

# SALT LAKE WRITER VISITS

## MT. MEADOWS MASSACRE SITE

STANDS ON FAMOUS SPOT ON MOTHERS DAY — AFTER SEVENTY-THREE YEARS. TAKES MANY PHOTOS.

Cultivation Has Reclaimed a Field Once Having Small Monument Upon It Land Soft and Inroads of a Deep Gully Threatening the Only Marker Remaining

NEED FOR ACTIVITIES OF A LANDMARK ASSOCIATION KEEN

Spot Sadly Neglected Which Only Draws Criticism, There Should Be a Granite Shaft and Many Road Markers The Time Invites

Saturday afternoon Mr Charles Kelly author of Salt Desert Trails accompanied by Mrs Kelly drove from Salt Lake City to Delta and took Frank Beckwith Sr to the site of the Mountain Meadows Massacre in Southern Utah where almost an entire immigrant train was slain in 1857

It is not my purpose to write of the history of the tragic event—You can get that from whatever source appeals to you Writers in Utah know the subject is taboo But I may with perfect propriety write of the site as it is today—and most certainly urge that the present state wide neglect of this historic spot be not continued There ought to be a sanctity about the place—a great granite shaft put up there inscribed

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF and followed by the names of every man woman and child who lost life at that tragic spot And it ought not to be done by outsiders to our state of Utah but by our own people by we Utahns ourselves

It should now be the duty of some landmark club to set up suitable road markers from Cedar City along the route taken by that ill fated immigrant train up to Pinto down to the Mountain Meadows and on the spot itself two great granite monuments with bronze plates with all the names of the dead inscribed thereon all the roads marked not only from Cedar City to Pinto but as well from any angle of approach for I myself went the other way in from Enterprise The roads from Modena St George Cedar City—all the roads leading to the place should be marked

We were informed that an outside movement was already on foot to buy acreage in the farm on the Mountain Meadows erect a monument fence it from the inroads of cultivation—but Utah should anticipate that movement—Do it itself

The spot now is sadly neglected One meager heap of stones is all that remains in place

Just remember how long the Gunnison Massacre Site lay neglected—from 1853 when Gunnison was killed to 1888 all that marked the site was A STUMP OF A CEDAR POST And from 1888 to 1927 by only a pile of refuse boulders—a sad neglect until the American Legion the Boy Scouts and the Daughters of the Utah pioneers roused awake and erected a suitable shaft with bronze tablet and a wonderfully nice dedicatory ceremony was held there with military honors to Captain John W Gunnison and his fellow dead

How nice it would be to hold a great state gathering at the site of the Mountain Meadows with officials of different churches state officials local and eminent men and then in a proper contrite spirit UTAH show its nobility its greatness its manliness and place itself right with a criticising world

Mr Kelly and I each took a stone and after a solemn silence in which both sought the proper tone each deposited most reverently a stone to that meager pile with heads uncovered and humbly reverent on a sacred spot

I have slept on the spot of the Gunnison Massacre alone and my intent to be alone and we tried to so manage it as to sleep by the very side of the only monument now standing at the site of the Mountain Meadows Massacre tho in the night time we missed the exact spot I will do it yet

As it was late at night when we drove there and being unfamiliar with the exact spot we went past in the light from our headlights a doe deer ran out to the middle of the road stood, ready to spring hes-

itated a moment looked away from us and then without undue haste passed easily out of sight We were then within thirty feet of her

We took pictures of the Meadows from both ends and that in the early sun taken from the south high on the hills was very fine and shows the expanse from that viewpoint very well The one from the north looking southerly lacks the advantage of a commanding eminence and is too flat

We took pictures of all the places mentioned in the history of the affair from different angles we walked over it with books in hand maps opened and studied the various versions picking out each incident

It was a thought which came home to us that here it was Mother's Day—a day sanctified to the mother of each of us living or dead but on this spot where many a mother lay not a song not a gathering not a soul to honor to sanctify to enoble the memory of the mothers lying there Mrs Kelly got a small bouquet of mountain flowers and silently laid them on the common grave There was no word between us—it wasn't necessary We each felt

While we stood at the monument an airplane passed overhead going at the rate let us say of a hundred to a hundred and twenty five miles an hour covering the distance from Los Angeles to Salt Lake in about as many hours as the slow-moving ox train of these immigrants would cover in approximately that many weeks—TODAY and YESTERDAY compared

The mileage I had covered there and back was 420 miles approximately while Kelly covered to get from Salt Lake and back nearly 760

That reflects his interest in the site

The land on which the massacre occurred was for years called the Burgess Ranch A few years ago the property came to George Lytle

Deltans who were raised in Dixie tell me that they distinctly remember a second monument in the middle of the Meadows This has now disappeared and the land under plow

Frank Beckwith Sr