

❁ WILLIAM NELSON AND SUMNER HOWARD TO ALPHONSO TAFT
 SEPTEMBER 23, 1876

MMM Letters.

The letter is written on 7¾ × 9¾-inch preprinted, embossed, and lined white paper. It is four pages long and is written on one side in charcoal ink. The preprinted portions of the document are shown in italics. The letter is stamped as being received by the Department of Justice on October 2, 1876.

UNITED STATES MARSHAL'S OFFICE,
 WM. NELSON, U.S. Marshal. DISTRICT of UTAH.
 Beaver City, Utah, Sep 23rd 1876

Hon Alphonso Taft, Attorney General
 Washington City D.C.

Sir The trial of John D. Lee indicted for murder committed at the mountain meadows in September 1857, has just been held at this place and the result is a verdict of "guilty of murder in the first degree", The result seems to be displeasing to certain factionists here who have heretofore conducted this case and those connected with the "Mountain Meadow Massacre" with reference more to outside matters than to the cause at bar. It has been their public boast that the former trial of John D. Lee in July 1875 was not for the purpose of convicting the prisoner, but to fix the odium of the Mountain Meadow butchery upon the Mormon church. The result ^{[[2]]} was the call for a large amount of public money, and no result except the advancement of certain schemes and aspirations of local politicians whose attitude is that of uniform condemnation of the administration and its appointees. In the trial just concluded, the case of John D. Lee, and that alone was tried. It became apparent early in the investigation, that there is no evidence whatever to connect the chief authorities of the Mormon church with the massacre, on the contrary those authorities produced documents and other evidence showing clearly that not only was that great crime solely an individual offence on the part of those who committed it, but that the orders, letters proclamations etc, which issued from the central Mormon authority which was also at that time the Territorial authority were directly and positively contrary to all shedding of blood, not only of ^{[[3]]} emigrants passing through the Territory, but also forbade the killing of the Soldiers of Johnsons army which was marching on Utah. Being satisfied of this the prosecution laid the case before the Mormon leaders and ask their aid in unraveling the mystery of this foul crime. That aid was given and the horrid testimony is public from the mouths of eye witnesses, convicting the prisoner without the shadow of a doubt. Those whose thunder is stolen by this conviction and the fixing of the crime where the evidence places it, and who failed in the same prosecution before,

are exceeding angry, and are making to the public such misrepresentations as their malice suggests and are said to be also forwarding certain of their statements to Washington.

It seems marvelous that any set of men should regret the conviction of the chief butcher of ^{[[4]]} Mountain Meadows, but disappointment and envy, together with the loss of political capital, will drive men into strange positions.

The outline of the case is reported to you herein with the assurance that nothing has been done in the management of the prosecution of which any officer of the government, high or low, need be ashamed

William Nelson,
U.S. Marshal

Sumner Howard
U.S. Dist Attorney

❖ SUMNER HOWARD TO ALPHONSO TAFT
OCTOBER 5, 1876

MMM Letters.

This letter is written in dark chocolate ink on the front side of one faded white sheet of 8 × 10½-inch preprinted and lined stationery. The preprinted portions of the document are shown in italics.

*United States Attorney's Office,
DISTRICT OF UTAH TERRITORY,
Salt Lake City, October 5th 1876*

Hon Alphonso Taft
Atty Genl
Washington
D. C.

Sir:

I wrote you yesterday in regard to Detective assistance in the Mountain Meadow Massacre cases. That letter could not have reached you when you receive this for the reason that it goes by way of Beaver for Judge Boremans endorsement.

I write now to offer as in additional reason for granting the assistance I ask that the conviction of Lee has unmasked another most dastardly and murderous assault which with the help I ask of you I can bring to light and punish—

I beg of you to give me the help I ask

Yours truly Sumner Howard