

The Mormons and the Settlement of the West

An Online Professional Development Seminar



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Alumni Distinguished Professor of History
University of Arkansas

Research focuses on the American West
and the American Indian

AMERICA *in* CLASS®

from the National Humanities Center

FROM THE FORUM

- What is the role and impact of the Mormons on US History
- What resources are available to teach Mormon history in the high school classroom



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The Essential West: Collected Essays (2012)

The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story (2009)

*The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the
Rush to Colorado* (1994)

[Winner of five awards including the
Francis Parkman Prize and PEN Center Award]

The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains (1995)
[Winner of the Western Heritage Award]

*Growing Up With the Country: Childhood on the
Far-Western Frontier* (1989)

Introduction

- To trace the origins and early history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), a major world religion that originated in the United States
- To consider the role of the church in westward expansion and settlement
- To examine the conflicts between the church and the federal government and parts of American society
- To consider what those conflicts can tell us about the nation in the 19th century

Joseph Smith's Vision



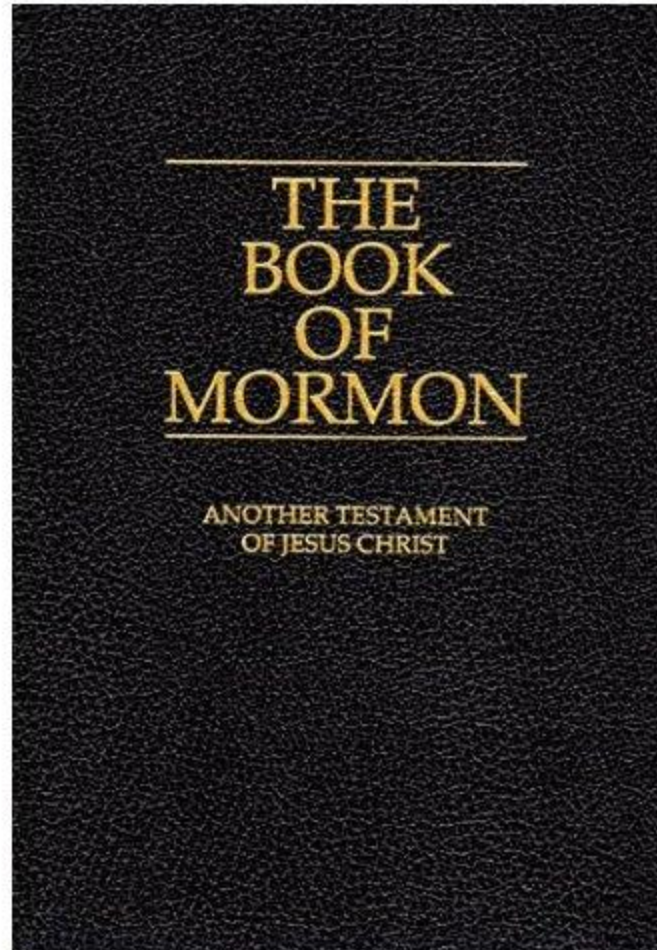
Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me....I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other—

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR HIM!

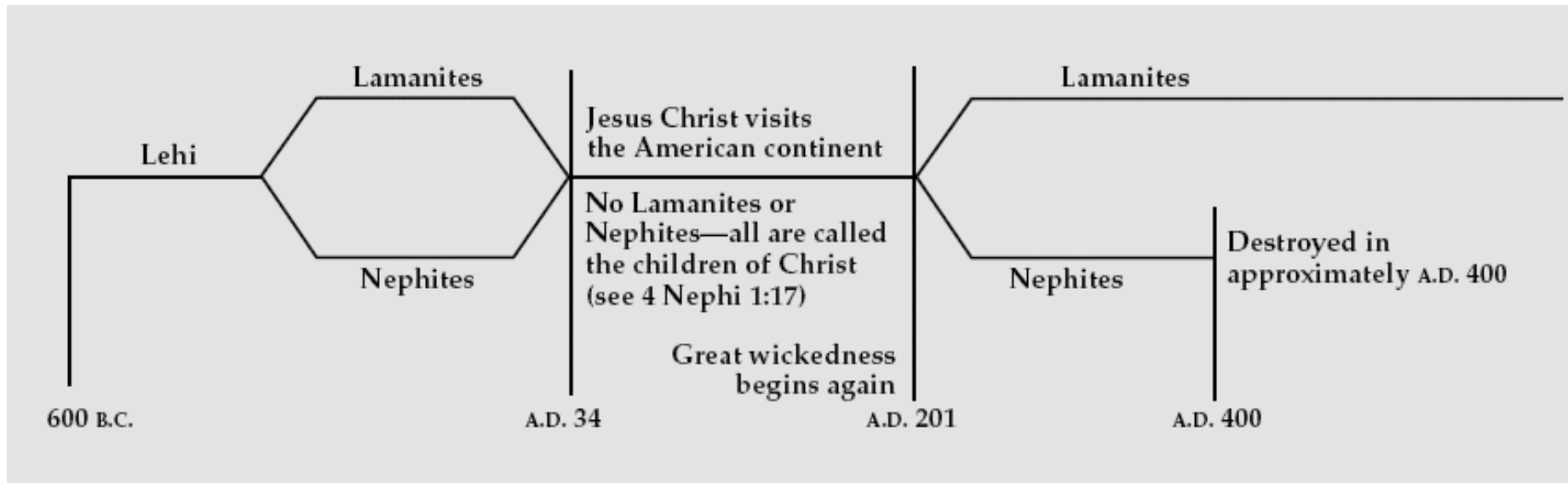
The Hill Cumorah



The Book of Mormon



The Tribes in America



The Priesthood of Melchizedek



Joseph Smith



Zion in Missouri



And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood—if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else. And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.

Mormon Doctrine and Covenants, 132:61-62

Sidney Rigdon: “We Will Bear it No More”

For from this hour, we will bear it no more, our rights shall no more be trampled on with impunity. The man or the set of men, who attempts it, does it at the expense of their lives. And that mob that comes on us to disturb us; it shall be between us and them a war of extermination; for we will follow them till the last drop of their blood is spilled, or else they will have to exterminate us.

Sidney Rigdon, July 4, 1838

Lilburn Boggs: “The Mormons...Must Be Exterminated”

The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state if necessary for the public peace--their outrages are beyond all description.

Governor Lilburn Boggs, October 27, 1838

The First Expulsion





John Bennett: The Mormon Conspiracy

[There is] a vast and deep laid scheme, upon their part, for conquering the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri, and of erecting upon the ruin of their present governments a despotic military and religious empire, the head of which, as emperor and pope, was to be Joseph Smith.

John C. Bennett,
History of the Saints

June 27, 1844



Brigham Young

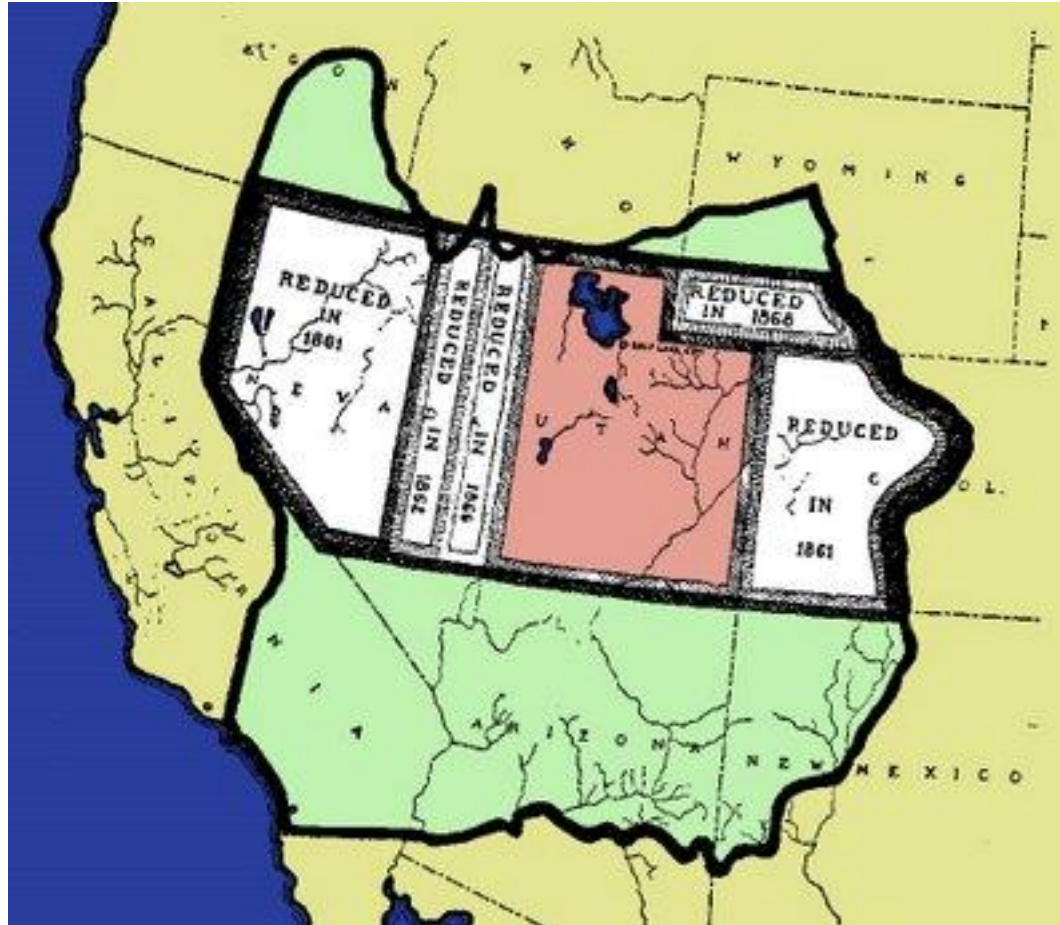


The Exodus to Zion





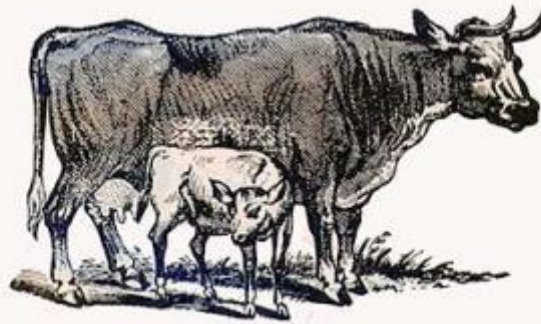
Utah Territory



Mormon Immigrants in New York



Deseret First Book



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Handcarts to Zion: 1856-1860



Our old and infirm people began to droop, and they no sooner lost spirit and courage than death's stamp could be traced upon their features....At first the deaths occurred slowly and irregularly, but in a few days at more frequent intervals, until we soon thought it unusual to leave a campground without burying one or more persons....Many a father pulled his cart, with his little children on it, until the day preceding his death. I have seen some pull their carts in the morning, give out during the day, and die before next morning. . . . We traveled on in misery and sorrow day after day.

John Chislett Reminiscence of 1856

Mormon Irrigation 1



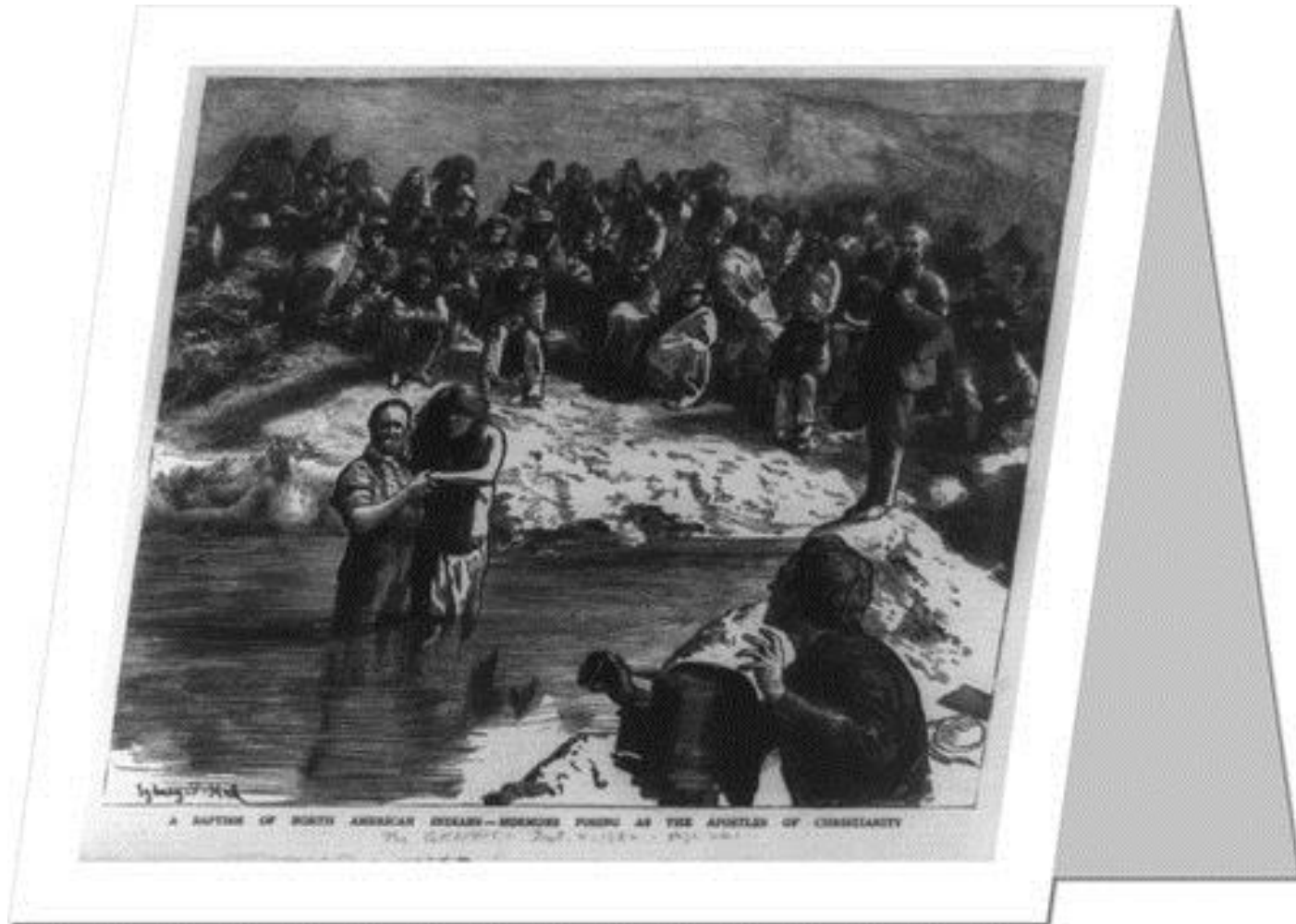
Mormon Irrigation 2



Mormon Octopus



Mormon Baptism of Indians



And my people who are a remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, yea, in the midst of them as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he go through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.

Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 21:12

A Popular View of Polygamy



The fact is, these people repudiate the authority of the United States in this country, and are in open rebellion against the general government... We are by no means sure that we would be permitted to leave, for it is boldly asserted that we would not get away alive.

David Burr, Surveyor General of Utah, 1857

The Utah War



We are invaded by a hostile force...to accomplish our overthrow and destruction....Martial law is hereby declared...and no person shall be allowed to pass or repass into or through or from this Territory without a permit from the proper officer.

Brigham Young proclamation, 1857

“We’ll Fight for God and Liberty”

What sound is that which now we hear
Re-echoing from the plains!
The troops, they say, are drawing near’
With all their wagon trains.
They come with sword and rifle too
And deadly bayonet
And swear to exterminate the few
Who dwell in Deseret

Chorus:

Then we’ll fight for God and Liberty
Our powder keep from wet
And when we’ve gained the victory
We’ll rule in Deseret

James Martineau, 1857

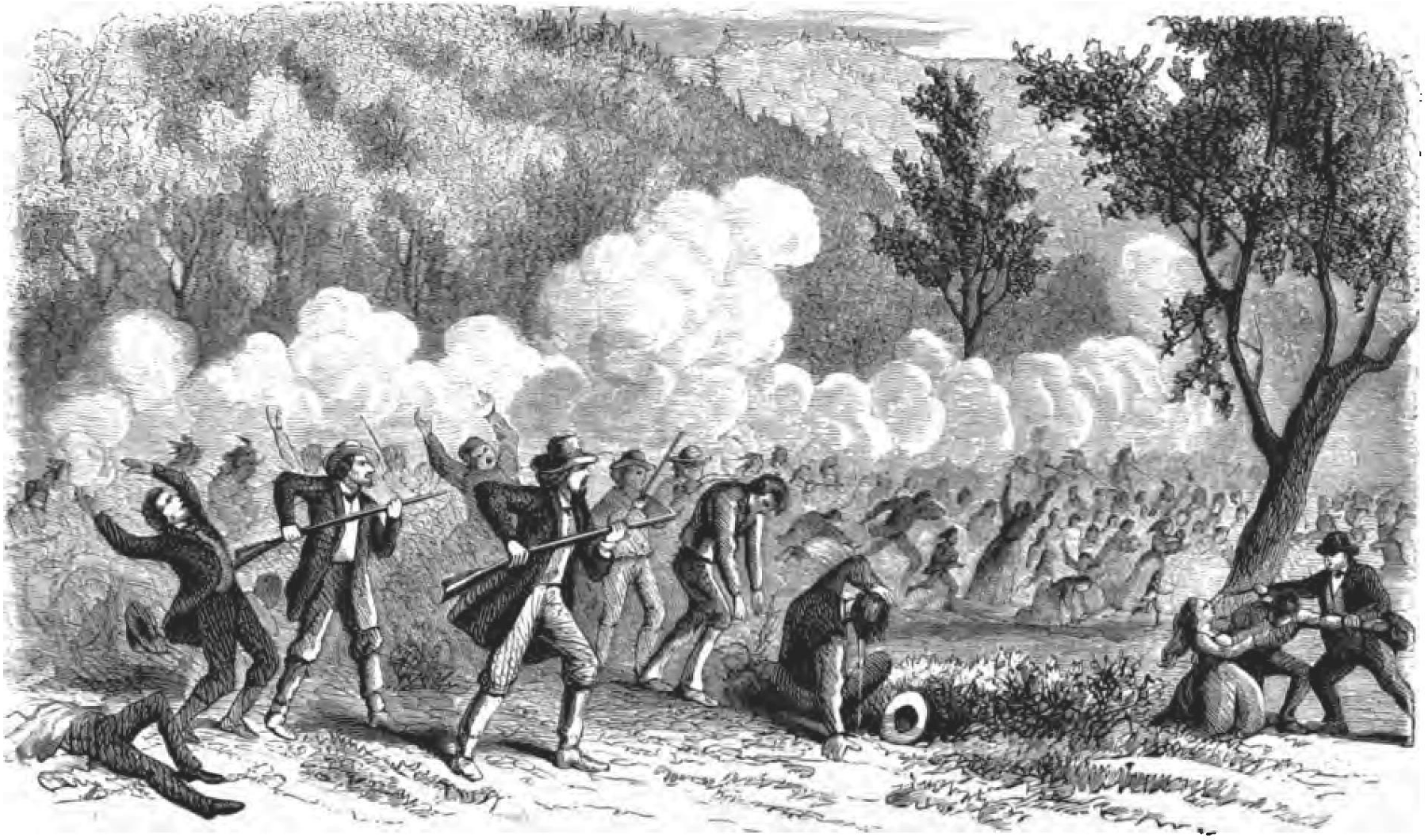
The Army in Salt Lake City



The Fancher Party



Mountain Meadows Massacre



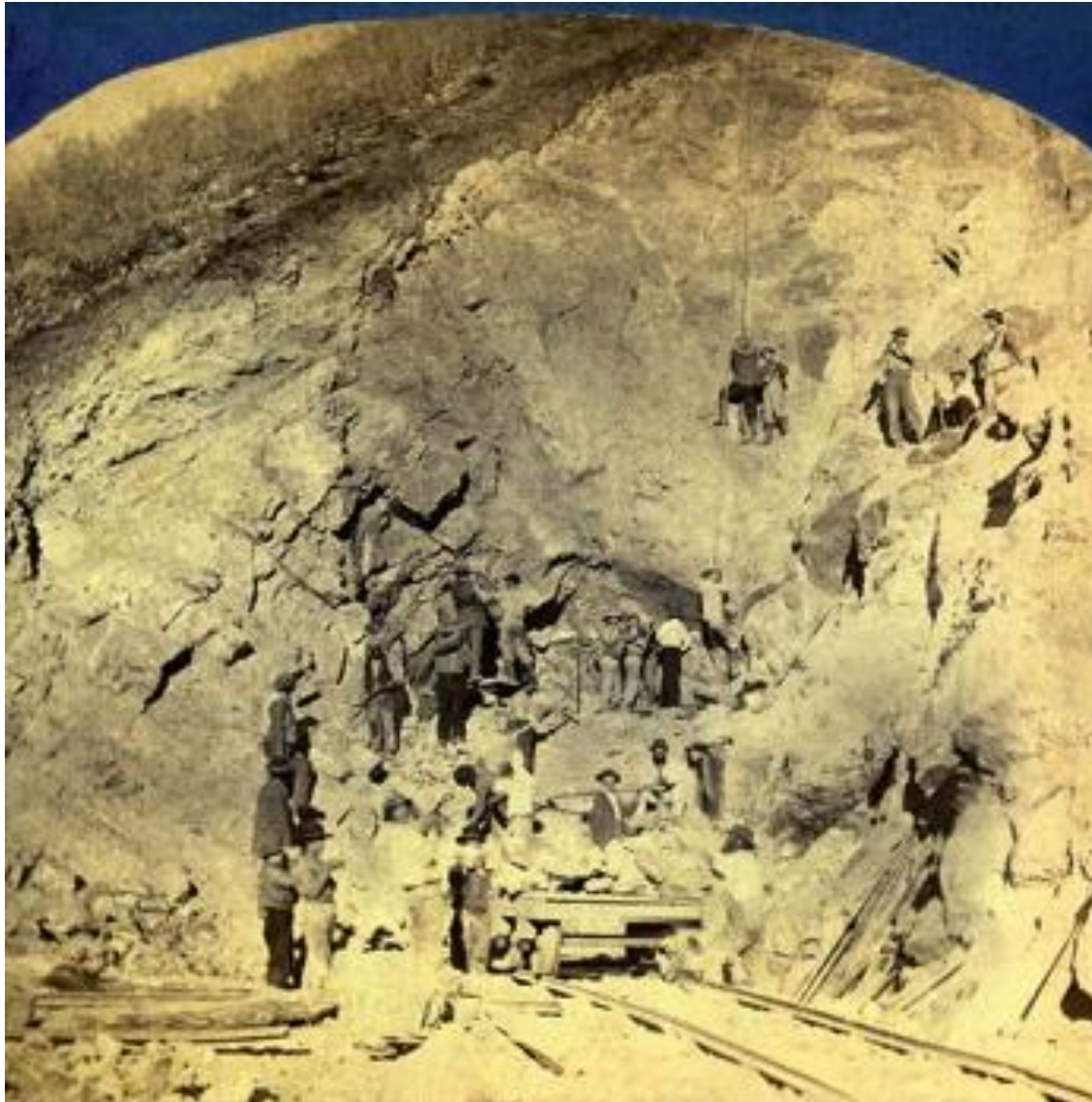
The scene of the massacre, even at this late day, was horrible to look upon... Here and there, on every hand, for at least a mile in the direction of the road, by 2 miles east and west, there gleamed, bleached white by the weather, the skulls and bones of those who had suffered...a sight which can never be forgotten.

Maj. J. H. Carleton, May, 1859

Massacre Monument



Mormons at the Transcontinental



Polygamy Rejected

We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice.... And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.

William Woodruff, President,
Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, 1890

Temple Square



Final slide

THANK YOU