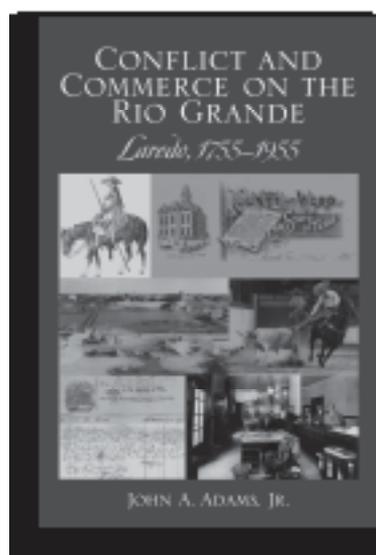


New Books from **TEXAS A&M**



Conflict and Commerce on the Rio Grande

Laredo, 1755-1955

JOHN A. ADAMS, JR.

This first-ever panoramic business and economic history of Laredo traces the evolution of the region from its early days as a trading center into the mid-twentieth century, when Laredo had become what it remains today: a booming port of trade and a principal center of commerce and financial services on the United States' southern border.

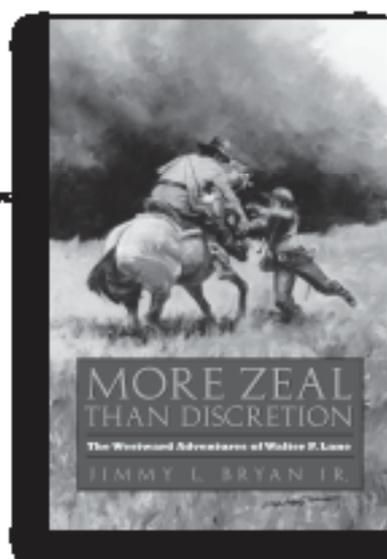
20 black photos. \$29.95 cloth

More Zeal than Discretion

The Westward Adventures of Walter R. Lane

JIMMY L. BRYAN, JR.

Bryan shows how the adventures of men like Lane, who emigrated from Ireland as a young boy, fought in three wars, sailed the Texas coast with a privateer, and traveled to California and Arizona in search of gold, provided both ethos and impetus for the westward migration of the early nineteenth century. \$35.00 cloth



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY PRESS

800-826-8971 • fax: 817-257-2621 www.tamu.edu/upress

TRACKING THE KAIBAB DEER INTO WESTERN HISTORY

NEIL PRENDERGAST

In the 1920s, an overpopulation of deer on Arizona's Kaibab Plateau helped inspire scientific and popular stories about the balance of nature. This essay examines other stories about the deer—ones told by Southern Paiutes, Mormon settlers, and national tourists—to understand the cultural creation of innocence in the West.

Durante la década de 1920, la sobre población de venados en la mesa de Kaibab Arizona inspiró historias científicas y populares sobre el balance de la naturaleza. Este ensayo examina otras historias sobre venados, como son contados por los Southern Paiutes, los colonizadores Mormones, y turistas nacionales, para entender la cultura de inocencia creada en el oeste.

THE NEW YORK TIMES CALLED IT a “range of death.” Tens of thousands of starving deer nosed through deep snow to reach bushes and tree limbs already picked clean of food. Thousands more deer lay dead in the snow. What once had been the nation’s most celebrated deer herd had become, in the winter of 1925, a symbol of devastation. Trapped on their degraded range—the Kaibab Plateau of northern Arizona—their deaths were haunting: anyone could watch, but no one could save the herd.¹

The story of the Kaibab deer is a western history, although its narrators have more often told it as an environmental parable. Scientists, historians, writers, schoolteachers, and countless others have told of the herd’s great population increase, or irruption, following the extermination of predators on the plateau. In Aldo Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac* and Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, the story of the Kaibab deer irruption

NEIL PRENDERGAST, doctoral candidate at the University of Arizona, thanks Kevin Armitage, Nic Mink, Katherine Morrissey, Peggy Shaffer, Doug Weiner, and the Summer Writing Group.

¹William Du Puy, “Forest Reserve Becomes a Range of Death,” *New York Times*, 15 February 1925, sec. Sunday Magazine, p. 8, Main Library, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona (hereafter ML).

Western Historical Quarterly 39 (Winter 2008): 413–438. Copyright © 2008, Western History Association.

warns Americans against upsetting nature's balance. As ecologists argue today, that relationship between predator and prey is not always so firm, and the idea of balance in nature is equally suspect. But if conventional wisdom has proven inaccurate over the last thirty years of ecological study, then something else has been much more durable about the Kaibab story: westerners have looked to large prey mammals, especially deer, to understand their own place in nature.²

Place, many western historians have argued, is something best understood through stories. Elliott West, for example, writes that any western place "is also what it is because of the stories people have told about it."³ He urges scholars to read deeply into narratives of all sorts, paying attention to where they conflict with one another, and suggests that consequently, attachments to place come into view. Often, a common reference point can hold an analysis together. In his study of wolves, Jon Coleman examines the stories people tell about this one animal as a way, at least in part, to capture the anxiety westward settlers felt about their new homes, as well as to explain the hate that this anxiety frequently became.⁴ Deer have a similar potential, but as prey, they inspired far different narratives in the past than did wolves. Stories about deer more often sound like the cultural narratives Patricia Nelson Limerick has found to have upheld many westerners' self-proclaimed innocence amid social conflict.⁵ Together, the works of West, Coleman, and Limerick suggest a new way to think about the Kaibab deer, a way related, but somewhat removed, from the environmental parable.

The Kaibab deer irruption discloses how westerners created place in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and how they used deer to do so. Westerners had long narrated their lives into the life of the Kaibab deer herd, and untangling the physical animals from narrative isolates these deer from their western past. Tracking the Kaibab herd, then, means searching for them in snow as well as in hunting songs, memory, and advertisements. It means following deer into the panoply of cultural landscapes overlaid on the herd's range and watching where a browse line or a shorn antler came to rest in the minds of Southern Paiutes, Mormon settlers, or railroad tourists. Westerners' imaginings of the herd take us to the places where they envisioned the herd to be: the social gathering of the fall deer harvest, the nostalgic setting for the old

² Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There* (New York, 1949), 129–33 and 170; Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston, 1962), 245–61; C. John Burk, "The Kaibab Deer Incident: A Long-Persisting Myth," *BioScience* 23 (February 1973): 113–4; Thomas Dunlap, "That Kaibab Myth," *Journal of Forest History* 32 (April 1988): 60–8; Daniel Botkin, *Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* (New York, 1990), 75–89; Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (New York, 1994), 258–90; Christian C. Young, *In the Absence of Predators: Conservation and Controversy on the Kaibab Plateau* (Lincoln, 2002).

³ Elliott West, *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (Albuquerque, 1995), 127.

⁴ Jon Coleman, *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America* (New Haven, 2004).

⁵ Patricia Nelson Limerick, *A Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York, 1987), 35–54.

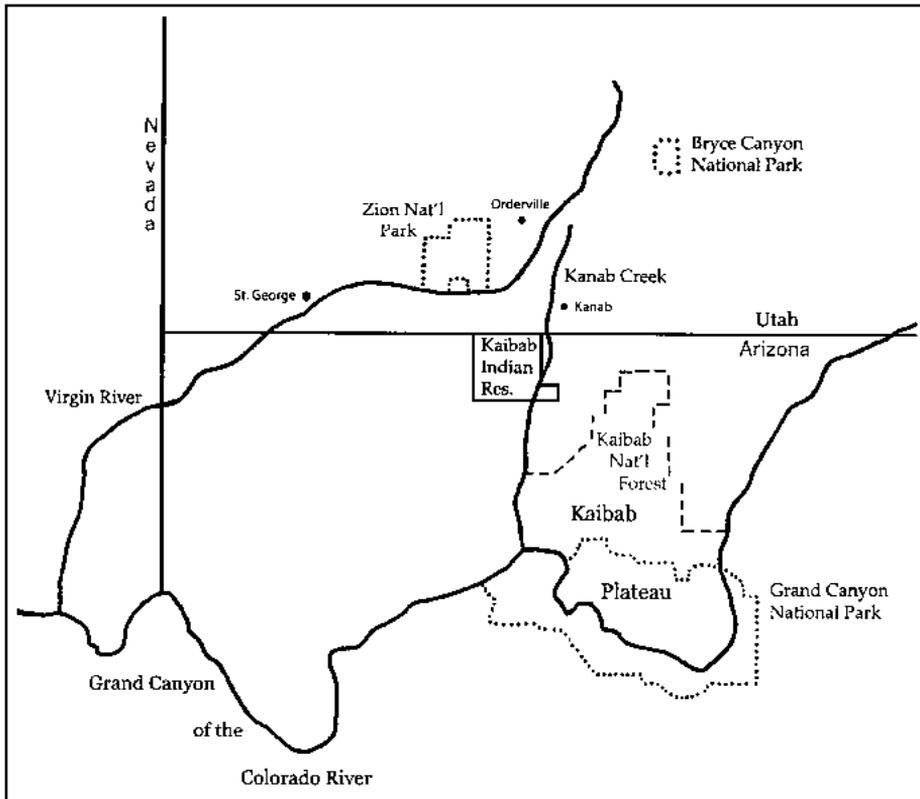


Figure 1. Kaibab Plateau and region, 1920s. Federal designations took place in the early-twentieth century, after decades of Mormon settlement and centuries of Southern Paiute inhabitation. Map by author.

pioneer days, or the quiet meadow of a leisurely afternoon. Deer pull these disparate places together and let us write a new story. More than anything, the *longue durée* of the Kaibab deer lets us think about the creation of innocence in the West.⁶

Innocence is a condition with many qualities: it exists as the lack of something else; it connotes youth, or at least inexperience; and it evokes a moral clarity more often sought than experienced in western history. On the Kaibab Plateau, Natives, settlers, and tourists saw a fountain of innocence in the Kaibab deer; thus, tracking the herd means reckoning with this relational, temporal, and moral quality. As Limerick has noted, the creation of innocence has long been a western affair, one borne by social

⁶ For discussions of story and place, also see William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *Journal of American History* 78 (March 1992): 1347–76; Linda Nash, "The Changing Experience of Nature: Historical Encounters with a Northwest River," *Journal of American History* 86 (March 2000): 1600–29; Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, 2004).

conflict, and the cultural interpretation of it. This certainly held true on the Kaibab Plateau. Southern Paiutes and Mormons fought when the latter arrived in the 1860s, leading to decades of mistrust between the two peoples, and, among the Mormon settlers, to moral self-doubt over a migration that turned from refuge-seeking into imperialism. When tourists began to arrive a half-century later, they too felt ambiguity in celebrating a contested place, and they were also uncertain about their relationship with Mormons, a group who had fled the national culture tourists now brought to their doorstep. In these interactions, innocence—variously and contextually defined—was uncertain, and so to gain it, these westerners put to use the symbolism of deer, an icon of the status they all sought. Examining stories about deer, consequently, illuminates a thread of this struggle.

That historical actors used deer to narrate their own innocent place on the Kaibab Plateau seems appropriate, for innocence must seem pre-existing and natural, just like deer. Here, deer's biological role as prey created a fleeting common ground: Natives, settlers, and tourists each extrapolated from this ecological niche to see deer as innocent in other realms. In origin stories, folklore, and nostalgia, deer stotted along, innocent of guile in the chase, improvement in agriculture, or destruction in modernity. All the while, the Kaibab herd, of course, also remained a physical community of deer, trudging through winter snow, browsing spring leaves, and drinking from summer ponds. As wild as westerners ran with their metaphors, the deer's physical ecology still mattered, especially when historical actors looked to the herd's presence to authenticate their own innocence.

The irruption challenged this authenticity for the 1920s game managers implicated in the massive starvation, but those who came before—Natives, settlers, and tourists—had known of this tension between the physical and cultural landscape. How to make the two fit? At its heart, this was a moral question, a conclusion better seen, perhaps, in the history of the herd before the irruption. Offering this "prehistory," as it were, reframes the irruption to highlight this dimension, thus drawing our attention to what was at stake, and why a "range of death" could so concern the country. This look into the past also suggests that prevalent themes of western history—such as imperialism, agriculture, and tourism—present enduring conflicts between real and imagined landscapes, conflicts capable of driving moral dilemmas for westerners and other Americans.

This article, then, begins with the plateau's first nineteenth-century residents—the Southern Paiutes—and proceeds into other peoples' (Mormon settlers, sport hunters, and railroad tourists) subsequent interactions with the deer. On the plateau, each group saw the deer as a cultural resource, as a bearing in place and time. Sometimes they agreed on the deer's meaning, and sometimes not, but their relationships with the deer suggested the possibility of an ideal landscape—where the moral imagination matched the ground.

The Kaibab Plateau rests thousands of feet above the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. It is roughly forty by twenty miles, although its rugged sides give it



Figure 2. Kaibab meadow and forest in the early-twentieth century. "Trees and Meadow" by George Beam. Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.

no discernible shape to measure. Reaching over eight thousand feet in elevation, the plateau blocks clouds from passing, forcing their moisture to condense into snow and rain. The precipitation percolates through subsurface limestone and eventually feeds into the canyon below. Because the rock is porous, a few ponds are the only water sources on the plateau. Dry ponderosa savannas are the most common forests, but spruce and fir stands are not rare. Aspens dot the edges of expansive meadows, where cool, heavy air settles at night, driving away even the most courageous boreal sapling, but allowing the grasses their place. Pinyon pines and junipers cover the plateau's flanks.⁷ Southern Paiutes arrived by the fifteenth century, and they were familiar with such forests. In the wooded mountains of the western Great Basin, they hunted mule deer and gathered pine nuts.⁸

⁷ D. Irvin Rasmussen, "Biotic Communities of Kaibab Plateau, Arizona," *Ecological Monographs* 11 (July 1941): 229–75.

⁸ Margaret M. Lyneis, "East and onto the Plateaus? An Archaeological Examination of the Numic Expansion in Southern Nevada, Northern Arizona, and Southern Utah," in *Across the West: Human Population Movement and the Expansion of the Numa*, ed. David Madsen and David Rhode (Salt Lake City, 1994), 141–9.

As immigrants, Southern Paiutes used the language of their former home to explain this new landscape. For one of the largest plateaus, they gave the name Kaibab, which means “mountain lying down.” They wove the plateau and the surrounding desert floor into a web of meaning that tied place and time together. Seasonal movements positioned extended families near key resources, such as grass seeds or deer, when they were ripe for harvest or fat enough to hunt. Springs, too, were seasonal both in the desert scrub and on the forested plateau. A place meant a time, and a time a place. Kinship groups could look across the landscape to a pinyon pine grove and see the past weeks, or look to a plateau’s crest and envision the upcoming month. On the Kaibab Plateau, the fall deer hunt provided enough food for several families to meet, and often an entire band of a few hundred individuals to gather. Men hunted the animals and women prepared hides, cooked meat, and distributed the food. Collected together, band members could conduct important affairs, including marriages and discussions about resources.⁹ Hunting on the Kaibab Plateau was so important to these people that they called their band Kaibab.¹⁰

For the Kaibab band, the world had no guarantees, but was often predictable. No one knew, for example, exactly what the next deer or pine nut season would bring, but the band had strategies to mitigate disaster: if deer hunting was poor, then they started the winter rabbit hunt early. Stories explained why a resource might fail. Hunters warned each other, for instance, about the supernatural character *Qai nacav*, who could bless or befuddle the deer hunt. He would sometimes transfer himself into a large deer, attract hunters, then disappear, thus leading the hunting party astray. A night lost in the woods was not the hunter’s fault, nor the deer’s, but was the meddling of *Qai nacav*.¹¹ In other stories, deer also remained innocent of guile, a condition hunters mimicked to encourage a successful hunt. Sometimes they would fold an aspen leaf and blow through it to imitate a fawn’s cry, in the hope of attracting an adult deer. Other times, they would sing in camp all night, not stopping until many of the singers fell down from exhaustion. The next day, the party would kill as many deer as the number of fallen singers, drawing a parallel between hunter and hunted. In these ways, hunters acted as prey to hide their motives from *Qai nacav* or guard against simple bad luck.¹²

⁹ Allen C. Turner, “Adaptive Continuity and Cultural Development of the Paiute Indians of the Grand Canyon’s North Rim,” *Tebiwa* 22 (December 1985): 28–53.

¹⁰ Isabel Kelly, *Southern Paiute Ethnography* (Salt Lake City, 1964), 23–4 and Edward Sapir, “Kaibab Paiute Ethnographic Field Notes,” in *Southern Paiute and Ute Linguistics and Ethnography*, ed. William Bright, vol. 10 of *The Collected Works of Edward Sapir*, ed. Philip Sapir (New York, 1992), 785.

¹¹ Sapir, “Kaibab Paiute Ethnographic Field Notes,” 829.

¹² *Ibid.*, 791. The singing ritual is from Carobeth Laird, *The Chemehuevis* (Banning, CA, 1976), 14–6. Kaibab Paiutes also had deer hunting songs, although no description of their ritual singing exists. See Don D. Fowler and Catherine S. Fowler, eds., *Anthropology of the Numa: John Wesley Powell’s Manuscripts on the Numic Peoples of Western North America, 1868–1880* (Washington, DC, 1971), 123.

At other times, being prey more explicitly meant being innocent. One story in particular illustrates this connection. In “*Chu-ar-ru-und-pu-run-kunt* and the *Yukuts*,” a man tricks two fawns into browsing near his spring, despite having just killed their parents. The fawns eventually grow fat, as the man had wanted, but with the advice of their grandfather Rattlesnake they also become wary. Soon, they realize the man will kill them too, and so they leave for a faraway plateau, where they live for a long time. The story instructed nineteenth-century Kaibab Paiutes to be wary of strangers who, like the man, would take advantage of unsuspecting individuals. In both hunting stories and social parables, Kaibab Paiutes used the deer’s condition as prey to construct an innocence that the band could then borrow. The metaphor was perhaps a moral position, but more overtly downplayed band members’ motivations, allowing stories to highlight the motives of actors whose decisions bore upon Kaibab Paiutes, whether those folks were neighboring bands or *Qai nacav*.¹³

Songs and other stories proved worthwhile ways to hunt, as well as to negotiate strangers, and so generation after generation passed them down. For perhaps five hundred years—from the 1300s to the 1800s—this pattern held in some fashion. Oral history and ethnographic data collected by the Powell Surveys of the 1870s tell this story, as do interviews conducted in the early-twentieth century by the linguist Edward Sapir and the anthropologist Isabel Kelly. In the songs and stories these scholars catalogued, deer bound through narratives as prey. Coyote (with a capital “C”) often hunts deer, and his colorful exploits offer younger generations of Southern Paiutes both entertainment and lessons in life. Deer, however, remain in the lower case, without character and rarely with motives. Instead, stories celebrate deer as food for people and their mythic characters.¹⁴ In the Kaibab band’s origin story, for instance, Coyote hunts deer for the first people—a woman and her daughter—and the meat provides the energy for peopling the land.¹⁵ At the close of the nineteenth century, deer provided far fewer Southern Paiutes with far less food. Anthropologists such as Martha Knack have shown that this was a time of incredibly difficult transition. In a pattern familiar to western historians, diseases from Euro-Americans (which filtered through other Native communities) struck Southern Paiutes, reducing their numbers by perhaps 90 percent. On this vulnerable footing, they began their interaction with Mormon settlers.¹⁶

¹³ Fowler and Fowler, *Anthropology of the Numa*, 94.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 76–97; Kelley, *Southern Paiute Ethnography*, 133–9; Sapir, “Texts of the Kaibab Paiutes and Uintah Utes,” in *The Collected Works of Edward Sapir X*, 358–65. For interpretation of these stories, see Judy Trejo, “Coyote Tales: A Paiute Commentary,” *Journal of American Folklore* 87 (January-March 1974): 66–71.

¹⁵ Sapir, “Texts of the Kaibab Paiutes and Uintah Utes,” 378–9.

¹⁶ Martha C. Knack, *Boundaries Between: The Southern Paiutes, 1775–1995* (Lincoln, 2001), 73–94 and Richard W. Stoffle, Kristine L. Jones, Henry F. Dobyns, “Direct European Immigrant Transmission of Old World Pathogens to Numic Indians during the Nineteenth Century,” *American Indian Quarterly* 19 (Spring 1995): 181–203.

When Mormons brought their livestock and wagons to Southern Paiute territory in the early 1850s, they encountered a landscape that disease had been depopulating for at least fifty years. To the settlers, though, the landscape evoked not despair, but hope. In the American West they sought a place where they could build an Eden, a garden that would support their growing religion and protect them from the persecution they had encountered in the Midwest. At the 1852 opening of the new tabernacle in Salt Lake City's Temple Square, Brigham Young recalled the challenges church founder Joseph Smith had faced, asking his audience to "tell . . . of a year, of six months, or of three months that Joseph was not hunted like the deer upon the mountains." The metaphor of a chased deer let listeners—and later, readers—personalize Young's message in familiar terms, a critical element for welcoming into the Mormon narrative the many church members who had not known Smith. Young more explicitly incorporated his audience into the story of Smith's tribulations when he explained that such metaphorical hunting had ended when the settlers "assembled in the peaceful valleys of the mountains."¹⁷ Here they could build Zion on the foundation of innocence Smith's struggle had laid.

Just a few years after Brigham Young declared "This is the right place" in 1847, residents of the new settlement of Salt Lake City explored southward to expand the garden. They called their new empire Deseret, after the industriousness of the honeybee in the *Book of Mormon*.¹⁸ Exploration parties studied the Great Basin with their minds on finding places where the Lord would reward their agricultural work with a bountiful harvest. One scout commented on a particularly attractive spot:

. . . said to be a great deer country by Mountaineers, discover many D[eer] tracks . . . felt thankful to find ourselves so comfortably situated to night with thousands of feed for our animals & sheltered by these high, Rocky rugged Mts.¹⁹

In this journal entry, the abundance of nature suggested a promising future, one that the expedition was eager to share with the folks back in Salt Lake City.

Among nature's many forms, the scout found himself attracted to a particular one. The protected valley lent itself to the natural resource strategy that historians,

¹⁷ Brigham Young, "Weakness and Impotence of Men—Condition of the Saints—Dedication to the Lord—The Millenium," in *Journal of Discourses: Volume One*, by Brigham Young, His Two Counselors, The Twelve Apostles and Others (London, 1854), 200, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/JournalOfDiscourses3&CISOPTR=9599&REC=1> (accessed 9 April 2008).

¹⁸ For the early years of settlement in Utah, see Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-Day Saints*, 2nd ed. (Urbana, 1992), 109–26. Brigham Young understood Eden as a garden to be built by human labor; see Leonard Arrington, Feramorz Fox, and Dean May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons*, 2nd ed. (Urbana, 1992), 99.

¹⁹ Robert Lang Campbell, quoted in *Over the Rim: The Parley P. Pratt Exploring Expedition to Southern Utah, 1849–50*, ed. William B. Smart and Donna T. Smart (Logan, UT, 1999), 51.

such as Thomas Alexander, Dan Flores, and William Abruzzi, have found common to nineteenth-century Mormons: the connection of diverse basin and range ecosystems through livestock grazing, timber cutting, and crop irrigation.²⁰ For Mormon settlers the landscape's appeal was strong enough to remind them of their new haven, Salt Lake City, whose fields were protected by the Wasatch Mountains and nourished by its creeks. According to the trip leader, the party "never felt so like home since [they] left . . . as here." For nineteenth-century farmers, a good home was one that supported animals, and so the party noticed that the grass was "richly mixed with fine rushes. Cattle like them—The valley white grass, which is so deep."²¹ Clearly, livestock and topography were important to the exploration party, but scouts also took the time to note the abundance of deer. The animals' presence was part and parcel of the land's appeal. While grasses suggested that large mammals such as cattle could thrive in the valley, deer showed that large mammals already did. They demonstrated to the settlers that what seemed to be "virgin" nature was ready for development into what William Cronon has called "second nature," or nature transformed by human use.²²

Deer did live in lush landscapes, and they also lived in an American Indian world. In southern Deseret, Mormon interaction with deer, then, was participation in the Southern Paiute world. And, conversely, living with Paiutes meant living with deer. The character of these interactions eventually brought Mormons into an uncomfortable conquest of Southern Paiutes and also quietly transformed the deer. Amid these changes, the Mormons' world in the plateaus and canyons near the Colorado River came into being.

Misunderstanding came first, and then the violence. Paiutes had little experience with private property, just as Mormons had little knowledge of Native social organization. It took time for settlers to understand that Paiutes lived less hierarchically than other Americans, of any sort. And it took time for settlers to discern among the Paiutes, Utes, and Navajos of the Intermountain West. In the 1860s and 1870s, the latter two raided for cattle and captives westward across the Colorado, often well within Southern Paiute territory and nearer and nearer the Mormon settlements. The resulting Black Hawk War was a war of skirmishes, sometimes of unknown assailants, but always of known victims. The deaths of two Mormons near the Kaibab Plateau, for example, enraged their brethren, who consequently murdered the several Southern Paiutes they suspected of the crime. This hasty retaliation resulted not just in lost lives for Paiutes, but also in the Mormons' moral questioning of their own settlement. As Paiutes raided

²⁰ William Abruzzi, "Ecology, Resource Redistribution, and Mormon Settlement in Northeastern Arizona," *American Anthropologist* 91 (September 1989): 642–55; Thomas Alexander, "Stewardship and Enterprise: The LDS Church and the Wasatch Oasis Environment," *Western Historical Quarterly* 25 (Autumn 1994): 340–64; Dan Flores, *The Natural West: Environmental History in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains* (Norman, 2001), 124–44.

²¹ Campbell, quoted in *Over the Rim*, 51.

²² William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York, 1991), 56.

for cattle too (although to protect their traditional springs and grasses, not to expand into new territory) and settlers became angry, Mormons looked for tactical and spiritual solutions to resolve their unplanned shift from refugees to conquerors.²³

Jacob Hamblin was the first, or at least the most well known, to speak, visit, and negotiate with the American Indians of Deseret. His religious faith gave him confidence that his travels would proceed safely, and he often hunted deer with American Indians, “occasionally loaning them [his] rifle, and assisting them to bring in game.”²⁴ His faith and courage quickly made him famous as a peacemaker on the Mormon frontier, a role which earned him the nickname “Buckskin Apostle.” At the Kaibab Plateau, he won the friendship of Southern Paiutes. His popularity among them eventually convinced Mormons that settlement was indeed sanctioned by the Lord. The settlers expected the Indians to be Lamanites—in Mormon theology, a lost tribe of Israel—and therefore ready for salvation into a God-fearing community of agricultural villages, much like the New England villages after which Mormons modeled their own towns. However, as much as the Buckskin Apostle tried to convince Paiutes to farm in the Mormon manner, they did not. Instead, they hunted the Mormons’ cattle as they had always hunted deer and the Mormons, of course, were not pleased.²⁵ Not only were their cattle herds being depleted, but the legitimacy of settlement also came under question. If they could not convince Paiutes to farm, then they had to question if God really wanted Mormons to rebuild Eden in this place.

The problem’s solution, according to the Mormons, lay partly in everyday language. If Paiutes could not accept the Mormon lifestyle, then Mormons would speak of Paiutes as if they never could have improved nature. Often, they called Indians deer. In newspapers and folk stories, the settlers referred to Native men as “bucks” and young women as “fawns,” or diarists would write of “the wild Indian of these mountains.”²⁶ Calling Southern Paiutes deer wrote them into the Mormon narrative of recreating

²³ Intertribal Council of Nevada, *Nuwuvi: A Southern Paiute History* (Reno, 1976), 70–89; John Alton Peterson, *Utah’s Black Hawk War* (Salt Lake City, 1998); Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 73–94; W. Paul Reeve, *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes* (Urbana, 2006), 63–84.

²⁴ Jacob Hamblin, *Jacob Hamblin, A Narrative of His Personal Experience, As a Frontiersman, Missionary to the Indians and Explorer. . .* (Salt Lake City, 1881), 30, Special Collections, University of Arizona, Tucson (hereafter SCUA).

²⁵ Juanita Brooks, ed., *Journal of the Southern Indian Mission: Diary of Thomas D. Brown* (Logan, UT, 1972), 104–6 and A. Karl Larson and Katharine Miles Larson, eds., *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker* (Logan, UT, 1980), 274–6.

²⁶ See, for examples, “Indian Stoicism,” *Beaver (Utah) Southern Utonian*, 18 May 1883, p. 4, <http://udn.lib.utah.edu/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/utonian&CISOPTR=6115&filename=6116.pdf> (accessed 9 April 2008); “Posioned Her Husband,” *Beaver (Utah) Southern Utonian*, 3 September 1909, p. 2, <http://udn.lib.utah.edu/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/utonian2&CISOPTR=23313&filename=23314.pdf> (accessed 9 April 2008); Austin Fife and Alta Fife, *Saints of Sage and Saddle: Folklore among the Mormons* (Bloomington, IN, 1956), 145–61; Larson and Larson, eds., *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, 499.

Eden, but kept them, metaphorically, as “virgin” nature, that first stage before nature became useful. Deer, after all, roamed through pristine landscapes neither impacted by man’s work nor tainted by his original sin. Both the deer and the landscape were unimproved agriculturally and innocent, and so, Mormon settlers would have it, were Southern Paiutes. But weren’t the Indians killing the settlers’ cows? Some cattlemen may have subscribed to the Anglo-American practice of calling Indians “wolves” for these transgressions, but deer references continued nonetheless.²⁷

Faithful Mormon settlers did not need to call the Southern Paiutes wolves, for Deseret was to be a peaceful improvement of the desert, not a war. And wolves could only be enemies. The Mormons believed that for the faithful, the Lord would help order the garden and not demand violence. When Jacob Hamblin caught a Paiute killing an ox, he told the man that the punishment “was in the hands of the Lord; if He would forgive him, I would, but I did not believe that He would.” Readers of Hamblin’s 1881 autobiography continued to the next line to learn: “This man died in a few days after this conversation.”²⁸ With such power on their side, Mormons—many of whom read Hamblin’s popular book—could consider themselves not conquerors, but improvers of the land and divinely appointed ones at that. As deer, though, Southern Paiutes were discarded from the improved landscape and a future in the Mormon world. In the settlers’ stories, Paiutes were innocent of agricultural improvement, just as settlers were innocent of the sins that could accompany agricultural improvement.

The Black Hawk War ended with the strengthening presence of the federal government in the West, although the government’s reach had not stretched as far as the Kaibab Plateau. There, open conflict diminished because Paiutes increasingly lacked the resources to defend springs and grasses against Mormon settlers. By the mid-1870s, Mormon towns began to flourish. The two towns closest to the Kaibab—Orderville and Kanab—experimented with a communal property arrangement Mormons called the “United Order.”²⁹ Though socially exclusive at its borders, United Orders internally exemplified the cooperative mindset that settlers hoped would enable their labor to construct Zion. The two towns grew within well-watered canyons, and residents grazed their

²⁷ Anthropologist Martha Knack writes that the “prevalent Western nineteenth-century use of the terms ‘buck,’ ‘squaw,’ and ‘papoose’ to refer to Paiute men, women, and children clearly had the effect, if not necessarily the intentional purpose, of dehumanizing them. The popular use in Utah of the name of a game animal to refer to Indian males is neither accidental nor meaningless.” See Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 328n103. Such terms prevailed in southern Utah well into the twentieth century, as evidenced by their use in a *Utah Historical Quarterly* article on Orderville. The author had interviewed settlers for his evidence, thus suggesting the terms held meaning both in those conversations and among the reading audience. He writes, “The bucks, perhaps, did but little work, but it is of record that squaws ‘thrashed our beans and peas and washed our dirty clothes.’” See Mark A. Pendleton, “The Orderville United Order of Zion,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 7 (October 1939): 148.

²⁸ Hamblin, *Jacob Hamblin*, 42.

²⁹ Arrington et al., *Building the City of God*, 225–94.

communally owned cattle on the plateaus nearby, including on the Kaibab (which they called Buckskin Mountain). Measuring the United Order of Orderville a success, one member wrote: "We proved to a demonstration what could be accomplished when men worked unitedly together," and he felt proud thinking "of the amount of property [they] had . . . all the Buckskin Mountain, large herds of sheep and cattle."³⁰ This ownership was not a legal title, but an ambiguous agreement, perhaps agreed upon by Paiutes as usufruct, and despite the confident tone of the member's quote, reflected the continued ambivalence Mormons had about the imperial dimension of their settlement.

While the United Order of Orderville grazed its cattle on the plateau, it did not interfere with Paiute deer hunting there. As metaphor, deer had helped Mormons exclude Paiutes from Zion, and as a resource for Paiutes, deer let Mormons imagine Zion could leave the Indians' world unfettered. An early historian of the Orderville Order wrote, after interviewing members, that "the claim that the deer were the Indians' cattle was respected. When the whites killed deer, the Indians were compensated."³¹ Here, the symmetrical framing of deer and cattle as natural resources, one for Natives and one for settlers, suggests fairness in the bifurcation of the Kaibab landscape. Such transactions were probably oral, and possibly kept, but their framework still speaks to their inequality and, just as importantly, to the way conscience and ecology created a landscape capable of supporting the settlers' moral vision.

Ordervillians may have seen their payment for deer as a reciprocity modeled on how they wanted Paiutes to view cattle as private property; however, the underlying basin and range ecology made that symmetry impossible. Simply put, cattle ate grasses that had been Paiute food, while deer did not eat Mormon food. The Kaibab deer did not impede the settlers' irrigated agriculture, livestock grazing, or timber cutting. The real contest was water and grass, especially the grass cattle grazed, as well as the creeks and springs townspeople used to irrigate their fields. Paiutes lost these critical resources, although they continued to hunt deer, and so the Kaibab deer became a moral resource for settlers. The deer let them follow Brigham Young's advice about Indians "that it was better to feed them than to fight them."³² Compensation for hunting, the occasional purchase of buckskin from Paiutes, and continued Paiute deer hunting became evidence for a seemingly fair transaction in which settlers made a space for themselves in the basin and range landscape.³³

Throughout the nineteenth century, deer had a relatively stable meaning. Their existence as prey lent themselves to be seen as innocent, whether by Paiutes or Mormons.

³⁰ Samuel Claridge, quoted in S. George Ellsworth, *Samuel Claridge: Pioneering the Outposts of Zion* (Logan, UT, 1987), 214.

³¹ Pendleton, "The Orderville United Order of Zion," 148.

³² Edwin D. Woolley, "Autobiographical Reminiscences," MSS A 1172, p. 5, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter USHS).

³³ The purchase of buckskin is from Emma Carroll Seegmiller, "Personal Memories of the United Order of Orderville, Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 7 (October 1939): 181–2.

The work of that meaning, however, changed as its context changed. Paiute hunting songs, in which hunters fell as the victims they hoped deer would become, accomplished a far different task than the innocence of agricultural improvement (and its accompanying conquest) Mormons saw in deer. The animals existed amid a cultural interaction that left both sides uncertain about their relationship to the landscape, and for the Mormons, that uncertainty stemmed from their own quest for innocence. United Order members hardly planned the course their relationship with the Kaibab deer took; instead it evolved from the settlers' cultural meanings about deer, from their commitment to being a people of refuge, and from how they found themselves transforming the basin and range socially and ecologically. In the end, the persistent abundance of deer in the Kaibab landscape could only seem to sanctify Mormon settlement. As much as innocence appears a purely individual matter of moral choice, it is also something firmly attached to the way people inhabit landscapes, which without a consciousness of their own, still work upon people's cultural assumptions.

As for the Southern Paiutes, they largely lost their deer. In 1907, the federal government created the Kaibab Indian Reservation, a small rectangular lot surrounding a few springs near the plateau and lacking the ecological diversity on which Paiutes had thrived for centuries. They traded on the margins of the Mormon economy: seasonal ranch labor, housework, and barter. They could no longer hunt deer on their "mountain lying down"—federal law forbade it, since the Kaibab Plateau had become, in 1906, the Grand Canyon National Game Preserve, a preserve to protect deer. One Paiute man appealed, writing that "Indians of this trib[e] would like if you would let them Kill Deer of [f] their mountain what they used call it their own . . . the white people are getting thick and they are holding us from starving in want of food."³⁴ It is possible that some Kaibab Paiute deer hunting did continue, although it would have been minor given its illegality and the diminished population of the band. Appeals to hunt left Kaibab Paiutes only with their reservation, which was created, in the words of the commissioner of Indian affairs, because "these mountains have been included in the Grand Canyon Reserve [and consequently] the Indians have been prohibited from hunting there, thus cutting off their principal source of revenue."³⁵

The exclusion of Southern Paiutes from the Kaibab Plateau at the opening of the twentieth century nearly crippled their community and also transformed the deer's world: neither the Natives' arrows nor fires tore through the forests any longer. Mormons took over the hunt in the fall, but not to feed hundreds of individuals, and so the deer faced fewer hunters. In spring the deer migrated from the pinyon groves on the plateau's flanks as they had always done, but when they climbed into the ponderosa forests above,

³⁴Quoted in Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 132, but also see 139–40 and 209–10 and *Arizona Fish and Game Law*, Section 26, 1913, SCUA.

³⁵F.E. Leupp, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 6 February 1906, Letter to the Secretary of the Interior in "Relief of Kaibab Indians in Utah," 59th Cong. 1906, 1st Sess., Document No. 487, pamphlet 15999, p. 2, USHS.

they found a thick forest unlike the savannas of widely spaced ponderosas they had known for centuries. Paiute burning—to flush deer towards hunters—no longer triggered the grasses surrounding the ponderosas to regenerate. Further dooming the deer's grass, the Mormon's cattle and sheep had spent the 1880s and 1890s overgrazing the plateau and, in the place of grass, more trees grew. Despite the loss of grass, deer likely fared fine (no one ever counted them, so it is impossible to know) because their species commonly browses on young ponderosas. Summers and autumns in the first decade of the twentieth century likely offered the Kaibab deer less preferable food, but also fewer hunters. Amid this transformed ecological world, the Mormon's nineteenth-century creation of the Kaibab deer as a symbol embodying peace, abundance, and a nostalgic past ushered the herd into yet another era, an era in which Mormon interaction with national culture provided the cultural and ecological context for the Kaibab deer.³⁶

The Grand Canyon National Game Preserve, the Kaibab Indian Reservation, and then the Kaibab National Forest and the Grand Canyon National Monument (both set aside in 1908) redefined the basin and range landscape, bringing new laws for resource use and new cultural work for the Kaibab deer to perform—as unwittingly as ever before. The government bound its work to the tourist industry, helping it create a cultural landscape celebratory of American nationalism. The Mormon settlers, whose United Order of Orderville dissolved in 1900, found in tourism not only the potential for regional development, but also the requirement that their own story become somehow national, not heretical. The Kaibab deer, a peculiarly large herd of an animal rich in national symbolism, began to matter not only to Mormon residents' internal narrative, but to the story of their settlement that they were beginning to tell tourists.

Deer were valuable as indicators of place. But what, local promoters began to wonder, was the Kaibab Plateau, if not strictly part of Zion? From Kanab, residents could see the dark, elevated line on the southern horizon and know it was the place where they had grazed cattle and hunted deer for decades, but where did it exist in the minds of others, in the minds of those who might pay to visit? Two locals in particular—John W. Young and E. D. Woolley—embraced this question and found possible answers: a royal deer-hunting ground for English nobles, one of the best locations to hunt predators in the country, and a picturesque prelude to the Grand Canyon. By presenting tourists with these different ways of seeing deer in the landscape, the local tourist industry mediated between the local ecology of the plateau and what a new tourist class wanted from the American West. The efforts of Young and Woolley were as much attempts to make a living, as they were trials for what deer could be ecologically and mean culturally.³⁷

John W. Young was Brigham's son and a tireless promoter of southern Utah and far northern Arizona. From the Orderville United Order, he purchased the grazing rights

³⁶ Jim Heffelfinger, *Deer of the Southwest: A Complete Guide to the Natural History, Biology, and Management of Southwestern Mule Deer and White-Tailed Deer* (College Station, 2006), 48–52.

³⁷ For the relationship between local communities and national tourism, see Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence, 1998).

to the Kaibab meadows and hoped to create a tourist business there. The meadows, he reasoned, were too wondrous to remain a local hunting ground. Instead, they warranted visits from nobility. Young spent the late-1880s in England, meeting with landed aristocracy to convince them that he could provide the grandest hunting grounds available. The English nobles who did travel to the Kaibab found, on their 1891 journey, a long dusty road. Despite the hospitality of Kanab greeters in Flagstaff, the party still had a rugged journey north through the Navajo Reservation, across the Colorado River on raft, over the remaining desert to the Kaibab Plateau, and then up its steep flanks to the meadows. The Englishmen never returned to the plateau.³⁸

Young's scheme failed, but succeeded years later in the hands of others, albeit in a new form. E. D. Woolley had greeted the would-be investors in Flagstaff, and thus understood the challenges of developing the remote basin and range country, so when he became president of Kanab Stake (a position of local, Mormon leadership), he championed roadbuilding. In 1909, Woolley's Grand Canyon Transportation Company opened the Kaibab Plateau to automobile travel, and it quickly became a popular place to hunt—not deer, but their predators.³⁹ Articles in *Field and Stream* and *Overland Monthly* eventually placed the plateau in a national landscape of bear dens and wolf haunts, and readers with time and money found their way to a Kaibab hunt. The hides of wolves, black bears, and especially mountain lions hung from Woolley's and hunting guide Jim Owens's meadow cabin porches. As many historians have noted, big game hunting at the century's turn was loaded with masculine overtones. Hunting in the game preserve (which encompassed nearly the entire plateau) was no different, except that its rhetoric specifically invoked a masculinity that protected innocence. To kill a mountain lion, after all, was to save a deer.⁴⁰

Every wildlife enthusiast, it seemed, sought to increase the nation's deer herds, many of which were in severe decline. White-tailed herds on the East Coast, for example, were at historic lows.⁴¹ For mule deer, the naturalist William T. Hornaday wrote, "the present scarcity of really large antlers in the possession of taxidermists is a sure sign of

³⁸ Angus Woodbury, "A History of Southern Utah and Its National Parks," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 12 (July-October 1944): 189–91.

³⁹ Woolley, "Autobiographical Reminiscences." All of the following can be found at USHS: Julius Woolley Dailey, "Experiences in the Life of Edwin Dilworth Woolley, Jr. and His Family," PAM 18470; Mary E. Chamberlain, "A Short Sketch of the Life of Edwin Dilworth Woolley, Jr., 1845–1920," MSS A 1999; Effie Dean Rich, "Buckskin History: Kaibab Plateau and Grand Canyon," MSS A 1941.

⁴⁰ Charles Griffin Plummer, "Winter Trails in Enchanted Lands," *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine*, May 1923, 28–30+, ML and A.G. Collins, "A Kaibab Cougar Hunt: The Hunter Who Kills a Mountain Lion Saves Many Deer," *Forest and Stream*, December 1928, 753+, ML. On masculinity, see Tina Loo, "Of Moose and Men: Hunting for Masculinities in British Columbia, 1880–1939," *Western Historical Quarterly* 32 (Autumn 2001): 296–319.

⁴¹ Thomas McCabe and Richard McCabe, "Recounting Whitetails Past," in *The Science of Overabundance: Deer Ecology and Population Management*, ed. William McShea, Brian Underwood, and John Rappole (Washington, DC, 1997), 11–26.

the approaching end of the species.”⁴² For future generations to enjoy deer, something had to be done. In the late-nineteenth century, sportsmen had begun regarding the hunting of does and fawns—both crucial to herd reproduction—not just as unmanly, but uncivilized as well. One hunter wrote in *Scribner's*: “I was never tempted to harm an inexperienced and careless fawn, or the doe cumbered with maternal cares . . . I think the man that can kill a ‘papoose’—unless impelled by the hunger that knows no law—is no better than an Indian. He is a grade worse.”⁴³

State game laws reinforced this cultural taboo: there was never an open season on fawns, and on does, only in rare circumstances. Usually, hunting fawns or does brought heavy fines (fifty dollars on the Kaibab Plateau). State laws also frequently prohibited American Indians—thought to be unscrupulous by the *Scribner's* author—from hunting outside reservation boundaries, as was the case with Southern Paiutes living in the Kaibab Indian Reservation. On the plateau, Anglo-Americans did not hunt deer either, but their prohibition was a measure of self-restraint aimed at fulfilling the obligations of civilization, as they defined it. A mountain lion hunt—with the understanding that it would save deer—protected Anglo-American culture, no matter how strangely.⁴⁴

As either Young's royal hunting ground or a national game preserve, the tourist industry defined the Kaibab Plateau by its deer. The region's boosters could not have been more pleased. They had long worried that tourists would see Utah and the rest of the Mormon culture region as “a sort of cross between Hades and the Great Sahara, the fitting home of a horde of semi-savage fanatics know as Mormons.”⁴⁵ The Kaibab forests and meadows, teeming with deer, reversed that desolate landscape imagery. And helping hunters protect those deer let Mormons dispel the “semi-savage fanatic” myth and regain their Anglo-American status. While boosters such as Young and Woolley could approach the animal from different angles, neither wanted to contest the central attribute toward deer: a symbol of health and innocence. To do so would jeopardize Mormon claims of being Anglo-American.⁴⁶

Mormons saw deer as helpless, worked to protect the Kaibab herd, and hunted with restraint elsewhere. The Dixie Rod and Gun Club, for instance, organized local hunters and fostered a culture of conservation among them. The club encouraged game licenses, posted dates for the deer season, and organized group hunts. Local hunters

⁴² William T. Hornaday, *The American Natural History: A Foundation of Useful Knowledge of the Higher Animals of North America* (New York, 1904), 126.

⁴³ J. Harrison Mills, “Hunting the Mule Deer in Colorado,” *Scribner's Monthly*, September 1878, 618, ML.

⁴⁴ *Arizona Fish and Game Law*, Section 26, 1913, SPUA.

⁴⁵ P. Donan, *Utah, A Peep into a Mountain-Walled Treasury of the Gods* (Buffalo, 1895), 11, ML.

⁴⁶ Scenic tourism was a form of “finding commonality and ignoring difference,” a process that historian Ethan R. Yorgason finds central to Utah's development into a cultural region of the nation. For “finding commonality. . .” see his *Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region* (Urbana, 2003), 169.

not only welcomed the tenets of conservation, but also embraced the sensibility that drove deer protection. Regional newspapers lamented deer killed in forest fires, disparaged poachers, and praised efforts elsewhere in Arizona and Utah to feed hay to deer after heavy snowfalls. One time, two cattlemen gained local fame for pausing their work to unlock the antlers of two bucks they found struggling after a long fight on the Kaibab Plateau.⁴⁷ And locals also shared the national sense that fawns especially embodied innocence, as evidenced when ranchers would allow their children to play with tamed fawns.⁴⁸ Such behavior demonstrated a shared sensibility among Mormons and tourists, one that could quietly reaffirm the tourist's sense that the Kaibab Plateau was an Anglo-American place.

On a July night in 1916, one tourist camped in the forested edge of a Kaibab meadow and,



Figure 3. A young girl, E. Elliot, posing with a tame deer in rural Utah, 1880–1920. “E. Elliot, Scofield,” by George Edward Anderson. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

⁴⁷ All of the following are from the *Saint George (Utah) Washington County News* and were accessed 10 April 2008 on the University of Utah’s “Utah Digital Newspapers” Web site (<http://www.lib.utah.edu/digital/unews/>). Placing the set of numbers after the page number respectively in the following URL in place of the corresponding x’s will lead the reader directly to the article: <http://udn.lib.utah.edu/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/washcounty&CISOPTR=XXXX&fileame=XXXX.pdf>. “Game Fleeing Fire are Killed,” 21 October 1909, p. 7, 6723, 6724; “The Utah Budget,” 10 February 1916, p. 3, 34347, 34348; “Duel to the Death, 3 September 1916, p. 4, 36334, 36335; “Poachers Kill Off Big Game,” 10 April 1919, p. 3, 47453, 47454; “Hunt Thanksgiving Day,” 24 November 1921, p. 1, 61255, 61256; “Get Your Game Licenses,” 11 May 1922, p. 1, 63438, 63439; “Dixie Rod and Gun Club Holds Business Meeting,” 25 May 1922, p. 1, 63610, 63611; “Deer Hunting, October 15,” 12 October 1922, p. 1, 65714, 65715.

⁴⁸ *Jim McPherson Jr. and His Pet Deer Standing in Front of a Milk Cow*, 1915, photo number 1.09.09.271, Don and Jeanette Wilcox Collection, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Also see, Kathleen L. McKoy, *Cultures at a Crossroads: An Administrative History of Pipe Spring National Monument* (Denver, 2000), 936.

while writing of the meadow's beauty, a buck noticed him, calmly looked towards him, but decided the tourist was too harmless to worry about and so continued eating a dinner of grass, following the best patches and not minding that they led toward someone's camp. To the buck, people were not predators. For the last ten years, no one had hunted deer on the plateau, except for the occasional cattleman hungry for "long-legged mutton" and willing to break the rules of the game preserve.⁴⁹ Deer also had fewer predators to worry about: the Biological Survey (which administered the Grand Canyon Game Preserve) extirpated wolves and killed mountain lions and coyotes by the hundreds. The life of a deer became easier, with less stress and more security while browsing, and so the deer ate more. Their grasses likely returned in the 1910s. Instead of 200,000 sheep and 20,000 cattle that the Kaibab Plateau supported in 1889, only 5000 sheep and 15,000 cattle and horses grazed the grass in the meadows and on the ponderosa forest floor. The deer looked less like wild, hungry animals and more like tame, content creatures.⁵⁰

The buck's "leisurely" approach to the tourist's camp hints at the complexity of stories told about settlement. How did the buck's quiet evening belong to agricultural development? One Forest Service ranger—a Mormon and former cattleman—wrote that the sections of the plateau were "so infrequently visited by man that when we encountered deer . . . the animals would seldom show alarm until they got our scent."⁵¹ Here, deer indicate untouched nature, where people have not disturbed a peaceful order, until their smell—the first, faint symbol of their presence—shatters the tranquility. That a former cattleman and a local resident, a person who understood the plateau as a place for work, could see a pristine nature within the meadows is telling. Deer, through their behavior, let Americans see unworked nature, even if it was embedded in a landscape of human work. For cattlemen and early tourists, deer could resolve the tension between letting nature run its course and altering it for human benefit. Like the hunters of mountain lions, they looked to deer for approval of their own place in the land.

Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, tourists, boosters, and land managers increasingly framed the Kaibab meadows as a landscape where untouched nature rested peacefully with human work. The Forest Service, which began managing the plateau as Kaibab National Forest in 1908, fostered this amalgamation of "virgin" nature and "second" nature. In one report, the agency wrote: "The presence of cattle actually adds to the variety and interest of the forest scenery." Tourists, the report argued, found "interest" in seeing a developed landscape, especially a well-developed one, grown into undisturbed

⁴⁹ George Fraser, *Journeys in the Canyon Lands of Utah and Arizona, 1914–1916*, ed. Frederick Swanson (Tucson, 2005), 135–9.

⁵⁰ Heffelfinger, *Deer of the Southwest*, 48–52.

⁵¹ William Mace, "Will Mace Memoirs," in *People and Places of the Old Kaibab*, by Clyde Moose et al. (Albuquerque, 1990), 68.

nature so that both prospered. The Forest Service defended its view with “the most incontrovertible evidence” that the “cattle are sleek and full-fed” and “there is still abundant forage for thousands of deer.”⁵² A landscape of balance—where development became improvement, not degradation—rises out of the report. The cattle and deer seem to justify each other: deer show that cattle have not intruded, and cattle show that deer are not wastefully monopolizing the meadows. (Cattlemen would even follow deer trails to find pastures for their horses.)⁵³ The marriage of these two landscapes into a park was so appealing, so grand, and so justifying of American endeavor that, in the 1920s, more and more readers of the *New York Times* who saw advertisements for the Kaibab Plateau decided to go. With their visits came a new tourist industry, one increasingly in the control of the American professional class. But it was the Mormons’ presentation of the Kaibab deer in the twenty years before that told tourists: yes, these deer are American and they are healthy and abundant.⁵⁴

In 1919, the Kaibab Plateau’s southern portion became part of the new Grand Canyon National Park and a more developed tourism infrastructure quickly accompanied the park status. By the early 1920s, the Union Pacific Railroad was regularly taking tourists to the plateau, or rather to the nearest rail depot, where the sightseers rented cars or boarded luxury buses and toured newly created Bryce Canyon National Park, Zion National Park, and then the Kaibab Plateau for its sublime Grand Canyon viewpoints and picturesque meadows.⁵⁵ The canyon’s form was permanent, but the meadows and deer were not. How sightseers took the Kaibab meadows as theirs set the stakes for what they would lose when the deer irrupted.

The Union Pacific’s tourism subsidiary, the Utah Parks Company, beckoned travelers to imagine the Kaibab as a well-kept estate, cared for by “ten thousand foresters” who kept the forest floor free from underbrush. Of course, Park Service and Forest Service rangers were not gardeners, but the suggestion unlocks the tourist imagination and reveals that, for many, the clear forest and expansive meadows recalled a refined landscape. In fact, the Kaibab presented a particularly welcome landscape for upper-class families accustomed to groomed resorts. It was safe: predators and dangerous Indians no longer lurked in the shadows. The cool air was not offensive, the “sylvan meadows” seemed designed for “light-hearted moods,” and perhaps most importantly, the deer brought forth feelings of safety and nurturing. “Unfrightened” bucks and does,

⁵² Quotes are from Frank Waugh, “Recreation Problems in District 4 National Forests,” 1922, MSS A2597, USHS. For deer and cattle, also see United States Department of Agriculture, *Kaibab National Forest* (Ogden, 1927), SCUA.

⁵³ Rowland Rider, as told to Deirdre Paulsen, *Sixshooters and Sagebrush: Cowboy Stories of the Southwest* (Provo, 1979), 82–95.

⁵⁴ Examples from the *New York Times* include the following: 28 May 1924, p. 48; 10 June 1925, p. 11; 24 April 1926, p. 24, ML.

⁵⁵ McKoy, *Cultures at a Crossroads*, 34–41.



Figure 4. Kaibab deer near a tourist hotel run by Dave Rust, a long-time employee of E. D. Woolley, 1920. "Rust's Tourist Hotel," courtesy Northern Arizona University, Cline Library, Special Collections and Archives, Art Metzger Collection.

attending their "exquisite prancing fawns," could be seen from the porch of the Deer Lodge Hotel at the edge of the meadow.⁵⁶

Sightseers yearned for tranquility, not for the violence that mountain lion hunters believed created tranquility. And while mountain lion hunters continued treeing the predators with hounds in the 1920s, many more tourists simply wanted to see the deer. The chance sighting of a deer told the tourist that lurking behind the world's everyday façade was a truth: nature is as caring as a mother's affection for her children. Likewise, the purposeful observation of deer—from the Deer Lodge Hotel in the Kaibab meadows, for instance—showed others that the tourist herself was genteel, and sensitive enough to cultivate an appreciation for nature's nurturing side. Tourists were often more concerned with fostering this sensibility than experiencing the awe and fear of the Grand Canyon. "Although the Grand Canyon is wonderful," one woman wrote, "I felt relieved to return to the seclusion and serenity of the forest. It has no glittering peaks. Only things which grow and a peaceful, soothing quiet reigns there." In the forest, where deer roamed and "one young doe posed for her picture," the woman found herself awakened: "You feel inspired to do more, to be charitable in all things. The peace is infectious. I caught it, enjoyed it, and regretted to part with it as we reluctantly left this wonderland of trees behind us."⁵⁷ Although she left, charity could always be found in

⁵⁶ Union Pacific System, *Zion National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Bryce Canyon, Cedar Breaks, Kaibab National Forest* (Omaha, 1927), 29.

⁵⁷ Quotes are from Ivy Williams Stone, "My Impressions of the Kaibab Forest," *Young Woman's Journal* 31 (October 1920): 540–5, ML.

these woods. Sharing peace with the Kaibab deer, it seemed, safely placed sensibility in a foundation deep and timeless.

Deer, to tourists, were so constant in this landscape that they connected the sightseers to the plateau's Southern Paiute past, although they rarely referred to Native people by more than the generic "Indians." This past the tourists either celebrated or ignored as they saw fit. Often, advertisers noted that Indians had enjoyed the meadows as a "Happy Hunting Ground," implying that they had never improved the land, but always took its bounty.⁵⁸ The Utah Parks Company frequently noted that Kaibab meant "mountain-lying-down" in English. The translation explains an unusual word and simultaneously ushers the reader into a new world of meaning, one that many tourists were eager to enter. The Kaibab Plateau could be, as one tourist wrote, a "fairyland" that confirmed his wildest imagination, for the Kaibab forest, he continued, "is such as I believed before seeing it."⁵⁹ These meanings for the plateau and the deer were personal, and comfortably ignored most American Indian history, stopping after the simple recognition that someone in some other time had lived there. The rest was up to imagination.

The picturesque vision sightseers took to the Kaibab Plateau harmonized nature with the aims of their professional class, who also celebrated places such as Central Park, Virginia Hot Springs resort, and George Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate. Besides being city parks, mountain retreats, or private estates, these places were—like the Kaibab Plateau—deer parks. There, deer found protection from animal predators and human hunters in a time when eastern white-tailed deer herds were declining. For their protection of an innocent species, deer reserves indicated virtue and also suggested that the owner's wealth was old, worthy of investing in a long future, and capable of improving nature.⁶⁰ Few sightseers had their own private estate; for most, the national parks and forests were their estate. The Kaibab meadows were their deer park, where nature was grander than it was in any estate or, for that matter, any city park or resort. And the Kaibab deer were not just an incredibly large herd, but also an amazingly docile one. Together, their tameness and abundance indicated that sensibility and wealth were a natural pair.

In the meadows, tourists found the landscape of their genteel dreams, and this realization made a trip there "never to be forgotten," in the words of one sightseer.⁶¹

⁵⁸ The following articles, from the *Saint George (Utah) Washington County News*, were accessed 10 April 2008 from Utah Digital Newspapers (see note 47): "The President's Forest," 16 March 1922, p. 5, 62632, 62633 and "The President's Forest," 9 March 1922, p. 1, 62493, 62494.

⁵⁹ C.J. Ducasse, quoted in Union Pacific, *They Say: Comment of Travelers on Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon, Cedar Breaks, Utah and Kaibab National Forest, North Rim, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona* (Omaha, 1925), 7, Americana Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

⁶⁰ For estates, see "Thinks Deer Raising a Future Necessity," *New York Times*, 13 March 1910, sec. Sunday Magazine, p. 11, ML.

⁶¹ Ray B. Kurtz, quoted in Union Pacific System, *They Say*, 17.

Indeed, for an individual to forget the details of a Kaibab vacation would risk suggesting that he placed little importance on cultivating a nurturing sensibility. Members of the professional class, not themselves estate owners, especially needed to display their affection for deer—it was the only way to associate themselves with the animals' peacefulness. They could not, after all, buy their own estate. Visits to the Kaibab meadows also achieved something more than tending a private deer park at an estate or resort, where gardeners mowed lawns, raked leaves, and fed deer. Tourists knew that foresters did not rake the forests and meadows of the Kaibab; the plateau was memorable because it achieved refinement *naturally*, on its own and without people's help.

For many tourists and writers, the naturally clean beauty of the meadows warranted more appreciation than places where human work had improved the landscape. On this point, they differed with the Forest Service, who argued that the Kaibab Plateau could accommodate deer and cattle. In the Forest Service's arguments, the large deer herd was proof that the cattle had not impeded upon this natural park. Local residents dependent on grazing, of course, agreed. But for many tourists, and one writer in particular, the meadows were not a place for "virgin" and "second" nature to commingle. Emerson Hough, a popular outdoors writer, suggested in the *Saturday Evening Post* that livestock were exhausting the meadows, which he regarded as the best deer park in the world. For the tourism industry, the Kaibab meadows were becoming, in the 1920s, a place to celebrate, ironically, a form of first nature that looked like the best of second nature.⁶²

In retrospect, this irony appears incongruous with tourists' strivings to see an improved nature, one that indicates wealth, cultivation, and age. Within the context of nationalism and what historian David Wrobel calls "frontier anxiety," the celebration of the Kaibab meadows as protected, unworked nature makes more sense. At the same time wealthy Anglo-Americans were forging a common identity by "Seeing America First," they were also concerned that the frontier's close signaled the end of what made the United States unique—engagement with unspoiled nature. So when Emerson Hough wrote about the Kaibab Plateau, he wrote to preserve American character as he saw it embodied in underdeveloped nature. The deer, because their herd was so *naturally* large, declared that the United States was ordained to be a great nation, greater than other nations that had to strive for such indicators of wealth. Hough, therefore, suggested the plateau not be kept a national forest (with too many cattle in that scheme) or a mere national park, but instead be made The President's Forest.⁶³

⁶² Emerson Hough, "The President's Forest," *Saturday Evening Post*, 14 January 1922, pp. 6–7, 65, 69, 72, 75 and 21 January 1922, pp. 23, 57–8, 60, 63, Hayden Library, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

⁶³ *Ibid.*; David Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence, 1993); Marguerite Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880–1940* (Washington, DC, 2001).

This new type of forest would be managed by the president's office and, Hough argued, be grander than any royal park "that any monarchy or republic in Europe ever owned." The Kaibab meadows and its deer, "the greatest stag herd ever known in the United States," was the only suitable place for the outdoor writer's idea. Sitting high above the surrounding desert floor, it had always been inaccessible to railroad tracks, and its timber remained almost uncut in the 1920s. Despite the livestock, it was the last place unspoiled by industry. Hough lamented over-logged forests, exhausted fields, and dammed rivers. To him, Americans had asked too much of those landscapes. Instead, he sought something more lasting: the royal deer parks of Europe—not wrought from old land—but preserved from new, "virgin forests" that only America had and to which every American had access. In Hough's writing, the Kaibab deer were an inspiring symbol of American egalitarianism. Their viewing was the privilege of any American, not a noble class. Hough's conception of equality, given the social context of the 1920s, seems aimed at the professional class and clearly excludes those for whom a long summer vacation was unthinkable. The President's Forest sought to make a quiet evening watching deer an exercise in the preservation of a particular order—the professional class and their sensibility.⁶⁴

Officially, Hough's idea never got beyond the pages of the *Saturday Evening Post*, but it reflected the experience of tourists making the Utah Parks' loop, who found on the plateau their idealized notions of peaceful moods and temperate weather, caring womanhood and nurturing does, accomplished men and antlered bucks. They were unbridled by any sense that the plateau was foreign; it felt too much like who they thought they were. There were no Southern Paiutes to challenge this notion. For twenty years they had been excluded from the plateau and the tourist route bypassed their reservation. The Mormons were nearly gone too. They had traded their history and its meanings into the national culture of the professional class and consequently quieted much of what made their interaction with the deer unique. What remained were the meanings they shared with the rest of the nation: in this case, that deer proclaimed the health of the land. What that health meant—how it was attached to class, gender, or race—was primarily articulated by the professional class. And they chose to make the deer reflect all that they thought was great about themselves, which made it so much harder for them to read, in the winter of 1925, that the deer were suffering an unimaginable starvation and dying by the thousands.

Most stories told about the Kaibab deer focus on what happened next: no one could agree how to save the herd. The Forest Service wanted to cull the herd, but the Park Service disagreed. Stephen Mather, director of the Park Service, adamantly wanted none of the herd shot: he feared culling would taint the agency's image. So while Mather paraded a Kaibab fawn named "Chummy" around Washington, D. C. to promote

⁶⁴Hough, "The President's Forest," 14 January 1922, 6. For the professional class, see Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (New York, 1996), 118–74.

the Park Service, the Forest Service and the Biological Survey tried other solutions, including trapping deer in crates for shipping elsewhere and even herding the deer off the plateau like cattle.⁶⁵ Neither idea worked, although the state of Arizona—which then took notice of its unique resource—did ship a few dozen crated deer to its state game preserves. Arizona, like the Park Service, opposed culling and, when the Forest Service issued hunting permits in 1926, the governor took the agency to court. In *Hunt vs. United States*, the Supreme Court found in favor of the Forest Service and the case set the precedent for letting the federal government manage wildlife on federal land, which until then had been the exclusive right of states. Meanwhile, biologists were still having trouble even counting the deer. The open season had a negligible impact on the herd, which numbered in the tens of thousands, but probably not as high as the one hundred thousand animals one biologist suggested. In any case, snow in the winter of 1925–1926 and the following years did more to reduce the herd than any human action. The futility of land managers left them all wondering, What had happened on the Kaibab Plateau?⁶⁶

Predator removal increased the herd, as did the release of vegetation following the reduction of cattle, sheep, and horses in the 1910s and 1920s. The deer ate grass, aspen, cliffrose, and juniper with less competition from stock animals than in previous years. The herd grew and grew, especially in the early 1920s, and finally ate themselves out of house and home. The larger the herd became, the more food it had needed, and so the 1924 season of fawn births was perhaps the herd's largest generation ever, but the following winter was likely its most lethal year as well. Snow was the nail in their coffin. It hid food and just walking through it required more calories than a deer could find in a covered branch of aspen leaves or a buried tuft of grass. Snow easily tipped the balance towards starvation, although game managers rarely conducted autopsies to determine if the deer starved or, weak from hunger, fell into the snow and then froze to death.⁶⁷

For Mormon residents of the region, the irruption presented no problem itself, although the legal wrangling over opening a hunting season did. In local newspapers, editorials urged Governor Hunt to “withdraw and let the forest service continue on their own plan of protecting the deer herd.”⁶⁸ Hunting would not only “alleviate the suffering

⁶⁵ Mather even kept two Kaibab deer at his estate, see Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks* (New York, 1951), 263–73.

⁶⁶ Young, *In the Absence of Predators*, 39–134. Young's work focuses on the problems of scientifically understanding the irruption, arguing that the predator parable derived more from the public's desire for simple stories than from scientific conclusions.

⁶⁷ Heffelfinger, *Deer of the Southwest*, 48–52.

⁶⁸ “Kanab,” *Panguitch (Utah) Garfield County News*, 16 October 1925, p. 8, <http://udn.lib.utah.edu/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/garfield1&CISOPTR=5263&filename=5264.pdf> (accessed 10 April 2008).

of the deer," but also bring more tourists through Utah, local boosters reasoned.⁶⁹ The road from southern Arizona—the one too underdeveloped for the English tourists over forty years before—now, in the 1920s, attracted the attention of Arizona and Utah, including their state governments and their tourist industries. Traveling north, the road bent eastward around the Grand Canyon, and then north and westward across the Colorado River to the Mormon towns along the state border and the Kaibab Plateau. Because of this circuitous route, hunters from Arizona would likely spend money in southern Utah if they wanted to hunt on the plateau. So not only did the irruption reaffirm the morality of hunting—allowing for the coexistence of hunting deer and the protection of deer—the emerging highway geography, created in part by the quest for more tourist dollars, allowed this moral reasoning to function on the ground.⁷⁰

For tourists, as for readers of the *New York Times*, the "tragedy" on the Kaibab Plateau struck at the heart of their beliefs about nature, and how they saw themselves in nature. William Du Puy, the author of the *Times* article "Forest Reserve Becomes a Range of Death," blamed the starvation on the state of Arizona, which had not allowed hunters to reduce the herd. The irruption was no natural disaster; it was borne by human hands. Du Puy omitted the Park Service's concurrence with Arizona and thus left the agency—the beloved protector of America's most honored landscapes—innocent. By association, park tourists too were left innocent, but they could no longer value such preservation of deer. The professional class searched for a new story about deer, because without one, the foundation of their sensibility would have begun to crumble. After all, no one could claim respectability if their hands were red with the blood of timid animals capable of inspiring charity.⁷¹

The new story outlined the balance of nature, in which all creatures—predators included—had a role to play. Aldo Leopold made this idea famous in his *A Sand County Almanac*, although writers such as Du Puy had subscribed to it beforehand. In 1949, after reflecting upon the Kaibab irruption and similar ones in New Mexico and Pennsylvania, Leopold lamented predator extermination: it let too many deer eat too much vegetation, until only "the starved bones of the hoped-for deer herd" were left.⁷² Leopold's sorrow is as much a story about wolves or mountain lions as it is about deer. It restored the possibility of a healthy relationship with deer, at least in narrative if not always in practice.

⁶⁹ "About the Deer," *Panguitch (Utah) Garfield County News*, 25 September 1925, p. 1, <http://udn.lib.utah.edu/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/garfield1&CISOPTR=4801&filename=4802.pdf> (accessed 10 April 2008).

⁷⁰ Articles promoting roadbuilding and tourism in far northern Arizona frequently appeared in *Arizona Highways*, the publication of the Arizona Highway Department. See for example, W.C. Lefebvre, "Does Arizona Want Tourist Traffic?" *Arizona Highways*, October 1925, 16–7+, SCUA.

⁷¹ Du Puy, "Range of Death."

⁷² Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 132.

Leopold was not the last person to tell stories about the Kaibab deer. In *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson borrowed the predator parable to demonstrate how much humans had upset the balance of nature. In fact, the “tragedy” of the Kaibab was a hallmark of ecology textbooks into the 1970s and has consequently influenced a great deal of environmental thinking. But at its heart, it is just one story from a landscape laden with narratives, from as far back as the Kaibab Paiute creation myth, through the Mormon exploration narratives, into Utah and Arizona booster stories, and then tourist memories, to name but a few.

Throughout, the cultural meanings of the Kaibab deer rarely changed: their biological role as prey suggested innocence, and each group venturing to the plateau invested much in this meaning. But their investments were each different, and that is why the irruption is also a western story. It is a tale of people encountering each other in the same place and, for the newcomers especially, trying to understand how they fit within a landscape already made home by others. Colonization bore conflict, a process central to western history. In this past, conflict can be seen not only in scenes of armed violence or the cultural disruption worked by disease and dispossession, but also in their reverse image, in visions of innocence. On the Kaibab Plateau, deer served as a bearing for innocence. It took stories to symbolize deer this way, and so in hunting tales, pioneer memories, and tourism literature we witness the construction of deer as innocent—and, through clever narration, of each successive group as innocent, too. The Kaibab deer let us understand innocence as something made, something, in fact, continually remade as people refashioned western landscapes to their own ends. Often, they questioned the morality of their presence and looked for ways to affirm it. That Southern Paiutes, Mormon settlers, and tourists all used deer to self-ascribe innocence suggests one way westerners considered—and at times rationalized—the morality of conquest. Thinking about deer lets us think about innocence, a moral position not pre-existing as perhaps it might seem, but an object of the quest to inhabit a place.

