

Researcher: Donner Party cannibalism did happen



By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Contrary to recent media reports sparked by a university's news release, the Donner Party of 1846-47 did cannibalize the dead, Western historians, authors and a bone researcher said.

The clarifications were based on a flurry of stories last week, which included headlines like: "Oops! Donner Party Gets Apology" (Winston-Salem Journal); "Analysis Clears Donner Party of Rumored Cannibalism" (Cleveland Leader); and "Donner Party Did Not Eat Each Other" (Examiner.com).

The problem: That's not what the bone study says. And telling Western historians the entrapped 1846-47 pioneers didn't eat each other is akin to announcing the Titanic missed that iceberg or Custer survived the Little Big Horn.

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