



Name of Property: Mountain Meadows Massacre Site (updated documentation and boundary change)

County, State: Washington County, Utah

Period of Significance: 1857-1859

NHL Criteria: 1, Exceptions 1, 4, and 5

NHL Theme: I. Peopling Places
3. Migration from Outside and Within
6. Encounters, Conflicts, and Colonization
IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
4. Political Ideas, Cultures, and Theories

Previous Recognition: 1975 National Register of Historic Places
2011 National Historic Landmark

National Historic Context: V. Political and Military Affairs, 1783-1860
H. Manifest Destiny, 1844-1859
X. Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898
D. Westward Trails and Travelers
5. Mormon Migration and Settlement of the Great Basin

NHL Significance:

- The Mountain Meadows Massacre Site is nationally significant as the location of the September 11, 1857, massacre of 120 emigrants, most of them from Arkansas, at the h



hands of militiamen associated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, whose members are commonly called Mormons). While no one single factor served as the sole spark for the massacre, the massacre was the apex of a chain of violence, mistrust, and fear that had begun in the East decades earlier.

- Even as the Latter-day Saints settled in the Utah Territory, where they were seemingly isolated from the rest of American society, westward migration through the Mormon Utah settlements stoked cultural conflicts between Mormons and non-Mormons. The Mountain Meadows Massacre Site recalls these conflicts which led, first, to the exodus of the Mormons from the East and, ultimately, to the Utah War.
- As tensions between officials in Washington, D.C. and Utah Territory escalated in the months before the massacre, U.S. President James Buchanan declared the territory in a state of rebellion. Calls to put down the “Utah rebellion” resounded in the national press at a time when tensions over slavery were already threatening to divide the nation. Occurring at the height of the Utah War, the Mountain Meadows Massacre further exacerbated the long-standing distrust between Mormons and non-Mormons.
- Although the massacre occurred in 1857, the period of significance extends to 1859 when the scattered remains were given proper burials and simple rock cairns were constructed to mark their locations.

Integrity:

- The resource retains a high level of historic and visual integrity. It encompasses lands where key events of the Mountain Meadows Massacre took place and includes the burial sites of the victims and associated artifacts. Since the nominated lands retain their natural features, vegetation patterns, and vistas, they possess an extraordinary ability to convey their association with the past, and specifically with the events of September 1857 and its immediate aftermath. The appearance of the location and setting remains largely unchanged, evoking the feeling and the emotion of the original events more than a century later.
- The NHL, with its proposed boundary expansion, is a discontinuous historic district with three discrete parts. The original nomination contained the encampment/siege site and the men’s and boys’ massacre site; the boundary expansion contains the women’s and children’s massacre site.

Owner of Property: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Corporation of the President

Acreage of Property: Original nomination: 771 acres; boundary expansion: 83 acres; total: 854 acres.

Origins of Nomination: The original nomination came at the request of the LDS Church and the three Mountain Meadows Massacre descendant organizations: Mountain Meadows Association, Mountain Meadows Massacre Descendants, and Mountain Meadows Monument Foundation. The boundary expansion originated with the acquisition of the Women’s and Children’s Massacre Site by the LDS Church in 2013. Acquisition of the property had been a

long-standing goal of the Church and the three descendant groups. The LDS Church coordinated with the National Park Service to produce the original nomination and the boundary expansion. The proposed update to the original 2011 nomination form documents the addition of the Women's and Children's Massacre Site.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- The current NHL, augmented by the additional nationally significant site, will help Americans to better understand the importance of this event in the history of the nation, and include more of the recognized nationally significant resources.
- The three descendant groups and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have worked for years to reach this stage in their relationship. In the past few years, their combined goal has been to obtain National Historic Landmark designation, which was achieved in 2011.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Mr. Hoyos moved, Dr. Seale seconded; unanimous approval.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (comments received as of 05/22/14):

Cheri Baker Walker, Treasurer, Mountain Meadows Descendants, Amarillo, Texas
Patricia L. Norris, President, Mountain Meadows Massacre Descendants, Omaha, Arkansas
Elder Steven E. Snow, Church Historian and Recorder, Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (owner)
Gregory C. Smith, Director of Lands and Realty Management, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC (owner)
Brad Westwood, Director, State Historic Preservation Officer, Utah Division of State History, Salt Lake City, Utah

Advisory Board Recommendation: