

# AFTER THE MASSACRE!

Graphic Account by Deputy United States Marshal W. H. Rogers.

Visit to Mountain Meadows With Dr. Forney and United States Troops.

Successful Search for the Children of the Murdered Emigrants.

Interview with the Indians and the Mormons who were at the Slaughter.

Hiram Young and the Church Implicated in the Massacre.

Judge Cradlebaugh's First Attempt to Bring the Butchers to Justice.

The following interesting letter was written for the Salt Lake Valley in 1860, by Wm. H. Rogers, who accompanied Dr. Forney to the slaughter-field in 1859, in search of the culprits. It is a truthful statement and implicates Brigham Young and the leaders of the Mormon Church in the bloody massacre.

I have observed on the part of one or both of the Mormon newspapers published in this city, an evident purpose to treat the light and cavalier manner the statement has been many times made, that the Mormons were concurred in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. By their reference to the matter, they would evidently produce the impression that the full story in regard to the Mormon boys in any way concerned in the transaction, is one that has been framed for the purpose of increasing the prejudice and animosity with which they are already regarded by the great body of the people of geography. As I have never seen a published statement of the facts connected with the wholesale butchery, so far as the facts in regard to it have been brought to light, I have determined to supply this omission, by a statement of facts and circumstances in relation to it, gathered during a trip which I made with Dr. Forney, supervisor of Indian Affairs for Utah Territory, into the region where the massacre occurred, in the spring of 1859.

AFTER INVESTIGATION.  
Dr. Forney left Camp Floyd in the last of March, 1859, to go down to the Santa Clara settlement, 350 miles south of Salt Lake City, to obtain and bring back with him the children saved from the Mountain Meadows Massacre, who had been captured, and were then in charge of Mr. Jacob Hamblin, Dr. Forney having some time previously employed him to collect the children and take care of them till he could get them away. On this trip Dr. Forney employed me to accompany him as his assistant, and I first joined him at the town of Nephi 80 or 90 miles south of Salt Lake City. From Nephi we proceeded through Fillmore to the Indian farm on Corn Creek, 15 miles south, where we distributed some goods to the Indians; from there, accompanied by Ranch, an Indian boy belonging to the Palmyra tribe, we proceeded to Beaver, Parowan, Cedar City, and Painter Creek. The latter is a small stream in the immediate vicinity of the Mountain Meadows, where the celebrated massacre occurred in September, 1857. In passing through each of the towns named, as Doctor and myself made diligent inquiry concerning the massacre of this party of emigrants, the number of persons comprising the emigrant party, and other matters of interest in relation to them, we however ascertained but little. The number of emigrants was generally estimated at from 110 to 120; but no one seemed to have any knowledge of the massacre except that they had heard that it was done by the Indians. At Painter Creek, an Indian guide had been sent by Jacob Hamblin, already referred to, the man that Dr. Forney had engaged to collect and take charge of the children saved from the Mountain Meadows Massacre, came up with us. This guide conducted us to the scene of the massacre.

THE MEADOWS.  
The small valley known as the Mountain Meadows, to which it occurred and which thereafter impart to its appropriate and everlasting name a sad and horrible history, is situated about six miles south of Painter Creek, a small Mormon settlement in Sanpete county. The valley is about five miles in length, and in the widest part does not exceed half a mile in breadth. It is covered mostly during the summer with a rich and nutritious grass, and is nearly the last place where grass can be found on the southern road to California, before striking the desert. In the north end of the valley, near where the road to it is, a ranch has been constructed for the purpose of breeding and taking care of the cattle brought here during the summer to graze. This ranch is owned by Jacob Hamblin. He and his wife during the summer months spend the winter with his family at Santa Clara settlement, some distance south of the Mountain Meadows. This ranch was unoccupied at the time that our Indian guide conducted us into the valley. The immediate locality of the massacre of the emigrant party is about one-half mile from the ranch on the road leading south. The valley at the place slopes gently toward the south. A small stream parallel with the road on the right-hand side of the spot.

THE MURDERScene.  
When we arrived here in April, 1859, more than a year and a half after the massacre occurred, the ground, for a distance of more than a hundred yards around a small point, was covered with the skulls and bones of human beings, intermixed in pieces with rolls or bunches of burnt and matted hair, which, from its depth, evidently belonged to females. In places the bones of small children were dug up side by side with those of grown persons, as if parent and child had met death in the same instant and with the same stroke. Small bonnets and dresses, and strips of female apparel were also to be seen in places on the ground there, like the bones of those who wore them, bleached from long exposure, but their shape was, in most instances, out. In a quick review of the ravine by the side of the road, a large number of leg and arm bones, and skull bones, could be seen sticking above the surface, as if they had been buried here, but the action of the water and digging of wolves had again exposed them to view. The entire scene was one too horrible and sickening for language adequately to describe.

THE DEFENSE.  
From this spot we proceeded south about two miles to a large spring, where the emigrants were encamped when the attack was made upon them previous to the massacre. Here, within a few yards of the spring, we could distinctly discern the form and size of the corral which they made, being a number of small holes, forming together a circle in the shape of a corral. These holes were dug for the purpose of keeping the wheels of their wagons in them, so as to form a better protection, when the attack began. In the centre of the corral a little over ten feet wide and deep, was dug for the purpose, no doubt, of placing the women and children in it in order to protect them from the fire of the assailants. To the left of this corral, and about one hundred and fifty or sixty yards distant on a level meadow or knoll, a number of stones were still piled up in a way to form a partial breastwork or protection against the fire which the emigrants no doubt returned to their assailants. On the breastwork of stones in this breastwork had been stuck upon them on the side toward the corral, fully supporting the stone structure as to its use. In places along the corral, human bones and imperfect skeletons were lying on the ground, intermingling with the corral and the breastwork, and at the place spoken of where the greatest number of bodies were found, the great mass of slaughter began.

CHAR KURTZ.  
This spring we proceeded on toward the settlement on the Santa Clara for the purpose of obtaining the children from Mr. Hamblin, who had received them. On the same evening, after we had struck our camp for the night, we drove up near us with an ox wagon, and very soon informed us that he had a child at Santa Clara, and that he was returning home from Cedar City with a load of salt, which he had been up to the latter place to obtain. The conversation, after these personal explanations, turned very naturally, after what we had witnessed during the day, upon the Mountain Meadows Massacre. And this man, whose name was Carl or Carlis Kurtz, informed us that he had lived, at the time the massacre occurred, at the ranch owned by Mr. Hamblin, at the north end of the Mountain Meadows. He was employed by Mr. Hamblin in making adobe at the time. He saw the emigrants at the time when they entered the valley, and talked with several of the men belonging to it. They appeared perfectly civil and genial, but, as he supposed, contained about forty wagons and seven or eight hundred head of cattle, including those that were lost. There was a considerable number of men and males. The emigrants entered the valley on Friday, and the men with whom he conversed told him that they were anxious to stop a few days and rest

and recruit their stock before entering the desert, and inquired of him a good spot for the purpose. He recommended the vicinity of the spring in the south end of the Meadows, as good water and plenty of grass abounded there. Following the advice, they proceeded thither and encamped. The next morning he again saw some of the men, who informed him that they were looking for lost stock. In the evening he saw the men returning, driving some loose cattle. He never saw any of the party afterwards. Early on Monday morning following, he stated that he heard the firing of a great many guns in the south, in the direction of the camp of the emigrants; he also saw on the hills around, good many Indians passing backwards and forwards, as if in a state of commotion or excitement. His impression from hearing the guns and seeing the Indians, was that the latter had attacked the emigrants. On our inquiry why he did not go to Fauci & Clark and give the alarm if he thought so, he stated that he supposed the people knew about it, if not in the words, the foregoing is the exact substance of the statement made by Kurtz.

## THE CHILDREN.

On the day following we reached the Santa Clara settlement and found in the possession of Mr. Hamblin thirteen of the children preserved from the massacre, which, with one at Painter Creek and two at Cedar City, was all that had then been heard of. These children were well with the exception of some eyes, which they all had, and which prevailed at that time as an epidemic in the place or vicinity where they were. After remaining a few days in Santa Clara in distributing some goods to the Indians, we set out with these children on our return. We did not take the same route in returning by which we came down, but proceeded direct to Hartman, leaving the Mountain Meadows about 15 or 20 miles to the west.

## MERT LEE.

On arriving at Harmony, Dr. Forney called on John D. Lee, who was at that time, and may be at present, a bishop in the Mormon church. The Doctor had received information which led him to believe that Lee had a portion of the property belonging to these murdered emigrants in his possession, and his object in calling on him was to demand a surrender of the property. On the demand being made, Bishop Lee denied having the possession of any of the property, or any knowledge concerning it, further than that he had heard that the Indians took it.

I was not present when this demand was made, but was informed of it as stated by Dr. Forney on his return from Lee's residence. Dr. Forney also informed me that in a conversation which he had held with Lee concerning the massacre, Lee stated that he was not at the massacre, but reached there just after it ended. Lee also stated that Isaac Haight, who resides at Cedar City, and is another prominent dignitary in the Mormon church, holding an office styled "president," which is higher than that of a bishop, also arrived on the spot soon after him. In the same conversation as related to me, Lee called some foul and indecent epithets to the emigrants—and indeed they were slandering the Mormons who were good shots, and they were afraid to venture near.

A chief of the band stated 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. These Indians also stated that the Mormons who killed the emigrants were painted so as to resemble Indians. They denied that they received any of the stock or property belonging to the emigrants, except a few of the old clothes. Three Indians called Bishop Lee "Narquit," which means in their language a crying man. This name was given to Lee, they stated, because he once cried when he lost some stock, or had some trouble.

They stated that some stock was there but would not venture near, looking like themselves afraid President Haight and Bishop Lee were also present, aiding in the attack.

Maj. Carlton, of the First Dragoons, came as the escort of Maj. Prince from California. On reaching Santa Clara, where we were encamped, the two commands went together to the Mountain Meadows—Maj. Carlton to recruit his stock before setting out on his return to California and Capt. Campbell on his way to Camp Floyd. Leaving these commands both here, Judge Cradlebaugh and I proceeded forward to Cedar City, where the Judge intended to remain some time and make a thorough investigation if he could, concerning the massacre and persons engaged in it.

## ODDLYRAUGH'S COURT AT CEDAR CITY.

Owing to some disadvantage in the location of Cedar City, a large portion of the inhabitants that once dwelt there had moved away, and there was, in consequence, a good many vacant houses in the place.

Judge Cradlebaugh obtained the use of one of these to stay in while he remained, and for the purpose of a court room. As soon as it became known that Judge O. intended holding a court and investigating the circumstances of the massacre, and that he would have troops to insure protection, and enforce his writs if necessary, several persons visited him at his rooms at late hours of the night and informed him of different facts connected with the massacre.

All those that called there, stated that it would be at the risk of their lives if it became known that they had communicated anything to him; and they requested Judge Cradlebaugh, if he met them in public in the day time, not to recognize them as persons that he had before seen.

## A WITNESS'S ACCOUNT.

One of the men who called thus on Judge Cradlebaugh, confided that he participated in the massacre, and gave the following account of it.

"Previous to the massacre there was a council held at Cedar City, which President Haight and Bishop Bigbee attended. At this council they designated or appointed a large number of men residing in Cedar City, and in other settlements around, to perform the work of dispatching those emigrants.

The men appointed for this purpose were instructed to resort, well armed, at a given time, to a spring or small stream, lying a short distance to the left of the road leading into the Meadows, and not very far from Hamblin's ranch, but concealed from it by intervening hills. This was the place of rendezvous, and here the men, when they arrived, painted and otherwise disguised themselves so as to resemble Indians. From thence they proceeded, early on Monday morning, by a path or trail which leads from the spring directly into the Mea low, and across the road some distance beyond Hamblin's ranch. By taking this route they could not be seen by any one at the ranch. On arriving at the corral of the emigrants, a number of the men were standing on the outside by the camp fire, which, from appearance, they had just left building. These were first fired upon, and at the first discharge several of them fell dead or wounded. The remainder immediately ran to the inside of the corral, and began trifling themselves, and preparing for defense as well as they could, by shoving their wagons closer together and digging holes into which to lower them, so as to keep the shots from going under and striking them. The attack continued in a desultory and irregular manner for four or five days. The corral was closely watched, and if any of the emigrants showed themselves, they were instantly fired at from without. If they attempted to go to the spring, which was only a few yards distant they were sure to fall by the rifle of their assailants. In consequence of the almost certain death that resulted from any attempt to penetrate the emigrants, before the plugs discontinued, suffered intensely from thirst. The assailants, believing at length that the emigrants could not be subdued by the means adopted, resorted to treachery and stratagem to accomplish what they had been unable to do by force. They returned to the spring where they had painted and disguised themselves previous to commencing the attack, and there removed those disguises and again assumed their ordinary dress. After this, Bishop Lee, with a party of men, returned to the camp of the emigrants, bearing white flags as a signal of truce. From the position of the corral, the emigrants were able to see them some time before they reached it.

## THE TROOPS.

As soon as they discovered it, they dressed a little girl in white, and placed her at the entrance of the corral, to indicate their friendly feelings to the persons bearing the flag. Lee and his party, on arriving, were invited into the corral, where they sat about an hour, talking with them about the attack that had been made upon them. Lee told the emigrants that the Indians had gone off over the hills, and that if they would lay down their arms and give up their property, he and his party would conduct them back to Cedar City; but if they went out with their arms, the Indians would look upon it as an unfeigned act, and would again attack them. The emigrants, trusting to Lee's honor and to the sincerity of his statement, consented to the terms which he proposed, and laid aside property and all their arms at the corral, and, under the escort of Lee and his party, started towards the north in the direction of Cedar City. After they had proceeded about a mile on their way, no signal given by Bishop Bigbee, who was one of the party that went to the corral with Lee,

## THE SLAUGHTERED BEGINS.

The men were mostly killed or shot down at the first fire, and the women and children, who immediately fled in different directions, were quickly pursued and dispatched.

Such was the substance, if not the exact words, of a statement made by a man to Judge Cradlebaugh, in my presence, who at the same time confessed that he participated in the horrible events which he related. He also gave Judge O. the names of 25 or 30 other men living in that region who assisted in the massacre. He offered also to make the same statement in court and under oath, if protection was guaranteed to him. He gave as a reason for divulging these facts, that they had tormented his mind and conscience since they occurred, and he expected a willingness to grant a trial for his crime.

## THE COOK WITNESS TESTIMONY.

We had been in Cedar City but two days when Capt. Campbell with his command arrived, and informed Judge Cradlebaugh that he had received an express from Geo. Johnson, directing him to bring back with him all the troops in his command, as reports were then current that the Mormons were assembling in arm'd bodies in the mountains, for what purpose was not known.

In consequence of this order Judge Cradlebaugh was left without the means of either protection or witness who might be called on to testify in the court, or of arresting any parties who might flee or resist his writs.

Without assistance of this kind, he deemed it useless to attempt to hold a court, and so accordingly both left on the following day with Capt. Campbell, on his return to Camp Floyd. On our way there we were overtaken by Mr. and Mrs. Hamblin, on the way to Salt Lake City. They had with them the child found at Rockville. I had employed Mr. H. to take it to the city, knowing that it would be out of my power to devote proper care to it, under the circumstances in which it was placed. Mr. Hamblin traveled in com-

pany with us for a day or two, and during this time of the massacre, she was living at the ranch at the north end of the Mountain Meadows and that for several days before those children were brought to her house, or before she had even seen them, she saw several men loitering about in the vicinity of her house without any apparent object or business; this was an unusual occurrence. On the day that the massacre took place, Mrs. Hamblin stated that the children were brought to her house, and there disposed of by Bishop Lee to different white persons who were there at the time. Lee professed to act as an agent for the Indians in disposing of those children. He pretended to barter them for guns, blankets and ponies for the use of the Indians; but Mrs. H. stated that she was of the opinion at the time that the children were not really sold, and that the pretense of doing so by Lee was a mere sham. Lee went through the form of selling and bartering off all the children but two. One of these was an infant whose left arm was nearly shot off above the elbow, the bone being entirely severed; the other was her sister, three or four years older. These two, Mrs. Hamblin stated, Bishop Lee gave to her, and assigned as a reason for doing so, the high esteem the Indians had for Mr. Hamblin. I deemed it useless to wait for his return, or to return myself to Cedar City under any expectation of finding himself or Bishop Lee there. I therefore returned again to the camp of Capt. Campbell, and proceeded on with it to the Mountain Meadows, and encamped a second time by the spring in the south end of the Meadows, where the emigrants were encamped before being butchered.

AN OTHER KNOWLEDGE TO THE INDIANS.

From the Mountain Meadows, Capt. Campbell, with his command, proceeded to Santa Clara, some four or five miles from the Mormon settlement on that side, and there waited the arrival of Maj. Prince. We waited here a week before Maj. Prince arrived. During our stay here some Indians in the vicinity came frequently to our camp—the same Indians that had been charged with massacring the emigrants at the Mountain Meadows. These Indians admitted that a portion of them were present after the attack began at the corral, but denied that they had joined in it.

One of these Indians stated in the presence of others of the same band, that after the attack was made upon the emigrants at the corral, a white man came to them and exhibited a letter and stated that it was from Brigham Young, and that it directed them to go up and help whip the emigrants. A portion of the band went, therefore, but did not assist in the fight, and gave as a reason for not doing so, that the emigrants had long guns and were good shots, and they were afraid to venture near.

A chief of the band stated 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. These Indians also stated that the Mormons who killed the emigrants were painted so as to resemble Indians. They denied that they received any of the stock or property belonging to the emigrants, except a few of the old clothes.

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