

## THE MOUNTAIN MEADOW MASSACRE.

The Massacre at Mountain Meadow, Utah, 1857, is one event in history I have come across that pertains to the Fanchers. The caravan of wagons from Arkansas that was massacred, was lead by Captain Alexander Fancher.

There has been a historical novel, called The Fancher Train,, by Amelia Beam, written about this event. I also found a chapter in a book, Boone County and Its People,, by Ralph R. Res, that gives a more factual account of this episode.

Captain Alexander Fancher was the son of Isaac Fancher. Isaac was the brother of Grey Bynum, who was our Thomas H. Fancher's father. . So Alexander and Thomas H. Were cousins. I'm sure they knew each other because both of their families lived in Overton County, Tennessee at the same time and also in Clark County, Ill.

Though it isn't a very pleasant story, I found it interesting, not only because it was called the Fancher Train, but because it was a part of the history in the development of this country .

I have included all the information I have about this incident and it can be found on the following pages.

Even as these families poured into Arkansas hills from the east, hundreds of those already here were moving west across the desert to a new frontier. The discovery of gold in California had set caravan after caravan rolling out of the Arkansas hills towards the western desert. For twelve years, until the war halted their westward trek,, family after family left their rocky Osark homes for the promise of a more bountiful life than they had ever dreamed was possible. Many an Oxarkian made his fortune and remained on the west coast; some came home broke; a few met death on the desert at the hands of Indians and thieves. The most terrible example of the latter was the Fancher Caravan that was destroyed at Mountain Meadows, Utah in September 1857.

In the last week of April or the first week in May 1857 this ill-fated emigrant train was formed at the Beller Stand. For a week some families had camped by the big spring near Crooked Creek, while they waited for other from Marion, Crawford and Johnson Counties to join them. Captain Alexander Fancher of the Osage community in Carroll County was the leader of the party. Captain Fancher had made two overland journeys to California prior to this 1857 trek.

On file in the National Archives in Washington, D. C. is a list submitted by William Mitchell to the Office of Indian Affairs, Utah Superintendent, dated April 27, 1860 at Crooked Creek, Arkansas. Mitchell's list contains the names of most of those who started with the caravan at Beller's Stand in the spring of 1857 and who were massacred. Three of his sons were among those killed. His list together with some additions and corrections based upon family records and the Federal Census of 1850 gives us the following information.

(I only listed Fanchers)

From Carroll County there was Alexander Fancher, his wife and seven children; James Matthew Fancher and Robert Fancher, nineteen and twenty-five years old respectively, both being sons of Jane Fancher.

(Other names were Baker, Beller, Prewett, Duplap, Camron, Jones, Tacket, etc.

In addition to the ones who were killed there were 17 children who were spared. Goodspeed names the surviving children as follows.

(Again I only listed Fancher's)

Kit Carson and Tryphene Fancher, children of Alexander Fancher.

having been killed makes a total of some eighty persons. The accounts written at the time generally agree that there were 137, or 138 people in the party at the time they were attacked at Mountain Meadows.

The first chapter of this tragic story began early on a Spring morning when the caravan pulled out from their camp at Beller Stand and moved westward on the military road toward Carrollton. Several miles beyond Carrollton, they came to the point where the road forked, and there they turned to the right towards Missouri.

Goodspeed says that the train consisted of about forty wagons, several carriages in which the ladies rode, nearly a thousand head of cattle, several hundred horses, including a stallion valued at \$2, 800. All in all the wealth of the caravan was established at \$70,000.

The party proceeded to St. Joseph where it turned west through Kansas and on into Colorado by the accustomed route. They reached Salt Lake City in August. Other parties had joined them from time to time along the way, but before they reached the Mormon country most of the others had veered off on the southern routs. The last party to join them was from Missouri, but they likewise took the southern course before they reached Salt Lake City.

For an account of the last day of the Fancher party's journey let us take the words of Elizabeth Baker Terry, who was an eyewitness.

"Six months had passed when we at last camped on the Jordan River in Utah."

"Our provisions were running low. The cattle were weary and footsore, but we were jubilant." In those days pioneers looked upon Utah as a supply station for the final drive to California. "At American Forks, a small settlement, attempts were made to re-provision. The Mormons met our offers with sullen shakes of their heads"

"We went through Battle Creek, Provo, Spring<sup>Yi</sup>well, Spanish fork, Salt Creek and Fillmore, then we reached Mountain Meadows. Ever since emigrants began plying their way across the continent, the meadow had been a resting place for travelers. This five mile long valley filled with luxuriant grasses, was a mile wide and bordered by low-flung mountains.

"Near the lower end the valley tapered to a mere three or four hundred yards, as a gap led out to the scorched sands of the desert beyond. A spring made this section of the meadow a natural camping ground. Here we halted to rest.

"The day before we were to start was spent in a final check. Every family was on ration. Most of us sought our blankets not long after sundown.

"I awoke early, a coffee aroma permeated the wagons which had been drawn up in a helter-skelter fashion.

"Suddenly there was a rattle of fire from the hillside nearest our camp".

"Whooping savages tumbled down the slope and sliced off our milling stock."

"The men worked frantically, shoving the heavy schooners and carriages into the form of a huge corral. A few, armed with long rifles, stood on guard. The last wagon was in line when the main band of savages charged down the mountain side yelling and shooting. Rifles began to bark along the train. The attackers hesitated before the viciousness of the fire and fell back. The respite gave us time to dig in. Under Captain Fancher's direction the wheels of the wagon corral were locked together by means of chains. Others hurried out with picks and shovels and dug feverishly to throw up a breastwork. Even the women helped."

"We were on a travel route and it appears that all we have to do was to stand the Indians off until help arrived.

"The sun tortured us with intense heat. By midday it was almost unbearable, and we were almost out of water. Later in the day the last brackish water was consumed.

"On the evening of the third day the Indians made their most determined attack. Crouched low, they circled about the train, shooting inaccurately. The Meadow afforded little cover and our assailants felt the lash of the corral sharpshooters. Back they went to the hillsides, carrying their wounded with them. The siege was on again.

"The fourth day was the worst of all. The wounded were actually dying of thirst. The entire caravan was weak from lack of water.

"The morning of the fifty day dawned. Our resistance was crumbling rapidly. Our ammunition was nearly gone. The stench of our unburied dead was in our nostrils. And always with us was the agony of thirst.

"The cry of a sentry shooed us from our stupor. Two men mounted on horses and bearing a white flag, were advancing toward us.

"In a twinkling, hope transformed our ranks. We cheered weakly. The horsemen came on at a walk so slowly I thought they would never reach the corral. A square-made man with an air of authority dismounted, smiling at our greetings. He left his companion with the horses. Captain Fancher stepped forward. The stranger took Fancher's hand. "John D. Lee, he said" Indian Commissioner for this district."

"Eagerly we crowded about him. He explained gravely that the  
Piaute Indians were rebellious and difficult to handle, but he be-  
lieved he could persuade them to parley. In a lengthy conference  
between Lee and the men of our band, he gained our complete confidence.

Here we leave Mrs. Terry's narrative briefly, and in order to  
better understand Lee's visit, let us turn to events that had trans-  
pired in Cedar City in the days preceeding the attack.

When the covered wagons and carriages passed through the city  
they were closely watched by three Mormon Saints. These men were  
Isaac Haight, Philip Klingensmith, and John Higbee.

Haight was president of the Parowan Stake, and a lieutenant  
Colonel in the Mormon Militia.

Klingensmith was Bishop of Cedar City.

Higbee was a major in the country militia.

The fanaticism of these three, coupled with the memory of the  
martyred Joseph Smith and their possession of information that part  
of the travelers were from Missouri and Illinois (these were the scen e  
of persecution against the Mormons) had helped them into an unholy  
plot.

There was another incident too, that contributes to the bitter  
feelings toward this particular caravan. Just three years before this  
time, Elder Parley P. Pratt, one of the devout saints, had come to  
Louisiana and Arkansas as the first missionary to represent his  
sect in these states. Among the converts was a Mrs. McLean of  
Louisiana, who allegedly deserted her husband to become a polygamous  
wife of Saint Pratt. McLean himself, was away from home at the time,  
when he returned he opposed the changed status. Pratt had already  
started westward, but McLean pursued him and had him arrested.  
Pratt was freed on arraignment and again started his westward journey.  
McLean was not satisfied with the outcome of the court hearing, so  
he again followed Pratt. This time he overtook pratt near the  
present town of Alma. There McLean attacked Pratt with a bowie knife  
and stabbed him to death. /The word of Pratts death soon made its  
way to the Mormon country, The Mormons felt that Pratt's death  
should be avenged.

All of those wrongs had burned deep into the hearts of the Mormons,  
so that it was easy for Haight, Klingensmith and Higbee to whip them  
up into a religious frenzy. Records of the Cedar City Council  
meeting indicate that the council developed a messianic complex, in  
that they felt that God has actually sent the caravan to them so that  
blood atonement could be made for the great wrongs that had been  
done against the Mormons in Missouri, Illinois, and Arkansas.

Haight, Klinensmith and Higbee were too cowardly and too hypocritical to attack the train by themselves, so they decided they would bribe the Piautes to do the job. That is where John D. Lee came into the picture, for as Indian Agent he was on friendly terms with the various tribes in Mormon Country.

The following night was spent in consultation with Lee. The three convinced Lee that the Gentiles had stolen cattle, insulted Mormon women, threatened to burn every Mormon town in Utah, and they even had with them the gun with which one of their number had assassinated Joseph Smith. With their anger fanned to a white heat the four then pledged themselves to wipe out the hated Gentiles. After their pledge they remained together until dawn, praying fervently. But the next day someone among the four conspirators talked to other Mormons, and the more sober heads in Cedar City made plans to head off the vicious plot. There was no one to whom they could appeal locally, so they decided to go to the highest recognized authority. They dispatched a messenger to Brigham Young to ask his decision. The messenger reached President Young, on Sept 10, 1857. It is pretty conclusively established that Young sent the messenger back immediately with the command to give the emigrants safe passage through the Mormon country. The messenger did not arrive until after the siege had begun, and as a matter of fact, it had almost failed because the Indians had met such stubborn resistance that they were ready to call the whole thing off.

Haight received Brigham Young's message, but the besieged caravan already knew too much, so there could be no backing up. He deliberately lied to Higbee, who in turn passed the erroneous order to Lee. The order Lee received read: "Kill everyone old enough to talk."

Several of the Indians had already gone back to their homes, so Lee and Higbee recruited some forty fanatical Saints to help them with the last chapter of this sordid tale.

This brings us up to date with the Mormons phase of our story, for it was at this point that John D. Lee rode up under a flat of truce, dismounted from his horse and taking Captain Alexander Fancher by the hand, offered his service to help the caravan in their hour of dire need.

Let us now turn back to Mrs. Terry's account of the last gruesome details of this dark picture.

"When the Indian Commissioner rode off our hope and prayer went with him. He was gone two hours.

"He came back at a gallop, a wagon following his dust. He said, They've agreed to let you go if you'll surrender your arms.

At first the men objected, then finally agreed to the terms.

"slowly they filed to the wagon Lee had brought with him . Rifles clattered in the bed.

"John D. Lee smiled grimly and nodded to the driver. The wagon rumbled off over the low rise. Mounting his horse, Lee spurred a short distance from the corral. He rose in his stirrups and shouted, "Do your duty."

"Bewildered we stood there. The Indians shrieking, shooting, yelling, tumbled down the slope triumphantly. For a moment the entire wagon train was frozen into immobility.

"I started to follow my mother and stumbled. The last I saw of her, she was running toward our carriage with little Billy in her arms. And the Indians were upon us.

"Now I could see they weren't all Indians. Whites had painted themselves to resemble their savage companions. With bloodcurdling yells they leaped on the defenseless pioneers. I sought shelter under a wagon and peered out between the spokes.

"I saw my father fall to the ground.

"The Indians and their white companions killed and killed. The sight of blood sent them into a fanatical frenzy. One huge white kept shouting. "For Jehovah "

"The fiends slackened their butchering only when there were no more victims. Dripping paint and blood, they stood panting, searching for any signs of life among the hacked and clubbed bodies."

"A white man took me by the hand and led me to a wagon where several other children had been placed.

"I found my sister, Sarah Frances, there.

"As we left, the Indians and whites were completing their looting. Some of the disguised Mormons were washing their paint at the spring.

"Our wagon creaked to the Hamblin ranch a mile away, where it discharged its sobbing cargo.

"We were held at the ranch for several days while the Mormons debated on how to dispose of us.

"No effort was made to give the bodies a decent preparation for burial. Not until 1859 did a passing detachment of U.S. Cavalry stop to gather the bones into one grave. A rock cairn was erected. On one stone was carved the words. "Here lie the bones of one hundred and twenty men, women and children, from Arkansas, murdered on the 10th day of September, 1857.

"An officer painted on a cross-like beam above the cairn,  
"VENGEANCE IS MINE SAITH THE LORD. I WIL L REPAY."

The first news that leaked out of Utah told of a terrible massacre by the Indians, and it was not until months later that the true facts were suspected. Here we must place much of the blame on Brigham Young, for though the best of evidence seems to indicate he did not sanction the act, he did become an accessory after the fact, in that he helped conceal the crime.

When the story came to light, William W. Watkins, who was <sup>then</sup> State Senator, was sent to Washington to press for an investigation into the massacre. He secured an audience with the President, and thereby started the wheels in motion for government intervention.

In 1859 James Lynch of the U S. Army took possession of the seventeen surviving children and returned them to Fort Leavenworth where William Mitchell, who had lost three sons in the massacre, met them and transported the children to Carrollton, Arkansas.

The main credit for solving this terrible crime goes to Judge Cradlebaugh, who was Federal Judge for Utah Territory. When Judge Cradlebaugh's investigation brought all the facts to light Brigham Young excommunicated Haight, Klingensmith, Higbee, and Lee. Klingensmith turned against the others and made an affidavit placing the blame on the other three. Haight and Higbee managed to avoid arrest and Lee alone was captured and tried.

United States Marshall William Stokes arrested Lee in 1874, seventeen years after the massacre.

Lee was tried twice. The first hearing was declared a mistrial, but on the second trial Lee was deserted by the church and left to face his crime alone. Old and broken, Lee then wrote a full confession, but in his confession he contended that he had only done his scared duty. He stated he obeyed orders given him by Haight and Klingensmith, and that their orders came from God."

He was sentenced to die and he choose the firing squad as the method of his execution. On March 23, 1877, the government had him transported to the exact spot on which the emigrants stood when Lee came to them with a white flag and guaranteed their safety. Lee sat on his coffin and refused the marshal's offer of a bnadage for his eyes. The rifles roared and the twisted, fanatical life of John Doyle Lee was snuffed out.

This officially closed the Mountain Meadow Case.



Captain Alexander Fancher (Isaac 4, Richard 3, David 2, Richard 1,)

Captain Alexander Fancher head of the wagon train which while crossing the plains in 1857 was attacked and slaughtered almost to a man by the Mormons and Indians at Mountain Meadow, Utah, 11 September 1857, was born in Overton County, Tenn, in 1812. He married in Coles County, Ill. 12 May 1836 Eliza Ingram, who was born in Illinois about 1824, and who was among those killed at the Mountain Meadow Massacre, with seven of her children .

Captain Fancher was a farmer, tall, slim, erect, of dark complexion, a singer, and a born leader and organizer of men. He had crossed the country twice, had great common sense, and was therefore chosen to captain a wagon train which started across the mountains in 1857 taking some 140 Arkansas emigrants to California, with 900 head of cattle, many horses, mules and wagons and considerable money. Waylaid and massacred in the valley of Mountain Meadow by Mormons and Indians, 120 men, women and children were butchered and only 17 children of tender years survived. The latter were later found among the Mormons, who had adopted them, and taken back to the land of their parents. The wagon train was reputed to have been the wealthiest of any which had crossed the plains up to that time, and the massacre one of the worst in the history of those days.

Children:	Hampton	B. Coles County, Ill.	1838
	William	B. Coles County, Ill.	1840
	Mary	B. Missouri	1841
	Thomas	B. Missouri	1843
	Martha	B. Carroll Co., Ark.	1846
	twin Sarah G.	B. Carroll Co., Ark	1849
	twin Margaret A.	B. Carroll Co., Ark	1849

(The above children were all killed at Mountain Meadow in 1857)

Kit Carson. Born in 1852 in Arkansas, died unmarried in Arkansas in 1873 at home of his second cousin Hampton Bynum Fancher. Kit Carson Fancher saw his father murdered, and after the massacre, while herding sheep, found one of the wives of a Mormon wearing his murdered Mother's cape or mantle.

Trifina D. Born 10 Nov. 1855 and she survived the Mountain Meadow massacre and was rescued later from the Mormons.