



# Devil's Gate: Brigham Young and the Great Mormon Handcart Tragedy

By David Roberts

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**Devil's Gate: Brigham Young and the Great Mormon Handcart Tragedy** By David Roberts

The revelatory story, now in paperback, of the worst disaster in the history of the Western migrations—and how Brigham Young made it a parable of the indomitable Mormon spirit.

- Dramatic re-telling of a terrible but little-known tragedy: In 1856, 220 Mormons traveling west to Utah, pushing and pulling their belongings in handcarts, died of malnutrition and hypothermia. Roberts draws on contemporary letters and diaries to re-create the drama and suffering.
- A powerful indictment of Brigham Young: Young had been warned that the pilgrims were at risk from winter storms; he could have waited until the next year or sent aid eastward sooner but failed to do so until it was too late. Not only have Young's biographers ignored or minimized this tragic and preventable event, they've tacitly accepted the official version of the story, which casts it as an unavoidable act of God that tested—and proved—the faith and steadfastness of the Mormon spirit.
- Follows the success of other books about the Mormons: Devil's Gate will appeal to the same readers that made Jon Krakauer's *Under the Banner of Heaven* and Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith's *The Mormon Murders* into explosive, national bestsellers.

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## **Devil's Gate: Brigham Young and the Great Mormon Handcart Tragedy** By David Roberts **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In 1856, two groups of Mormon emigrants using handcarts to transport their belongings got a disastrously late start on their westward trek to Utah. Unexpected October blizzards and the lack of restocked supplies left them stranded in Wyoming, coping with frostbite, starvation and disease. While Mormon retellings of this story have emphasized the subsequent daring rescue, Roberts sees the whole episode as an entirely preventable disaster from start to finish. Moreover, he fixes the blame at the top, arguing that Brigham Young, then president of the church, consistently undervalued human life, created dangerous situations with regard to provisions in order to pinch pennies and dissembled after the fact about not having any knowledge of the emigrants' late start. Roberts builds a persuasive case, arguing from dozens of primary sources and using the emigrants' own haunting words about their experiences. He competently situates the tragedy within the context of the 1856–1857 Mormon Reformation, a time of religious extremism. This is a solid and well-researched contribution to Mormon studies and the history of the American West. (Sept.)

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From [Booklist](#)

Although well known among the Mormon faithful, the story of the Mormon handcart tragedy remains unfamiliar to most others. Roberts seeks to remedy this via his passionate account of one of the most disastrous and ill-conceived cross-country journeys in the history of the American West. Laying the blame squarely on the shoulders of Mormon leader Brigham Young, who hatched the preposterous plan to transport more than 3,000 European converts on foot from Iowa to Utah, pushing all their belongings in handcarts, Roberts smashes the Mormon myth embellished and spun by Young that somehow managed to turn tragedy into triumph. Although some may be uncomfortable with his searing indictment of Young, this compelling account of a major frontier catastrophe is hard to put down. --Margaret Flanagan

Review

"*Devil's Gate* is the chilling story of the greatest disaster in the history of American westward settlement: the Mormon handcart tragedy. With meticulous research and elegant writing, Roberts tells a gripping story of impoverished Europeans brought to the New World with a promise of hope, who died in the wilderness of the American West under the most appalling circumstances. It is more than just history: it is an indictment of fundamentalism itself. This book is proof that people who are serenely certain they know the mind of God are not only presumptuous, they are dangerous. *Devil's Gate* is a book of history with an important message for the modern world." -- **Douglas Preston**, author of *Blasphemy* and *The Monster of Florence*

" This disturbing account of the Mormon immigrants who in 1856 pushed handcarts for more than 1,000 miles from Iowa to Salt Lake City is narrative history at its best. It's also pertinent to our time, for David Roberts shows how, in the cover-up of the most deadly catastrophe in the history of Western migration, political and religious leaders turned failed experiments into triumphs and tragedies into hymns. Roberts has swept away the cobwebs in his stirring book." -- **Ted Morgan**, author of *Wilderness at Dawn* and *A Shovel of Stars*

" The tragedy of the handcart people forms the largest carnage of the Western migration and is one of the great wounds that made Mormonism America's most successful native religion. David Roberts in this fine book shows how the dying came not from bad luck, not from early snows, not from God, but from the Prophet Brigham Young and his pursuit of profit and power. An eye-opener on the man who brought Zion to

our desert and our national life." -- **Charles Bowden**, author of *Desierto* and *Blues for Cannibals*

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What do you think of book? It is just for students since they are still students or that for all people in the world, what the best subject for that? Merely you can be answered for that question above. Every person has diverse personality and hobby for every single other. Don't to be pressured someone or something that they don't desire do that. You must know how great and important the book Devil's Gate: Brigham Young and the Great Mormon Handcart Tragedy. All type of book are you able to see on many methods. You can look for the internet solutions or other social media.

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#### **Francis Pilkington:**

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#### **Dorothy Penland:**

The reason why? Because this Devil's Gate: Brigham Young and the Great Mormon Handcart Tragedy is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will surprise you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who write the book in such awesome way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any longer or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book possess such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking means. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I were being you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

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