

Late News From The Meadows

The Mountain Meadows Association Newsletter

Honoring the Dead • Historic Preservation • Fellowship & Reconciliation

Volume 12 • Number 1 • January 2009

Report on the 2008 Annual Meeting

From September 26-28, the annual meeting in Arkansas proved to be an uplifting experience. The atmosphere in Eureka Springs provided a dramatic setting. Thousands of motorcyclists filled the streets, parking lots, shops and restaurants. In this colorful setting, MMA members visited historic chapels and other buildings, restaurants and the site for the Passion play. For those who were unable to attend the meeting or would like to revisit Eureka Springs, please go to <http://eurekaspringspictures.com> and enjoy the sights.

Friday morning, we boarded the Belle of the Ozarks for a twelve-mile cruise around Beaver Lake. The captain told us how this dam fit into a government project for managing water power in the region. While touring the scenic shoreline, we noticed various birds that included eagles and Canada geese; we also observed the Ozark Bluffs. The captain pointed to some bubbles that were surfacing on the lake and told us they came from scuba divers who were penetrating the depths of the lake. You may get an impression of our experience by going to the website, selecting Beaver Lake and viewing the Beaver Lake Photo Gallery.



On Friday evening, we met in the courthouse where Rob Briggs moderated a provocative discussion with Rick Turley, Robert Clark, and Roger Logan. Rick Turley, assistant historian of the LDS Church, answered questions about the new book on the Massacre that he coauthored with Ronald Walker and Glen Leonard. He said that all the sources they used will be made available to scholars and other interested persons.

Bob Clark, book publisher, spoke about his relationship with Will Bagley and of the historic changes that have occurred with the merger of the Arthur H. Clark Company and the University of Oklahoma Press. This change includes the series edited by Will Bagley entitled *Kingdom of the West: The Mormons and the American Frontier*. MMA members may be especially interested in Volume 10, *At Sword's Point, Part I, A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858*.

Based on his lifetime of research, Judge Roger Logan concluded the discussion by addressing the ordeals of the surviving children. They suffered the irreplaceable loss of their parents, siblings, and other close relatives in the massacre. Then, returning to Arkansas in 1859, they soon began experiencing the ravages of the Civil War during the first half of the 1860s.

Following the panel, some members expressed the feelings of anguish and pain they felt about this tragic event. They extended a hand of compassion to the relatives of those who died and those who survived the massacre to suffer for the rest of their lives. Barbara Jones Brown, one of the editors of the new Turley volume, announced a plan to make two quilts titled *The Mountain Meadows Massacre: Remembrance and Reconciliation*. One will be displayed in Utah and the other in Arkansas. The idea began with a conversation between Ms. Brown and her friend in Arkansas, Diann Fancher, who created "a stunning metaphor comparing each of our lives to a single thread. If all of us

bring our threads together . . . we can make a beautiful quilt.” Ms. Brown and others sent quilt blocks to interested people, who created images to symbolize healing from the massacre. Next year at the annual meeting, the blocks will be stitched together and put on display.

Bus Tour

On Saturday we enjoyed a bus tour of the Bentonville region where some members of the wagon train began their journey to California in 1857. We visited the homesteads of Alexander Fancher and Peter Huff. During the trip, we listened to descendants from Northwest Arkansas who provided details about the changes that have occurred since these families began their journey. To see additional photos of this tour and other activities please visit the website <http://tfancher.tripod.com/mmaannualmeetingpage.htm>.



2008 Annual Dinner

After President Terry Fancher welcomed people to the annual dinner meeting, Rick Turley of the LDS historian’s office provide the latest information on the application for a National Historic Landmark designation for the massacre site. The process will take more time than originally thought. He stressed that it will be extremely important that association members write individual letters to support the application. He made it clear that there are those who will oppose this type of recognition.

Then J.K. Fancher Jr. reflected upon his experiences of not only preserving the memory of those who died at Mountain Meadows but also healing the wounds of this tragic event. He emphasized how important it is to preserve the memory of those who died along with the memory of the children who survived.

Shirley Pyron also shared her experiences of preserving the memory of those who died at Mountain Meadows. She reflected on her time as president of the MMA during challenging times. President Terry Fancher awarded her the MMA Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her services as former president and long time board member of the association. Then President Fancher called Verne Lee by cell phone and Verne expressed his deep feeling for the mission of the association. He recalled sitting across from Ron Loving and forming the idea of bringing together people from both sides of the massacre to forgive one another. President Fancher also presented Verne with the MMA Lifetime Achievement Award.

On Sunday, members enjoyed a moving religious experience in the Thorncrown Chapel. Situated in the woods of the Ozark Mountains, this unique building sits on top of 100 tons of flagstone and contains 425 windows with over 6,000 square feet of glass thereby giving one the feeling of being in harmony with nature. The chapel was a fitting location for the 2008 annual worship service to remember those who died at Mountain Meadows.



Meetings in Utah in May 2009

Recently, President Fancher collaborated with Elder Marlin Jensen, Rick Turley Jr., Patty Norris, and Phil Bolinger to make plans for 2009. This group scheduled some important activities in Utah for May 29-30, 2009.

First, the LDS Church has granted permission for us to see any of the documents that were collected by Messrs. Turley, Walker and Leonard for their book, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*. To make this manageable, the number of persons allowed to attend will be limited to sixty. Each of the three organizations will be allotted space for twenty participants. If any of the three groups do not generate enough names, the space will be given to the other two groups. To accommodate our requests, the LDS historical department needs some advance notice of the documents that we wish to review. We suggest the you check the bibliography and endnotes of this book and make a list of sources that interest you. Since there are only twenty slots for members of MMA, please contact Terry Fancher immediately with your name and the list of documents you wish to see so that space can be reserved for you.

Second, a PowerPoint presentation will provide new information about a master plan for the Northern Gravesites and the request for designation as a National Historic Landmark. The success of this request will depend on individual letters written by the members of the three organizations. In subsequent newsletters, we will make suggestions once we have a clearer idea of what information will be the most helpful.

Third, we will leave Salt Lake City on Saturday morning, May 30, and travel to Mountain Meadows to commemorate the gathering of the children in 1859 and their return to relatives in Arkansas. We will commemorate the erection of the Carleton monument and visit other important historic sites.

Meetings in Arkansas in September 2009

On Saturday, September 19, MMA, MMMF, and MMMD will celebrate the return of the surviving children to Arkansas. This event will include a reenactment of the children returning in period wagons to the Carrolton courthouse and the Yell Lodge. A script for this event is being prepared by Burr Fancher, Terry Fancher and Roger Logan. It will include as much detail as possible about the roles of Alexander Fancher, Captain James Lynch and others. When additional details are available, they will be posted on the MMA website and included in future newsletters.

Annual Dues and Pre-Registration Forms

Renewal of membership in the Association is due each January (rather than September 11, the date of the Massacre). Please fill out all of the details on these forms at the end of this newsletter and e-mail Terry Fancher at tnf49@aol.com or mail to the Mountain Meadows Association at 12703 Whisper Spring Cove, Draper, Utah 84020. You also now pay your dues online at http://www.mtn-meadows-assoc.com/dues_form.htm or make a donation at <http://www.mtn-meadows-assoc.com/donations.htm>

Mountain Meadows Association Membership Mail-in Form

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone Number(s): _____
E-mail: _____

Dues are \$20.00 per year. Check the following categories:

New Member _____ Renewal _____ Additional Donation \$ _____ for _____

If you plan to attend the meetings in Utah on May 29 and 30 to view the documents, please **RSVP by e-mail** Terry Fancher at tnf49@aol.com or call him at home 781-848-9668 or his cell phone 617-774-9041.