hard but calculated that a third of his sixty-hour trip had been spent getting horses.[110] Despite the letter he carried from Dame asking bishops and militia commanders to furnish him horses, some were not eager to lend their best animals to a hard-riding expressman.[111]



JAMES H. HASLAM. *Thomas and Odell, Courtesy LDS Church History Library.*

In Salt Lake City, Haslam turned left off the upward slope of State Road onto South Temple Street, stopping at the Lion House, one of Brigham Young's homes.[112] Soon Haslam was ushered into an office where Young and a dozen other church leaders were meeting with Jacob Hamblin, who had been asked to instruct them on how Indians stored food. The subject was important. The Mormons were still thinking of fleeing to the mountains, where they would cache provisions for their survival if the army got through.[113]

While they were still preparing for the worst, their fears had been somewhat assuaged two days before by the arrival of Capt. Stewart Van Vliet—the first representative from the U.S. government to explain the army's intentions. Although Mormon leaders remained wary, Van Vliet had assured them the army meant no harm to the Saints, that Gen. Harney had been retained for duties in Kansas, and that the troops were not likely to reach Utah settlements before winter.[114]

Hamblin gave the fullest account of what happened when Haslam entered Thursday's meeting, important because the text of Haight's incoming express did not survive. "While in S. L. City an express came from Iron Co, asking what should be done with a certain Company of Emigrants, that had behaved verry mean while passing through the differant Towns," Hamblin said. "The spirit of the Express rather asked the privilege to chastize them....President Young answered them rather haistily, saying No, when I want Marshal Law proclaimed, I will let you know."[115]

Young's comment suggested that Haight proposed using the militia against the emigrants—just as he had proposed earlier to Dame. Martial law—often proclaimed by governments in times of war—would have allowed the militia to take the law into its own hands in an emergency. Young had been considering a martial law proclamation for some time but would not issue it until September 15, after discussions with Van Vliet convinced him that army leaders were intent on reaching Utah regardless of how its citizens felt.[116]

Young asked Haslam, who had spent most of the last sixty hours in the saddle, if he "could stand the trip back" to Cedar City. When Haslam replied that he could, Young told him to get a little sleep and be back in the office in an hour for his written reply.[117]

Copies of Young's letter would survive both in rough and final draft form, the latter preserved in sequential order in Young's bound letterpress copybooks—clear evidence the letter was a contemporary document. The express, addressed to Haight and dated September 10, began with news that was apparently intended to relieve Haight's fear of imminent attack:[118]

> Dear Brother,
>
> Your note of the 7th inst is to hand. Capt Van Vliet acting Commissary is here having come in advance of the army to procure necessaries for them. We do not expect that any part of the army will be able to reach here this fall. There is only about 850 men coming, they are now at or near Laramie. A few of the freight trains are this side of that place, the advance of which are now on Green River. They will not be able to come much if any farther on account of their poor stock. They cannot get here this season without we help them, so you see that the Lord has answered our prayers and again averted the blow designed for our heads.[119]

The letter's next two sentences addressed Young's concerns about fairness in times of conflict. Although determined to resist the approaching army, Young had pondered deeply the morality of war. "[If] I have to fight," he wrote in his journal three weeks earlier, "I wish to give my enemies fair warning, and then if the[y] will not take it they must abide the consequences." His concern was not just earthly ethics. "I wish to meet *all men* at the judgment Bar of God without any to fear me or accuse me of a wrong action," he wrote.[120] Now he gave similar advice to Haight:

In regard to emigration trains passing through our settlements we must not interfere with them untill they are first notified to keep away. You must not meddle with them.[121]

Haight's letter said the emigrants had gotten into a scrape with Indians, and Young had emphasized the importance of not alienating native tribes since their help was wanted to resist the army. His instruction to Haight reflected his new policy of letting Indians and emigrants resolve their own problems without Mormon interference:

President's Office
G. S. L. City Sept. 10th 1857

Elder Isaac C. Haight.
Dear Brother.

Your note of the 7th inst. is to hand. Capt Van Vliet acting commissary is here having come in advance of the army to procure necessaries for them. We do not expect that any part of the army will be able to reach here this fall. There is only about 850 men coming. They are now at or near Laramie. Of four of the freight trains are this side of that place, the advance of which are now on Green River. They will not be able to come much if any farther on account of their poor stock. They cannot get here this season without we help them. So you see that the Lord has answered our prayers and again averted the blow designed for our heads.

In regard to emigration trains passing through our settlements we must not interfere with them untile they are first notified to keep away. You must not meddle with them. The Indians we expect will do as they please but you should try and preserve good feelings with them. There are no other trains going South that I know of if those who are there will leave let them go in peace. While we should

BRIGHAM YOUNG LETTER TO ISAAC C. HAIGHT, SEPTEMBER 10, 1857. *Courtesy LDS Church History Library.*

The Indians we expect will do as they please but you should try and preserve good feelings with them.[122]

With Hamblin nearby to advise him, Young must have known the Paiutes posed little threat on their own to the well-armed wagon company. At Corn Creek, when the emigrants asked Hamblin's opinion, he had told them they could handle the Indians with half the number of men in their party.[123]

828

be on the alert, on hand and always ready we should also possess ourselves in patience preserving ourselves and property, ever remembering that God rules. He has overruled for our deliverance this once again and he will always do so if we live our religion, be united in our faith and good works. All is well with us.
May the Lord bless you and all saints forever.
I remain as ever your Brother in the Gospel of Christ.

Brigham Young

Young concluded his letter by preaching to Haight the need for peace, patience, and reliance on God:

> There are no other trains going south that I know of if those who are there will leave let them go in peace. While we should be on the alert, on hand and always ready we should also possess ourselves in patience, preserving ourselves and property ever remembering that God rules. He has overruled for our deliverance this once again and he will always do so if we live our religion, be united in our faith and good works. All is well with us.
>
> May the Lord bless you and all saints forever.
>
> I remain as ever your Brother in the Gospel of Christ.[124]

When Haslam returned to the office after his brief rest, the letter was ready for him. Young wanted the message to reach Cedar City as soon as possible. He walked the rider to the hitching post near the outer gate and repeated his instruction several times as Haslam mounted his horse and adjusted the saddle girth. "Brother Haslam," Young instructed, "I want you to ride for dear life; ride day and night; spare no horse flesh."[125]

Haslam "shot off like an arrow down Theatre Hill and was soon out of sight."[126]

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

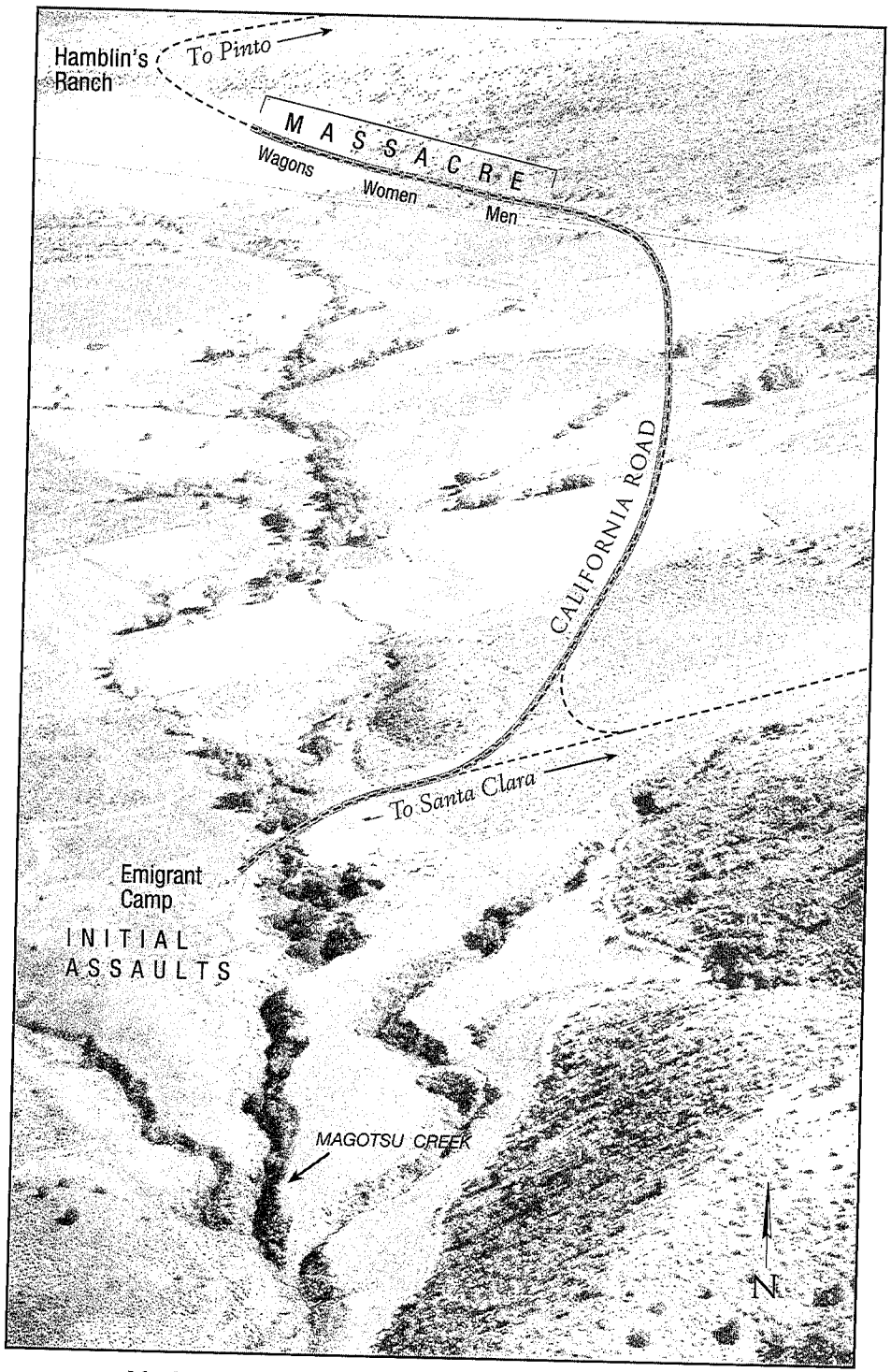
Decoyed Out and Destroyed

Mountain Meadows, September 10–11, 1857

Hours after nightfall on Thursday, the new detachments from Cedar City reached Hamblin's ranch house at the north end of the Meadows and set up camp. A few key men "found Lee and others, and found how matters stood."[1] Lee "and some of the principal chiefs of the Indians were gathered" at Hamblin's, awaiting word from Cedar.[2] Higbee relayed the orders, saying they had come from Haight and Dame. The emigrants were "to be decoyed out and destroyed with the exception of the small children" who were "too young to tell tales," Higbee said, "and if the Indians cannot do it without help, we must help them."[3]

Through interpreter Nephi Johnson, Lee suggested to the Paiute leaders "that he would try and get the emigrants out of their camp as well as giving up their arms after which they would kill them."[4] At first, Johnson hesitated to interpret the awful message. Lee "wanted me to talk to the Indians in a way I didn't want to," Johnson later recalled. Despite his initial reluctance, Johnson repeated the plan in Paiute, "and the Indians agreed to assist in killing the emigrants."[5]

Higbee, Lee, Klingensmith, and other militiamen then traveled south to the main Mormon camp, where they met with Ira Allen, Charles Hopkins, Robert Wiley, William Bateman, and a few other leaders. The men sat in a circle off by themselves and began by praying



Map by Sheryl Dickert Smith and Tom Child; photo by Wally Barrus

for "Divine guidance," a sacrilege that only the passions of the time could explain.[6] Then the serious discussion began. When Higbee shared the orders he had brought, objections arose. Lee later claimed to be the one who raised them.[7]

Responding to the dissent, Higbee spoke of the killing of William Aden and his companion's escape to the emigrant camp. "White men have interposed and the emigrants know it," he said, "and there lies the danger in letting them go." Someone reasoned, "If we let them go,...they will raise hell in California, and the result will be that our wives and children will have to be butchered and ourselves too, and they are no better to die than ours."[8] No one knew for sure what would happen if they let the besieged emigrants go. But in the twisted rationalization that leads to mass killing, sometimes "murder becomes a service to humanity."[9]

Having reached a consensus, the men then discussed how to implement the orders. They "decided to send a man with a flag of truce and request that the emigrants send out a delagation to arrange terms upon which they would leave their camp." Once the emigrants had left the protection of their wagon fort and were strung out on the road, the militia and Indians would destroy them.[10]

The most common word used by the plotters to describe the plan was "decoy." But "deceive" and "double-cross" would have been better choices. The new plan carried the fewest risks for the militia, and the planners justified the treachery in a hollow defense of faith and hearth, a necessary cover-up of what already had taken place that week.[11]

The first traces of light filled the pleasant valley when the council put the matter to a vote. "Every man now had to show his colors," Lee said. "It was not safe to have a Judas in camp." Lee had every man in the council "express himself." Again no one dared go against the group. "All said they were willing to carry out the counsel of their leaders; that the leaders had the Spirit of God and knew better what was right than they did." Each passed the moral buck up the line.[12]

Although Lee said all the men in the meeting consented to the plan, their support probably ranged from fervent to begrudging.[13] Whatever their ardor, the men had deluded themselves into thinking they were justified in what they were about to do. When Lee told of these events in later years, he blamed others but credited them with good intentions. "They were enthusiastic," he said, "but their motives were pure."[14] Even on more frank occasions, when he spoke of his own role, Lee clung to his self-deception, insisting he did "nothing designedly wrong."[15]

After the council meeting, interpreters Nephi Johnson and Carl Shirts were sent down toward the Paiute camp "to inform the Indians of the plan of operations, and to place the Indians in ambush, so that they could not be seen by the emigrants." Lee had doubts about the interpreters. "So suspicious was Lee of me," said Johnson, "that he sent an Indian boy who could talk English"—probably Lemuel—"to see that I carried the right message."[16]

After breakfast at the white encampment, the militiamen were called together to receive instructions from their leaders.[17] Klingensmith said the men were organized into a "hollow square"—a common military formation of the day—with about fifty men facing inwards, a dozen or so on each side. Majors Lee and Higbee stood in the center.[18] Mountain Meadows was in Washington County—Lee's jurisdiction—but the two majors shared leadership on the field. Daniel Macfarlane served as adjutant, while Klingensmith, only a militia private, exercised informal leadership because he was Cedar City's bishop and because he supported strong action against the emigrants.[19]

In the excuse-making that followed the massacre, some participants crafted alibis that put them elsewhere at the time of the killing. Still enough accounts survived to assemble nearly a full roster of those present that day. Cedar City furnished roughly thirty of the militiamen, about a dozen came from Washington, and a few, including those working at Hamblin's ranch in September 1857, were from Santa Clara. Lee and Carl Shirts hailed from Harmony, and Nephi Johnson was called out from Fort Johnson. But none of the Indian missionaries from Pinto—the nearest settlement to the Meadows—were identified by anyone as joining in Friday's massacre. Nor had Dame sent out any of the Parowan militia.[20]

Although by law every state and territory in America had a militia, Utah had its own peculiar organization in 1857. The Iron Military District had four battalions—one in Parowan, two in Cedar City, and one headquartered in Harmony. Haight and Higbee were majors over the two Cedar City battalions, and Lee was battalion major at Harmony. Captains commanded the battalions' companies, which in turn were divided into platoons, each led by a second lieutenant and sergeant who oversaw at most eight privates. This organization, because of its top-heavy officer corps and small squads, was an "extreme alteration" of normal procedure "never known to the Army before," wrote one modern military specialist.[21]

The militiamen at the "hollow square" were mostly officers and represented only about 15 percent of the Iron Military District.[22] The low turnout suggests that Haight had difficulty finding men to go to the Mountain Meadows—or recruited only the men he needed.

When it came time to explain their acts, some of the militiamen excused themselves by saying they were acting under orders; others cited their youth and inexperience.[23] Three were teenagers: William Edwards was fifteen, James Pearce eighteen, and Columbus Freeman nineteen. A dozen or so were in their early twenties. More than two-thirds of them, however, were a mature twenty-five years or older. The average age was thirty-one. More than 80 percent of the men were married, and about a third of those married had entered polygamy. All told, this was a seasoned group of men.[24]

When the militia meeting began, Higbee and Lee gave the men detailed instructions. All the emigrants except the small children were to be killed. The emigrants would be lured from their camp by "a flag of truce." They would be told that "the Indians were determined on their destruction" and that the Mormons "dare not oppose the Indians, for we were at their mercy." Instead, if the emigrants would "trust themselves in our hands," then "the best we could do for them" would be to place a few of their belongings—including their guns—in two wagons and escort the emigrants to the settlements. The wagons would also carry "the small children and wounded," and the emigrant women would "follow the wagons and the men next, the troops to stand in readiness on the east side of the road ready to receive them." When Higbee finally gave the signal "Halt," the militiamen were to kill the emigrant men and older boys, while the Indians were to "dispatch the women and larger children."[25] Higbee ordered most of the militiamen to put their horses out on the range. He wanted them walking next to their victims, ready to fire at close range.[26]

Until they heard the plan announced, some of the men remained uncertain how the scene would wind up. Some had gone to the Meadows without a clear understanding of what was taking place there, and speculation had continued in the ranks about just what they might be expected to do.[27] When the plan was finally explained, some were stunned. "A good many objected," Johnson said years later, "but they didn't dare to say anything."[28] Some of the men's later claims, of course, were posturing—attempts to convince others and even themselves that they were not responsible for what happened. Though "a good many" may have inwardly objected, Johnson conceded that "most of the men who took part in the killing, also considered them [the emigrants] as their common enimies, and under the excitement caused by the advent of the [approaching] Army they felt partly justified in distroying them."[29]

When the militia meeting dissolved and the men began to move off, Higbee saw Joseph Clewes. The unarmed courier stood "riveted to the ground," as perplexed and nervous as when Haight had called him into service on Monday afternoon. "Clewes, we have no further use for you here," Higbee barked. "Get on that mule and ride back to Haight, and tell him how things are up to this time; and," he added, shaking his finger, "not a word of this... to any one." Clewes left immediately, this time all too happy to obey.[30]

During the hollow square meeting, Johnson and Shirts had been at the Paiute encampment telling "the Indians what they were expected to do." The Paiutes were to hide in the sagebrush, scrub oak, and rocks on the north side of a low ridge that extended from the eastern foothills near the Mormon camp to a point just east of the California road. The ridge formed part of the Rim of the Basin, which divides waters that flow into the Pacific from those that remain in the Great Basin. From this location, more than a mile northeast of the emigrants' camp, Johnson and Shirts "were to rally the Indians, and rush upon and dispatch the women and larger children."[31]

The role assigned to the Paiutes was a feeble attempt on the militia leaders' part to salve their own consciences. Though reconciled to killing the emigrant men, they wanted to limit the number of women and children they would have to kill themselves—as if planning and directing the crime were not enough.[32] After placing the Indians in ambush, Johnson turned his horse east and rode up the ridge, from where he "could see it all."[33] For the next sixty years, his role in the plot would rack him. Memories of the massacre would haunt him in the delirium of his deathbed.[34]

In the highly democratic culture of the Paiutes, each man decided for himself whether to participate.[35] Since the attack on Monday morning, the number of Paiutes at the Meadows had fluctuated as some came and went. How many Paiutes participated in Friday's massacre would become a highly disputed matter. Some Paiutes later said that none of their people participated in the killings. If they were present, they merely watched from the surrounding hills. Others acknowledged Paiute participation but portrayed it as minimal. Understandably, none relished the odium that white leaders from the beginning had planned to fix on them.[36] One contemporary Paiute who knew massacre participants concluded, "All the Indians there were not more than one hundred."[37]

The white participants, not surprisingly, described the Paiute participants as plentiful. Higbee's accounts put the number as high as six hundred, while Joel White put it as low as forty with perhaps "a good many more."[38] Nephi Johnson said that on the day of the massacre, "There were about 150 Indians present."[39] On "Thursday... the Indians had been largely reinforced during the day," Clewes wrote.[40] "They was there for to help finish the massacre," remembered Klingensmith. "The hills were pretty full around there, and they done the massacreing of the women generally."[41]

U.S. Army Brevet Maj. James Henry Carleton, investigating the massacre in May 1859, concluded that "fifty or sixty Mormons" participated in attacking the train. "They had, also," he wrote, "all the Indians which they could collect at Cedar City, Harmony, and Washington City, to help them; a good many in number." Carleton cited Paiute leader Jackson as saying that a "combined force of Mormons and Indians" carried out not only "the first attack" but also "the last massacre."[42] Non-Mormon Indian agent Garland Hurt sent a young Indian man south to investigate the massacre just days after it happened. He returned saying he had "met a large band of the Piedes" coming from Iron County who "acknowledged having participated in the massacre of the emigrants, but said that the Mormons persuaded them into it."[43] A modern Paiute history would conclude "that although local Nuwuvi [Paiutes] were involved, they played a secondary role to the local settlers in the actual murders."[44]

At about 10:00 a.m., some four dozen militiamen began moving toward the emigrant corral in an unstructured fashion, "like a lot of men would go to a meeting house," someone said. Allen, Higbee, and adjutant Daniel Macfarlane were on horseback. With the men were wagons driven by Samuel McMurdy and Samuel Knight.[45] McMurdy had brought his wagon from Cedar on Thursday evening, and a reluctant Knight had been recruited to bring his from Hamblin's ranch on Friday morning.[46] The militiamen were a motley bunch, armed with assorted weapons, including revolvers, jaeger rifles, "shotguns, Kentucky rifles, flint locks and every imaginable firearm."[47]

Cedar City sergeant Samuel Pollock and Washington privates William Young and James Pearce stayed in or near camp, perhaps to help guard the militiamen's property. At age fifty-two, Young was the old man of the group, and eighteen-year-old Pearce was sick with "the botts" after eating too much "fresh beef."[48]

After a dusty mile or so, the militia stopped two hundred yards northeast of the corral near a three-way intersection in the roughly defined road. By that time they had formed a line. The emigrants and

militia were now "within a rifle shot" of each other. To the southwest the soldiers saw a small, white swag hung from a pole visible above the wagons. The emigrants had raised the cloth above their camp on Wednesday when they saw Lee, a white man, cross the valley.[49] It signaled both hope and despair.

With the approach of the militia, the emigrants' hopes of deliverance seemed about to be realized. After four days of siege, the Indians had disappeared, replaced by citizen soldiers carrying a white flag. Yet there were warning signs. Instead of flocking to the emigrant camp as rescuers might be expected to do, the militiamen had stopped short, positioning themselves at the strategic junction that led from the campground.[50]

Higbee called William Bateman to carry the militia's white flag and make the first contact with the emigrants. Bateman, who had participated in that morning's council of leaders, served as a constable in Cedar City and as sergeant in one of the platoons. As he crossed the open land between the two groups, a man left the wagon corral and met him halfway with his own "white rag on a stick."[51] The two men talked briefly. "The emigrant was told we had come to rescue them if they were willing to trust us," Lee later said. The man agreed to a second meeting, and Lee, glib and smooth, walked out next.[52]

The name of the emigrant representative would be obscured by time and the massacre. Alexander Fancher was dead, and Jack and George Baker were wounded.[53] Lee said the man's name was "Hamilton," a surname that appears in later lists of emigrants.[54] A Fancher family tradition would hold that the primary negotiator was James Mathew Fancher, Alexander's twenty-five-year-old cousin.[55] Whoever the man was, he met Lee outside the corral and talked. After about fifteen minutes, Lee motioned for Knight and McMurdy to follow him in their wagons to the corral, where the emigrant negotiator unhitched some of the chains that held the makeshift barricade together and moved one of the emigrant wagons to open a channel.[56]

It was now around noon, and the September sun stood high in the sky.[57]

Lee's senses absorbed the details as he entered the emigrants' enclosure. He saw and smelled the signs of close quarters and paid particular attention to the defenses. The defenders' guns were "mostly Kentucky rifles of the muzzle-loading style," he noted. Inside the circle of chained wagons was a "rifle-pit" large enough for the entire company. "I found that the emigrants were strongly fortified," he said.[58]

Men, women, and children crowded around Lee. "Some felt that the time of their happy deliverance had come," he said, "while others, though in deep distress, and all in tears, looked upon me with doubt, distrust and terror." Seeing the emigrant families up close for the first time jolted Lee. "My position was painful, trying and awful...as I thought of the cruel, unmanly part that I was acting," Lee remembered. "My tongue refused its office"—but not for long. "I delivered my message."[59]

Word of the rescue terms, each of them false or misleading, spread within the corral. The emigrants were promised safe conduct to Pinto and then Cedar City, but they must first lay down their weapons. The Indians had "gone off over the hills" but would be watching. If the emigrants displayed their arms it would be seen "as an unfriendly act" that might renew the attacks.[60] Second, the emigrants must leave behind their cattle and other belongings as payment to the Indians for ending the siege.[61] Third, Lee promised to carry the wounded, a few children, and whatever other belongings could fit in the two militiamen's wagons. Lee told them to hide their firearms under the bedding and baggage in the wagons, with the wounded on top.[62]

The most extraordinary demand was that the emigrants leave the compound in a specific order. Knight's and McMurdy's wagons would lead, followed by the women and children. The men and older boys would then file out in the rear, each escorted by an armed militiaman. No one explained how Lee was able to sell the emigrants on the contrived proposal. Perhaps he argued that the main target of Indian anger was the Arkansas sharpshooters who had wounded and killed Paiute men. By having the men and older boys march together, he could assure the safety of the women and children. Then by putting an armed militiaman next to each emigrant man, he could assure their protection, too.[63]

The emigrants feared a trap. The orchestrated attack on their train earlier in the week suggested that more than Indian forces were at work. The emigrants' raising of a white flag two days before signaled that they may have seen Lee or other white men during the assaults. Even if they hadn't, Aden's wounded companion had made it back to the wagon corral, bearing word that white men had fired on the two.[64]

Because of the emigrants' suspicions, Lee faced tough questions from them. They "were afraid they would be killed," he reported. In response, Lee asked a question of his own. Did he look like the kind of man that might betray them?[65] "No," the emigrants replied, but "they were sure that white men had been with the Indians when the attacks had been made" earlier in the week.[66] Despite Lee's assurances, some of his listeners remained suspicious. One emigrant man warned that

any agreement with the militia would make them all dead men. He called their companion who conferred with Lee a "fool" for considering the Mormons' proposals.[67]

In the end, it didn't matter much. The talk was less negotiation than dictation. Four days of death, suffering, squalor, and thirst left the emigrants with only desperate options.[68] While they now had access to fresh water to slake their thirst—a welcome relief after days of baking in the sun—they had nearly run out of ammunition. Lee thought the entire camp was down to twenty remaining shots. "If the emigrants had had a good supply of ammunition they never would have surrendered," he mused. "I do not think we could have captured them without great loss, for they were brave men and very resolute and determined."[69] Despite the long odds, the suspicion, and the unusual terms Lee presented to them, the emigrants finally gave in. Lee offered them hope—the only hope they had.[70]

As the emigrants prepared to leave their wagon fortress, Lee sat for a time on the ground "near where some young men were engaged in paying the last respects to some person who had just died." In another account, Lee spoke of seeing the emigrants wrapping buffalo robes around the corpses of "two men of note" and laying them in a grave. From various emigrants, Lee learned the inside details of the four-day standoff—including the number of dead and wounded—things he earlier could only guess about.[71]

A woman described by Lee as "a large, fleshy old lady" told and retold him about the emigrants' recent troubles. Was Lee an Indian agent? she asked, seeking assurance. "In one sense I am," Lee replied, "as [the] Government has appointed me Farmer to the Indians." Lee later said, "I told her this to satisfy her."[72]

The wagons and teams Lee had motioned into the camp became the center of activity as he and the emigrants began loading them.[73] Knight's wagon bed was "loaded to its utmost capacity" with people and possessions, including firearms.[74] McMurdy's wagon had similar cargo—bedding, clothing, luggage, and miscellaneous "truck," he remembered. The blankets in one wagon were bright red with black borders, one surviving child said. Some of the emigrants carried their belongings "as if they were going on a journey."[75] They did not know how short their trip would be.

Knight thought he had "two men, one woman and I think some children" sitting on top of the baggage, but his memory was unsure.[76] McMurdy recalled having half a dozen in his wagon.[77] The priority went to those who were wounded. Loaded next were the small children, though some babies and other youngsters stayed with their walking mothers. A few older women were given the wagon space that was left.[78]

By now Lee had been in the corral for an hour or more. The negotiation and loading took longer than the impatient militia leaders expected.[79] Would their plan hold together? The Paiutes, about a mile up the road in their sage-and-cedar hideout, were growing uneasy.[80] Nor was time on the militiamen's side. They stood on the road east of the corral, jaws set and minds racing for what lay ahead. Killing is best done quickly, without time to think.[81]

Higbee, waiting outside the corral with the men, ordered his twenty-year-old aide, Daniel Macfarlane, to hurry the emigrants. In better times Macfarlane sang the bass part in the church choir and took Shakespearean roles in the Cedar City theater. His widowed mother had become one of Haight's plural wives, and Macfarlane himself would later marry one of Haight's daughters. Macfarlane rode to the emigrants' camp to hurry things up "for fear that the Indians would come back and be upon them." It was another in a string of deceits.[82]

Finally, the two heavily laden wagons led out through the corral and soon turned north towards Hamblin's ranch. Lee had told McMurdy to take this route—"steer north, across the valley," he said. The wagons' route lay a little west of the road where the militia stood. From their position a short distance away, the militiamen could see the bobbing heads of the wounded, the elderly, and some of the children as the wagons passed by.[83]

Lee walked along between the two wagons, and behind them rode Macfarlane on horseback, leading the way for dozens of women and children—and two men, wounded but walking.[84] Macfarlane led the women northeastward, "right up to the troops," where they then turned north, following some distance behind the wagons.[85] The women's full dresses brushed against the dust of the road. It was their first exercise away from the stench of the corral for days and must have been bracing.

The emigrant men and older boys followed next. By now their ranks were heavily depleted. Seven men had died in Monday's attack, and a few more had since perished from wounds.[86] Another five or so were killed outside of the Meadows—Aden, the two men shot near Leach's Spring on Tuesday, and presumably the men sent to make pine tar before the first attack. In addition, sometime during the week three men had slipped from the corral in a last desperate attempt to reach

California to summon help—or at least report the emigrants' sad fate. With a half dozen or more men riding in the wagons or walking with the women, the column of emigrant men and older boys totaled about two dozen, perhaps a few more.[87]

The militiamen had numbers heavily on their side. McMurdy, Lee, Knight, and Macfarlane were with the forward party; Johnson and Shirts waited with the Indians; Pollock, Young, and Pearce remained at the militia camp; and Clewes, the courier, was on his way back to Cedar City. Still, the militiamen waiting on the road outnumbered the men and boys from the corral by as much as two to one.[88] As the emigrant men approached, the militiamen slung their guns across their arms, preparing to walk alongside them.[89]

According to Macfarlane, "One of the emigrants, a boy or young man, returned to the camp again, after leaving it, declaring that he believed there was treachery connected with the move, and his comrades had all they could do to persuade him to follow them."[90]

When the emigrant men reached the militia, they "halted a little while" as the children and women were "hurried ahead."[91] A few of the emigrants raised a mild cheer, "as if they believed that [the militiamen] were acting honestly."[92] Higbee ordered "his men to form in single file and take their places" four or five feet to "the right of the emigrants."[93] The parallel columns of men then followed some distance behind the wagons and women.[94] The march had no rhythm; most walked haphazardly.[95]

Farther north at the head of the procession, McMurdy's horses, "a very fast walking team," easily outpaced Knight's newly broken pair. Lee walked behind McMurdy and sometimes alongside of Knight.[96] Lee wanted a fast pace to put distance between the wagons and the walking emigrants when the killing began.[97] But he also wanted the two wagons to stay together, and at times McMurdy moved too fast—Lee had to tell him to slow down "several times."[98]

Albert Hamblin, Jacob's adopted Indian son, and his friend John, a young Indian who lived with Samuel Knight, reported watching the procession from a distance. "The women were on ahead with the children," Albert said of what they saw. He did not mention the lead wagons, now well beyond most of the women and children. Lastly, about a quarter mile behind the middle group were the older boys and men. "It was a big crowd," Albert said, claiming also to have seen Indians hiding in the scrub oak and sage brush. "I said to John, I would like to know what the emigrants left their wagons for, as they were going into a 'worse fix than ever they saw.'"[99]

It was now midafternoon.[100]

So far, everything was going according to the militia leaders' plan. In front, the wagons carried the emigrants' firearms, now well beyond the men accustomed to using them and difficult, if not impossible, for the injured in the wagons to reach because of the bedding and passengers set over them. The middle group—the women and children—were easy targets. From their nearby hiding places, the Indians could descend on them. Finally, the emigrant men were unarmed, outnumbered, and within the dead-on range of the militiamen's arms. The militia leaders used the landscape in their plan. The women and children soon reached the Rim of the Basin, beyond which the Indians were hiding.[101]

The plan was succeeding because it was so calculated, because the emigrants had no real options, and because it was so improbably sinister. Even many of the tough and practical emigrants, used to surprises on the trail, could not have imagined anything happening to them that was so premeditated, evil, and cunning.

Some of the Mormons could not believe it either. Despite all their uncertainties and fears, their feelings of anger or hatred, and their willingness to obey leaders, they struggled when faced with the reality of what they were about to do. Maj. Higbee, on horseback in the middle of the long train, was to start the slaughter with the simple command of "Halt." But when he reached the point where he was supposed to give the signal, he said nothing and allowed his horse to saunter. Higbee reportedly hoped for a reprieving stay—some last minute, impossible order from Haight that would spare the emigrants.[102] Perhaps it was the sight before him that made him waver. Up ahead on the trail, dozens of defenseless women and children were walking toward the deadly ambush he would unleash.

As Higbee hesitated, the women and children walked past the hiding Indians toward the open valley where surprise would be more difficult. The Paiutes scurried to keep up, moving from one concealing object to another. As the trail began to open up, they were running out of places to hide and "though[t] they were going to be deceived" by the militiamen. According to Ellott Willden, "Lee afterwards scolded Higbee for this delay."[103]

The women and children were now a quarter mile past the planned site of the ambush.[104] Higbee, realizing the plan was unraveling, turned his horse across the road and looked back. Finally he shouted, "Halt!"[105]

JOHN M. HIGBEE. *Courtesy Special Collections, Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University.*

The first volley was like "one loud shot," said one of the militiamen, and the firing went on for a minute or two.[106] When the heavy smoke lifted, blood and horror were everywhere where the emigrant men once stood. The militia had killed at close quarters, sometimes face-to-face. Many of the bullets hit their victims in the front or back of the head.[107] Several of the Mormon men "shed tears at the sight of the dead lying before them, and only in obedience to what they considered legitimate military authority would they have done what they did," reported one. Not all of the militia took part, refusing to fire or shooting into the ground or air. Under duress, they failed to kill quickly and efficiently, if at all.[108]

Others made up for it, out of duty or conviction or because once the killing began, they lost control of themselves. William "Bill" Stewart—the man who killed Aden—and Joel White, his accomplice, took out after the few emigrant men spared in the fusillade, who were now running for their lives. The two Mormons nearly got themselves killed by running into the line of fire.[109] Their act helped earn them the reputation for being the "most bloodthirsty" men on the field.[110]

The leaders had planned for possible runaways. Higbee and Allen, each on horseback, were at opposite ends of the line of emigrant men, and Macfarlane rode at the front of the women. Their duty was to "round in those who might try to escape."[111] The fleeing emigrant men did not get far. Some were dead within twenty steps, although one emigrant almost got to the mountains, a half mile off.[112]

When later asked if he killed his man, obeying orders to his "fullest capacity," Klingensmith acknowledged that he had.[113] Then he said he watched Higbee do one of the follow-up killings. His account made it sound as if Higbee and his victim knew each other. "That man was wounded, a little" and "lying on the ground," Klingensmith said. "John M. Higbee went up to him and dr[ew] his knife out and cut his throat. This man begged for his life....He said, Higbee, I wouldn't do this to you." Higbee replied, "You have done something just as bad."[114] Klingensmith gave no explanation of what Higbee meant.

As the emigrant men were being killed, another horrific scene played out a few hundred yards up the trail. Moments after Higbee gave his order, Johnson, who was still on the hill overlooking the militia and the Paiutes, "gave the word to the Indians to fire."[115] They rose up from their hiding places "yelling and whooping," some rushing toward the front of the group of women and children and others toward the back. At first the terrified women and children ran back toward their men "until the Indians cut them off; headed them off," said William Young, who watched the slaughter from the ridge, near the militia camp. The Indians hurled "rocks at them and I saw them fall from the rocks and laid on the ground as though they was dead."[116] Carl Shirts's father said "the women and children were knocked down with stones, clubs, and gun barrels, struck in the neck and butchered like hogs."[117]

Young saw one Indian use a large rock to crush life from a teenage boy who had fallen. Two or three times, the man raised the rock and crushed it into the boy's chest.[118]

One large woman, "hollowing for her husband and children," somehow made it through to the white men, only to be shot in the back by one of them. When she fell, Klingensmith remembered, there was no quiver.[119]

Other women and children who weren't initially struck down "wheeled" and ran toward the brush or the two wagons on the north. One blood-covered girl, perhaps ten or eleven years old, got within about sixty yards of the wagons before an Indian shot her.[120] Another girl was fleeing for her life when an Indian "plunged his knife through her."[121]

NEPHI JOHNSON. *Frank Esshom, Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah* (*Salt Lake City, 1913*).

Some of the victims simply "clung together" in terror.[122] Others fought for their lives. "I saw the women fight," said Young, "and then I saw the Indians kill as many as three women; I saw them strike at them." Young also saw "an Indian kill an infant child, that a woman had in her arms before she fell, with a knife."[123]

Rebecca Dunlap, six years old at the time, remembered the terror. She ran and hid in a cluster of sagebrush near the road. From her hiding place she saw two of her older sisters killed, their bodies falling nearby. She also heard her one-year-old sister, Sarah, crying. She found the infant "entwined" in their dead mother's arms. Sarah "had been shot through her right arm, below the elbow, by a large ball, breaking both bones and cutting her arm half off." Rebecca pulled Sarah free and took her back into the sagebrush to hide. She stayed there until she saw a white man and begged him for help.[124] She was spared only because of her young age.

Six-year-old John Calvin Miller "was near his mother when she was killed." He desperately "pulled arrows from her back" as she lay dying.[125] When the massacre was over, a militiaman said he saw arrows "scattered here and there around among the bodies."[126]

Another surviving child recalled, "I remember standing by my mother, holding onto her skirt, while my mother stood with my baby brother in her arms, and when the white man, not an Indian, raised his gun to take the life of my mother, she said: 'God, have mercy on my children!'"[127]

Four-year-old Nancy Saphrona Huff, whose father had died on the plains, remembered that Jack Baker was carrying her when he was shot.[128] Baker may have been one of the two wounded men seen walking with the women and children. Or perhaps he was among the wounded riding in the wagons, holding little Nancy in his arms.

A third killing site was at the wagons, where, as elsewhere, the later claims and counterclaims would make it difficult to find the precise truth. When McMurdy heard Lee order him to "halt," he pulled on the reins and brought his team to a stop. "At that instant," he said, "I heard the sound of a gun." Turning to look, McMurdy saw a woman falling backward and Lee standing with a long-barreled gun to his shoulder.[129]

The sharp clap of the firearm spooked McMurdy's and Knight's animals.[130] As McMurdy turned back to his horses, he heard behind him a dull thud such as "a heavy instrument, something like a gun would make" hitting a human head. From the second wagon, Knight saw Lee striking a woman with "a club or gun." When McMurdy looked back again, he saw Lee firing his pistol, close-up, at two or three of the wagon riders. According to Lee, one of his pistols accidentally went off, sending a bullet at McMurdy, cutting his buckskins "below the crotch" and probably catching some flesh. Then Lee's gun jammed.[131]

Sarah Frances Baker remembered sitting on her wounded father George's lap in one of the wagons when the same bullet that snuffed out his life took a nick out of her left ear. Sarah wasn't quite three years old. "But even when you're that young," she maintained more than eighty years later, "you don't forget the horror of having your father gasp for breath and grow limp, while you have your arms around his neck, screaming with terror." She recalled "the blood-curdling war-whoops," "the banging of guns," and "the screaming of the other children and the agonized shrieks of women" being killed. "And you wouldn't forget it, either," she said, "if you saw your own mother topple over in the wagon beside you, with a big red splotch getting bigger and bigger on the front of her calico dress."[132]

Nephi Johnson, watching from the hill, said he saw Lee and an Indian pull at least one man from a wagon. The motion of Lee's arm made Johnson think "that he was cutting a man's throat," although he could not see for sure.[133]

In the first two weeks after the massacre, Lee would tell others of his killings. Then, for the next twenty years, he repeatedly denied taking

any life. Shortly before his death, however, he privately acknowledged having "killed five emigrants and possibly six."[134]

Both Knight and McMurdy claimed Lee did all the killing at the wagons, saying they had their hands full with their teams. But Lee was not the only man at the wagons who was taking human life. "The drivers with me killed the sick and the wounded," Lee wrote in his confessions.[135] Lee said McMurdy, armed with a double-barreled shotgun, "shot a man who was lying with his head on another man's breast; the ball killed both men." Lee also claimed Knight "shot a man with his rifle" and then clubbed a fourteen-year-old boy, crushing his head.[136] McMurdy denied killing anyone, although he wavered during cross-examination at Lee's trial. "I believe I am not upon trial, sir," he finally told a defense attorney who questioned him on the subject. "I don't wish to answer."[137] Knight persistently claimed that he did no killing—even in a private interview with a Mormon leader near the end of his life. Rather than do any shooting, he insisted, he had jumped from the wagon to hold his fractious animals.[138]

Nineteen years later, Lee accused Knight and McMurdy of witnessing falsely against him. They "swore that I committed the awful deeds, that they did with their own wicked hands."[139]

Knight testified that another Mormon participated in the killings at the wagons, and Johnson agreed, although neither witness identified the killer. "Who he was I do not know," Johnson said when testifying at the Lee trial. "I can't tell and I never enquired to find out."[140]

One or two Paiutes were at the wagons as well. Because they had run some distance from their hiding places, they arrived after the carnage started, but "took some part of the killing," said Johnson.[141] According to Lee, one of the Paiutes at the wagons was "an Indian... called Joe," from Cedar City. After the massacre, a Joe worked for Elisha Groves at Harmony and dressed himself in pants and a coat taken from the emigrants, though he may not have been the man Lee mentioned.[142]

For the most part, the massacre of the emigrants was over in a few minutes—Johnson said no more than five.[143] In the years following the mass killing, the white participants persisted in blaming the tragedy primarily on Paiutes. Even Johnson, who saw most of what happened from his position on the hill, at times joined in the finger-pointing.[144] But during a conversation with a senior Mormon leader from Salt Lake City in 1895, Johnson said that "white men did most of the killing."[145]

The carnage was astonishing. "I saw the bodies of men, women, and children, butchered in the most horrible manner," Samuel Pollock said. "Some of the children with their heads mashed in by rocks, I suppose."[146] Klingensmith gave a similar description. "I found [the bodies] in almost every condition," he said, "some with their throats cut, some heads smashed, some shot."[147] Few if any scalps were taken.[148] When Jacob Hamblin examined the victims' skeletons in 1858, he "observed that about one-third of the skulls were shot through with bullets, and about one-third seemed to be broken in with stones."[149] Although the militia leaders had planned to spare those "too young to tell tales," at least a half dozen of these young children became part of the terrible harvest, too.[150]

Though the main slaughter was "quick," the follow-up killings took longer.[151] Jimmie Pete, the son of Tau-gu ("Coal Creek John"), a Cedar City Paiute who was at the killing fields, confirmed that the militia and Indians were careful and systematic. In an oral interview, Pete said his father told him that after the first wave of killing was over, "they was going over them [the bodies] again. My father was, I guess, about third place. Some white man was ahead of him and trying to stir them up, to see [if]... they was alive." All that showed signs of life, said Lee, were immediately shot through the head. As the men checking the bodies approached them, two emigrants pretending to be dead sprang up and made an impossible dash for freedom. "My father chased them clear up the mountain and got them up there," said Pete.[152]

Some emigrants—like little Rebecca and Sarah Dunlap—were found in hiding. The "Dutchman" or "German," whose role figured so prominently in Mormon accounts about the emigrants, was one of "several that was hid out that they didn't get." The "German" was probably one of the men seen walking with the women and children and was holding an infant when he was found. A single bullet killed both of them, and the double killing became one of the infamous stories told about the massacre.[153]

Later, when Lee received the brunt of blame for the butchery, he was accused of this double murder. Lee reportedly talked about the killing in a public meeting immediately after he returned to Harmony, casting it as a dream in which he, dressed like an Indian, led Paiutes in the attack. Harmony resident Annie Elizabeth Hoag remembered Lee saying that

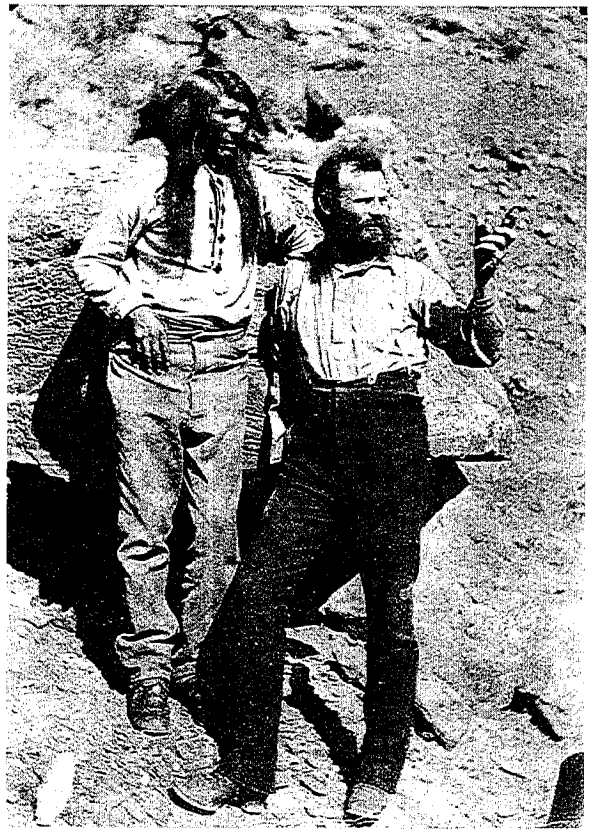
> when they came to one man that had his child in his arms an infant babe, he says give up that child. No, Lee, says the man, I know you, I recognise you [even] if you are painted[,] and you know the penalty of shedding innocent blood. If you kill me you kill my child, I will part

with the last drop of blood there is in my body before I give up my child. Lee asked him again, if he would give up his child and he said no; then John D. Lee said it was his turn to assist and he shot him through the heart and killed the child at the same time. He said he didn't consider himself under the penalty of shedding innocent blood, he could not help it, because the man would not give up his child.[154]

Soon after, Lee told Peter Shirts, who attended the Harmony meeting, that the events he related were no dream.[155]

Even though Lee may have been disguised with paint during the initial attacks earlier in the week, he could not have been painted during Friday's massacre because he was with the emigrants and won their trust immediately before the massacre began. But Ellott Willden confirmed Hoag's testimony that Lee shot a man and baby, clarifying that the murdered German carried not his own but "somebody elses child."[156]

Two Dunlap sisters, probably twelve-year-old twins Lucinda and Susannah, were among the last emigrants to be killed. During the



TAU-GU AND JOHN WESLEY POWELL, 1873. *John K. Hillers, Courtesy National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.*

slaughter, the girls tried to escape by climbing into the eastern hills and hiding "in some bushes." Albert and John, the two young Indian wards of the Mormons, saw them go. Albert said he and John "ran down and tried to save them....A man, who is an Indian doctor, also told the Indians not to kill them."[157]

From his perch on the hill, William Young "saw an Indian leading two girls one in each hand." The Indian "led them up in sight of me," said Young. He "led them up in among the balance of the Indians and I saw no more of the two little girls."[158] When Lee came down the road after the killing at the wagons, a Cedar City "chief" brought the girls out and asked him "what he should do with them." The Paiute did not want the girls killed because they were "pretty," Lee later told Jacob Hamblin. But Lee insisted. "They was too big and too old to let live," he said. Lee claimed he told the Indian to shoot one of them and he cut the other's throat. When Hamblin returned from Salt Lake City some days after the massacre, however, he saw the girls' bodies, both with slit throats, lying together "some ways off" from the other emigrants' remains.[159]

Some stories about the killing of the girls had even more lurid details. One account said one of the girls begged for life and offered to marry Lee, who took her into the brush for half an hour before killing her.[160] "My name's heralded all over the country as the biggest villain in America," Lee told journalist John H. Beadle in 1872. "It is published for a sworn fact that I violated two girls as [they] were kneeling and begging to me for life, and so help me God, it is an infernal lie!"[161]

When the killing ended, the looting began. Militiaman George Adair said Higbee told the men that if they took property off the bodies, "it would burn them." Apparently that curse didn't apply to everyone. Adair claimed that when he found "a long purse filled with gold" and held it away from himself "as a thing accursed," Higbee "grabbed the purse, and pushed it in his pocket," threatening to slit Adair's throat if he ever told anyone. At least that was Adair's version of the incident.[162]

Lee said he found Higbee, Klingensmith, and Stewart searching bodies for money, watches, and jewelry, and that they asked him to hold a hat for them to collect the valuables. Lee said that only a little money was found, although several rumors contradicted the claim.[163] Gilbert Morse said that after the massacre, Lee "sported a handsome gold watch and chain." Holding it up for Morse to see, Lee said he had eight more like it.[164]

According to Paiute oral traditions, the militiamen told the Indians "that if they saw any round gold pieces (coins) lying on the ground

the Indians were not to pick them up because they were poison and would kill them." Instead, "the Mormons picked up all the coins and put them in a sack and kept them."[165] Not all of the Paiutes heeded the admonishment. Tau-gu said, "Don't tell us no, cause what we want to do, we want to do." Ignoring the white men, some "kept on feeling in the shirts."[166] By morning most of the bodies would be "stripped of all the clothing," as well.[167]

Nephi Johnson said Lee ordered him to the emigrant corral "to keep the Indians from taking things out [of] the wagons."[168] By the time Johnson got to the wagons, several Paiutes were gathering blankets, bedding, clothes, cooking utensils, saddles, and most anything else that they could quickly pack or hide in the hills and rocks around them. Johnson told them to stop, and "some of them would and some of them would not," he said. Johnson, perhaps recalling Lee's earlier failure to reward Paiutes as promised, did not press the matter too strongly.[169]

By late evening, the militia leaders gained control over most of the property. Over the next several weeks, they would distribute it largely among themselves. Some of the Paiutes drawn to Mountain Meadows by promises of gain felt the massacre leaders had cheated them.[170]

Before the looting, Klingensmith had moved up the road to pick up the surviving boys and girls. "I immediately put the little children in baggage-wagons belonging to the regiment and took them to Hamlin's Ranch," he said.[171] Klingensmith left out grisly details. While many of the children were in the wagons of McMurdy and Knight during the slaughter, others were scattered on the ground near their dead mothers or were walking numbly about. Klingensmith chose which ones would live. "I was told at the time," said Johnson, that "Klingin Smith, selected seventeen of the smallest children together, and handed the older ones over to the Indians who killed them."[172] Nancy Saphrona Huff remembered, "At the close of the massacre there was 18 children still alive, one girl, some ten or twelve years old they said was to big and could tell so they killed her, leaving 17....I saw them shoot the girl after we were gathered up."[173]

When the wagons with the crying and blood-stained children reached Hamblin's ranch, Rachel Hamblin took them into her shanty and surrounding yard. She did her best, one woman caring for seventeen children, in addition to her own. Some babies were still nursing and wailed for the comfort of their mothers' breasts. Two of the young survivors showed outward wounds. Sarah Frances Baker's ear was bleeding, and little Sarah Dunlap's arm still oozed near the elbow, "the bone being entirely severed."[174] The inner damage was still worse—young hearts and minds in terrible trauma. Though they had not had peaceful rest in days, "the children cried all night."[175]

The scent of human blood in the Meadows brought coyotes from their dens, and their howls mingled with the crying of the children and the bawling of the emigrants' cattle.[176] That night campfires flickered here and there in the Meadows, although the militia leaders, including Lee, went to Hamblin's ranch house in time for supper at sundown. Despite the din and the fresh memories of the slaughter, Lee rolled out his saddle blanket and slept soundly.[177] Exhausted from the week's action, he also had the facility to shield his mind from self-inspection. He had done his duty; that was all he allowed himself to think.[178]

Like Lee, some militiamen may have rested well, but the sleep of others must have been more fitful. However much they sought solace thereafter, memories of the massacre at Mountain Meadows would lurk in their minds and haunt them to their deaths. Some sought refuge in excuses or denial. Others fled the land in a vain hope of escaping the recurring visions of that day. None was ever the same again.[179]

The tragedy at Mountain Meadows played out on several levels. The murdered emigrants lost their hopes, their dreams, their property, and their lives. Some lost their very identity, their names forever effaced from human memory. The surviving children were robbed of the warmth and support of parents, brothers, and sisters. Their first sobbing night at Hamblin's was just the start of their ordeal. The Paiute participants would bear the brunt of blame for the massacre, shamelessly used by the white men who lured them to the Meadows. For the militiamen who carried out the crime—as well as their families, descendants, and fellow church members—there was another kind of tragedy. It was the gnawing, long anguish that flows from betrayed ideals. The burdens of the massacre would linger far beyond what anyone imagined on the night of September 11, 1857.