



Site of the initial attack and siege at Mountain Meadows.

# Guest Editors' Introduction

*Richard E. Turley Jr. and Ronald W. Walker*

In writing *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*,<sup>1</sup> we hoped to leave no source unturned. One bystander, hearing of our aspiration, asked where we thought we'd find the richest vein of materials. "Perhaps here in Salt Lake City," one of us said. This special issue of *BYU Studies* bears out that hunch, as does the complete companion volume from which it is distilled, the forthcoming *Mountain Meadows Massacre Documents: The Andrew Jenson and David H. Morris Collections*.<sup>2</sup>

During years of research, we and our colleagues uncovered a great deal of information about the 1857 massacre in southern Utah, leading to a clearer understanding of how this tragedy happened. A concise overview of our findings appeared in the September 2007 *Ensign*,<sup>3</sup> preceding the recent publication of our book by Oxford University Press.

To make publicly available many of the manuscript discoveries that helped shape our thinking and writing, we are pleased to present here, for the first time and with facing transcriptions, selections from two important collections found at the headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. Each of these collections of documents has its own story.<sup>4</sup> The first was gathered in the 1890s by Andrew Jenson (1850–1941), a full-time employee in the Church Historian's Office, and the second a decade or two later by David H. Morris (1858–1937), an attorney and judge in St. George, Utah.

While the massacre continues to shock and distress, we hope that the publication of these documents will be a further step in facilitating understanding, sharing sorrows, and promoting reconciliation. We are honored

to present these documents to readers of *BYU Studies* as supplements to *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*.

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1. Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Our coauthor, Glen Leonard, was serving as a missionary in Santa Fe, New Mexico, while this issue was being prepared and thus was unable to join us here as guest editors.

2. Richard E. Turley Jr. and Ronald W. Walker, *Mountain Meadows Massacre Documents: The Andrew Jenson and David H. Morris Collections* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, forthcoming).

3. Richard E. Turley Jr., "The Mountain Meadows Massacre," *Ensign* (September 2007): 14–21, marking the 150th anniversary of this terrible crime.

4. From a more technical, archival point of view, the documents actually ended up in four manuscript collections: the Andrew Jenson collection in the Church Historian's Office (now the Church History Library), the Andrew Jenson collection in the First Presidency's Office (now in the Church History Library), the David H. Morris collection in the First Presidency's Office (now in the Church History Library), and "Collected Material Concerning the Mountain Meadows Massacre," a Church History Library collection that includes the Elias Morris interview and the original Charles Willden affidavit.