

MARCHING ON ZION



A NOVEL ON THE UTAH WAR
BY GM "JACKSON" JARRARD

ENTRY FOR SESQUICENTENIAL CONTEST
JUNE 27, 2025



THE SETTING FOR MARCHING ON ZION

On February 27, 2025, the most viewed podcaster in the United States, Joe Rogan, hosted the producer of *American Primeval*, Peter Berg. On YouTube alone, Rogan's Berg episode has so far amassed more than 672,000 views. In 2024, before the election, Rogan's interview with Donald Trump generated over 69 million views. Rogan loved *American Primeval*, and people love Joe Rogan. Berg's six Primeval episodes gave the viewers a "traumatic, realistic and barbaric" look – in Berg's own words – at the starkness of life in the mid-19th century. Industry insiders report that Berg's six-episode series cost upwards of \$100 million to produce.

His raw portrayal of the people and their circumstances of the 1850's omits their humanity, sacrifices and the charity, particularly of the Latter-day Saints, of that period. His one-sided view portrays that in graphic detail in one particular episode – the massacre at Mountain Meadows. Despite that, Peter Berg admires Brigham Young, calling him "a survivor," admitting that "we made him (Brigham Young) look like a gangster (in the series) and I respect that."

The Mormons' best friend and defender Thomas Kane, on the other hand, these hardy pioneers, especially Brigham Young, "and their soft hearts and hard hands."

In my novel, *Marching on Zion* – the entry for this contest – I have taken the stories, character sketches and biographies ("auto" and otherwise) and tried to breathe life into these long-gone people who made the desert blossom as a rose and who defended their homes against overwhelming odds. Those people include Thomas Leiper Kane, the 5'3" 100-pound hero who made a 6,000 journey in the winter of 1858 to mediate the conflict between one-third of the U.S. Army stuck in western Wyoming and the Latter-day Saints some 113 miles away.

Another character is William Stowell who was captured by members of the Utah Expedition with Major Joseph Taylor and was shackled and imprisoned in a "tent of wickedness" for some nine months. The stories of women have been told as well. Two characters named "Elizabeth" – Elizabeth Kane, Thomas' wife and Elizabeth Cumming, the wife of Alfred Cumming, the governor sent to replace Brigham Young wrote about their experiences which are woven into the dialogue.

WHAT WAS MY MOTIVATION

Between 1984 and 1986, I had returned to Brigham Young University to acquire a masters of arts in communication to augment the BA that I was awarded in 1970.

My lead professor was Dr. Ralph Barney (with whom my wife and I share three grandchildren) and from whom I took at least three classes, one of which was *Media Ethics*, a subject out of practice in 2025. One paperback text we used in that course was *LYING, Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, by Sissela Bok (it's on the shelf right above my head). In the introduction, Bok quotes St. Augustine: "*When regard for truth has been broken down or even slightly weakened, all things will remain doubtful.*"

Then after returning to Germany in 2015 with my wife Christie to serve a senior mission in the same place where I labored from 1965-1966, we spent three months in 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland, at BYU's Kennedy Institute for International Relations' "Geneva Office for Human Rights Education"¹ working on the website, creating PSA's etc. and focusing on human rights, particularly freedom of religion. Over the years, truth telling has become an obsession for me.

¹ (see <https://go-hre.org>)



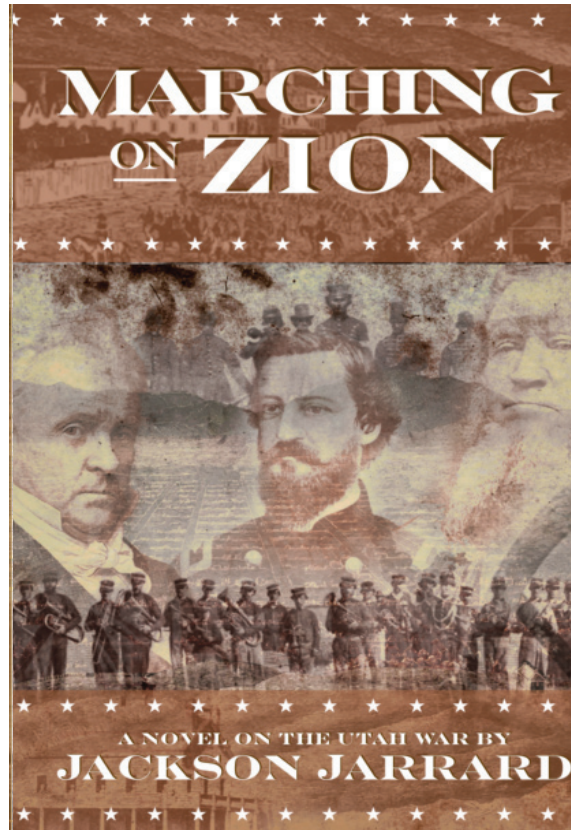
That applies to correcting the misperceptions and slanders regarding the Latter-day Saints. I have felt for years the need to share the history of what the Mormon pioneers accomplished, the obstacles they overcame, from digging irrigation canals, cutting down trees, fighting crickets and drought and to even facing down the U.S. Army. **Marching on Zion** tells the true story about the unlikely hero and a community of believers who faced an army and a nation together.

TIDBITS, TEASERS AND TRAILER

The following excerpts will give you a sense, a preview of what you'll find inside the book, and we hope, what you'll see cinematically sometime in the future.

From Chapter 15, pp. 174-175. (Mormon militia members are looking for cattle to rustle and wagons to burn and loot)

As they rode together to where Port's scouts had discovered the cattle, Lot couldn't help himself. Port was his usual taciturn self, darkly brooding about some misadventure, and Lot rightly guessed what was on Rockwell's mind: "Think we'll find some mules to go along with



the cattle we're about to claim for the Kingdom?" Porter's mood instantly changed – gone were the storm clouds looming over his brow. He broke out in self-derisive laughter.

"Who told you about that?"

"I think it was in the *New York Herald*; I'm sure I saw a copy, describing the whole event right on the front page."

Porter was still laughing – now a couple of other riders had joined the audience.

"How did I know that mules had such a love for bugles," Porter countered.

"How so?"

"We had them dead to rights...a whole menagerie of mules, some fine ones, not a jenny in the bunch. We were moving them out when their blasted bugler played their daily 'come to dinner' serenade.' I never saw a mule turn around so fast and hurry back to where it came from. I learned my lesson," Porter said.

Lot was laughing out loud now – so were the other riders within earshot. "So what was that lesson you learned."

"Never steal a mule without a bugler at your side!"



Ch. 11 pp 133-134 – Thomas Kane’s father, Judge Kane is trying to “talk some sense into him” to give up on his Quixotic adventure to travel to Utah stop a war but to no avail:

The judge stood and walked to Thomas' desk and held up a copy of the *New York Herald*. Thomas had read the paper earlier that day.

“Yes, dozens of editors like *The New York Herald’s* James Gordon Bennett are calling for Mormon scalps. There are storm clouds in Washington these days. The twin relics of barbarism, slavery and polygamy? They don’t dare touch slavery, but polygamy? That’s fair game.” Thomas said and then paused: “It’s coming you know, Father,” Thomas said as he walked past his father and opened the window to let in the evening breeze. He stood there for a moment and leaned against the window sill and smiled.

“Keep your eye on South Carolina, Father.”

“What? What does that have to do with anything?”

“South Carolina. That's where Joseph Smith said the war would begin. He said it in 1832, or rather if you believe the Mormons, prophesied it.”

“So do you believe it?”

“Time will tell. That’s a storm no one can stop. But maybe, just maybe, we can stop this one.”

“We?”

“I was hoping to enlist you as my Sancho.”

“What do you want of your humble servant, Don Quixote,” the judge asked with a resigned smile.

“Nothing much. Just a face-to-face, meeting with the president of the United States.”

“No midnight rides to the Rocky Mountains?” his father asked.

“Let's hope not,” Thomas answered.

Somehow the judge knew he wouldn't stop until he was in the West tilting at windmills.

“Well, at least your Sancho could write the good man a letter of recommendation,” the judge admitted.

Writing a letter to the president was the least Judge John Kane could do.

Thomas would appreciate it – so might the Mormons.

(Ch. 12, Pg133-134)

Ch. 14 pp 164-165 – Lot Smith and his crew capture a wagon master and his bullwhackers, the wagon drivers and tell them they will burn their wagons and take their stock:

John Dawson, the wagon master, was seated on a log by the fire with Philo Dibble and Mahonri Cahoon standing guard. Lot dismounted and walked towards the men; Terry pointed out the leader, Dawson, to Lot Smith,

who addressed the man respectfully:

“My name is Smith. Are you in charge here?”

The man stood up: “I am. My name is Dawson; Sir, what are your intentions?”

“To burn the wagons and supplies to keep your Army out of our city,” he replied.

“For God’s sakes, don’t burn the wagons,” the man pled.

“It is for His sake that we will do just that – we are on the Lord’s errand,” Major Smith declared.

Several of the teamsters smiled and laughed. A huge man seated on the wagon shouted: “No more bullwhacking, boys!” They were pleased – apparently – they had not taken kindly to bullwhacking.

“Let us save enough to keep body and soul together, sir,” the wagoneer asked.

“Your weapons are stacked over by the corral – they’re yours after we leave. We’ll let you take your supplies and personal belongings, but we’re following our orders to keep your army out of our valley.”

These selections provide a glimpse of this gripping episode in church history punctuated by heroics on all sides and ending in an uneasy truce thanks in large part to Thomas Kane, but because of Mountain Meadows, still haunts Latter-day Saints today.