

# [PDF] American Massacre: The Tragedy At Mountain Meadows, September 1857

**Sally Denton - pdf download free book**

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**Books Details:**

Title: American Massacre: The Tragedy

Author: Sally Denton

Released: 2003-06-17

Language:

Pages: 336

ISBN: 0375412085

ISBN13: 978-0375412080

ASIN: 0375412085



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## **Description:**

**From Publishers Weekly** Like September 11, 2001, another September 11, in 1857, reverberates in American history as a date when the dangers of violent religious extremism became obvious, for it was then that a party of Mormons (and possibly Paiute Indians) attacked a pioneer party passing through southern Utah, killing all but the youngest children. Denton, an investigative journalist (*The Bluegrass Conspiracy*, etc.), is not the first interpreter to take on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, but she adds a new twist. Whereas historians Juanita Brooks and Will Bagley emphasized the Mormons' religious motivations, Denton latches onto a more base explanation: greed. The Baker-Fancher party, she writes, was rich, with hundreds of livestock and a ready supply of cash, and their wealth proved irresistible to the Mormon attackers. At times, she overreaches her sources, asserting

as fact what is not attested to in the historical record, e.g., that Brigham Young struck a deal with a prosecuting attorney to fix the conviction of John D. Lee, the only attacker convicted of murder. She also wrongly claims that Brigham Young became fatally ill six months to the day after Lee's execution (it was five months later) in order to make Young's death fit a prophetic legend. Although not as nuanced a historian as Brooks or Bagley, Denton is a marvelous writer who keeps this work of popular history as fresh and engaging as any novel.

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**From** In September 1857, a wagon train filled with gold was attacked, and the 140 Arkansas emigrants on their way to California in the wagons were slaughtered as they passed through Mountain Meadows, Utah. After the massacre, the Mormon church began to place the blame on John D. Lee, a discredited Mormon, and on the Paiute Indians. Denton, of Mormon descent, draws on oral histories, diaries, and depositions of the descendants from historical societies in Arkansas; from U.S. government files at the National Archives; Mormon records; newspaper accounts; and other sources. These documents bolster Denton's contention that the Mormon church's leader, Brigham Young, was responsible for the massacre because of what she describes as "the church's financial crises." Despite scientific evidence to the contrary, over the years the church has steadfastly denied any responsibility for the tragedy. Denton's extensively researched account of this atrocity is both convincing and chilling. *George Cohen*

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