

give all,” and invited the people to attend a memorial service at Mountain Meadows on the centennial of the massacre. “May God help us all,” she concluded, “as we strive for understanding and brotherhood.”⁴⁵

“Your coming has done much to establish a spirit of love and forgiveness,” Fancher later wrote her. “The Mormon Church owes you much because now the people in this section feel much better toward the Mormon people.” Brooks was “the public voice, otherwise silent, of confession and contrition for the most shameful deed in Mormon history.” Her courage initiated a long process of reconciliation between the descendants of the participants and the victims of Mountain Meadows. But southerners have a long memory: in 1956 the mountain communities in northwestern Arkansas organized a wagon train that trekked from Harrison to Berryville to commemorate the Fancher party.⁴⁶ Despite Brooks’s best efforts, a lingering bitterness—and a refusal to forget—remained alive in the Ozarks.

IT IS FROM THE DEVIL: VINDICATION

For more than two decades after the publication of *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, Juanita Brooks remained vitally concerned with the event and its legacy. Shortly after her speech in Arkansas, The Huntington Library published *A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848–1876*, which Brooks had edited with nominal help from Robert Glass Cleland. The book won the Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History, and *Time* magazine praised it as “one of the most extraordinary documents ever written by an American.” The *Deseret News* refused to print Olive Burt’s favorable review, and Burt stalked the office “mumbling to herself and out loud to anybody who [would] listen—Cowards! Cowards! Cowards!”⁴⁷

Brooks was unable to gather support in Utah for a centennial commemoration of the massacre, but she focused her disappointment on a persistent crusade to mark the site appropriately.⁴⁸ She turned her attention to writing a biography of John D. Lee that presented her evolving interpretation of the massacre. Lee’s journals provided tremendous insights into the aftermath of the event, and Brooks was pleased to find that the new material she was constantly uncovering consistently confirmed her view of southern Utah history.

Once again her work created a controversy that brought her into conflict with the most powerful men in her church. The battle began when Ettie Lee reported the reinstatement of John D. Lee. Temple worker Merrit L. Norton had presented the family’s request, and on April 20, 1961, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve authorized the restoration of Lee’s membership and temple blessings. Norton was baptized for his dead grandfather, and on May 9 Apostle Ezra Taft Benson officiated in the endowment and sealing ceremonies at the Salt Lake Temple. Ettie Lee told Brooks the authorities advised her to give the information only to members of the Lee family to avoid “undue publicity.” Brooks had already heard the news from

five different sources—“Like a fire in the grass, it got out of control”—and she was ecstatic.⁴⁹

Brooks felt the reinstatement was a tacit admission by the highest LDS authorities that her indictment of Brigham Young was correct. She immediately wrote her publisher, Arthur H. Clark, Jr., that the restoration was an event she had not expected to live to see. She wanted to insert a terse announcement in her Lee biography, but she asked Clark to wait to add the information until she could secure approval for its publication, for she did not dare to use it without official consent. Brooks could foresee no harm in publishing it, but the subsequent controversy resulted in yet another ordeal.

Brooks learned through Lee family members that the new prophet, David O. McKay, did not want this confidential information to appear in her book. He threatened to rescind Lee’s reinstatement if Brooks persisted in publicizing it. Brooks felt McKay might well excommunicate her for publishing forbidden information, but she did not believe he would be so petty as to revoke Lee’s restoration. She was confident it was only a bluff. Brooks proposed leaving the notice out of the initial publication, but she insisted she would include it in subsequent editions. At his request, Brooks met with Apostle Delbert E. Stapley at LDS headquarters in Salt Lake. “Like a broken victrola record,” she recalled, the apostle repeated McKay’s threat, while Brooks expressed her conviction that God had delayed the book’s publication so that it could include this information. Outraged, the apostle slammed his fist on the table and said, “IT IS FROM THE DEVIL!” She finally agreed to omit the notice from the first printing, but, she said, “more than that I would not promise.”⁵⁰

Brooks met with the Lee family in Phoenix to sort out the controversy, and in an acrimonious debate lasting through what she described as a “horrible, horrible” July afternoon, the family pleaded with her “NOT to do this terrible thing.” When all the Lees had said their piece, Brooks told them she could bear as fervent a testimony as anyone there, but since “I had put in seventeen years of my life working around this subject . . . I had a right to include in it what I wished.” It was “MY book, not theirs.” To each emotional appeal, Brooks replied, “Sorry, the answer is NO.” She had already informed the family that the second edition with the notice of Lee’s reinstatement would quickly follow the first. On her return to Utah she wrote to her publisher to confirm their plan to print two hundred copies of the first edition dated 1961 and then immediately release a second printing dated 1962 that ended with the news of Lee’s rehabilitation.⁵¹ The controversy made the first edition of the Lee biography a prized collector’s item but resulted in no retaliation against either Juanita Brooks or John D. Lee.

John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Scapegoat appeared in November 1961. The biography represented the culmination of Brooks’s long struggle to bring Lee “out of the shadows and present him in his true light as a zealot, frontiersman, colonizer, and loyal member of his church.” Historians criticized Brooks’s use of invented dialogue and her lack of documentation, but the *San Francisco Chronicle* deemed her