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## Homeland, Homestead, and Haven: The Changing Perspectives of Zion National Park, 1700-1930

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HOMELAND, HOMESTEAD, AND HAVEN: THE CHANGING PERSPECTIVES OF ZION  
NATIONAL PARK, 1700-1930.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

Master of Arts—History

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## Thesis Approval

The Graduate College  
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## ABSTRACT

Homeland, Homestead, and Haven:  
the Changing Perspectives of Zion National Park, 1700-1930.

By

Sara Suzanne Black

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Zion National Park is a landscape that the American public celebrates as a unique and beautiful wilderness. However, Zion is much more culturally layered than what most tourists perceive. Numerous Native American cultures have ties to the canyon, including the Southern Paiutes, who used and interacted with this area on a regular basis for at least the last 500 years. For them, it served both substantive and cultural roles in their communities that reinforced their understandings of themselves and their place in the world. For Mormons, who came into the area in the 1860s and quickly dominated the landscape, Zion was a part of their religious vision, a place that needed to be transformed from a barren desert to a garden in their New Jerusalem. Zion Canyon and the rest of the southern Utah landscape was a culturally important place for both Mormon settlers and Southern Paiutes and became the setting for cultural exchange and conflict between the two groups that left its mark on the landscape. The National Park Service and early tourism boosters worked to establish a new narrative and purpose for this remarkable

canyon, serving as a catalyst for change as they transformed Zion into an untouched wilderness, altering the perceptions and histories of both Paiutes and Mormons in the process.

This thesis largely focuses on the perception of place, as I explore how a canyon can be transformed simply by who is looking at it. How place can change from a native homeland to a homestead and ultimately to a haven from the modern world. This thesis is an exploration of the cultural dynamism of Zion Canyon, as Southern Paiutes, Mormon settlers, and finally the National Park Service each occupied the landscape, utilizing it in completely different ways that profoundly impacted the land. They all created specific relationships with the canyon informed by their cultural and religious beliefs and experiences. Their relationships altered the canyon as well as how each previous group interacted and connected to that landscape. Each of these groups perceived Zion differently, creating a unique place that had special meaning and served a specific role in their societies.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I also would like to thank the Cultural Resources staff at Zion National Park and the staff at Pipe Spring National Monument: Sarah Horton, Russell Cash, Amber Van Alfen, former curator, Justin Hall, current curator, Miriam Watson, former superintendent, John Hiscock, and park guide, Ben Pikyavit. I am so grateful that you allowed me to use office space and spent so much time answering my questions and engaging in discussions over the material in this thesis. You really helped me gain a better understanding of archaeology in Zion, the history of the area and were great resources during this project.

I want to thank all of the staff at the various libraries I have visited over the years. There are so many knowledgeable people on the history of southern Utah. I am truly grateful for all of their help.

I especially would like to thank Paiute elder, Glendora Homer, who I interviewed in 2011. Your insights and knowledge of Paiute traditions and history contributed a great deal to the shape and focus of this thesis. My discussions with you really made me realize how little of Paiute history is reflected in the literature and presentations on Zion's history. Hopefully, this thesis will help shed more light on Paiute connections to this area.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my family: my husband, Brian, for all of his support and help during this process, my daughter, Juniper, for being the light of my life, and my parents, Brian and Suzanne, and siblings, Matthew, Andrea, and Amy, for listening to my long history rants and being sounding boards for my arguments. Your unwavering belief in me and the sacrifices we made as a family really made this thesis possible. Just as in raising a child, it truly takes a village to finish a graduate degree. I could not have done this without you.



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## INTRODUCTION

Zion National Park, located in southern Utah, is a place known because of its landscape. Composed of dramatic sandstone cliffs, cut into jagged peaks and smoothed into towering domes, it is a land that demands the viewer to constantly gaze upward to follow the lines of its mountains or compare the bright red, pink, and orange hues of its rock layers to the blueness of the usually cloudless sky above. An ever changing geologic story is told here: the deposits from ancient seas, swamps, rivers, forests, as well as the sand from one of the largest sand dune deserts that ever existed on earth form the park. The Virgin River and its minor tributaries carve the land, creating the narrow canyons and wide flood plains and even boggy swamps in certain sections of the park. Zion is a testament to the power of water and its ability to erode. When first time visitors arrive at Zion, this dynamic and breath-taking scenery dominates their experience to such a degree that they rarely think of Zion outside of being a landscape. Their understanding and perception of what Zion is remains completely confined by its role and history as a national park. In many ways, the overwhelming drama of the land and the National Park Service's emphasis on the park's physical landscape obscure Zion's history and its religious and substantive role in the lives of the Paiutes and the Mormon settlers who lived both in and around Zion Canyon before its development as a national park in the early twentieth century. This work will largely focus on the perception of place in this dynamic environment and will explore how these perceptions impacted the utilization and cultural meaning of this singular place by these three groups over time.

Evidence of Native and Mormon use is everywhere in the park, hidden often in plain sight. The Pa'Rus Trail is a popular and well-traveled trail in the park that ambles along the Virgin River from the Visitor Center to Canyon Junction, giving a visitor lovely views of the

Watchman, the West Temple and other mountains. Irrigation ditches, used by Mormon settlers dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, are clearly visible if one looks closely along the trail. Pottery sherds and arrowheads left behind by the ancient Virgin River Anasazi, the Paiutes, and other native groups are also easily found a little off the trail and in the campgrounds.<sup>1</sup> In the early spring, some of the trees near the South Campground and one lone tree in a large empty field are heavy with pink and white blossoms. These are the remnants of the orchards grown by the Crawfords, a large Mormon family who once owned and worked most of the land from the Human History Museum to the campgrounds from the late 1860s through the 1930s. Even in the main canyon of the park, the part that was originally designated a monument in 1909, numerous examples that show consistent human use and occupation for hundreds of years can be found. This history is literally everywhere and in plain view of the public but regularly goes unnoticed by the millions of people who visit Zion every year.

As a historian who has worked in and known Zion on an everyday basis for the last six years, the unspoken quality of the park's history intrigued me. How could a place so well-known and beloved by the American public have a recent history that appears so blank? There is some representation of Zion's past in the park's Human History Museum; however, much of the museum focuses on the Virgin River Anasazi whose Puebloan, sedentary agricultural lifestyle disappeared from the canyon 500 years ago. Most of the other exhibits describe the development of the canyon as a national park at the beginning of the twentieth century. The museum largely skims over Mormon history in the area and barely discusses the history of the Paiutes whose

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<sup>1</sup> For this paper, I use the term Virgin River Anasazi to describe the ancient Puebloan culture that once lived in the area, as this is the phrase Zion National Park's cultural resource and interpretative staff use. Anasazi is a problematic term, however. It is actually a Navajo word meaning "ancient enemy" and therefore, many of the descendants and related groups to these people find it offensive, as they have their own, more positive names for their ancestors. In response to this, many anthropologists and archeologists have started referring to them as Ancestral Puebloans and the specific group in this area as the Virgin Branch Puebloan culture. Southern Paiutes specifically call them, *E'nengweng* and the Hopi refer to them as *Hisatsinom*.

hunter/gatherer culture absorbed and replaced the Virgin River Anasazi. The museum leaves the average visitor with the impression that Zion remained largely unused and unincorporated in the lives of the two groups who had most recently occupied the area. Whatever human interactions people had with it, the museum implies, were regulated to the distant past.

In many ways, this type of historical presentation is common in western national parks established for their scenery. Zion, like most other national parks, largely exists under the assumption that the landscape, before its preservation as a park, was an uninhabited “wilderness” with little or no human interaction. Wilderness is a human construct with a variable meaning and most typically defined by a lack of human presence. In the United States, wildernesses are also places that Europeans or Euro-Americans did not develop.<sup>2</sup> No national park was ever truly a wilderness under the first definition, as all national parks have histories of native use and most had some European or Euro-American interaction before they were set aside. The expectation that Zion was uninhabited is also reinforced by the fact that Zion is technically a desert, which is a word synonymous with wilderness and characterized by uselessness in terms of human needs.<sup>3</sup> In reality, Zion and the other national parks essentially had to be *transformed* into a wilderness first, so they then could be preserved as wilderness. Zion’s assumed lack of human history interested me a great deal, as Paiutes and Mormons had to be dispossessed in order to create that narrative. I found myself wanting to know more about these two groups: how they utilized the canyon, what cultural and substantive roles it served in their day to day lives, and ultimately how their perceptions and relationships with Zion changed once it became a national park and they were removed from its landscape and narrative.

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<sup>2</sup> Spence, Mark. *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Limerick, Patricia. *Desert Passages: Encounters with the American Deserts* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), 8.

Finding reliable resources for this project proved challenging and raised new questions. As I began my research, I found that most of the information that described Mormon and Paiute history in Zion Canyon came from oral histories collected in the 1930s and 1940s. These accounts were essentially remembrances of the pioneer era given by former Mormon settlers. Though there were many useful elements, many of these accounts were steeped in nostalgia and gave a skewed view of life in the canyon. The most puzzling and intriguing parts of these oral histories centered around Paiute history in the region, as nearly all of these accounts claimed Paiutes were afraid of Zion Canyon and never went into it. This seemed unlikely to me and, as I discovered, was actually a very pervasive false narrative. This led me to many of the central questions for my thesis: How do people transform a space into a place with meaning and significance? Why did Paiute historical dispossession occur and why is the denial of their history in the canyon so prevalent? What role did dispossession serve in transforming Zion from an Indian place to a Mormon one and then finally a national park? These questions became foundational in understanding the history of both Paiutes and Mormons in the canyon. They also lend further understanding of the creation of Zion's historical narrative in the twentieth century, and as a result, have become the focus of my research.

Paiute sources proved to be the most challenging part of my research, as I had to depend on archaeological and anthropological data. There are numerous Paiute archeological sites throughout Zion National Park, but in the main canyon specifically, there are only a handful of sites that Zion archaeologists believe to be Paiute. The small amount of Paiute material culture that has been found is not indicative of little use, however, as Paiute artifacts are, by their very nature, problematic. In order to be mobile, their goods had to be either "portable like baskets,

[or] expendable like their easily built houses . . . .”<sup>4</sup> These types of artifacts are very difficult to study as they were made from vegetation and decayed quickly, leaving very little behind for archaeologists to actually find.<sup>5</sup> In general, there are very few existing archaeological sites in the main canyon of any group because of the Virgin River’s tendency to flood. Despite all of this, Zion archaeologists have found enough Paiute material in the main canyon to suggest they utilized this area and did come into the canyon. Mormon sources, of course, were much easier to find. Mormon settlers produced a wide array of written records on the area. Their history in general was also much better known, so my goal centered on representing their history in Zion Canyon as accurately as possible while for the Paiutes it became about firmly establishing their usage and describing that history.

For the Southern Paiutes, Zion is a part of their traditional homeland and, as such, serves to define a part of their identity as a people. How they used this landscape and viewed their relationship with it was and is intrinsically tied to their understandings of themselves as a people and their place in the world. Their use reflected both utilitarian and spiritual motives, as Southern Paiutes’ subsistence strategies were rooted firmly in their religious and cultural beliefs. All of Paiute territory is sacred space, as these are the lands where they were created, the place where they were meant to live, and the place where they have always been. Paiutes saw themselves as the land’s caretakers, which required their interaction and use in order to remain productive and

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<sup>4</sup> Smaby. “The Mormons and the Indians Conflicting Ecological Systems in the Great Basin,” *American Studies* Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Archeologists generally depend on the Paiutes’ style of rock art, the presence of stone tools made from chert, sandstone, and obsidian, as well as their distinctive pottery to identify their sites. This, however, is also tricky. Paiute sites can be easily confused with archaic cultural sites that date back thousands of years, especially when only stone tools are found. If obsidian is present, it is possible to date the site by the water content in the glass, but when absent, it can be impossible to decipher between the two groups. Paiutes also did not make or use their pottery regularly, as it was fragile and generally inconvenient in their hunter/gatherer life style. The firing process of the Paiute brown-ware also caused it to disintegrate over time, meaning that even when Paiutes did make it, very little pottery actually survived. Conversations with Zion Archaeologists Russell Cash and Amber Van Alfen. January 13, 2016.

healthy. Their history, represented in archeological sites throughout Zion National Park and preserved through oral tradition, reveals a complex and resilient people who shaped and were in turn shaped by their environment.

Mormon settlers also utilized the resources of the canyon to support their settlement but in different ways than the Paiutes. Mormons originally settled the area to grow crops that would support and promote the expansion of their society and the religious kingdom they attempted to create in the West. For them, settling this landscape was a religious calling, as their leadership instructed them to make “the desert bloom as the rose.” Through the transformation of this land, they were redeeming it from the wilderness and making it a part of their “Zion”—an idyllic community worthy of God and a sacred place. The common goals they shared, as well as the hardship they experienced, served to create a unique connection to this landscape and imbued the canyon and its surrounding areas with specific meanings that came to define their identity. The displacement and assimilation of native peoples, including Paiutes, were a part of this process. Still, Paiutes managed to adapt to these changes while holding on to a core aspect of their identity—their homeland. Through their interactions, Paiutes and Mormons influenced each other’s relationship with the land, adding new meanings to the landscape that reflected their understandings of themselves and each other.

Once Zion became a national park unit, Zion Canyon became a landscape set apart. It was no longer a place to exploit agriculturally but instead a special place that needed to be preserved and protected because of its unique beauty and value to the broader nation. The National Park Service (NPS) envisioned Zion and the other national park units as sites that would connect people to the land, God, and each other through nature. NPS, with the aid of railroad companies, small businessmen, and local Mormon communities transformed Zion from



cattle country and farmland into an uninhabited “wilderness” for the enjoyment of tourists and the American people over the course of a year in 1917.<sup>6</sup> This alteration drastically changed the purpose of the canyon and marked an abrupt shift in the perception of the landscape. It was no longer a place to collect wild plants, grow crops or raise livestock. Instead, it was a place of enchantment and heavenly inspiration and regulated to recreational purposes. This shift significantly altered how Paiutes and Mormons interacted with Zion and how each group perceived it. Paiutes, who had been put on reservations a decade earlier, found themselves completely written out of the park’s history and prevented from utilizing the canyon’s resources. Mormons’ use of the canyon was also limited, but they directly benefited from the growing tourism market and became an almost side-attraction to curious visitors. Their history and connection to the canyon was regulated to outside of the main canyon but was generally celebrated and even promoted. Zion became a place no longer remembered for its hardships but as a place Mormons had always known was unique and special, as they became allies in its transformation. The early Park Service reimagined the canyon’s narrative, redefining the roles both Paiutes and Mormons played in the park’s history and how each group understood their relationship with it. The NPS essentially served as a catalyst, transforming the canyon both physically and psychologically for each group, imbuing the landscape with new meanings and a new history that altered Paiutes’ Mormons’ connections to the land.

My thesis is broken into four chapters. Chapter one focuses specifically on the history of the Paiute people from their origin story to mid-nineteenth century just before Euro-American

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<sup>6</sup> This process was both abrupt and gradual. Massive advertising campaigns and initial general park development occurred in 1917 and 1918. Zion went from having a handful of visitors to several hundred within a year. It could be argued that Zion’s full realization as a National Park did not occur until 1930 when the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway and Tunnel were completed. At this point, all of the trails, buildings, and roads Zion became known for were finally finished. Zion’s visitation at this point was also in the tens of thousands and a thriving tourism economy was firmly established in southern Utah.

and Mormon settlement took place. I discuss Paiutes in the broader context of what they consider to be their territory as well as their history in the region that became Zion National Park. In order to describe this history, I depended a great deal on studies conducted both by amateur and professional anthropologists, such as John Wesley Powell, Edward Sapir, Isabel Kelly, William Palmer, Martha Knack, Richard Stoffle, and others. These studies were conducted from the 1870s to the present and represent a varied view of Paiute lifeways prior to Euro-American settlement. I also relied heavily on oral histories to better understand Paiute beliefs, their perceptions of Zion Canyon, and what role it served in their lives. The report, “Ethnographic Overview and Assessment: Zion National Park, Utah and Pipe Spring National Monument, Arizona” was a major source for this thesis, as it represents the only existing collection of Paiute oral histories related to Zion Canyon. When examining these histories, I attempted to keep in mind the ideas presented by Dakota historian, Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, that when discussing Indigenous histories, Indigenous oral tradition should be privileged and take on the center role in the discussion.<sup>7</sup> Paiute history in and around Zion Canyon has been so misunderstood and misrepresented that I believed it was extremely important for Paiutes to speak for themselves on this matter and generally tried to present the oral histories as they were recorded.

Chapter Two focuses on the history of Mormon settlement in southern Utah and the religious and cultural meanings behind that settlement. This section describes both the economic

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<sup>7</sup> Wilson, Waziyatawin Angela. *Remember This! Dakota Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narratives* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 1. There are many other Native historians who also emphasize the importance of utilizing Native oral tradition. Vine Deloria Jr.’s *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Macmillian Company, 1969) focuses heavily on Euro-Americans’ failure to really listen to Native American groups both in modern concerns as well as in the past. The following articles also added to and expanded on this discussion, as they each stress the need for Native historians and for more oral history in the field in order to avoid misinterpretation: Mihesuah, Devon A. “Voices, Interpretations, and the ‘New Indian History’: Comment on the ‘American Indian Quarterly’s’ Special Issue on Writing about American Indians,” *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1996): 91-108; Miller, Susan. “Native Historians Write Back: The Indigenous Paradigm in American Indian Historiography” *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 24, no. 1 (2009): 25-45. Throughout my thesis, I was very conscience of these ideas and my usage of Paiute oral history reflects my attempt to adhere this paradigm as much as I could as a non-Native historian.

and religious influences that led to settlement in southern Utah and how Mormons attempted to transform the region into their specific agricultural vision.<sup>8</sup> I also discuss how Mormons became connected to the southern Utah landscape.<sup>9</sup> Finally, I explore how Mormons interacted with Paiutes, incorporating them into their belief system, and how both groups affected the others' relationship with the landscape. For the Mormon settlers, I relied on journals, church documents, and oral histories to capture what life was like during this period, how Mormons viewed the land, and how Mormons and Paiutes attempted to adapt to each other's presence. This chapter represents the complex interactions Mormons and Paiutes had with one another and their landscape in a changing world.

Chapter three continues to examine the changing relationship between Mormons and Paiutes, as Mormon culture and society fully appropriated the southern Utah landscape. Southern Utah changed in their mindset from a difficult place they were called to settle in to one embraced as home. This section explores how this conversion happened and how it impacted Mormon and

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<sup>8</sup> To understand the background and history of the Mormon Church, I relied on a variety of materials. The following is a list of secondary sources that provided excellent background information on the history of the church prior to their move to Utah as well as their history in the area: Arrington, Leonard J. *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: the Deseret Book Company, 1976); Arrington, Leonard J. *Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-Day Saints, 1830-1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958); Farmer, Jared. *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Nelson, Lowry. *The Mormon Village: A Pattern and Technique of Land Settlement* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1952); Smith, Joseph. *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 6, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1950); and Stegner, Wallace. *Mormon Country* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1942). I also strongly recommend reading *The Book of Mormon* and the church's *Journal of Discourses* publication, which is a collection of sermons and speeches delivered by the LDS Church's leaders and prophets.

<sup>9</sup> All of the following books describe in detail the local history of southern Utah and provide the basic framework in understanding this area. Alder, Douglas D. and Karl F. Brooks. *A History of Washington County: From Isolation to Destination* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1996); ed. Bradshaw, Hazel. *Under Dixie Sun: A History of Washington County by Those Who Loved Their Forebears* (St. George: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1950); Hafen, Arthur Knight. *Dixie Folklore and Pioneer Memories* (St. George: Published Privately, 1961); Larson, Andrew Karl. *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971); Larson, Andrew Karl. *"I Was Called To Dixie": The Virgin River Basin: Unique Experiences in Mormon Pioneering* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961); Logue, Larry. *A Sermon in the Desert: Belief and Behavior in Early St. George, Utah* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); and Reeve, W. Paul. *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006). Most of these works were written by Mormon historians, many of them local to the area, and give great insight as to how they view their history and connection to southern Utah.

Paiute relations, as Paiutes became seen as interlopers. This change in attitude and the expansion of Mormon settlements impacted Paiutes enormously, as they experienced significant population loss and learned to adapt in ways that greatly altered their relationship with the landscape. The alterations brought to the land by livestock grazing and other agricultural activities also greatly affected Paiute groups' ability to live in their traditional ways, forcing Paiutes to change even more.<sup>10</sup> This section relies heavily on settler accounts, Paiute oral histories, and anthropological studies in order to fully understand the changes during this period.

Chapter four analyzes the impact Zion Canyon's designation as a national park unit had on both the Mormon settlers and Paiutes who had still been using the canyon as a part of their subsistence economies. I use articles from magazines and newspapers to represent the new narratives the National Park Service, the railroads, and tourism boosters created for Zion, which established Zion as an American place rather than a Paiute or Mormon one. I also describe how the development of Zion both benefited and altered Paiute and Mormon relations with the canyon and how their perceptions of Zion changed once it became a national park, as both groups were firmly placed on the park's periphery. In this section, I utilize some of the ideas from anthropologists, Julie Cruikshank, and Keith Basso, who both discuss cultural perceptions and the importance of narrative when understanding a people. Cruikshank emphasized the significance of local stories and the context in which they are told in comprehending their

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<sup>10</sup> In this section, I was very much influenced by the ideas presented by William Bauer Jr., Clyde Ellis and Fredrick Hoxie among others, as their books often focus on how Native Americans utilized systems that were meant to undermine and assimilate them to actually maintain their culture and tribal connections. See the following: Bauer Jr., William. *'We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here': Work, Community, and Memory on California's Round Valley Reservation, 1850-1941* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Ellis, Clyde. *A Dancing People: Powwow Culture on the Southern Plains* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003); and Hoxie, Fredrick. "Exploring a Cultural Borderland: Native American Journeys of Discovery in the Early Twentieth Century," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 79, no. 3 (1992): 969-995.

purpose and how they impact local understandings of events and places.<sup>11</sup> Basso also noted something similar, stating “for what people make of their places is closely connected to what they make of themselves as members of society and inhabitants of the earth . . . .”<sup>12</sup> In other words, how people interpret and remember the stories they associate with specific places reveals their cultural perceptions of their environment, their history, and even their identity.

By exploring the history of Zion this way, we learn how perception shaped peoples’ understanding of place and the narratives they created about that place. For the Southern Paiutes and Mormon settlers who called Zion home, the changes they experienced as a result of encroaching groups greatly challenged the purpose and role the canyon served in their societies. Zion went from a place both groups interacted with on a subsistence level to one that was commoditized into an aesthetic spectacle.<sup>13</sup> To understand the true impacts of these changes, we must first understand how Paiutes and Mormons saw the land around them and how they used Zion Canyon. As with most things, the beginning is usually the best place to start, and for the Paiutes, that is their genesis as a people, when the world first began.

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<sup>11</sup> Cruikshank, Julie. *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), xii-xiii.

<sup>12</sup> Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Limerick, Patricia Nelson *Desert Passages: Encounters with the American Deserts*, 6.

## CHAPTER 1: THE SOUTHERN PAIUTES-ZION AS HOMELAND



FIGURE 1: KAIBAB PAIUTE WOMEN GATHERING SEEDS. Photograph by J.K Hillers, 1873. Courtesy of Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives, bureau of American Ethnology Collection. Dresses are actually Northern Ute brought by the photographer and John Wesley Powell. Paiute women normally only wore bark skirts. Basketry is accurate.

The Southern Paiutes' traditional homelands are central to their belief system and identity as a people. Paiutes identify their territories as the place of their creation. According to their origin stories, the world began as a vast ocean from which Ocean Woman created dry land.

Ocean Woman then gave Coyote a basket or sack that was very heavy and directed him to open it when he got to the middle of the world. This location changes a little depending on which Paiute band is telling the story. Some bands say it was *Nuvagantu*, Charleston Peak in southern Nevada. The Shivwits claim it was Buckskin Mountain while the San Juan Paiutes identify it as a place near Page, Arizona. No matter the exact location, Coyote grew curious about the basket's contents before arriving there and opened it. All of the other peoples of the world scrambled out and spread across the globe, but he managed to close it with a few left inside and brought them to the place designated by Ocean Woman where he released them.<sup>14</sup> These people became the Southern Paiutes. This story demonstrates how prominent place is in Paiute cosmology, as it realigns the world's geography around the Paiute homelands. Paiute lands are important and significant in this alignment. They are the *place*, and Paiutes are the ones who specifically belong to it. Paiutes are essentially the only people who ended up exactly where they were supposed to be, revealing a sense of their uniqueness and their special connection to their territory. Anthropologist Richard Stoffle explained this viewpoint in his ethnographic study on the Paiutes. In a discussion about restocking mountain sheep on different ranges, Stoffle stated that Paiutes saw both themselves, sheep, and all other living things as having a "a special, supernaturally derived attachment to the place where they were created. Their purpose derives from that place . . . to move them . . . would not only be culturally inappropriate it would be a

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<sup>14</sup> Martineau, LaVan. *The Southern Paiutes* (Las Vegas: KC Publications, 1992), 22-23; ed. Fowler, Don D. and Catherine S. Fowler. "Anthropology of the Numa: John Wesley Powell's Manuscripts on the Numic Peoples of Western North America 1868-1880," *Smithsonian Institution Contributions in Anthropology*, no. 14 (1971): 78. Ed. Mouton de Gruyer Bright, William, *The Collected Works of Edward Sapir Southern Paiute and Ute Linguistics and Ethnography*. (New York: Mouton de Gruyer 1992), 378. Stoffle, Richard, et al. "Ethnographic Overview and Assessment: Zion National Park, Utah and Pipe Spring National Monument, Arizona" (National Park Service Report), 39.

violation of creation.”<sup>15</sup> From the Paiute perspective, place is completely intertwined with the beings who live within it, as it defines purpose and identity.

When Paiutes look back at their history and the history of the area, they see a long unbroken line of ancestors connecting them to this land, reaching back thousands of years. This understanding of themselves imbued the landscape with specific meaning and a deep sense of belonging that defined Paiute identity. Colorado River explorer, John Wesley Powell, noted this strong connection in the 1870s, as he recorded a Paiute man stating, “We love our country; we know not other lands. We hear other lands are better; we do not know. The pines sing, and we are glad . . . We do not want their good lands; we want our rocks, and the great mountains where our fathers lived.”<sup>16</sup> For Paiutes, the deserts of Utah, Nevada, and the high dry sierras of the Arizona Strip were and remain the good lands. The Paiute homeland is the foundation of their identity and acts as a lens through which they see themselves and the world around them. The landscape is as much defined by the Southern Paiutes as they are defined by the landscape, shaping their interactions with each other and its resources.

### *How Land Shaped Paiute Lifeways*

Aridity and the difficult, complex environment of the Southern Paiutes’ territory influenced how Paiutes structured their society and their interactions with one another. Paiutes generally lived as small nuclear families with a husband, one or two wives, children, and perhaps a grandparent or two. This simple structure allowed them greater mobility and dispersed them more widely across the environment; a necessity as no one area in their territory was consistently reliable year round. Each individual family unit had complex kinship ties that connected them to

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<sup>15</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 8.

<sup>16</sup> Powell, John Wesley. *Exploration of the Colorado River* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1961), 136.



other families within their territory, forming political and cultural band structures that they could draw upon as a resource. The exact number of bands before European contact is unknown and subject to much debate in anthropological circles. Anthropologist, Richard Stoffle, in his ethnographic study of Zion National Park, argued that Paiute bands essentially could be divided up into ecological districts with a riverine oasis or large spring system at its core. Each district had permanent farms and villages, offset by hinterlands which added ecological diversity where Paiutes could gather wild plants, hunt, and access natural resources like salt, paint, and tool-making quarries.<sup>17</sup> In southern Utah, Stoffle described these eco-regional districts as the Shivwits/Santa Clara district (Santa Clara River), the Ua'ayukunants/Uinkaret district (Upper Virgin River Valley), Kaibab district (Kanab Creek), Kaiparowits district, Antarianunts district, Panguitch district (East Fork of the Virgin River), Cedar City/Indian Peaks district, San Juan district (the Colorado and San Juan Rivers), and the Pahvant (Beaver) district.<sup>18</sup> This division, largely based on the research done by anthropologist, Isabel Kelly, and amateur ethnographer, William Palmer, in the 1930s, attempted to better explain the complex relations between small Paiute groups within a particular region and how they utilized the landscape. Paiute groups were extremely fluid, however, and this division should not be accepted as a rigid system. Paiutes dispersed themselves widely and intermarried with other bands frequently, so cultural and social ties existed interregionally. Regardless of the exact band structures, Paiutes organized themselves to best exploit their environment, utilizing its resources while maintaining cultural and social connections across their territory.

Flexibility also characterized Paiute subsistence strategies, as Paiutes depended on both hunting/gathering and farming for their survival. Paiutes regularly moved seasonally across their

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<sup>17</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. "Ethnographic Overview," 49.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 57.

lands, taking advantage of the varied elevations and the different growing seasons of wild plants. In general, most Paiute groups found the collection of wild plants to be a more dependable food source than farming in their environment. Paiute stories describe a time in their distant past when they stayed in one place and focused only on agriculture. The land began experiencing a great drought, and as Paiutes watched their crops wither, they prayed for an answer. Finally, *Sungwuuvv*, Coyote, came and admonished them for their complaints and told them that “the country is large and somewhere there is always food. If you follow the animals and the birds they will lead you to it.”<sup>19</sup> This story reveals how important mobility was in Paiute lives. They viewed it not only as a necessity of life but almost as a spiritual mandate. The story reinforces the idea that Paiutes were placed in an important land, lands that occupied the center of the world, and that this land could produce all they needed. Failing to utilize these resources and thrive in this landscape would only demonstrate their ungratefulness and put them at risk for the possible loss of those resources. For Paiutes, their subsistence strategies were intertwined with their spiritual beliefs and how they viewed their connection to their environment.

Paiute movements across their landscape were purposeful and directly expressed the great intimacy in which they knew their territory. In the early spring, Paiutes collected agave and juniper berries while in the late spring they gathered rice grass seeds, one of the major staples of their diet. In the fall, Paiutes moved to the higher plateaus to collect pinion pine nuts, another major staple, which were easy to store and high in fat.<sup>20</sup> Paiutes generally returned to the same places year after year and even to the same stands of trees, expressing a kind of ownership that other Paiutes recognized. In an interview, Glendora Homer, a Kaibab Paiute elder, stated that “They knew where all the good stuff grew. Over here, they have really good prickly pear. And

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<sup>19</sup> Palmer, William. *Pahute Indian Legends* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1946), 123.

<sup>20</sup> Kelly, Isabel T. “Southern Paiute Ethnography,” *Anthropological Papers*, no. 69 (May 1964), 41-46.

over here, maybe it's not quite so sweet . . . those juniper berries, this tree has really sweet berries. Every year it produces sweet berries and that's the tree the family would use, because not all the berries on the juniper are good."<sup>21</sup> Paiutes saw dependable food sources wherever they looked within their landscape, giving them a strong sense of security and plenty. Even during times of scarcity, Paiutes could depend on their lands to provide them with food if they looked hard enough and were creative. John Wesley Powell noted this creativity when he observed Paiutes collecting the "mucilaginous substance which is destined to form an additional growth to the tree" from pine trees.<sup>22</sup> Some plants required extensive processing in order to make them edible, such as Prince's Plume or Indian Spinach which had to be boiled three times before it could be eaten safely.<sup>23</sup> Buoyed by generations of knowledge and adaptation, Paiutes saw their landscape as a land of abundance that could always be depended on to provide all of their needs.

Paiutes in the Upper Virgin River eco-scape also practiced similar subsistence strategies in order to survive. According to James Jennings, a Mormon settler in Rockville, around 1862 "there were two or three hundred Piute Indians living in the vicinity of Rockville . . . a camp across the river from the Northup bench, another across . . . from Rockville in the foothills, another at the extreme lower end of Springdale."<sup>24</sup> Paiutes lived in this section of the Virgin River canyon system in large numbers, because it was wider, flatter and generally sunnier than other areas. More of the wild plants they depended on as a food source, such as rice grass, berries, etc. grew in this section, making it an ideal location.<sup>25</sup> As a Cedar Paiute woman simply remarked, "There summer food was there."<sup>26</sup> Parunuweap Canyon, which juts out just south of

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<sup>21</sup> Glendora Homer, interview by Sara Black, November 9, 2011, transcript, 23.

<sup>22</sup> Ed. Fowler, Don D. and Catherine S. Fowler. "Anthropology of the Numa: John Wesley Powell's Manuscripts," 47.

<sup>23</sup> Glendora Homer, interview by Sara Black, November 9, 2011, 18.

<sup>24</sup> Jennings, James H., "Historical Sketch," unpublished manuscript Box 1, Folder 8, Southern Utah University

<sup>25</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. "Ethnographic Overview," 87.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 86.

Springdale, also supported a large group of Paiutes for similar reasons. Like other Paiute groups, they used a mixture of subsistence strategies in order to survive, hunting/gathering and farming at various times as well as moving seasonally. For this group, Zion Canyon most likely served as a hinterland where certain plants could be gathered and some gardens planted. A Kaibab Paiute elder recalled collecting plants there and described how under “an archway where the water comes out . . . they lived there and gathered herbs and berries.”<sup>27</sup> The narrowness of the canyon and the few hours of sunlight it received discouraged large, consistent settlement, but as stated above, some Paiutes probably did live there at various times. For the Paiutes, Zion Canyon and the Upper Virgin River were simply another area in which they lived that provided numerous resources.

Annual gathering of specific plants also served as social and cultural events. John Wesley Powell described the Kaibab Paiutes traditional annual gathering of *yant*, or agave fruit pods as an important substantive and social activity. He recorded how after collecting many bushels, they roasted the agave in a large pit and “At dawn . . . the little tribe gathers in a circle around the heap and sings the *yant* song and dances the *yant* dance . . . The dancing and singing and feasting is continued until the whole pit is exhausted, and another collection is made.”<sup>28</sup> The annual pinion pine nut gathering was another major event for most Paiute groups, as it brought distant relatives into close proximity, allowing for the renewal of relations, the spreading of news, and generally cementing ties through shared cultural experience.<sup>29</sup> Similar activities occurred in Zion Canyon as well. Several elders from many different Paiute bands, including Kaibab, Shivwits, and Koosharem, mentioned social gatherings in the canyon during the fall.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>28</sup> Ed. Fowler, Don D. and Catherine S. Fowler. “Anthropology of the Numa: John Wesley Powell’s Manuscripts,” 46-47.

<sup>29</sup> Knack, Martha. *Boundaries Between* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 17.

They described how “Indians from all over would meet during harvest . . . It would be a big gathering . . . At the time, they had lots of plants . . . .”<sup>30</sup> Homer in her interview stated that “Zion is a place where people used to gather in the old days. That’s where they went to have . . . fall gatherings. Get together and eat and socialize . . . Some of our winter stories talk about Paiute gatherings in Zion and animals gathering in Zion.”<sup>31</sup> These activities served as just one of the numerous ways subsistence and cultural activities were intertwined in Paiute life. Being mobile allowed Paiutes to take advantage of numerous food sources and prevented them from becoming too dependent on one specific area or one particular food type. It also established strong cultural ties and continuity among far-flung communities and relatives, allowing Paiutes to connect to their landscape and each other in unique ways.

Hunting, of course, was another major part of the Paiute subsistence economy. Paiutes took advantage of a wide variety of animals and insects to survive. They hunted large game, such as deer, sheep, and occasionally bear when available but generally, they depended on rabbits and other small animals, which were far more abundant. The rabbit drive was a big event, as a whole encampment worked together to force rabbits into a net. They would “surround a large space . . . and advance concentrically toward the net beating the bushes and shouting and screaming. The rabbits are started up and they shoot at them with arrows . . . and driving the remainder into the net where they are entangled and shot.”<sup>32</sup> Paiutes could catch a couple dozen rabbits this way when lucky. Afterwards, they divided up the meat and used the fur to make blankets, which were a necessity during the winter months. Paiutes also ate reptiles at times. During his expedition to California in 1850, John C. Fremont observed that they “had long sticks, hooked at the end,

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<sup>30</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 86.

<sup>31</sup> Glendora Homer, interview by Sara Black, November 9, 2011, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Ed. Fowler, Don D. and Catherine S. Fowler. “Anthropology of the Numa: John Wesley Powell’s Manuscripts,” 48.

which they use in hauling out lizards, and other small animals, from their holes. During the day they occasionally roasted and ate lizards at our fires.”<sup>33</sup> Paiutes were creative when it came to food sources, and almost every type of animal was fair game in their arid landscape. Paiutes regularly ate insects, including grasshoppers and crickets which were roasted on a tray like seeds and ground into a meal. Ants were fried and eaten in a cornmeal mush, adding a bacon-like flavor.<sup>34</sup> For Paiutes, their landscape had an abundance of food that only required work and imagination in order to take advantage of it.

### *Paiute Farming*

Farming also served an important substantive and cultural activity among Paiute groups. When Atanasio Dominguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante, the exploring Catholic Priests, traveled through Utah in 1776 in their search for trade routes, they admired the long rows of corn grown in Paiute fields, calling them a “primitive pergola with plenty of ears and shocks of maize . . . .”<sup>35</sup> Nearly a century later, Mormon settlers also took note of Paiute farms and their techniques, observing how Paiutes grubbed and burned trees to clear land and built “an irrigating canal cut round the base of the mountain about ½ mile in length” to water their crops at Ash Creek near present day Toquerville.<sup>36</sup> Paiutes cultivated a variety of domestic and wild crops, such as corn, potatoes, watermelon, beans as well as amaranth, devil’s claw, and sunflowers.<sup>37</sup> All Paiutes farmed at least a certain extent but the degree of work and time put into these farms varied from Paiute group to Paiute group. For the communities in the St. George and Muddy

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<sup>33</sup> Fremont, J. C. *The Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, Oregon and California*. (Buffalo: Geo. H. Derby and Company, 1851), 389.

<sup>34</sup> Ed. Fowler and Fowler. “Anthropology of the Numa: John Wesley Powell’s Manuscripts,” 48.

<sup>35</sup> Ed. Warner, Ted. *The Dominguez-Escalante Journal: Their Expedition through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico in 1776* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 91.

<sup>36</sup> Ed. Brooks, Juanita. *Journal of the Southern Indian Mission* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1972), 67.

<sup>37</sup> Knack. *Boundaries Between*, 15

River Basins, farming was an elaborate venture where a series of ditches and canals moved water to plots of a dozen acres or more at a time. These irrigation systems could be quite sophisticated and extensive. Along the Santa Clara River in the 1850s, Mormon explorers described thirteen Paiute built dams and a large network of canals, which cultivated over one hundred acres and supported a Paiute community of about two hundred fifty.<sup>38</sup> For these Paiute bands, farming served as their major subsistence strategy and was a central part of their everyday lives. The wide, low-lying valleys where this type of farming took place were unique in Paiute territory, as most areas could not support this type of extensive cultivation. Farming, however, was important to all Paiute communities even when done a smaller scale.

Any dependable water source usually supported at least a few Paiute farms. These farms were generally about one acre in size and often clustered close together when there was enough water to support them.<sup>39</sup> Farming ranged from small, supplemental garden plots that were essentially abandoned until harvest to plots that were returned to every few days or left in the care of older relatives and small children.<sup>40</sup> The Kaibab band, centralized near Kanab Creek and on the Arizona Strip, practiced this type of farming, as they often grew gardens at the various spring sites along the Vermillion Cliffs. Anthropologist Isabel Kelly noted that these sites “were strategically situated . . . water was at hand; the juniper-dotted slopes of the backing scarps provided fuel; the desert flats were nearby for rabbit hunting and seed collecting; and the higher plateaus could be visited periodically for deer, pinenuts, and yucca fruit.”<sup>41</sup> This setup gave this particular band access to several types of food at once, revealing once again the general fluid and

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<sup>38</sup> ed. Brooks. *Journal of the Southern Indian Mission*, 68.

<sup>39</sup> Allison, Meegan, and Murray. “Archaeology and Archaeobotany of Southern Paiute Horticulture in the St. George Basin, Southwestern Utah,” *Kiva*, No. 4 (Summer 2008): 419-420.

<sup>40</sup> Kelly. “Southern Paiute Ethnography,” 36-41; Knack. *Boundaries Between*, 16.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

flexible nature of Paiute subsistence strategies and how intertwined both agricultural production and hunting/gathering were in Paiute survival.

Southern Paiutes in the Upper Virgin River valleys also farmed throughout the area. As one Kaibab elder stated, “All those little places (along the Virgin River) -- that is where the people had their corn fields.”<sup>42</sup> Farming largely took place near the confluence of the north and east forks of the Virgin River “where they could plant and hunt a little.” Another noted that, “The Springdale area was the most valuable area on the Virgin River because it was where they lived mostly and made their farms.”<sup>43</sup> Paiute elders also specifically discussed farming near Weeping Rock, calling it *Pah Teepits* (water seep) and *Yahadid tumpi* (crying rock). They described how “They would camp anywhere in there. They had gardens in there. They would stay there in the winter because it was a warm place with lots of animals and plants.” They also interpreted the rock art at Birch Creek, near the Three Patriarchs, as sign of Paiute farming in that section as well.<sup>44</sup> Paiutes farmed wherever conditions were favorable as many places were along the Upper Virgin River, producing enough to support themselves.

### *Land and Paiute Culture*

The flexible subsistence strategies Paiutes adopted reflected both the complexity of their environment and how they viewed their relationship with the land. As a people who were placed to live within this landscape specifically, the Paiutes saw themselves as having the “supernatural responsibility to protect and manage the land.”<sup>45</sup> Through the habitual occupation of certain

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<sup>42</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 87.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 87, 89.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 37.



places, Paiutes expressed a sense of ownership that translated into a caretaker role.<sup>46</sup> This role often guided their interactions with the land and its resources and became the foundation of certain rituals and practices. Paiutes believed that all aspects of their environment were alive and needed to be treated with respect and the right amount of care or they risked their possible loss.

As Angelita Bullets, a Paiute elder, explained,

“It is taught that one must consider that rocks, trees, animals, mountains and all other things are on the same level as man. Each has a purpose in life, and the one who created every living thing on this earth placed all living things here to interact with one another. Therefore, it is customary to show respect to everything that must be disturbed. There is mutual regard between man and these things, each having something to share and each being dependent on the other for life.”<sup>47</sup>

Paiutes viewed themselves as living in a delicate balance with nature. They saw themselves and everything around them as interwoven, requiring their interaction and care in order to ensure the continued productivity of their lands. This belief affected how Paiutes interacted with and utilized their resources, shaping their perception of place in connection to the use of those resources.

Water and watering places, particularly because of their scarcity, took on great importance and necessitated certain actions in order to ensure that water continued to flow. In the course of their seasonal movements, Paiutes relied on a variety of water sources. Rivers, creeks, and springs provided the most, of course, but in some places, water only existed as puddles that formed in shallow, sandstone basins after a rain storm. In others, water might be only a “damp ‘seep,’” a trickling spring covered in sand and vegetation that had to be cleared off and dug down in order to provide enough water for a traveling family.<sup>48</sup> Paiute survival depended on both large and small water sources, so the rituals and practices Paiutes performed to protect them took on

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<sup>46</sup> Kelly. “Southern Paiute Ethnography,” 7.

<sup>47</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 78.

<sup>48</sup> Knack. *Boundaries Between*, 13.

great significance. During her interview, Glendora Homer explained “If you don’t take care of the springs, you don’t do the offerings and prayers at the springs, take care of that water, keep it clean, and keep the animals out of there, it will eventually be covered up . . . [if] nobody pays attention to it anymore . . . they’re gone.”<sup>49</sup> Paiute usage had a direct effect on the water, as failure to act in the proper way led to its disappearance and could even endanger a whole community. Paiutes believed that water had rights and human-like qualities; and if misused, it could cause great damage, which could take the form of floods or pointed attacks on specific persons.<sup>50</sup> Water was the most important and one of the scarcest resources in the Paiute landscape. They saw it as a powerful force that had to be respected and cared for in order to ensure the survival of their people and gain the benefits of its powerful spirit.

This role as caretaker also extended to include plants. Glendora Homer emphasized the need to respect the plants, as they, like water and everything else, had a life force. She described how plants will “show you that they are a living thing. When they’re pollinating, they’ll shake themselves and puff . . . a big white puff will come out of it . . . so they are all living, breathing things. And you have to be respectful of that.” When harvesting a plant, “You have to ask the plant permission . . . and tell that plant why you’re taking those berries, and you thank that plant, and you only take enough. Leave berries there for the animals too. You don’t get so greedy that you take everything or you yank it out of the ground. You don’t ever do that.”<sup>51</sup> Paiutes saw themselves both as caretakers and members of a community that included all aspects of their environment. Disrespecting a plant or taking too much disrupted that community and the balance of relationships that existed. Failing to use the plants also negatively impacted the community. Paiutes noted that plants they had cut and used frequently grew back better. Willow branches

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<sup>49</sup> Glendora Homer, interview by Sara Black, November 9, 2011, 19.

<sup>50</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 212.

<sup>51</sup> Glendora Homer, interview by Sara Black, November 9, 2011, 10-11.

were straighter and more useful in basketry, medicinal plants produced more leaves, etc. Paiutes attributed these improvements to their actions, as Angelita Bullets explained “plant resources are at a maximum when they are pruned by utilization, and they will reoccur in their most advantageous state. In a traditional context, it is said that if plants aren't used, then they will disappear and be gone from the People forever.”<sup>52</sup> Paiutes saw their interactions with plants as an absolute necessity, as not using them put them at risk for their loss. Talking to the plant, explaining why it was needed, and asking its spirit for aid were also a necessary part of this interaction, as they believed “the plant’s power will not help or heal” if not done.<sup>53</sup> Not utilizing plants and failing to interact with them in prescribed ways damaged Paiute’s ability to use them. In this relationship, the Southern Paiutes were the guardians of their lands’ appropriate balance and thus pivotal figures in their larger environmental community.

Animals required certain practices to be conducted to ensure their abundance and Paiutes’ hunting success as well. As noted above, Paiutes depended on hunting as a major food source. Bighorn sheep, antelope, deer, and rabbits were all a part of the Paiute diet when they could be had. Paiutes had to observe certain cultural practices in order to respect the animal and avoid the negative consequences of inappropriate behaviors. In the oral histories gathered during the 1980s, Eleanor Tom, a member of the Shivwits band, discussed how young boys after their first hunt showed respect for the deer and their elders by giving the meat away to the older members of the tribe. If he refused and ate the meat, the boy would become unlucky in future hunts because of the disrespect he showed to both the animal and his elders.<sup>54</sup> This cultural practice demonstrated how Paiute actions of respect not only affected their relationship with resources

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<sup>52</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 77.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>54</sup> “Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah: Paiute Oral History Project 11 1986-1987,” 18. Southern Utah University Special Collections

but also their social relationships within their bands. Showing proper respect to the animal in this situation translated to being generous with the meat and abstaining from consuming it. This cultural practice worked to preserve and strengthen relationships within the band and within the larger environmental community they lived in, creating ties of respect that would benefit the young hunter for a lifetime.

### *Zion's Significance in Paiute Culture*

The Southern Paiute interaction with Upper Virgin eco-scape and Zion Canyon also reflected these same cultural practices and beliefs. Within Zion Canyon, there were numerous sites Paiutes considered to be sacred, spiritual places. Weeping Rock was particularly important, as Paiutes believed the water had healing properties when drunk or bathed in. Prayers and offerings had to be made in order to receive the blessings of the spring. One Paiute woman described how her grandmother “would cut a piece of bread and spread out to the four directions” in order to ensure nothing bad happened after camping. The plants that grew near the water were also seen as particularly powerful and had “both medicinal and ceremonial purposes.”<sup>55</sup> Collecting these plants and others in the canyon served specific uses as one Paiute elder stated, “We didn't go there (Zion Canyon) to gather often, because the plants belong to the spirits. We did gather momomp (*Datura meteloides*) over there from Zion -- it is real strong -- special plant . . . Lots of medicine there. Must give a place or a plant something like a little rock if wish to pick it.”<sup>56</sup> Certain mountains were also significant. Paiute elders described the Great White Throne and Angel's Landing in particular, as they were used “for worship, seeking power,

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<sup>55</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 86, 155.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 87.

and teaching younger people about the importance of the place.”<sup>57</sup> Zion overall was important place for the Paiutes who utilized the canyon. It was another area where Paiutes conducted traditional activities and expressed their spiritual selves. In the canyon, Paiutes expressed their caretaker role through their usage of its resources and the observance of the necessary codes of behavior.

Paiutes saw themselves as uniquely and intrinsically tied to their landscape in both a physical and spiritual sense. Through the landscape, they not only gained their subsistence but also practiced their belief systems. Paiutes used the land to teach their children both their lifeways and their religion and culture. It defined who they were as a people, their role in the world, and their future. Zion Canyon and the Upper Virgin River valley were important because they were a part of this homeland. It was another location in which they grew, gathered, hunted their food, and expressed themselves spiritually. For Paiutes, this area and the surrounding lands had always been home and served as the center of their communities. From the Paiute perspective, this land was the good land, the place that was special and unique and the place where the Paiutes were chosen to live. This connection to their homeland defined the Paiute identity and guided many of their actions and the decisions that they made in their day to day life.

This also proved to be the case once their lands became a thoroughfare for American emigrants on their way to California during the mid-nineteenth century and remained a driving influence when another group settled down next to the Paiutes on their own lands. These newcomers came with their own understandings of what the Paiute homeland was and what they wanted it to be. For them, these lands were a proving ground, a test, as well as a celestial and worldly promise that could only be fulfilled through hard work and determination. It was to be a

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 159

part of their refuge, a place that they could establish themselves and create a religious empire. These newcomers were the followers of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-day Saints, more commonly known as the Mormons, and unlike the other American emigrant groups Paiutes had dealt with, they were here to stay.

## CHAPTER TWO: MORMON SETTLERS-BUILDING ZION IN THE DESERT

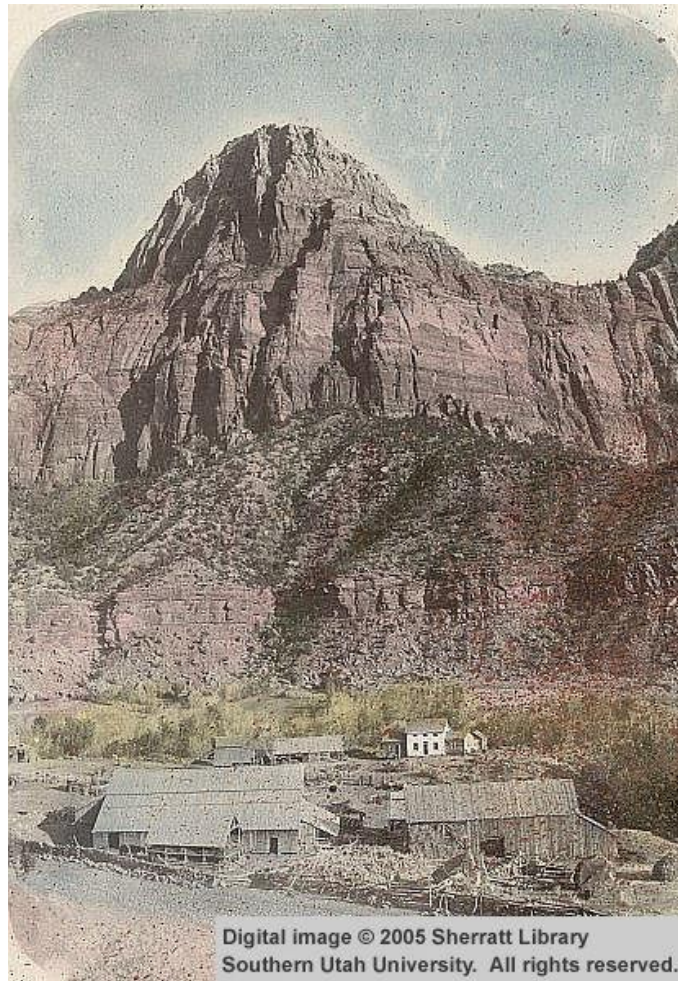


FIGURE 2: CRAWFORD FAMILY HOMESTEAD NEAR PRESENT-DAY ZION HUMAN HISTORY MUSEUM. Courtesy of Gerald Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University

Mormon settlers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 looking for a land of their own. The Mormon religion originated in upstate New York in the early 1800's and was one of numerous restorative Christian sects that arose in the United States as a part of the Second Great Awakening. The church's founder and prophet, Joseph Smith Jr., claimed to have been visited by Jesus Christ and other key figures from the Bible. The Angel Moroni instructed Smith where to find and translate a collection of metal plates that told the story of an Israelite group that traveled

to the Americas before the coming of Christ. These plates essentially served as another scriptural text, and described the rise and fall of Judaism and Christianity in the New World before European colonization. According to Smith, these Israelites divided themselves into two groups after their arrival, called the Nephites and Lamanites. Over the centuries, these groups warred with one another and at times, one group would be god-fearing and righteous while the other would be wicked. They were visited by Christ after his resurrection and received the gospel, but eventually, the Nephites were completely wiped out, and the surviving Lamanites forgot their Israelite identity and evolved into the various Native American tribes Europeans encountered. Smith translated the plates and published the work in 1830, calling it the Book of Mormon. That same year, Smith formally organized the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints (LDS) and began proselytizing heavily, converting thousands of people both in the U.S. and overseas within the church's first decade. Smith and his followers believed that they were restoring an ancient Christian church and that they needed a gathering place to bring all of the true church's followers together in order to form a new society. From the beginning, place was an extremely significant aspect of the Mormon Church and one that would dominate much of the church's future actions.

A gathering place was extremely important in Mormon theology. Like many other of the other Christian sects formed during this period, Mormons believed that the Second Coming of Christ was a fairly imminent event. As the new chosen people, Mormons understood that it was their responsibility to establish a New Jerusalem or Zion in North America. Smith imagined it as well-ordered, paradisiacal city whose occupants were all devout followers of the Mormon faith. Both the Old Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem would be the only remaining cities on earth after the return of Christ, so the establishment and construction of this city was of the utmost



importance.<sup>58</sup> The location of where they would build this city changed several times. Joseph Smith believed that when Christ returned, he would appear in a location directionally the geographic opposite of Jerusalem, which he considered to be Jackson County, Missouri. In 1831, Smith encouraged his followers to begin settling in Independence, Missouri, but by the late 1830s, tensions between their non-Mormon neighbors, competition over space, and finally an order of extermination by the governor of the state forced Mormons to relocate to Commerce, Illinois. Smith renamed the city, Nauvoo, a word he claimed meant “beautiful plantation” and established a new temple site. In 1844, Smith expanded the idea of where Zion was and where it could be, stating “The whole of America is Zion itself from north to south . . . that it is the Zion where the mountain of the Lord should be . . . .”<sup>59</sup> This broadened concept of Zion had huge implications in regards to where Mormons could establish their gathering place and how large of an area such a place could encompass. Zion was no longer just a singular location but rather could be a whole territory and even the whole North American continent. For the time being, however, Smith and his followers were content to build their Zion in Illinois and focus on proselytizing efforts.

Persecutions and violence once again forced the movement of the Mormon gathering place. During the summer of 1844, tensions began to rise between Mormons and their neighbors. Local officials arrested Smith after he ordered the destruction of a newspaper press that had published negative articles on the church. While awaiting trial, Smith was killed by a vigilante mob in his jail cell. The majority of the Mormon Church’s followers (about 12,000 to 15,000)

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<sup>58</sup> Pratt, Orson. “The Earth—Its Fall, Redemption, and Final Destiny—The Eternal Abode of the Righteous,” *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 1, 47.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, Joseph. *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 6, (Salt Lake City: Desert Book Company, 1950), 318-319.

regrouped under the leadership of Brigham Young, a close associate of Smith's.<sup>60</sup> Young wanted to find and establish a new Zion for the church's followers away from the persecution and interference of outsiders beyond the Rocky Mountains. It was an idea that Smith had considered as well before his death, but Young was determined to make it a reality. Young and other church officials ultimately identified the Great Basin as the ideal location because of its climate and isolation. There, they believed, they could create a religious empire, a new *Zion* of the west, free from persecution and the interference of outsiders. For Mormons, Utah symbolized both religious freedom and a major step towards the fulfillment of their faith's prophecies and their destiny as a people.

Practicality and religious motivations both played a major role in the settlement of Utah. Brigham Young and his fellow church leaders whole heartedly embraced the idea of an expanded Zion that Smith had suggested towards the end of his life. Young wanted to create a large, separate religious empire in the West that would be expansive enough to accommodate all of the church's members and that had a wealth of natural resources and differing climates for agricultural production. Mormon leaders marked out all of Utah, most of California and Nevada and parts of Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, and Oregon as their territory and originally named it *Deseret*, which meant "beehive."<sup>61</sup> This name conveyed church leaders' expectations that Mormons, as the bees, would busily work to support the church and create communities that expressed and upheld its religious teachings. "Building up Zion" became the church's mantra and served as a rallying call for colonization efforts throughout the territory, which began almost

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<sup>60</sup> Farmer, Jared. *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 38.

<sup>61</sup> Deseret was a hope for church leaders rather than a reality. After the Mexican-American War ended in 1848 and gold was discovered in California in 1849, the idea that Mormons could hold onto such a large swath of territory became untenable. Thousands of U.S. emigrants moved to these areas, quickly outpacing the Mormon populations. The colonies Mormons had established both in California and Nevada in the 1850s were abandoned as Mormons chose to consolidate their populations in Utah. Mormons continued to expand and did have settlements in Arizona and Idaho, but they never managed to create the large, religious empire of Deseret.

immediately. Within the first five years of settlement, Mormons had established over a half-dozen communities both north and south of Salt Lake as well as conducted several exploratory expeditions for future settlement sites. Church leaders saw this quick expansion as necessary for several reasons. The church's proselytizing efforts brought thousands of new "saints" into the territory every year, and they needed more space in which to settle them. Controlling more land also would serve to bolster Mormon claims to the Utah landscape in general. As stated in 1881 by then president of the church, John Taylor:

"Whenever there is a habitable place, Latter-day Saints are living on it, and consequently living in these little places they control the mountains and the country . . . And suppose we did not have these little forbidding barren places, the little springs and little rivulets that come along reminding one of oases in the deserts—if we did not have them, we could not have the country but we do have them and God given us possession of them."<sup>62</sup>

By spreading out communities and dominating waterways, Mormons ensured that the territory and its resources would remain under their control. Colonization of the landscape was vital to strengthen the church and establish Mormon ownership. The small communities created were part of a network that connected individual Mormons to the land and the land to the church, establishing a base the people could draw from to "build Zion" out of the new territory.

"Building up Zion" took many forms for church members, as the idea of Zion was both a physical as well as spiritual ideal. Charles Lowell Walker, a devout member and early St. George pioneer, wrote "it took some Men to preach, some to build up Zion, and He that was at work making roads or adobies [*sic*], quarrying rock, building Bridges, was fulfilling his mission just as much as him that was preaching the Gospel."<sup>63</sup> Building saw mills, clearing land, planting orchards all became religious acts as settlers were transmuting the landscape, altering it from its

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<sup>62</sup> Taylor, John. "The Settling of Southern Utah—Building the Temple." *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 23 (1881): 17.

<sup>63</sup>Ed. Larson, A Karl and Katherine Miles Larson. *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker, Vol. 1*(Logan: Utah State University Press, 1980), 193.

“natural wilderness” state to a dwelling place of God. Mormons interpreted any of their successes as proof of their uniqueness and role as a chosen people. As stated in the Book of Mormon, “For the Lord shall comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.”<sup>64</sup> Mormons took this line of scripture literally and believed God would bless the actions taken by the church and help them in their efforts to expand and strengthen its influence. Any failures were seen as failures of the people rather than the church, as one church leader reminded his congregation “The Lord blesses the land in proportion as they are willing to do good.”<sup>65</sup> This belief system would challenge many Mormon settlers, as it ignored many environmental realities and especially ignored the presence and influence of Native peoples on the landscape. Still, by working towards a common goal of building the church, church members believed they were also transforming themselves. Any sacrifices they made and any hardships they endured became symbols of their own worthiness and faith. As Brigham Young reflected, “this is a hard land in which to get a living. Now I am very thankful for the land just as it is. It is a splendid country to rear Saints in.”<sup>66</sup> Through the act of working the land and turning it into their agrarian ideal, Mormons were both establishing the physical and spiritual Zion.

Young and most members of the church also embraced the isolation of living beyond the Rockies. Most Mormons felt embittered towards the U.S. in general because of the persecutions they experienced. Mormons frequently compared their experiences to those of the Jews escaping Egypt and referred to Utah as their “promised land,” which they hoped could “be made to

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<sup>64</sup> *The Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 8:3.

<sup>65</sup> Smith, George A. “Difficulties With Which the Church Has Had to Contend in Its Establishment in Utah” *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9 (1861): 116.

<sup>66</sup> Bleak, James. *Annals of Southern Utah Mission Book B*, unpublished manuscript, Dixie State University Special Collections and Archives, Series V, 128.

produce wine, milk, honey & oil. . . .”<sup>67</sup> By being separate from the U.S., Mormons believed they would be safe from more persecution as well as protected from the wicked influences of non-believers. This isolation also meant that these Mormon communities needed to be largely self-sufficient. Goods and supplies literally took months to arrive to Utah territory and generally were prohibitively expensive, as they had to be brought by wagon. Church leaders recognized this problem and directed the expansion of Utah settlements to areas with natural resources the territory needed, so they could “produce what could not be produced in the Salt Lake Basin” as stated by Brigham Young.<sup>68</sup> For the Mormon people, the settling of Utah served as a sacred act with biblical parallels as well as served their basic needs.

#### *Mormon Settlement in Southern Utah and the Upper Virgin River Valley*

Mormons specifically settled in southern Utah to grow cotton. Young established the test communities of Harmony (1852), Washington (1857), Toquerville (1857), and Grafton (1859) to experiment with grapes, olives, cotton, and other semi-tropical species in the mild, sunny southern Utah climate. By 1861, their sometimes-success with cotton convinced Young to call over 300 families to settle the region and begin growing the crop in earnest.<sup>69</sup> The outbreak of the Civil War sparked Young’s strong interest in the product, as Mormons needed cotton within the territory, and he and other Mormon leaders believed that Utah’s “Dixie” could become a major supplier of the material to California and other states.<sup>70</sup> Young asked Erastus Snow and Orson Pratt, both members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—a high ranking governing

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<sup>67</sup> Ed. Beecher, Maureen Ursenbach. *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000), 122.

<sup>68</sup> Bleak, James. *Annals of Southern Utah Mission Book B*, 212.

<sup>69</sup> Larson, Karl. “*I Was Called to Dixie*”: *Unique Experiences in Mormon Pioneering* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961, 20-25; Bleak, *Annals of Southern Utah Mission Book A*, 62.

<sup>70</sup> Bleak, *Annals of Southern Utah Mission Book A*, 45.

body within the church, to lead the Southern Utah Mission. Snow and Pratt were responsible for establishing church infrastructure, determining settlement locations, and encouraging settlers to meet expectations regarding cotton production.<sup>71</sup> Settlers essentially would trade their cotton for foodstuffs produced by other communities. Settlers could also sell their surpluses to outside non-Mormon communities. In 1863, farmers could expect at minimum 53 cents per 100 lbs. of cotton according to the Cotton Official Statistics listed by church historian James Bleak in the *Annals of the Southern Utah Mission*.<sup>72</sup> Mormons saw cotton as an economic gateway. Not only would it allow them to build Zion, providing the raw materials needed by other communities, but they also hoped to fill the economic niche formerly occupied by the rebelling South and profit from the disunion.

Environmental factors, such as access to water and ease of irrigation, determined the size and location of Mormon settlements. Nephi Johnson, a Mormon missionary and scout, surveyed the upper Virgin valley in 1858 and possibly became the first Euro-American to view the canyon.<sup>73</sup> In his autobiography, he simply recorded that

“I went up the river to where Springdale now is. I also went up the East Fork of the river to where Shonesburg was afterwards located. I then went down the river to where Virgin City is. I looked over the country and decided that settlement could be made there.”<sup>74</sup>

This description does not provide much way in understanding how Johnson reacted to the canyon, but it does reveal the priorities of early Mormon settlers. Land with adequate irrigable farmland was the central concern and determined settlement patterns. Erastus Snow originally focused on the Upper Virgin Valley near Grafton for settlement. However, the more in-depth surveys performed by George A. Smith, Horace G. Eldredge, Chandler Holbrook and others in

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>73</sup> Jesse N. Smith, another Mormon surveyor, had also traveled through Parunuweap canyon and ended up near Springdale a few weeks before Nephi Johnson, but Johnson may have gone up further and has long been credited with the honor of seeing Zion first.

<sup>74</sup> Johnson, Nephi. Autobiography, unpublished manuscript, Gerald Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University, 2.

1861 found that only “about 1000 acres . . . could be irrigated,” certainly not enough land to provide for the bulk of the settlers’ needs.<sup>75</sup> Snow and the other leaders eventually chose to send 50 families to the upper valley while the majority would be settled in St. George.<sup>76</sup> This division firmly established St. George as center of the largest economic activities while the settlements along the upper part of the Virgin River would remain on the periphery. As an agricultural site, Zion Canyon and the Upper Virgin Valley as a whole were too remote and limited in space to house many families at a time. Erastus Snow’s account of the canyon presented an ominous picture to the people as a future place for settlement as “the mountains close in leaving but a narrow gorge . . . leaving no room for passage of man or beast.”<sup>77</sup> As a settlement location, Zion Canyon and the surrounding valley were just too small to support the large population first envisioned living there. The church, however, still expected the settlers who came to reside in this remote area to be productive and add their strength to the building of their religious empire.

In the early years of settlement, Mormons in the Upper Virgin Valley and Zion Canyon struggled to build a strong agricultural economy. For the first two years, settlers worked hard to produce cotton and sorghum—a plant that makes a molasses-like syrup-- both of which were in much demand in the northern settlements. In 1863, Anson Perry Winsor, the Mormon bishop for Grafton and its surrounding settlements, proudly reported that they grew 4,784 lbs. of cotton and made 5,000 gallons of molasses. Brigham Dalton, one of the earliest settlers in Rockville, recalled how “the raw cotton was seeded by hand, corded spun and wove into cloth by the womon folks.”<sup>78</sup> Settlers put much of their time and energy in processing these crops for trade, as mandated by the church; however, the exchange rate for these items was unexpectedly low. The

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<sup>75</sup> Bleak, *Annals of Southern Utah Mission Book A*, 65.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

<sup>78</sup> “Historical Sketch of Brigham Dalton,” George A. Croft Collection, Box 1 Folder 8. Gerald Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University.

Dixie settlements ended up short on food, and by 1864, they began cutting back on cotton and focused on growing their own provisions. The farming done in Zion Canyon reflected this focus. Settlers maintained fields and allowed their livestock to pasture in the canyon while a few settlers actually built their homes there. Isaac Behunin lived near what is now Zion Lodge, William Heaps had his home just below the lower Emerald Pool, John Rolfe settled some of his family in the Grotto, and William Crawford established his home at Oak Creek behind the current Zion Human History Museum. There, settlers planted peach orchards, grew corn, potatoes, wheat, and supplemented with cotton and sorghum. The early years of settlement demonstrated the problems with the church's self-sufficient economic model, but these struggles along with the successes defined Mormon life and gave meanings to the land in Zion Canyon and elsewhere that connected the settlers to the landscape.

### *Mormons and Paiutes: Compromise and Conflict in Southern Utah*

Mormons, of course, were not alone as they struggled in this challenging new landscape. Southern Paiute bands occupied all of the areas Mormons had planned to settle in southern Utah and continued living alongside Mormons after settlement. These two groups were similar in the fact that they both believed that the southern Utah landscape was religiously and economically significant but in completely different ways. As discussed previously, for Paiutes, the land was their generational homeland whose rich resources provided for them and defined them spiritually. For Mormons, it was a barren land that had to be transformed from its "wild and unusable state" to one that fit their agrarian ideals and become a part of Zion. Mormons and Paiutes came from two very different cultural worlds and social-political structures, which created many problems that sometimes turned violent as each imposed their perspectives and



expectations on the other. Mormons believed they had a divine right to the landscape. Paiutes and other native peoples could live there in theory, but only on the condition that they convert to the Mormon faith and assimilate into their culture. This was an ideal supported by the church, but most often in practice, Mormon settlers and church leaders saw Native peoples as irreconcilably alien. In the end, they generally viewed and treated Native peoples as nuisances or worse and sought their removal. Paiutes, of course, had their own cultural views and goals. The early part of the nineteenth century was one of the most turbulent periods in Paiute history, and initially, many Paiutes hoped Mormon settlement would help protect their people from outsiders and maintain their homeland. Both groups attempted to use the other for their own benefit and incorporate each other into their own cultural worlds. Paiutes made numerous concessions in order to survive in an increasingly Mormon dominated landscape. Ultimately, however, Mormon movement into southern Utah greatly altered the Paiutes, their perceptions of themselves and their relationship to the landscape, creating numerous lasting and devastating consequences for Paiutes while strengthening Mormon beliefs and perceptions of the landscape.

Before Mormon settlement, Paiutes had experienced numerous changes that put enormous pressure on their society. After the exploring party led by Spanish Franciscan friars Atanasio Dominguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante in 1776 came through Paiute territory, Paiute lands opened up to Spanish and Euro-American influences. Utes, a large equestrian tribe to the north, began capturing and selling Paiutes as slaves in order to gain more firearms and other goods from Spanish and later Mexican traders.<sup>79</sup> Paiutes were unable to defend themselves

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<sup>79</sup> The slave trade that connected Paiute slaves to Ute raiders and finally to Mexican and Euro-American buyers was enormously complex. In this paper, I was unable to truly explore this topic in any real depth or give it the attention it really deserves, as it was not the primary focus of this thesis. Readers should explore the following in order to gain a greater understanding of this difficult and complex subject: Brooks, James F. *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Holt, Ronald. *Beneath These Red Cliffs: An Ethnohistory of the Utah Paiutes* (Albuquerque: University of New

successfully from their better armed neighbors and experienced significant population loss, as Utes targeted their women and children, upending their demographic sex ratios. This loss reduced Paiutes' abilities to recover naturally from the new diseases they were also exposed to from their increased contact with Euro-Americans. Several epidemics of measles, small pox, and other European diseases broke out among Paiute populations starting in the early 1800s and continuing through the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>80</sup> These diseases devastated Paiutes and strained their political and social structures, as they removed whole kinship links, which Paiutes depended on for mutual protection and aid.

Emigrant overland travel also increased during the mid-1800s, especially once gold was discovered in California in 1849. These emigrants usually went through Paiute lands following the well-established Spanish Trail, bringing cattle, oxen, and other livestock with them, which ate up many of the grasses and plants Paiutes depended on. Paiutes attempted to take advantage of the situation by stealing livestock and occasionally killing straggling emigrants. Famous explorer, John C. Fremont, compared them to "wolves" which "lurk . . . between the rocks along the road," giving Paiutes a savage reputation. Fremont's report of the area was widely read and such comparisons encouraged others to not see or treat Paiutes as people. They were hungry animals who preyed upon emigrants, ate lizards, and "whose sole occupation [was] to procure food sufficient to support existence."<sup>81</sup> They were therefore deemed unworthy of respect, which served to justify poor treatment of all Paiutes. Emigrants raided Paiute stores when they came across them and killed Paiutes if suspected of taking their livestock. These actions further

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Mexico Press, 1992); and Knack, Martha C. *Boundaries Between: The Southern Paiutes 1775-1995* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

<sup>80</sup> Ed. Erwin G. and Elisabeth K. Gudde. *Exploring with Fremont: The Private Diaries of Charles Preuss, Cartographer for John C. Fremont on His First, Second, and Fourth Expeditions to the Far West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 130

<sup>81</sup> Fremont, J. C. *The Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, Oregon and California*. (Buffalo: Derby and Mulligan, 1853), 389.

stressed Paiute populations, encouraging the behavior for which American emigrants admonished them. It is little wonder that when Mormons began moving southward, preaching conversion and making promises of aid, that Paiutes saw this as an opportunity to form a possible alliance that could benefit them.

Mormons had a strong religious motivation to establish good relations with the Paiutes. As mentioned earlier, Mormons believed Paiutes, along with all Native American groups, were really Lamanites, a lost Israelite tribe cursed with dark skin that had destroyed the Nephites. Mormons viewed Lamanites as inherently wicked, as they had rejected the old Christian sect and forgotten their true ancestry. The Book of Mormon stated “they did become an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety, and did seek in the wilderness for beasts of prey.”<sup>82</sup> This did not make Native peoples irredeemable, however. Mormons believed that one of the main purposes of their religion was “to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever.”<sup>83</sup> In other words, Native peoples needed to be converted, and Mormons needed to be near Native settlements in order to “bring them back to God.” This paternalistic view dominated Mormon interactions with Paiutes, as they saw them as wayward children. Mormons believed that through their interaction, they could redeem the Lamanites and make them once again a “white and delightsome people,” as they were before their fall.<sup>84</sup> Native peoples had an important purpose to serve once they converted, as they would become the battle axe of the Lord in the final days, leading to the second coming of Christ. For Mormons, Paiutes existed just as

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<sup>82</sup> *The Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 5:24.

<sup>83</sup> *The Book of Mormon*, title page.

<sup>84</sup> *The Book of Mormon*, title page. Mormons were unsure how this transformation would take place. Brigham Young suggested that they would become white over the years through intermarriage. Some Mormons interpreted this literally and expected it to happen once the Lamanite had truly converted. Some actually claim to have seen this happen. In recent years, the Mormon church has shied away from this all together and has actually changed the wording to read “pure and delightsome” in copies of the *Book of Mormon* published in the last few years, including the online edition.

another element they were trying to incorporate in the religious landscape they were creating. In many ways, Paiutes were a personification of the wilderness Mormons were attempting to turn into a garden, as they worked to build Zion out of the Utah landscape. This view, of course, failed to take into account that Paiutes were an independent people with their own culture and history who would also attempt to bring Mormons in line with their own cultural practices.

Initially, Paiutes saw Mormon settlement as a benefit. Mormon missionaries were the first to have regular contact with Paiute bands and made some promising reassurances to Paiute headmen. In 1854, Missionary Thomas Brown reported, “They rejoiced much to hear that the Big Captain [Brigham Young] had told Walker [a Ute leader] to quit stealing their Squaws & children and that we should write to the Big Captain for ploughs, spades &c. and probably we might come and help them next year.”<sup>85</sup> In exchange for this help, Mormons hoped to convert more Paiutes and gain their cooperation with Mormon settlement in southern Utah. This probably seemed like a reasonable exchange to Paiutes, as they would be gaining a buffer between themselves, Ute raiders and American emigrants. The promise of spades and other Mormon goods, especially guns, probably interested Paiutes as well. It is uncertain as to whether or not Paiutes understood Mormons intention to settle among them permanently, but at the very least, they saw their initial entry into their territory as an opportunity to regain some of their autonomy from the Utes and gain new technology.

Paiutes’ good will and cooperation were very necessary for Mormons. Paiutes had large communities at Santa Clara, Toquerville, and near the Rockville/Grafton area: all of which became some of the earliest Mormon towns in southern Utah. This was not coincidental, as these were obviously the best farmlands in the region. When Mormons first explored southern Utah in 1850, they noted the amount of land Paiutes irrigated and how successful those crops were,

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<sup>85</sup> Ed. Brooks, Juanita. *Journal of the Southern Indian Mission: Diary of Thomas Brown*, 68.

recording “we struck the Santa Clara here there is some good land cultivated . . . and some 3 wickeups well peopled all actively employed, here were 5 acres of good wheat partialy ripe, also corn, beans, &c . . . .”<sup>86</sup> Paiute farming success was a good indicator of possible Mormon farming success, and good relations were a necessary component so they could peaceably settle in those areas. Mormons understood that their settlements would in fact displace Paiute farms and communities, but they believed that Paiutes could continue to live near them in separate settlements on lands that could somehow be made productive. They imagined the Paiute as a yeoman farmer, converted to the Mormon faith and living like them.<sup>87</sup> This denied the reality of the landscape, however, and even the realities of Mormon population growth. Still, Mormons justified their occupation as the will of God. As stated by Brigham Young in a sermon addressing the displacement of Native peoples in 1866, “The Lord has brought us here and it is all right. We are not intruders, but we are here by the providence of God.”<sup>88</sup> Mormons believed their presence was ordained by God and that it was in the will of God for the Native peoples to be displaced in order to make way for them.

Mormons’ negative relations with the Utes in the northern Utah valleys worked to motivate good relations with the Paiutes as well. Mormons had clashed with the Utes over control of land in the Utah valley and resented Ute demands for livestock and other goods. This uneasy relationship finally erupted into a war in 1853. The so-called Walker War, named after Ute leader, Walkara, ended with Mormon dominance firmly established over Utah, but Mormons wanted to avoid such a conflict in their faraway southern settlements. Brigham Young instructed missionaries to “help the Indians in their work, and show that they feel an interest for them . . . . and they will have more confidence in you and your influence will be greater over them. In this

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>87</sup> Knack. *Boundaries Between*, 64.

<sup>88</sup> Young, Brigham. “Our Indian Relations—How to Deal with Them,” *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 11 (1866), 264.

way we shall be able ultimately to control and govern them.”<sup>89</sup> Mormons hoped to win over Paiutes by helping them and giving them access to Mormon welfare and goods. Paiute headmen were often the recipients of these goods, who in turn, gave them to their people, influencing Paiutes to do what Mormon leaders asked. This initial policy, however, did not stop hostile relations from forming at times. Numerous incidents of violence did occur between the two groups during the first two decades of settlement with Mormons and Paiutes acting as the aggressor. It also established that Mormon settlers would act as caretakers for the Paiutes for at least some period of time, a role both groups would come to resent. Ultimately, what Mormons were really seeking was power and control over Paiute territory, so it could be incorporated into the Mormon landscape. Paiutes, however, had their own agendas and sought to use Mormons to their own advantage.

As Mormons began to settle the area, Paiutes called upon their new neighbors to follow through with their promises of support. In 1855, Missionary Jacob Hamblin described how a group of Utes came to force Paiutes to sell them their children, stating:

“Amon and other Eutahs arrived to buy children the Lamanites called a council. I was invited in Amon wanted the piutes to go and bring in Childrin and he would buy them they refused and Said I had told them not to Sell their children he asked me if I had told them that this plased me in a peculiar fix I then told him I had if they did not want to Sell their Childrin . . . .”<sup>90</sup>

Paiutes accepted Mormon settlers into their territory with clear expectations that they would help them regain their autonomy from the Utes, and they did not hesitate to make this demand.

Paiutes even expected Mormons to defend them militarily when needed, as was the case in 1853 after Utes killed a Paiute near Parowan. Paiute leaders went to the settlers who

“told the Utes that they must not steal nor kill any Piedes; neither their women and children from that time forth; for so long as the Piedes would do right, we intended to protect them. They had helped us build the fort, and we promised the protection within its walls . . . . Neither did we

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<sup>89</sup> Ed. Brooks, Juanita. *Journal of the Southern Indian Mission: Diary of Thomas Brown*, 85-86.

<sup>90</sup> Ed. Starr, Helen. *Jacob Vernon Hamblin: Peacemaker in the Camp of the Lamanites* (St. George: privately printed, 1995), 53.

intend that they [the Utes] should sponge their living out of us as they had be[en] accustomed to; that we worked for our provisions, and so did the Piedes . . . we had guns and men who loved to use them; and we would fight sooner than be trampled upon.”<sup>91</sup>

For Paiutes, their relationship with Mormons was an alliance that provided them with protection and access to some Mormon goods while giving Mormons access to their lands and potential converts. By allowing Mormons into their world, Paiutes were looking to regain some autonomy over their landscape and minimize the impact the slave trade had on their people. Mormons fulfilled this end of the bargain, but as Paiutes and Mormons interacted more, they both attempted to draw the other into their own cultural worlds with their unique social obligations and behavioral expectations, creating new frustrations for both.

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<sup>91</sup> Lee, John D. “Letter to Editor, 24 January 1854,” *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, UT), Feb. 16 1854.



FIGURE 3: SHIVWIT PAIUTE MAN BEING BAPTIZED NEAR ST. GEORGE, UTAH BY MORMON MISSIONARY, DANIEL D. MACARTHUR. Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society, Peoples of Utah Photograph Collection.

Paiutes attempted to bring Mormons into their own cultural world by forming links with them that mimicked the kinship ties they had with other Paiute bands. Mormons were often surprised by the fact that Paiutes were eager for baptism into the Mormon religion. Jacob Hamblin described a scene similar to the image above as, “upwards of 100 desired baptism of them, and now those prefer being called Pahute Mormons to Pahutes.”<sup>92</sup> Baptism was a way for Paiutes to cement ties to Mormons. It was a statement that they were members of the same group and thus deserving of its protection from outside forces and as well as access to church resources. After baptism, Paiutes were almost always gifted with food and clothing, so it was

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<sup>92</sup> Ed. Brooks, Juanita. *Journal of the Southern Indian Mission: Diary of Thomas Brown*, 74.



also a direct way for them to immediately access those resources. Paiute elder, Glendora Homer, summarized the mindset Paiutes developed towards Mormonism, stating “if you let them baptize you, then they’ll give you food and they’re gonna give you clothing. They’ll help you out, and so . . . a lot of Indians got baptized for that reason.”<sup>93</sup> Baptism was a Mormon cultural device used to show one’s faith and commitment to the church and willingness to follow its rules and teachings. Paiutes did not interpret or use it in this manner, but instead utilized it to show Mormons that they were willing to compromise and adopt some of their traditions in exchange for much needed goods. In many ways, the picture above represents two groups talking past each other, as the act of baptism placed particular expectations on one another that neither group was willing to fully meet.

Although Paiutes sought the help of Mormons and to establish a strong relationship with them, they did not blindly accept Mormons actions and recognized the inconsistencies in their promises. One Paiute headman confronted Jacob Hamblin in 1856, telling him:

“you told us if we would hear you talk and plant corn the Lord would Bless us my corn is Dying for water what will I feed my Childrin next winter the Mormans are youseing the water in Pine Valley you Said they would not youse it thare onley for cutting pine logs we once could feed our children on Rabits when they was hungry now thare is no Rabits for us . . .”<sup>94</sup>

Mormons had promised Paiutes if they adhered to the Mormon way of life, they would prosper, which was not the case. Paiutes recognized that Mormon occupation of their lands was negatively affecting their ability to provide for themselves, but they also understood that they had no way of stopping Mormon settlement. Paiutes were outgunned and outmanned the moment Mormons entered their territory, but they did resist in both overt and subtle ways, attempting to maneuver Mormons to take actions that benefitted them.

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<sup>93</sup> Glendora Homer, interview by Sara Black, November 9, 2011, 4.

<sup>94</sup> Ed. Starr, Helen. *Jacob Vernon Hamblin: Peacemaker in the Camp of the Lamanites*, 54.

Mormons also attempted to incorporate Paiutes into their cultural world. Although Mormons did stop Utes from selling Paiutes as slaves to Mexican traders, Mormons did not actually end the slave trade but instead became active participants. Mormons regularly purchased Paiute children from Utes and later directly from Paiute parents through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mormons drew distinctions between themselves buying Native children and Mexicans buying Native children, which they outlawed in 1852. Brigham Young claimed that they were “purchasing them into freedom instead of slavery . . . where they could find that consideration pertaining not only to civilized, but humane and benevolent society.”<sup>95</sup> These children worked for Mormon families, but once they reached adulthood, they were freed. Mormons justified slavery as a tool to better assimilate Paiutes into their culture and also as a way to save these children’s lives. Multiple settlers tell a story about a Ute trader, often Walkara, who bashed in the skull of Paiute girl because Mormons refused to buy her. Elizabeth Kane, the wife of a federal official who visited Utah in the 1870s, was even given a version of it at one of the Mormon homes she visited.<sup>96</sup> Mormons used this story to illustrate why they *had* to participate in the slave trade, but it ignored the fact that Mormons frequently purchased children without an overhanging threat of violence. In one of the first recorded instances of a Mormon purchasing a Paiute child, the Mormons were the ones who were doing the actual threatening. According to settler George A. Smith, an ox had been killed and the Mormons discovered a Paiute man and his son nearby. They “told him he was the scoundrel that had shot it. He denied it but turned very pale . . . I told him it was too late to cry, but if he would let me have the boy, he might have the

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<sup>95</sup> Young, Brigham. “Letter to the Editor,” *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, UT) January 10, 1852.

<sup>96</sup> Kane, Elizabeth. *Twelve Mormon Homes: Visited in Succession on a Journey through Utah to Arizona* (Philadelphia, 1874), 14.

ox, to which he readily agreed.”<sup>97</sup> Mormons benefited from Paiute slavery, as it gave them a source of labor to draw upon in a land that required a great deal of physical labor to transform it into their Zion. They believed that this work also transformed the Paiute children doing it, teaching them how to act and think like them and making them a part of their society. This was a second-class status, but still Mormons thought it was better than allowing these children to continue to live in their “godless”, traditional ways.

Paiutes viewed the slave trade differently than Mormons. Many Paiutes voluntarily sold their children to Mormon settlers, but it was usually an instance in which they were either being coerced or were unable to care for them. Jacob Hamblin described the purchase of three girls who “the Indian said the Girls Father and Mother cryd to See them go but they had nothing to eat and it would be beter for the children than to Stay and Starve.”<sup>98</sup> As Mormon settlements grew, they used more and more resources and marginalized Paiute usage, stressing their populations. Paiutes could not compete with Mormons settlements and therefore had to sell some of their children in order to protect them from starvation and relieve stress on the larger Paiute groups. By doing this, Paiutes managed to continue living in their traditional way for several decades after Mormons’ arrival.

Paiutes also used the slave trade to protect a core aspect of Paiute identity, their homeland. For Paiutes, this exchange, not only became a way to ensure their children would be taken care, but it became a way of keeping them in Paiute territory and accessible to Paiutes. In George A. Smith’s story about the ox, the Paiute boy’s father told the Mormon settlers that “he wanted to see him dressed like a white man on his *return*. [emphasis added]”<sup>99</sup> Although he was

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<sup>97</sup> Smith, George A. “Journal of the Iron County Mission”, unpublished manuscript, 7. Utah State Historical Society Special Collections.

<sup>98</sup> Ed. Starr, Helen. *Jacob Hamblin Peacemaker in the Camp of the Lamanites*, 45.

<sup>99</sup> Smith, George A. “Journal of the Iron County Mission,” unpublished manuscript, 7.

selling his son, he still expected to see the child again and check on his welfare in the future. Children sold to Mormons were not necessarily seen as lost to their Paiute families. After reaching adulthood, many of these children returned to their Paiute relatives or at least continued living in the same area.<sup>100</sup> Many of these children also managed to learn about their own culture, language, and traditional practices despite Mormon efforts to assimilate them. Tony Tillohash was an excellent example of this. Raised from infancy in a Mormon family in St. George, Tillohash attended the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania where he became a resource for anthropologist and linguist, Edward Sapir. Tillohash spent most of his life with Euro-Americans, but he had still managed to accurately learn his native language and many of the Paiute traditional stories and songs by the time he was a young adult. Unfortunately, this was not the fate for most of the Paiute children sold into slavery, as many died from direct exposure to European diseases. Still, Paiutes used slavery as a way to maintain a central aspect of their cultural identity by keeping their children in the homeland even when they could not take care of them.

As Mormon settlements expanded and took over more and more lands, Paiutes interpreted and adapted to this marginalization in several ways. Mormons often claimed that Paiute headmen “invited” Mormons to live on their lands or out right “sold” them the property, but this was not Paiute interpretation of these actions. Lands that became occupied by Mormons were not seen as off limits to Paiutes. Paiutes continued to return to these areas during the farming season but with the expectation that Mormons would provide them with food or give them gleaning rights to the fields they once occupied at harvest. This was the case with a Paiute named Shunes who “sold” the Gifford family a plot of land near Rockville, which they called

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<sup>100</sup> Brooks, Juanita. Indian Relations on the Mormon Frontier,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* Vol. 12, no. 1 and 2 (1944): 33-39.

Shunesburg. Much to the annoyance of this family, Shunes and his followers returned every year, demanding food.<sup>101</sup> Mormons essentially became a part of the Paiute subsistence strategy, as Paiute leader and guide, Chuarrumpik explained to John Wesley Powell, “They have gone to Washington for wheat; or rather to glean the fields. . . The Mormons at Washington are now cutting their wheat; the Indian corn at Tokerville is not ripe. The Pai Utes have but little to eat; they want wheat very much; I think they have gone to glean in the Mormon fields.”<sup>102</sup> Paiutes expected that Mormons would reciprocate their sharing of land with a sharing of food. This was a policy that had been obvious at the beginning of Mormon settlement, as they had so quickly opened up church stores to Paiutes. However, as settlers continued to live in the area, it became a policy they would come to resent.

From the beginning, Mormon leaders had encouraged settlers to follow a “feed not fight” guideline with Paiutes. As Brigham Young explained,

“This is the land that they and their fathers have walked over and called their own . . . this is their home and we have taken possession of it, and occupy the land where they used to hunt . . . But now their game is gone, and they are left to starve . . . It is our duty to feed these poor ignorant Indians; we are living on their possessions and at their homes.”<sup>103</sup>

Many of the settlers resented this expectation, however, and failed to follow through with it. Rockville resident, Rebecca Dennett, described an incident where she used an old pistol to warn off an “old surly Indian” who had come to her home demanding food. He began threatening her, so she “snatched the old pistol . . . and told him to clear or I would kill him.”<sup>104</sup> Such hostile interactions were fairly common, as both groups became frustrated by the others’ failure to meet their expectations. Paiutes expected Mormons to follow their cultural practice of reciprocity by sharing food. Mormons, on the other hand, assumed Paiutes would eventually become self-

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<sup>101</sup> “Shonesburg” George A. Croft Collection, Box 1, Folder 3. Gerald Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University.

<sup>102</sup> Ed. Fowler, Don and Catherine. “The Anthropology of the Numa: John Wesley Powell’s Manuscripts,” 66.

<sup>103</sup> Young, Brigham. “Our Indian Relations,” *Journal of Discourses*, 11: 264.

<sup>104</sup> “Rockville.” George A. Croft Collection, Box 1, Folder 1, 8. Gerald Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University.

sufficient again and could make a living on the smaller, less productive parcels of land left to them without their direct aid. These misunderstandings and failures to adhere to the others' expectations bred animosity and smoldering feelings of resentment.

Some Upper Virgin River settlers did develop friendly relationships with Paiutes, however. Grafton resident, Bertha Wood Hall, described a generational friendship between her family and a Paiute family who lived in the area. Apparently the friendship began during the 1860s, when a Paiute woman named Mary “brought her newborn baby up and gave it to my mother . . . The Navajos were raiding at the time and she was afraid for her baby . . . Ma took the little baby and kept it for weeks.” Mary and her family settled in Grafton shortly after and assimilated into Mormon culture. Hall described Mary’s daughter-in-law, Sally, as “more like a white woman than an Indian” and remembered how she “used to come there to my mother’s place . . . she’d help her do the washing on the board. She’d pick Nen up and throw him in the air and say, ‘He-po-aun-o baby. Pretty baby. He-poo-auno baby.’ That meant good, real good. Those Indians were always so good to us.”<sup>105</sup> Hall felt very comfortable with this family and the close interactions between them continued for some time. The relationship between Mormons and Paiutes was a complex one, as Mormons constantly tried to reconcile the image of both “other” and “brother.” Close relationships could and did form between Paiutes and settlers, but as evident in this account, assimilation was a determining factor. The cultural and racial divide between Mormons and Paiutes continued to affect relations between the two peoples even after assimilation.

Tensions between Mormons and their Native neighbors escalated during the mid-1860s in what became known as the Black Hawk War. Navajo raiders from the south began entering

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<sup>105</sup> ed. Hall, Victor. “Life in Grafton,” *Washington County Historical Society*, accessed May 30, 2015, <http://wchsutah.org/documents/life-in-grafton.pdf> .

Mormon settlements, stealing livestock and occasionally attacking and killing settlers. The federal government had been trying to force Navajo peoples onto a reservation at Bosque Redondo in New Mexico. The Navajo resisted and began targeting Mormon settlements to steal livestock and other goods. Mormons made a good target. Their poor relations with the U.S. government made it unlikely that they could call upon aid from federal troops, and of course, they had a lot of livestock. Groups of Utes and Paiutes also most likely participated in these raids though to what extent will never be known. The murders of James Whitmore and his ranch hand, Robert McIntyre, at Pipe Spring, just over the border on the Arizona Strip during the winter of 1866, and the murders of Robert and Joseph Berry and Robert's wife Isabella that spring by Indians convinced church leaders to order the abandonment of several settlements and consolidate settlers in the larger towns. In the Upper Virgin River valley, settlers left Springdale, Grafton, Shunesburg, and Duncan's Retreat, resettling in Rockville and Virgin. The abandonment of these settlements represented a major threat to the creation of the Mormon landscape. Very rarely had Mormons actually abandoned settlements in Utah at this point. Settlers were extremely fearful of future attacks, putting the future of Mormon expansion at risk, as some settlers considered leaving the area all together.

These hostilities greatly affected Mormon-Paiute relations, as Mormons viewed any and all of their Native neighbors with suspicion. After the Whitmore and McIntyre's murders, Mormon leaders organized a posse to investigate. They found a group of Paiutes with several sheep skins and some of the dead men's clothing. Mormons blamed them for their murders and killed everyone in the group in retaliation. The innocence or guilt of these Paiutes remains a

mystery, but their deaths did increase tensions between the two groups.<sup>106</sup> Most Mormon settlers believed that the kinsmen of the slain Paiutes killed the Berrys in revenge. When visitor, Elizabeth Kane, inquired about the Berrys in 1871, she asked if the Navajos had murdered them and was told emphatically that “Why no, they were Pi-edes.”<sup>107</sup> Mormons responded to these suspicions in several ways. In 1868, church leaders offered presents to Indians who “professed friendship and volunteered aid to resist the incursions of the Navajos” and ordered settlers to refrain from attacking Indians in the southern Utah settlements. Some settlers were even encouraged to utilize Paiutes to help warn them when Navajos were in the area or help keep livestock.<sup>108</sup> In many cases, however, settlers responded with paranoia and attacked and killed several Paiutes who just seemed vaguely suspicious. These killings ranged from random singular deaths to group murder as in the case of Circleville, located in the Sevier River valley in 1866. Mormon settlers rounded up a local camp of Paiutes and executed them, because they had been seen talking to unknown Indians.<sup>109</sup> This was a period in which Mormons no longer looked at their Paiute neighbors with an interest to incorporate them into their religious landscape but rather viewed them as hostile aliens largely incompatible with their way of life. Although peace was achieved in 1871, the Black Hawk War changed the relations between Paiutes and Mormons fundamentally. The attitude, though generally not manifesting itself in physical hostilities, remained effectively hostile and became defined by a growing Mormon indifference to Paiutes’ welfare.

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<sup>106</sup> It seems likely that this group of Paiutes was innocent of the murders. Paiute oral histories all strongly assert that Navajo Indians killed them and even some Mormon accounts of the incident reveal an uncertainty of their guilt and disgust for the act.

<sup>107</sup> Kane, Elizabeth. *Twelve Mormon Homes*, 136.

<sup>108</sup> Bleak, James. *Annals of Southern Utah Book A*, 287.

<sup>109</sup> Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 83-85.



After the Black Hawk War ended, Mormon settlements began to expand once again as they reoccupied former town sites. Mormon interactions with Paiutes also began to recede into the background. During the war, Paiutes had largely responded to the animosities and growing competition with settlers by removing themselves to more isolated areas. In many ways, the 1870s saw Paiutes drop off of the Mormon radar. Mormons had expanded their settlements into Arizona and Nevada and chose to focus their conversion efforts on other Indian groups. The Hopi captured the imaginations of Mormon settlers especially, as their more sedentary way of life was more appealing to Mormons than the hunter/gatherer Paiute groups. There were also rumors that the Hopi were actually remnants of surviving Nephites rather than Lamanites and some even had white skin.<sup>110</sup> Paiutes simply became a problem that reemerged seasonally for Mormons when they would appear in Mormon towns, begging for food or wage labor before moving on. Amy Carrol Stark, a settler in Orderville, remembered how “In August after the wheat was cut, we knew without guessing that the Indians would again be pitching camp. Gleaning wheat in the fields up and down the Valley . . . was a seasonal, thrifty, and quite profitable enterprise.”<sup>111</sup> By the 1870s, Mormons no longer saw themselves as living in Indian country. They saw the Indians as living in theirs. They appropriated the landscape both physically and culturally and viewed Paiutes as the interlopers who interrupted and disturbed their daily lives. Paiutes still continued to be a presence, but they had receded both physically and figuratively from the Mormon viewpoint after the Black Hawk War. Mormons were less fearful of outside Indian attacks and thus turned their focus inward. This worked to build stronger connections within their own community and with each other, refining Zion as they grew more comfortable with living in southern Utah.

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<sup>110</sup> Kane, Elizabeth. *A Gentile Account of Life in Utah's Dixie: 1872-1873* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 112.

<sup>111</sup> Stark, Amy Carroll. *The Section*. (Raleigh: Lulu Press, 2011). PDF e-book, 3

CHAPTER THREE: MORMONS AND PAIUTES--BUILDING AND ALTERING  
CONNECTIONS IN THE UPPER VIRGIN VALLEY



FIGURE 4: SPRINGDALE SCHOOL OUTING TO WEEPING ROCK, 1908. Photograph Courtesy of the Gerald R. Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University

Mormons established a strong cultural life in the Upper Virgin Valley, connecting them to each other and the land. Despite the scattered nature of the homesteads and communities in and near Zion Canyon, settlers interacted with one another frequently as part of social activities related to the church and through farm/ranch work. Evan Greene and S.K. Gifford, both settlers in Rockville and Shunesburg, described in detail many of the different church meetings they attended, which encouraged the heads of household to pay their tithe [church tax] and be active members of the community.<sup>112</sup> Women also busied themselves, as they participated in the local Relief Societies in Springdale and Rockville, a religious and social organization founded in the

<sup>112</sup>Greene, John Y. Diary, 1871-1875, call number MS 1787, The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints History Library Collection, Salt Lake City Utah; Gifford, Samuel K. Diary, 1891-1895, call number MS 1856, The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

late 1860s that provided assistance to families in the community. Religion was at the core of these communities' cultural identity. Almost everyone settlers interacted with was Mormon, and having this same background worked to build strong relationships among the settlers and a strong group identity. Settlers also participated in non-church functions, such as drama classes in Rockville and dances at the Crawford home in Oak Creek.<sup>113</sup> Although settlers were still farming and working in the canyon, they also saw it as a place to play and take part in cultural and social activities. Mormon settlers established a rich cultural life in the Upper Virgin Valley, which reflected their connections to religion and their growing connection to the landscape as more than just an agricultural land.

### *The Challenge of Zion*

The Upper Virgin Valley settlers, like those in the lower valley, continued to treat settlement as a religious calling. They saw President Young's command for settlement as an opportunity to serve the church and add their labor to the construction of Zion. Many of those sent to "Dixie" had already abandoned homes and moved for the church several times, following church-founder, Joseph Smith, from Ohio to Missouri and then to Illinois and then Brigham Young to Salt Lake after Smith's death. These settlers were bound to the church by faith and the belief that through hardship they could prove their worth to God, as Erastus Snow stated to one of his wives "that good and patient man Job when his vast property and his ten sons were all swept away in a single day. Ought we not . . . to try to imitate his noble example of resignation?" By overcoming hardship, Mormons forged a closer relationship with God and the land. The landscape tested settlers, which the church believed made them better members. The self-

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<sup>113</sup> Crawford, Nancy. *Springdale, Utah: Articles, Interviews, and Notes on its Early History*, 110; Isom, Anna (Crawford), interview by the Voices of Remembrance Foundation: Oral History Collection, October 1, 1969. Dixie State University Special Collections, St. George.

sacrifice required to develop the landscape connected settlers to their new environment in a profound way. Every hardship endured in the construction of homes, fields, orchards, fences and other trappings of Euro-American civilization symbolized their accomplishment and worth as members of the church. Life was difficult in these communities, but for the most faithful, these problems became a means through which they expressed their faith in God and their mission.

Not all settlers accepted their mission call to Dixie, however. Of the 309 families originally called, 15% of them refused to go on the mission or abandoned it within a year.<sup>114</sup> In the conferences held for the mission from 1861 through 1874, both Erastus Snow and Brigham Young spoke frequently about the families and young people they met on the road to Salt Lake and California who had left the mission. These settlers, frustrated by the difficulties of growing the crops and their low return, often questioned their commitment to the mission and possibly the church itself. Many settlers also left and then returned. William Flanigan's family, who, after 15 years in Rockville, went "to find some kind of pay work, to buy shoes, clothing, and food" in the northern settlements in the 1870s.<sup>115</sup> Through these actions, settlers protested the hardship placed upon them by Mormon leaders and questioned their role in the building of Zion. They attempted to negotiate the terms by which they supported and interacted with the church, revealing the complex ways Mormons related to and understood their identity. Mormons did not follow the church blindly, but rather members made decisions that benefited themselves and challenged church authority at times. Settlers constantly redefined what they owed the church and what it owed to them as individuals.

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<sup>114</sup> Bleak, *Annals of Southern Utah Mission Book A*, 62.

<sup>115</sup> Flanigan, William. "Excerpts from the Diaries of William Wallace Flanigan," William Flanigan Collection, Gerald Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University.

One of the greatest and most consistent challenges that tested settlers and their commitment to their mission was the Virgin River. On Christmas day 1861, a few weeks after settlers arrived, it began raining and rained for nearly ten days. James Bleak wrote that:

“The bed of the Virgen and of the Santa Clara were greatly widened and deepened . . . Nathan C. Tenney’s house at Old Grafton was washed away; a few minutes after his wife, with a recently born infant, was conveyed from it in a litter to a higher bench. At Adventure [Rockville], where Apostle Pratt and family were located, a blacksmith’s shop, tools, etc., were swept away by the angry waters.”<sup>116</sup>

The storm was a fluke, but floods on the Virgin remained a constant problem. Mormons followed dam construction practices that assumed the existence of a firm bedrock, allowing one to easily contain and direct the flow of water. The Virgin River’s sandy, shifting bottom made success with this type of construction impossible. Floods washed out the dams in *all* of the settlements annually (sometimes more) for the first several years. These floods were devastating, because not only did the water wash away crops and topsoil, it also but also brought tons of silt and rock debris, effectively burying fields. Settlers attempted to deal with these floods by building up banks and relocating fields and homes.<sup>117</sup> Property was very fluid in the first decade of settlement in the Upper Virgin Valley, and settlers would simply sell off or abandon land, moving to higher ground or to a smaller stream or creek that did not flood as badly. William Crawford’s farm near Oak Creek was so successful in part because he depended on a water source that experienced less flooding.<sup>118</sup> The Virgin River defined life for those who used its waters, as it both supported and destroyed the settlers efforts to serve the church and make their communities successful.

Settlers dealt with many other environmental challenges. In 1879, Samuel K. Gifford, a resident of Springdale, reported to *Desert News* that “a little squash bug destroyed nearly all our

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<sup>116</sup> Bleak, *Annals of Southern Utah Mission Book A*, 73.

<sup>117</sup> Flanigan, William. “William Flanigan Autobiography,” William Flanigan Collection, Gerald R. Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University.

<sup>118</sup> Crawford, Nancy. *Springdale, Utah: Articles, Interviews, and Notes on its Early History*, 50.

squashes, melons, and cucumbers . . . And finally, the winged tribes of various kinds sallied forth . . . so that we had to gather our grapes before we were hardly ready.”<sup>119</sup> Such assaults were common throughout the upper Virgin valley and at Zion Canyon, which settlers could do very little to prevent. Deer and ground squirrels also annoyed and frustrated pioneers, eating plants and stealing vegetables and fruit before they ripened. The climate and the boggy sections of the Virgin and other rivers also created the perfect conditions for the spread of malaria. Settlers referred to the disease as ague and experienced it in seasonal waves. Historian, Larry Logue, who examined death records, stated that this mosquito born disease infected numerous people every year and might have been responsible for the high mortality rate among women in southern Utah. Malaria weakened immune systems and combined with frequent pregnancies, malnutrition, and water-borne illness lowered these women’s life expectancies. Out of women aged twenty to sixty living in southern Utah, one in three died.<sup>120</sup> All of these challenges worked to undermine settlers’ wills to build a life and serve their church in southern Utah, but they also connected them through shared suffering.

### *Mormon and Paiute Changing Connections to Landscape*

The hardships Mormon settlers experienced and their attempts to build a stronger cultural life in southern Utah changed their perceptions of the landscape considerably. By the late 1870s and early 1880s, Mormon had become fairly successful in the area as a whole. They no longer viewed the land as a foreign, hostile landscape that showed “no signs of water or fertility” nor as “a wide expanse of chaotic matter . . . huge hills, sandy deserts . . . perpendicular rocks, loose

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<sup>119</sup> Gifford, S.K. “Correspondence,” *Desert News* (Salt Lake City, UT), Oct. 7, 1879.

<sup>120</sup> Logue, Larry. *A Sermon in the Desert: Belief and Behavior in Early St. George, Utah* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 97-98.

barren clay, dissolving beds of sandstone . . . lying in inconceivable confusion.”<sup>121</sup> The farm fields and orchards they managed to cultivate had transformed it to place that was their own, giving the landscape new meaning. This was a land that they suffered through to create their Zion. Every orchard and farm field served as a marker of their success and the “strange perpendicular rocks” came to be a part of its charm. A former school teacher in Grafton recalled a night walk home from Rockville, describing how

“the moon rose over the Eagle Peaks and lighted up majestic old Steamboat Mountain transforming it into a temple of transcendent beauty. There was the fragrance of ripening apples, drying hay and of cool wet willows that grew along the stream-- the kind of night that lovers through the ages have thought was made especially for them.”<sup>122</sup>

Mormon settlers connected to both the agricultural landscape they had created as well as aspects of the natural landscape that existed before their settlement. The Upper Virgin River valley and southern Utah in general now represented a hybridization of their original agricultural vision, a place that was both green fields and red rock, a place Mormons saw as specifically their own.

Just as Mormons became more connected to southern Utah through hardship, hardship served to separate Paiutes from the landscape. Mormon and other Euro-American communities had continued their expansion, bringing more and more land into their control and restricting Paiute usage. By the end of the 1860s, Southern Paiutes’ presence in the Upper Virgin River valleys particularly became more dispersed. Competition for the limited space and water with Mormon settlers and their livestock pushed many Paiutes to more remote streams and springs. Anthropologist Richard Stoffle theorized that the Upper Virgin River Paiutes retreated to the Uinkaret plateau region near Mt. Trumbull and then later joined the Kaibab band along the Kanab Creek eco-scape.<sup>123</sup> This area was less densely populated by settlers, but the growth of the

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<sup>121</sup> Parley P. Pratt, quoted in Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), 317.

<sup>122</sup> ed. Hall, Victor. “Life in Grafton,” 11.

<sup>123</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 54.

Mormon town of Kanab, the expansion of cattle ranching on the Arizona Strip in the 1870s, and the growing presence of mining pressured these Paiute groups. Some Paiutes continued to live in the Upper Virgin River area despite these challenges. Accounts through the turn of the century described small groups who came back into the area seasonally, begging for food in Springdale or doing odd jobs. A handful of Paiutes, who had assimilated into Mormon culture, even lived in the area until well after the turn of the century as discussed earlier.

Paiutes struggled in part because of the environmental changes Mormon settlers had caused. Settlers had been overstocking the ranges in southern Utah for decades, and by the 1880s, much of the land was completely overgrazed. Staple plants in the Paiute diet, such as rice grass, were scarce and had been replaced by invasive plants. Paiutes adapted to this by adopting some of the edible invasive species as a food source, such as tansy mustard, horehound, and other plants, but these did not even come close to fulfilling the caloric and nutritional niche Paiutes lost. Overgrazing also had the effect of increasing the damage of floods, making it more difficult for both Paiutes and Mormons to farm. In the Upper Virgin River valley, which had always had a high risk of flooding, the lack of vegetation meant less absorption of rainwater and so “with the increased volume sent down from the hills, the stream often went on a rampage tearing away the banks and making wide flood plains. . . .”<sup>124</sup> As an attempt to better the lives of some Paiutes, in the 1880s, some Mormons gave Paiutes tracts of land to farm, but flooding remained an issue. One Mormon man expressed his frustration as the plot of land he set aside for Paiute use flooded out, and the Paiutes promptly abandoned the site.<sup>125</sup> Paiutes continued to switch subsistence strategies as they had in the past but often their other strategies failed them as

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<sup>124</sup> Reid, B.H.L. “Man’s Part in Erosion,” *Zion-Bryce Nature Notes*, vol. III, no. 4 (September 1931): 32. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

<sup>125</sup> Brooks, Juanita. “Indian Relations on the Mormon Frontier,” 26.



well. As the century wore on, the Paiutes' situation became increasingly precarious and their traditional life ways untenable in the new environment they found themselves in.

Disease also dramatically affected Paiutes and their relationship with their homeland. Paiutes died in large numbers throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century from direct exposure to European diseases. One Mormon noted the devastating impact in one Paiute community, commenting that “all of their squaws & many of the Indians had died lately . . . the disease from their description must have been vomiting and bloody flux, only one squaw left among so many men!”<sup>126</sup> These diseases were terrifying and Paiutes often explained them as being caused by a medicine man or another powerful individual. Mormons picked up on this belief and used it in their interactions with Paiutes. In his journal, Jacob Hamblin described how two Paiute headmen stole Mormon cattle. When one of them got sick and died shortly thereafter, Hamblin used his example to warn the other Paiute headman to not disobey and steal from them. One Paiute headmen responded by telling Hamblin that “he was Stout and hard Morman could not Prey him to deth . . . .” Later, according to Hamblin, this same headmen also died, which “fully established our influence among them from this time forth the Mision prosprd the influence of the Misionarys Spread among the diferante bands.”<sup>127</sup> Paiutes believed Mormons could possibly make them ill and some abandoned their traditional ways in the hopes of being saved. Still, Paiutes continued to die in mass numbers during the late 1800s from a deadly combination of malnutrition and European diseases both directly caused by the expansion of Euro-American settlements. In the 1890s, many Paiutes even participated in the Ghost Dance Movement in response. They hoped by performing the dance they could reverse the damage settlement had on them and bring back

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<sup>126</sup> ed. Brooks, Juanita. *Journal of the Southern Indian Mission: Diary of Thomas Brown*, 94.

<sup>127</sup> Ed. Starr, Helen. *Jacob Vernon Hamblin: Peacemaker in the Camp of the Lamanites*, 56.

those who died from these “unnatural” diseases.<sup>128</sup> This did not work. In 1870, Erastus Snow roughly estimated Paiute numbers on the whole Virgin River system were between 800-900 people.<sup>129</sup> By the early twentieth century, there were about 300 left.<sup>130</sup> This was a terrible loss of both humanity and culture, as these diseases most often affected the elderly, who then could no longer pass on traditional knowledge to the next generation. Despite this devastation, Paiutes did survive in both a physical and cultural sense, maintaining numerous aspects of their identity.

The Paiutes who managed to survive these years did so through a combination of multiple strategies. They utilized Mormon and other Euro-American settlements for labor and handouts while also continuing to practice some traditional subsistence strategies. From the beginning, Paiute men’s labor had been important resource for Mormons who had utilized them to build irrigation ditches, canals, and other projects while the women worked as maids, laundresses, or performing other domestic chores.<sup>131</sup> This continued to be the case even into the early twentieth century, as the reservations Paiutes were consolidated on were generally near Mormon town sites. Paiute reservations in Utah were established fairly late and at a point in time where they had lost all of their lands to encroaching settlers. The Shivwits reservation formed in 1891 was located just northwest of St. George while the Kaibab Reservation was not established until 1906 just over the border in Arizona. The creation of these reservations served an important purpose. Before their establishment, federal officials and locals attempted to force Paiutes to consolidate on either the Moapa reservation in Nevada, which was already overcrowded and lacked the water to support more Paiutes, or onto the Uinta reservation established for the Utes in

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<sup>128</sup> Stoffle, Richard; Lawrence Loendorf; Diane E. Austin; Angelita Bullets. “Ghost Dancing the Grand Canyon: Southern Paiute Rock Art, Ceremony, and Cultural Landscapes,” *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 41, No. 1, February 2000, 11.

<sup>129</sup> Bleak, James. *Annals of Southern Utah Book B*, 49-50. The number was probably higher than this. I’m not sure if Snow included the Kaibab in this estimate, which were included in the estimate from the BIA in 1910.

<sup>130</sup> Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 137; Stoffle, Richard and Michael J. Evans. “Kaibab Paiute History: The Early Years,” *Kaibab Paiute Cultural Heritage Series*, pamphlet 1, 1978, 6.

<sup>131</sup> Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 120-122.

northern Utah. Paiutes in southern Utah resisted or ignored attempts to move them. They could no longer interact with the landscape as they once had, but most remained determined to stay close to areas that were traditionally a part of their individual bands, allowing them to maintain a core element of their identity.<sup>132</sup> Paiute culture was greatly altered by the early twentieth century, but despite all of this loss, they were still a people with a cultural identity entwined with their homeland.

For Paiutes who survived this period, their landscape took on new meanings. Many of the landmarks that Paiutes utilized and saw regularly became associated with stories of Paiute resistance and versatility. The Eagle Crags, a well-known and prominent peak on the horizon just south of Springdale, reflected this change. As one Paiute elder explained:

“that one over there, across from us, that’s what they call tee-he-na-nam-butzn, that means some kind of sisters, "three Indian sisters" [Eagle Crag Mountain]. I think long time, when white settlers came and they were taking the Indian ladies, and three of them they took off and went up that way with their children, I think that’s where they call it that name, I think my uncle was telling me that, they done that so they turn into that kind in the legend.”<sup>133</sup>

The mountain has always been there, but its meaning and the stories associated with it changed because of Paiute and Mormon interaction. For Paiutes, the mountain symbolized their ancestors’ ability to resist Mormon control and influence and served as a reminder of Paiute autonomy. Landmarks and the stories associated with them operated as connections to the Paiute past, reinforcing their cultural identity and their relationship with the landscape. Paiute culture and connection to their territory was interrupted and dramatically changed by Mormon settlement, but Paiutes still continued to react and build themselves culturally despite this, incorporating

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<sup>132</sup> Nine reservations in total were created for the Southern Paiutes, located in Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. All of these are located in the Paiute traditional homeland and the reservations represent either one whole band or are compilations of two or three bands.

<sup>133</sup> Stoffle, Richard, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 139.

their experiences into an understanding of themselves, their history, and their connection to their homeland.

### *Diversity in Mormon Connections to Landscape-Waning Power of the Church*

Culturally, the late 1800s was a period of change for Mormons as well. Although most Mormons still adhered to the church and its teachings, the remoteness of southern Utah and Zion Canyon became places in which Mormons exerted their independence from church authority. The Mormon Church held its members to strict codes of conduct, as it forbade the consumption of alcohol (outside of religious sacrament during the 19<sup>th</sup> century), the use of tobacco, and gambling. In the far-flung communities and homesteads of the south, church leaders frequently complained of settlers who took advantage of this lack of oversight. According to Erastus Snow, several settlers engaged in “card playing . . . reading of novels, all of which was pernicious and productive of no good.” Many were also indulging “too freely in wine and other intoxicating drinks.”<sup>134</sup> These actions frustrated church leaders, as it damaged their vision of what Zion should be. The story of how Zion Canyon received its name best illustrated this. In the 1860s, a group of church bishops visited the Upper Virgin Valley settlements (in some stories, Brigham Young was in attendance as well). After touring Springdale, the group went to the Behunin homestead in the canyon, which Behunin and his family had begun calling Zion. For the Behunins, the name fit the canyon well; however, the visiting bishops disagreed. According to local legend, Behunin and his sons grew and smoked tobacco. The party noticed the plants growing in Behunin’s fields and scoffed at the canyon name and commented that this was *not*

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<sup>134</sup> Bleak, *Annals of Southern Utah Mission Book B*, 183.

Zion.<sup>135</sup> The name “Not Zion” stuck for many years, representing for church leaders what was wrong in the settlements. How could these communities exist as a part of the church’s religious empire if they did not follow its teachings? As Snow reminded the settlements during the mission’s semi-annual conference in 1873, “ten dirty sheep in a flock would spoil the appearance of the whole flock; and thus, in a community, a few of the wayward and ungovernable make the whole community appear unfavorable.”<sup>136</sup> The church saw these actions as undermining the integrity of the southern mission and spoke to the dangers of having remote and isolated colonies. For settlers, however, these actions symbolized their ability to act independently without interference from the church’s hierarchical structure.

The remoteness of the colonies also made it difficult to ensure that all settlers were working to build the church empire. The primary mission of the settlements was to produce goods that they would sell or trade to other Mormon communities, enriching and strengthening Zion. However, the difficulties of exchanging enough goods to supply one’s family and the temptation of selling items to the growing non-Mormon communities in California and Nevada proved too much for many families throughout southern Utah. During the early 1870s, church leaders scolded the settlements numerous times for selling goods outside of Mormon territory. In 1873, church leader Joseph Young told settlers that they had “no right to go to Pioche and trade off our lumber, chickens, eggs and grain unless we are told to do so. Said many felt to chase the dollar and neglect their duties, all of which we had no right to do.”<sup>137</sup> Outside, “Gentile” settlements were seen as possible enemies who worked to undermine Mormon obedience and

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<sup>135</sup> Woodbury, Angus. “Southern Utah and Its National Parks,” *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 158; Crawford. *Springdale, Utah: Articles, Interviews, and Notes on its Early History*, 128. The account differs slightly in these works. Crawford attributes the comment to Bishop Hunter while Woodbury claims President Young stated it. Both received this information from longtime Springdale residents.

<sup>136</sup> Bleak, *Annals of Southern Utah Mission Book B*, 183.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 167.

attachment to the church. By trading with them, church leaders felt that the settlers were building up Babylon instead of Zion and that these actions demonstrated settlers' lack of confidence in the church.<sup>138</sup> The Mormon settlers in southern Utah were independent people who took actions that benefited them individually. Although the dominant force of the church strongly influenced life in the southern Utah settlements economically and culturally, settlers took actions that went against its instructions-- demonstrating how the isolation of these colonies allowed settlers to express themselves and negotiate the church's role in their lives.

The late 1800s was a time of change for the Mormon Church in Utah, as non-Mormon control and influences increased within the territory. Brigham Young's attempts to rein in the settlers and maintain the church's economic control over the region proved futile by the 1880s. The discovery of silver and other metals in Utah, the completion of the transcontinental railroad, and the growing general settlement of non-Mormons in the territory made it more and more difficult for the church to keep Mormon settlers from strictly supporting other Mormon communities. The temptation of goods brought from the east and the need for cash to purchase those items gradually brought settlers further and further into the larger national economy, undermining the Mormon Church's goal of building a self-sufficient religious empire. The U.S. government, which had been largely distracted by the Civil War and Reconstruction, also became more involved in Utah territory. During the mid to late 1800s, a quarter of Mormons practiced polygamy as a part of their faith. This lifestyle horrified the U.S. government, so in the 1880s, officials pushed to end the practice by arresting polygamists in vast numbers. These raids, coupled with the recognition that the territory could not survive economically on its own, convinced Mormon leaders to make fundamental changes. Utah territory had been applying for statehood for almost twenty years, but it had done so on the church's terms. These applications

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 173.

featured the state's name as Deseret with all of the religious and political meanings it implied. In 1895, when the territory applied again, church leaders had ended polygamy as an official practice. They also relinquished much of their property and businesses and chose Utah as the state name, which demonstrated their willingness to meet the U.S. government's demands. Utah became a state in 1896, and though, the Church retained much of its political and cultural dominance, this marked a new beginning for Utah as it became more open to outside interests and influences.

CHAPTER FOUR: ZION AS A HAVEN-- THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND THE  
RISE OF A TOURISM ECONOMY



FIGURE 5: SPRINGDALE-ROCKVILLE BAND WELCOMING PRESIDENT WARREN G. HARDING DURING HIS VISIT TO ZION CANYON IN 1923. Photograph Courtesy of the Gerald R. Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Zion Canyon and the whole Upper Virgin River area were completely a Mormon place in thought, memory, and largely physicality. The Paiutes, who had interacted and utilized this region, had been relocated to reservations where they generally remained. A few, however, continued to use the canyon to gather plants and hunt wildlife as they had done traditionally for centuries. Mormons dominated the region and utilized Zion largely for livestock grazing and planting crops, although they did enjoy some social and cultural activities in the canyon as well. Overall, Zion existed as an extension of the community in Springdale and was a place fully incorporated both economically and culturally. After 1900, descriptions of picnics, hikes, and school fieldtrips in Zion Canyon increased. This demonstrated the general economic success they managed to achieve, the fondness the people had developed for the canyon, as well as the national and regional influences regarding outdoor recreation as a



wholesome part of life. William Flanigan, a settler from Springdale, described how on May Day in 1902 “Nearly all the town went in to the big bend” and how he and a few of the other young men and women went hiking, going “with –out dinnir and walked all day.”<sup>139</sup> Mormon interactions with Zion Canyon in the twentieth century reflected the changes in how they and the rest of America perceived nature.

### *Elevation of Zion to a National Stage*

Outside interests also recognized the recreational potential of Zion and its natural appeal. In the spring of 1904, Fredrick S. Dellenbaugh, an artist and topographer of the southwest, displayed a painting of towering, brightly colored cliffs at the St. Louis World Fair. Dellenbaugh had traveled through Zion Canyon first in 1872, as a part of John Wesley Powell’s mapping expedition of the “Rio Virgen.” He had photographed the area extensively and in 1903, returned to paint it. His painting, along with an article he published in *Scribner’s Magazine*, captured the U.S. imagination. He described Zion’s “naked mountain of rock” and stated that “There is almost nothing to compare to it. Niagara has the beauty of energy; the Grand Canyon, of immensity; the Yellowstone, of singularity . . . this Great Temple, of eternity—”<sup>140</sup> These descriptions peaked the interests of U.S. and Utah leaders alike, as individuals like John Muir and others had brought the ideas of conservation and preservation into the national conversation.

The passing of the American Antiquities Act in 1906 gave urgency and power to this discussion, as it allowed U.S. presidents to preserve landmarks of prehistoric, historic, and scientific importance as national monuments.<sup>141</sup> In 1909, the arguments made by Utah Senator

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<sup>139</sup> Flannegan, William. Diary 1901-1913, Reel 1. Utah State Historical Society Collections, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>140</sup> Dellenbaugh, Fredrick. “A New Valley of Wonders,” *Scribner’s Magazine*, Vol. XXXV, 1904, 1.

<sup>141</sup> “American Antiquities Act of 1906,” The National Park Service Cultural Resources, accessed April 28, 2012. <http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/anti1906.htm>.

Reed Smoot, Dellenbaugh, and others convinced President Taft to turn Zion Canyon into Mukuntuweap National Monument. Taft chose Mukuntuweap, a Southern Paiute word that meant “straight rock,” as its name, because John Wesley Powell described it as such in his 1872 expedition.<sup>142</sup> This change in status did not directly affect locals for the first several years, but it did give the canyon a national meaning and value, altering the trajectory of the canyon forever. It could no longer be just a Mormon landscape or even a Paiute one with local significance; instead, it would be a national treasure that held value for the whole country.

Zion Canyon’s elevation to a national monument initially changed very little for its local community. Poor roads and lack of development largely kept visitors away from Zion Canyon for the first nine years. Although no one lived in the canyon year round after the 1870s, Mormon settlers continued to use the canyon as a part of their subsistence economy, farming and ranching on the canyon floor.<sup>143</sup> The managing officials for the landscape were all located in Salt Lake City and had very little influence over how the locals utilized the area, as one Rockville resident complained, pigs and other livestock occasionally ran rampant in canyon, polluting the Virgin River despite orders to remove them. The Crawfords, whose farming and ranching on Oak Creek had always been more successful, remained until the National Park Service purchased their homestead in the 1930s. In 1900, exploitation of the canyon’s resources had actually grown, as David Flanigan developed a system to bring lumber safely down from Zion’s cliffs by utilizing pulleys and cables. The Cable Mountain Draw Works located near Big Bend proved to be a successful venture, as it provided lumber not only for Springdale but for Virgin City and St.

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<sup>142</sup> Powell, John Wesley. *The Exploration of the Colorado River*, 143.

<sup>143</sup> Woodbury, “A History of Southern Utah and its National Parks,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* Vol. XII Nos. 3-4, July-October 1944, 198 .

George as well.<sup>144</sup> William Flanigan, David's brother, described bringing loads several times a month by wagon to communities all over southern Utah.<sup>145</sup>

Remote and isolated, locals did not feel the change in Zion Canyon's status until 1913 when Utah Governor, William Spry, and other state officials visited the area. Aware of the possibilities of increasing tourism to the state, officials began improving roads and visiting locals, preparing them for the possibility of development.<sup>146</sup> After this initial work, a few tourists and journalists did make it into the canyon; however, major development and tourism did not truly occur until after 1916 when the U.S. Congress formed the National Park Service (NPS). Under the leadership of Stephen Mather and his assistant director, Horace Albright, NPS focused on identifying national monuments that were underdeveloped that could be expanded and made into national parks.<sup>147</sup> Championed by Utah's congressmen and senators and already relatively close to the railroad, Mukuntuweap National Monument made the short list and became one of the first monuments Mather and Albright centered their attentions on, altering the daily lives for its surrounding communities who attempted to control and add their mark to the development of a new Zion.

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<sup>144</sup> Crawford. *Springdale, Utah: Articles, Interviews, and Notes on its Early History*, 128.

<sup>145</sup> Flannegan. William. *Diary 1901-1913*, Reel 1. Utah State Historical Society Collections.

<sup>146</sup> Papers 1921-1975, Utah Parks and Company, Reel 2, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

<sup>147</sup> The following books give an excellent overview of the early National Park Service, discussing its goals and how NPS officials and their partners constructed wilderness ideals in the National Parks: Carr, Ethan. *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); McClland, Linda Flint. *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Sellars, Richard. *Preserving Nature in National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Shaffer, Marguerite. *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001); and Spence, Mark. *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Richard Sellars' *Preserving Nature in the National Parks* provides the best overview of the National Parks throughout the twentieth century and served as a foundational source for my understanding of the Park Service. Spence's *Dispossessing the Wilderness* is more specific and presents a more focused picture of NPS interactions with Native people and helped guide my initial research into the subject.

## *NPS and Mormon Partnerships*

Local Mormons living near Zion Canyon worked to benefit from and negotiate the development of the national monument in many ways. Stephen Mather recognized the advantages in building relationships with communities near the parks and sent his assistant director, Horace Albright, to meet with Utah officials and the local Mormon bishop and congressman, David Hirschi, in Springdale in 1917. Albright already had the support of Utah state officials, so his major task was to convince local citizens of the benefits of opening up the area to tourism and to get them to stop grazing their animals within it, which had denuded much of the vegetation.<sup>148</sup> These meetings were largely successful, as locals recognized that their cooperation meant they would receive the federal dollars proposed to build the roads in Springdale and Zion Canyon as well as gain new business opportunities. This was not decided without trepidation or enacted without dissension.

Despite the benefits, at least a few settlers continued to graze their livestock in the park, especially in Zion Canyon's backcountry, which was unregulated. Douglas White, an official from the *Salt Lake and Los Angeles Railroad* who operated the rail-line to southern Utah, was also present and spoke of the money that tourism would bring, further convincing settlers of the immediate advantages of development. After these meetings, Albright felt that the monument's name, Mukuntuweap, needed to be changed to Zion National Monument. He believed this better reflected the Mormon contribution to the canyon's history and development.<sup>149</sup> This nod to the Mormon past also smoothed the way for future projects made by NPS. The name change appealed to both railroad officials and the U.S. congress, as it was easier to pronounce and had biblical associations that produced a stronger image. Local Mormons played a large part in

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<sup>148</sup> Woodbury, "The History of Southern Utah and Its National Parks," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 199.

<sup>149</sup> Woodbury, "The History of Southern Utah and Its National Parks," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 201.

facilitating the development of Zion Canyon and became key allies with NPS during this period, which gave them a continued sense of ownership over the landscape. It was not a place they were losing, but rather, a place they were sharing. The name change to Zion National Monument ensured that the settler's legacy would mark the canyon forever, which settlers actively worked to shape in the coming years.

Economically, Mormon settlers gained a great deal from Zion's development into a national park. The road projects alone employed dozens of people, pumping cash into an economy that still was largely based on bartering. Locals were also employed to help build and widen trails and occasionally by W. Wylie who began operating a luxury camping company near the present day Zion Lodge in 1917.<sup>150</sup> The loss of grazing areas impacted several families. It was a changing economy with agricultural activities giving way to tourist related ventures, which most locals embraced. Several locals managed to open up new businesses and received contracts with NPS to provide certain services and supplies to tourists. The Parry brothers, Gronway and Chauncey of Cedar City, famously operated the National Parks Transportation and Camping Company with Wylie, bringing thousands of tourists to Zion starting in 1917.<sup>151</sup> The Gifford family was granted a contract to cut and sell ice blocks to the Wylie camps and later the Lodge once it was complete in 1925.<sup>152</sup> J.L. Crawford, born near Zion Canyon in 1914, even remembered selling his father's photographs for a nickel a piece to passing tourists during the 1920s. Springdale also grew.<sup>153</sup> Fruit stands stocked with locally grown fruits and vegetables

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<sup>150</sup> Woodbury, Lowell, interview by Sally Pearce, Jan. 23, 1982, Zion National Park Archives Box 5, p. 2. Courtesy of National Park Service, ZION 12352, Zion National Park Museum Collection.

<sup>151</sup> Articles of Incorporation of the 'National Park Transportation and Camping Company', April 14, 1917, *Zion Codex: Government Documents and Correspondence, 1908-1919, Vol 1*. Courtesy of National Park Service, Zion National Park Library.

<sup>152</sup> Crawford, Rueben & Zella, interview by Kathy Andrews, Jan. 17, 1982, Zion National Park Archives Box 5, p. 16. Courtesy of National Park Service, ZION 12352, Zion National Park Museum Collection.

<sup>153</sup> Hafen, Lyman. "In the Shadow of Steamboat" from Smith-Cavros, Eileen. *Pioneer Voices of Zion Canyon* (Springdale: Zion Natural History Association, 2006), 16.

sprang up and business generally expanded. Mormon settlers took full advantage of the new park and made significant economic strides within the first decade of the park's development.

### *Paiute Dispossession and the Creation of Zion's "New" Narrative*

Paiutes participated very little in the process of Zion Canyon becoming a national park unit. Their presence on the Upper Virgin River, of course, had become fairly sparse in the early twentieth century as discussed previously. Their populations were largely restricted to the federal reservations created for them and their surrounding communities, although travel between the reservations became an important aspect of their lives.<sup>154</sup> Some Paiutes did still come and utilize the canyon, however. One elder, who was born in 1927, recalled that her father "used to go to Zion. I heard of Indian names for Zion where he would go all the time."<sup>155</sup> Other elders interviewed in 1995 recalled grandparents who gathered plants or even hunted a little in the canyon during the early part of the twentieth century.<sup>156</sup> As a hinterland, Zion Canyon was still an active area that Paiutes utilized when they could.

As Zion became more developed and the National Park Service began regular operations in early 1920s, Paiutes found themselves forced out of Zion and other federally regulated areas. Paiutes "were arrested for hunting deer on the Kaibab Plateau, fishing in Duck Creek, and gathering plants in Zion N.P."<sup>157</sup> NPS rangers, who regulated the landscape, were following the Park Service's central mandate "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such

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<sup>154</sup> Knack. *Boundaries Between*, 180.

<sup>155</sup> Stoffle, et al. "Ethnographic Overview," 82.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, 83.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”<sup>158</sup> This meant protecting all the plants and wildlife from use. One Kaibab woman lamented:

“Food is everywhere at Zions. I used to go up there with my dad and Maggie. The old people used to yell, ‘Oh! stop there, look at all that food -- we should get some of that.’ But sometimes we could not get it because it belonged to the white man. So we went on by when it was getting ready to be picked . . . We used to gather ku’u -- we used to gather sacks and all those people up there did too. We got bags of it and we were glad to get it. But they [the park rangers] used to tell us to get away from there . . . ‘You are not allowed over there..Get away.’ They [the park rangers] would even do that with the i’isi, even though the white man didn’t know what to do with it. They just ran us out.”<sup>159</sup>

For Paiutes, this was not only a loss of needed resources but was also potentially damaging to the land. In their belief system, plants and animals needed to be harvested and utilized in order for them to flourish. By refusing to allow Paiutes to gather resources from Zion, NPS rangers became a stumbling block preventing them from interacting with the landscape in a way their cultural beliefs dictated. From the Paiute perspective, NPS was not only keeping them from the resource, they were endangering the land they claimed to be protecting. The Park Service essentially worked to divorce Paiutes from the land and the cultural traditions associated with that land, interrupting their cultural and religious relationship with Zion.

Although Paiutes could no longer use Zion as a hinterland, they did benefit economically from the canyon’s development at least a little. Many of the projects and money from tourism did trickle down to the reservations. Road improvement projects and others gave some Paiutes temporary labor though the economic impact of tourism was more limited than in the Mormon/Euro-American communities. In Cedar City, some Paiutes made basketry, pottery, and other goods to be sold to the arriving tourists at the train station there.<sup>160</sup> Unlike other native communities near national parks, Paiutes were not usually employed to work in the park to

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<sup>158</sup> “Organic Act 1916” accessed January 23, 2016, [http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online\\_books/anps/anps\\_1i.htm](http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/anps/anps_1i.htm).

<sup>159</sup> Stoffle, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 89.

<sup>160</sup> Palmer, William. William Palmer Papers, *William Palmer Collection*. Folder 23, Gerald Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University.

represent its “primitive past” which was popular at the time and regularly done at the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Glacier during the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>161</sup> At Zion, Native people were only used in such a capacity a couple of times during this period: for the 1925 grand opening of the newly built lodge up canyon and for the grand opening of the tunnel in 1930.<sup>162</sup> The main reason for this lay with the how the National Park Service, the railroad, and others marketed Zion to the public. In the articles and pamphlets published between 1917 and 1925 on Zion, all described the new park as a religious space whose majesty and wonder inspired tourists and Mormon settlers alike but terrified all Native people. This myth born from misinformation, confusion, and ignorance came to pervade Paiute history in the canyon and remains a dominant narrative to this day.



FIGURE 6: NATIVE AMERICAN DANCERS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE ZION-MT. CARMEL TUNNEL, JULY 4<sup>TH</sup>, 1930. Photograph Courtesy of National Park Service, ZION 11923, Zion National Park Museum Collection.

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<sup>161</sup> Shaffer, Marquerite S. *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington D .C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2001), 68-69; Spence. *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, 117.

<sup>162</sup>Courtesy of National Park Service, ZION 11923, Zion National Park Museum Collection.



The stories regarding Paiutes' and other Native peoples' fear of the canyon largely came from the observations of settlers. In many accounts, Mormons mentioned that Paiutes were afraid to remain in Zion Canyon after dark and insisted on exiting and getting back to their camp.<sup>163</sup> Settlers interpreted this to mean that Paiutes were afraid of Zion, which was not the case. In reality, Paiutes held a cultural belief that if one was out after dark, he could become prey to the evil spirits who roamed. As one Kaibab elder explained "One of things that I was taught as a child was when the sun goes down, you come inside. You don't stay outside running around and playing . . . because that attracts the spirits . . . that's when the spirits get to come out and you don't want to bring one of those home with you."<sup>164</sup> Paiutes were not afraid of the canyon specifically. They were afraid of evil spirits that roamed *everywhere* after dark.<sup>165</sup> Settlers simply misconstrued Paiute cultural belief with a specific fear of Zion.

Stories of Paiutes too afraid to enter the canyon were also based on the fact that many settlers claimed they never saw Paiutes in the park. Elijah Behunin, whose family lived seasonally up canyon near the present day lodge, wrote in a brief history on his life that he "never saw an Indian this side of Springdale. We used to try to get them to work for us, but they would never venture into this part of the canyon."<sup>166</sup> Behunin's and other settler accounts were based on childhood observations at a time when the Paiute presence in the Upper Virgin River valley had become more infrequent, and therefore, were not accurate representations of Paiute usage of the area. Behunin and other settlers also largely lived in the canyon only during the

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<sup>163</sup> Stoffle, et al. "Ethnographic Overview," 118.

<sup>164</sup> Glendora Homer, interview by Sara Black, November 9, 2011, 5.

<sup>165</sup> Many Paiutes today still hold this cultural belief. Pipe Spring National Monument has an annual event called "Windsor Castle at Night." Pipe Spring is located in the middle of the Kaibab reservation (literally next door to tribal headquarters) and they often have trouble getting Paiutes to participate in this event because it occurs outdoors and at night. Conversation with former Pipe Spring Archaeological Technician Amber Van Alfen, December 10, 2015.

<sup>166</sup> "Statement of Elijah C. Behunin August 21, 1930" p. 5. *Zion Codex: Government Documents and Correspondence, 1925-1930, Vol III*. Courtesy of National Park Service, Zion National Park Library.

summer and wintered in Springdale. Most Paiute accounts discussed fall usage of the canyon for deer hunting, so settlers simply might not have noticed them. Paiutes offered a different explanation for their perceived absence in the canyon during this period, stating,

“The Mormon settlers, they made a home there . . . Indians wanted to be neighborly, but the Indians were shot by local Mormons . . . They [Mormons] said the Indians were scared--the reason we were scared is we were scared of the Mormons who lived at the mouth of the canyon . . . The Mormons had another story -- saying the Indians were afraid of the Canyon.”<sup>167</sup>

Negative relations very well could have been a factor as to why Mormons claim they did not see Paiutes. Many settlers also simply might not have known and reasserted the ideas presented by others rather than admit ignorance on the subject. Regardless of why, the Mormon accounts created a new narrative of Zion Canyon that firmly placed Paiutes on its periphery.

Selective memory also played a part in these assertions. Some Mormon accounts, especially from the 1860s, did mention Paiutes in the canyon or at least hinted at their presence. Some settlers recorded Paiutes hunting in Zion, and during the Black Hawk War, Mormon settlers went in armed groups up canyon to tend their fields, indicating that they were afraid of possible Indian attacks.<sup>168</sup> The East Rim Trail was also originally referred to as an “Indian trail” in numerous documents before it was developed. In many ways, Mormon experiences became so dominant in their own memories that Paiutes simply disappeared from their mental landscape just as their physical presence was diminishing. As one historian noted, “Collective memory involves forgetting as much as remembering,”<sup>169</sup> which was the case for Zion Canyon and the settlers on the Upper Virgin River ecoscape. As Mormons moved further away in time from their frequent interactions with Paiutes during their first years of settlement, their own experiences with the landscape and each other rose to the forefront. Whatever the reasons, the settlers’ claim

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<sup>167</sup> Stoffle, et al. “Ethnographic Overview,” 87.

<sup>168</sup> Bleak, James. *Annals of Southern Utah, Book A*, 112.

<sup>169</sup> Farmer, Jared. *On Zion’s Mount*, 12.

that Zion Canyon was an empty landscape before their arrival came to dominate the canyon's history.<sup>170</sup> By dispossessing Native people of their history in Zion, the Mormon story of settlement took on greater meaning and added more mystery to the canyon. An element that journalists, travel writers, the early NPS, and even amateur historians embraced and reinforced as they began constructing a narrative for the new national park.

In the initial promotions for Zion, the NPS, railroad executives, and government officials drew upon the religious and cultural heritage of the local Mormon community and many of the religious names already given to certain features in Zion to create a heavenly theme for the park. This had been done with other national parks at the time: Northern Pacific Railroad had marketed Yellowstone as "Wonderland" since the early 1880s and the Great Northern Railway advertised Glacier as the place to experience "real Indians."<sup>171</sup> Several of the mountains in Zion already bore specific names from the Bible and the Book of Mormon. It was easy to expand the theme and rename mountains that had more secular or local references. Mountains that settlers had affectionately called Flannigan's Peak and Steamboat became the Watchman and the West Temple.<sup>172</sup> "El Gobneidor," which had just been named in honor of Governor Spry in 1913, became the Great White Throne. These names appeared in most publications on the park by 1925, marking a shift as Zion and its image came under the full control of the National Park Service and Union Pacific Railroad which had bought out the Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad interests earlier.

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<sup>170</sup> Zion Natural History Associations' *Outstanding Wonder: Zion Canyon's Cable Mountain Draw Works*, which was printed in 2008, references Angus Woodbury's article, which featured the explanation of Paiutes' fear of the canyon. The author's elaborated slightly on it, stating that the Paiutes hunted in the park sometimes but generally continues the claim that Southern Paiutes have very little connection to Zion.

<sup>171</sup> Shaffer. *See America First*, 49, 69.

<sup>172</sup> Hafen, Lyman. "In the Shadow of Steamboat Mountain," from Smith-Cavros, Eileen. *Pioneer Voices of Zion Canyon*, 9.

In travel essays and pamphlets marketing the new park, writers attempted to create an experience through language that captured the beauty of the area and the heavenly connection one could expect to feel. In 1917, Guy Elliot Mitchell explained in *Travel* magazine that the sections of Zion's canyon were:

“a series of nine majestic great inner courts stretching for seven miles from the wonderful portals whose guardians are the Temples of the Virgin to the Voice of the Waters at the Gates of Eternity where the gorge reaches away twelve miles more to Crystal Spring on Cedar Mountain. Each of these courts grows narrower and more impressive as one passes through them and on to court after court through the constricted passes that connect them. We named them in order, the Court of the Wind, the Court of the Sun, the Court of the Patriarchs, the Great Amphitheater, the Court of Music, the Court of the Poets, the Court of Many Waters, the Court of the Ages, and the Voices of the Waters. . . .”<sup>173</sup>

This description worked to elevate the landscape and invoke the image of God and the heavens. It presented the idea that Zion was a beauty beyond human comprehension that would force the viewer, as one writer noted, to gasp “a prayer, for one may not behold what one beholds there without knowing that there is a God!”<sup>174</sup> Others compared it directly to Heaven stating, “If you want to look into Heaven, go into Zion Canyon and look upward; if you want to look into Hell, stand on the edge of the Grand Canyon and look down.”<sup>175</sup> With such imagery, writers were advertising a unique, God-affirming experience that would forge a special connection between the tourist and the landscape that would remain with them for life. These grandiose claims, however, needed to be supported with examples of how other groups, namely the local Native peoples and settlers, experienced the canyon.

Early NPS promoters and tourism writers readily embraced the settlers' stories of Native peoples' fear of Zion Canyon. Jack Lait, who wrote a pamphlet series for the United States

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<sup>173</sup> Mitchell, Guy Elliot. “Mukuntuweap, A Desert Yosemite: a Little Known National Monument in Southern Utah, that Closely Resembles Yosemite Valley But Has Distinct Characteristics of Its Own—Once a Refuge of the Mormons,” *Travel*, Vol. XXIX, June 1917, 10.

<sup>174</sup> Lait, Jack. *Zion National Monument: United States Railroad Administration National Park Series* (Chicago: Rathburn-Grant-Heller, 1919), 3.

<sup>175</sup> Dodge, Henry Irving. *All Aboard for Zion* (Omaha: Union Pacific System, 1926), 2

Railroad Administration in 1918, reported that “Zion was held in reverence, none of these superstitious people ever daring to spend the night within the portals of its winding canyons.”<sup>176</sup>

In 1925, Eyre Powell wrote an article in *Success: The Human Magazine* that stated Zion “carried legendary terror to the more modern tribes. . . .”<sup>177</sup> Stories of Paiutes too afraid to enter Zion Canyon bolstered tourism writers’ claims of Zion’s mysterious and awe-inspiring power. The definitions given to the Paiute word, Mukuntuweap, also reflected this purpose, as various writers claimed Mukuntuweap meant “The Home of God” or “Home of the Spirits” rather than “Straight Rock” its actual translation. Whether born from a lack of knowledge or the desire for sensationalism, this imagery reinforced the idea of Zion’s exceptionalism. After all, what tourist did not want to see a place where the “Redman feared to tread”? For Paiutes, these claims firmly placed them outside of the canyon and its history, denying any and all connections they had to the area. Through these articles, Zion was no longer a Paiute place but rather was an American place that could only be truly enjoyed by the visiting tourist. It denuded the park of its native peoples while populating it with the EuroAmerican pilgrim, searching for a sanctuary from the modern world.

Early NPS officials and tourism boosters took a very different route with Mormon history in the canyon. Rather than minimize and marginalize their connection to the new park, officials often advertised Mormons as a part of the attraction. Robert Yard in his 1919 book, *The Book of the National Parks*, described what the average visitor would see after disembarking from the train:

“The houses are of a gray composition resembling adobe, and many of them are half a century old and more. Dilapidated square forts, reminders of pioneer struggles with the Indians, are seen here and there. Compact Mormon churches are in every settlement, however small. The men are

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<sup>176</sup> Lait, Jack. *Zion National Monument*, 3.

<sup>177</sup> Powell, Eyre. “The Last Great American Frontier,” *Success: The Human Magazine*, Vol IX, No. 5, May 1925, 20.

bearded, coatless, and wear baggy trousers, suggestive of Holland. Bronzed and deliberate women, who drive teams and work the fields with the men, wear old-fashioned sunbonnets. Many of these people have never seen a railroad-train. Newspapers are scarce and long past date. Here Mormonism of the older fashion is a living religion, affecting the routine of daily life.”<sup>178</sup>

This description strongly emphasized the quaint nature of the Mormon culture and presented it as a last remnant of the early pioneer world the rest of the United States had left behind. Yard added to this description by remarking “these strange primitive villages, these simple, earnest, God-fearing people, merge into unreality with the desert, the sage-dotted mountains . . . the colored sands, and the vivid cliffs.”<sup>179</sup> To Yard, Mormons were an extension of the landscape, a living history element just as interesting as the cliffs and mountains. Their presence defined the area, suggesting the idea that Zion was not only a place that inspired religious fervor but was a place composed of it. Non-NPS tourism promoters wrote about the Mormons in similar terms as well. From the earliest articles to later publications written in the mid-1920s, travel writers emphasized the Mormon presence in the canyon, calling them “true pioneers and subjugators of the desert”<sup>180</sup> and referring frequently to how they worshipfully built their homes near the park while gazing “with awe on the portals of the flaming abyss . . . .”<sup>181</sup> Tourism boosters and the early Park Service ultimately used Mormons to bolster and confirm their claims of Zion’s religiosity while also keeping them outside of the park. Mormons did not cultivate fields or utilize its resources in these articles but simply appreciated the canyon aesthetically, maintaining the image of a wild, beautiful landscape that had always inspired reverence. Boosters did market Mormons as a draw for the curious who might hope to glimpse the strange “zealot” and the remnants of the old pioneer life.

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<sup>178</sup> Yard, Robert. *The Book of the National Parks* (New York: Charles Scribner’s and Sons, 1919), 358-359.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid*, 359.

<sup>180</sup> Mitchell, Guy Elliot. “Mukuntuweap, A Desert Yosemite: a Little Known National Monument in Southern Utah, that Closely Resembles Yosemite Valley But Has Distinct Characteristics of Its Own—Once a Refuge of the Mormons,” *Travel*, Vol. XXIX, June 1917, 10.

<sup>181</sup> “New Southern Utah Wonderland to Open,” *The Denver Post Tourist Edition* (Denver, CO), May 10, 1925.

Early park promoters also altered and fabricated stories about the settlement of Zion Canyon, giving it greater significance in Mormon and Utah history as a whole. In the *Travel* article, “Mukuntuweap: A Desert Yosemite,” Mitchell described Zion as a Mormon refuge “in case they were driven . . . from the Salt Lake Valley” by the federal government.<sup>182</sup> He indicated that the Mormon leadership and most of Mormon population would relocate there; inventing a more essential role for the canyon, one that had no bearing on either the political or environmental reality of the area. The foundational legislation for Zion from 1918, when it was renamed Zion National Monument, and from 1919, when it was declared a national park, both mentioned that Mormons used it as a refuge in case of Indian raids, which was also not true. As discussed earlier, during the 1860s Black Hawk War, Mormons regathered in Rockville, all but abandoning the canyon for several years. The idea of Zion as a refuge firmly took root, however, and elaborate versions of it appeared in various publications. In 1925, *The Denver Post* wrote that Zion “was a place of the dead, of spirits and terrible gods. Even the war trail of the dreaded Navajos circled it in a wide detour across the plateaus. The great chasm thus found a place of safety during Indian raids and soon renamed itself among the pioneers. It became the ‘Little Zion’, the place of refuge . . . .”<sup>183</sup> This article utilized the invented history of the area to add a sense of drama to the canyon and its name. It reaffirmed that Zion was a place of fear for the native peoples but was a literal sanctuary for Mormons and implying it could be a figurative one for the modern visitor.

After Zion Canyon became a National Monument, Mormon memory of how they interacted with it changed. Nephi Johnson’s stoic and disinterested account of his exploration of the canyon, took on a dramatic flair in the tellings and retellings among local Mormons. Nancy

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<sup>182</sup> Mitchell, Guy Elliot. “Mukuntuweap, A Desert Yosemite,” 8.

<sup>183</sup> “New Southern Utah Wonderland to Open,” *The Denver Post Tourist Edition* (Denver, CO), May 10, 1925.

Crawford, Springdale's librarian in the 1940s, described how Nephi Johnson penetrated "the stronghold of the Gods" and how the "canyon will from henceforth echo the sound of the white man's voice and his implements of civilization."<sup>184</sup> Her description left the reader with a strong sense of unfolding destiny and awe that Johnson might never have felt in his initial survey of the area. Crawford also appropriated the exaggerated language of Zion being the "canyon of the gods" featured in the pamphlets created by the Union Pacific Railroad for the park during the 1920s.<sup>185</sup> In these descriptions, Zion became more than just a beautiful canyon, but a place full of mystery and deep religiosity that the settlers immediately felt upon entering. These views, however, differed greatly from the pragmatic approach settlers actually took towards the canyon illustrated in the *Annals of the Southern Utah Mission* and in diaries. The local Mormon leaders who were involved in the canyon's development into a National Park also took on a dream like quality. Randall Lunt Jones, a native to Cedar City, was instrumental in managing negotiations between local towns and Union Pacific regarding facilities and road construction for the park. The descriptions written of his early childhood by relatives after his death make Jones out to be almost prophetic. They describe how Jones, a poor barefoot boy in overalls, would round up cattle in the mountains above Zion Canyon and would look down and imagine its bustling future.<sup>186</sup> Zion Canyon's transformation into a National Park altered how local Mormons interpreted their history in it, as they began seeing a deeper meaning in their earlier interactions. Zion became a place that Mormons had *always* known was special, redefining their connections and imbuing the landscape with a sense of destiny.

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<sup>184</sup> Crawford. *Springdale, Utah: Articles, Interviews, and Notes on its Early History*, 1.

<sup>185</sup> Union Pacific took over the Salt Lake and Los Angeles rail-line to southern Utah in 1922. The purchase was finalized by 1923 and they began to really develop tourism facilities in Zion, the Grand Canyon, and Bryce Canyon.

<sup>186</sup> "Randall Lunt Jones," 3-4, unpublished manuscript, Gerald Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University.



In 1944, the various versions of Zion Canyon's narrative culminated in an article published by the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. Angus M. Woodbury's "A History of Southern Utah and its National Parks" became a foundational and dominating work on the history of Zion. The initial article was transformed into a small book in 1950 and has been in almost continuous publication since then and is one of the most cited sources on the park. Woodbury was a St. George local who spent a great deal of time in the Upper Virgin River valley and became Zion's first park naturalist in 1925. He later became an ecology professor at the University of Utah but dabbled in writing history. His work reflected both a nostalgic Mormon centric perspective while also featuring detailed facts and information about the park's foundation. Most parts of this article were well-researched and factual, although Woodbury did have a tendency to swing into admiring tangents on his former neighbors and friends. He also greatly misconstrued the history of Southern Paiutes in Zion. Because it is such a dominating work, his arguments must be addressed specifically. Woodbury based his information largely on the settlers' accounts, like Elijah Behunin's that "Paiutes avoided it [Zion Canyon] as a camping ground." He supported this with an assertion that Tony Tillohash, a Shivwits Paiute, said "an Indian would not dare go into Zion alone."<sup>187</sup> Woodbury then went into a detailed description of Paiutes' supernatural hierarchy and explained how "Kai-ne-sava was a mysterious being of changeable moods . . . Sometimes he built fires on the West Temple . . . [or] pushed down rocks that fall down in Zion." He also implied that another evil being, Wai-no-pits, might have occupied the canyon. Woodbury claimed that the stories around these two beings kept Paiutes out.<sup>188</sup>

What Woodbury actually described was a compilation of a couple different stories, none of which supported the belief that Paiutes refused to enter the canyon. The being Kai-ne-sava

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<sup>187</sup> Woodbury, Angus M. "A History of Southern Utah and its National Parks," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 112.

<sup>188</sup> Woodbury, Angus M. "A History of Southern Utah and its National Parks," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 112-113.

came from a story John Wesley Powell was told by his Indian guide, Chuarrumpeak, as they camped near Zion. Chuarrumpeak told Powell the beings who lit fires on the mountains were called “*Tu-mu-ur-ru-gwait’-si-gaip* or Rock Rovers.” In the story, there was no indication that Paiutes avoided the area because of these beings.<sup>189</sup> It was just a story to explain a fire that occurred on the West Temple. Also, Wai-no-pits was not a being specific to Zion. In an interview, one Paiute elder commented on the legends Woodbury and others claimed Paiutes believed about the canyon, stating “There’s spirits that dwell everywhere. And I guess what he’s implying that he was a spirit that dwelled up in the narrows, but there are spirits everywhere.”<sup>190</sup> Even Tilllohash’s statement that Woodbury took as evidence that Paiutes did not go into the park, did not actually assert that. Tilllohash just said they do not go in alone. When read all together, Woodbury seems to have supported settler’s claims of Paiute fear of Zion, but when examined individually and using the sources he drew this information from, his evidence falls apart.

Interestingly, a contemporary of Woodbury’s took strong exception to his explanation of Paiute history in Zion. William Palmer, an amateur ethnographer, Mormon bishop, and sometimes BIA agent studied Paiute history and culture and produced several books with anglicized versions of Paiute stories and songs during the 1930s and 1940s. Palmer was an authority on Paiute history at the time. He filtered much of his work through the lens of his own culture and religious beliefs, but he did capture many basic facts about Paiutes; and in a series of interviews he conducted with Paiutes, he created a very different history of Zion that Woodbury completely ignored in his 1944 article. Palmer actually attacked Woodbury earlier in 1936, in a

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<sup>189</sup> Powell, John Wesley. *The Exploration of the Colorado River*, 144.

<sup>190</sup> Glendora Homer, interview by Sara Black, November 9, 2011, 15. Homer’s comment is specifically referring to the story that the spirit, Sinewava or Suungwuv dwelled in the Narrows. Wai-no-pits is another spirit.

bulletin published in *Zion-Bryce Nature Notes*, a Park Service publication, over a disagreement about the Paiute word for Zion. Palmer wrote:

“The confusion today probably arises from a failure to distinguish between I-oo-goone, the Canyon, and the tribal lands of I-oo-goon-ints band of Indians. This tribe or clan claimed the country from Grafton up to the Narrows in Zion and extending eastward as far perhaps, as the Coal Hill. . . Each mountain and canyon and stream and hill had its own name. I-oo-goone, Zion Canyon, was only one of those features and not, as supposed, a general name for all of them. The farmed section above the tunnel was called ‘Moki-Uav or Moquich Valley.’”<sup>191</sup>

Palmer also listed the names of twenty sources, most of them Paiute, who gave him his information and denounced Woodbury for only using two, neither of whom were Paiute.

Woodbury ignored most of Palmer’s information but he did give him a nod, by using one native source and writing that some Paiutes called the area I-u-goon in his 1944 article.<sup>192</sup> Ultimately, Woodbury rejected Palmer and his version of Paiute history in Zion, as it did not fit the narrative Mormons and the Park Service created for the canyon during the early twentieth century. The feelings of pride and accomplishment associated with the canyon and the understanding that only Euro-Americans knew how to truly enjoy and treat this place eclipsed any and all Native claim to the area. Zion Canyon was a Mormon place, and its uniqueness eventually made it into an American place that Mormon settlers eagerly shared. There was no room for Native people in such an account.

These questions and challenges regarding Paiutes’ history in Zion Canyon had lasting consequences for Paiutes. During most of the twentieth century, Paiutes had larger concerns regarding their reservations, their tribal governments, their economy, and maintaining their cultural identity as a people and therefore, did very little to challenge Mormon and NPS claims. For them, this narrative served just as another example of how Euro-Americans and Mormons erased and replaced Paiute history with their own. For many, it served as a point of frustration,

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<sup>191</sup> William Palmer Papers. Bulletin published by the Department of Interior and was meant to correct mistakes in “Nature Notes,” Vol. 8 No. 1 for March 1936, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

<sup>192</sup> Woodbury, Angus M. “A History of Southern Utah and its National Parks,” *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 115.

especially because it remains such a pervasive narrative. In her interview, Paiute elder, Glendora Homer emphasized that Paiutes “were not afraid of that canyon.”<sup>193</sup> The elders interviewed by Stoffle in 1995 also made the same assertions. For Paiutes, this false narrative had very real impacts, as it justified the Park Service’s and other federal officials’ decisions to deny Paiutes access to Zion’s resources and areas that were culturally significant to Paiutes. The entry fees and fears of being chased out by rangers all worked to divorce Paiutes from the canyon and diminish the relationship Paiutes once had with the area. Because of these policies, Zion became a place Paiutes rarely went to. It had been a part of their social and religious culture but most interactions with it faded to long ago memories preserved by Paiute elders. Even the experiences the elders described in Stoffle’s 1995 interviews were not their own but rather their parents’ and grandparents’, who were all interacting with the canyon before the park’s development. In many ways, the National Park Service made all of the assertions that Paiutes avoided the canyon true in the twentieth century.

### *Impacts of Development on Local Mormon Community Life*

With the development of Zion, Mormons also experienced significant changes that challenged their perception of their culture and identity though in an entirely different way. Between 1915 and 1930, the Upper Virgin River valley transformed from a string of remote and isolated Mormon villages to an area that thousands of tourists from all over the country descended upon during the summer months. In 1915, only a handful of Springdale and Rockville residents had ever seen a car but by 1930 not only did residents see them on a daily basis, but many of the townspeople actually owned one. Both Springdale and Rockville had electricity thanks to the park’s development by that time as well. Electricity had been needed for the Zion

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<sup>193</sup> Glendora Homer, interview by Sara Black, November 9, 2011, 12.

Lodge, completed in 1925 and electric lines were extended into the towns shortly thereafter.<sup>194</sup>

For a culture that had once defined itself with isolation and agricultural hamlets, Mormons found themselves in a rapidly modernizing world. Their lives had been characterized by the hardship of attempting to “make the desert bloom as the rose” to one that commoditized and exploited the desert. This represented a shift in their culture and their connection to the landscape, as these changes forced Mormons to forge a new version of themselves in a modern world.

Mormon interpretations of the changes in Zion reflected a mixture of emotions over the canyon’s new status. Moses K. Gifford was born in 1869 in log cabin located in Shunesburg, a small Mormon settlement, nestled near Parunuweap Canyon just outside of Springdale. His father, Samuel Gifford, was one of the original pioneers called to settle in Dixie and who defined his family’s life through his deep commitment to the Mormon Church. Moses grew up practicing the subsistence economy that dominated southern Utah, growing cotton, corn, and peaches. He even had a potato patch near Big Bend in Zion at the turn of the century.<sup>195</sup> His life witnessed the great changes in Zion Canyon and in Utah in general. Gifford reflected on these changes in a series of poems he published in the 1930s. His poem, *Visions of the Pioneers*, revealed complex feelings about Mormon past and future. He wrote:

“Pioneers are growing older,  
Times goes rolling by,  
Soon the young will have to shoulder,  
Things they could not try.  
They had visions of the future,  
Longing for the day,  
Their souls were thrilled, their dreams fulfilled  
In such a miraculous way.

Chorus 3:  
There’s a long long night of darkness  
When the lights were very low,  
And we hear the cowbell ringing,

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<sup>194</sup> “Rockville,” George A. Croft Collection. Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>195</sup> George A. Croft Collection, Box 1 Folder 6, p. 3.

Telling us where to go.  
Yes, the bygone nights of darkness,  
Now we bid you all adieu,  
Come and read our electric meters;  
Every month we look for you.”<sup>196</sup>

Gifford’s poem spoke to the feelings of loss for an old way of life and uncertainty about what would define Utah’s identity in the twentieth century. He recognized the benefits of Zion’s new status as a National Park and the improvements that had been made, implying it was a fulfillment of the pioneers’ dreams of a blossoming desert. He also voiced uncertainty as to who or what would act as guide in this new world. The shift from an agricultural economy to one based more on tourism altered life in southern Utah in dramatic ways, as exposure to people outside these insular communities created new opportunities but also threatened old life patterns. The response to these changes was evident in the poem, however. The focus and idolized language used to discuss the past represented the new emphasis on ancestry, as Mormons used the past define themselves in their present. Gifford firmly grounded the future with the past identity, demonstrating how Mormons adapted to the changes in Zion and Utah as a whole.

This emphasis on ancestry and the romanticized version of the pioneer era changed how Mormons perceived their history in southern Utah in general. Mormon interactions with Paiutes and the impact they had on their hunter/gatherer lifestyle came to be understood as a failing of the Paiutes. As one former settler recalled, “They [Paiutes] had beautiful happy hunting ground until we came here . . . So we did really intrude on them. They weren’t taking advantage of a good thing, they just weren’t taking care of anything.”<sup>197</sup> Many settlers acknowledged that they interfered with Paiutes’ traditional lifeways, but they viewed Paiutes ultimately at fault for not being able to adapt to Mormon settlement in the area and for not being sedentary farmers to

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<sup>196</sup> Gifford, Moses K. *A Collection of Songs, Poems, and Tributes Vol. 1* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930)18-19.

<sup>197</sup> DeMille, Raymond and Fern, interview by Sally Pearce, Jan. 22 1982, Zion Archives Box 5, p. 10. Courtesy of National Park Service, ZION 12352, Zion National Park Museum Collection.

begin with. This narrative absolved settlers of any guilt associated with settlement and continues to be a common interpretation to this day. As a Jacob Hamblin reenactor told me and my fellow audience members during a Pioneer Day celebration in 2015, “No matter how hard we tried, we just could not get them [Paiutes] to irrigate.” This narrative rewrote Paiute history, making them much more in need of Mormon aid while also blaming Paiutes for the losses they experienced.

Mormon interpretations in regards to the slave trade in Utah also reflected a similar narrative. Juanita Brooks in her 1940 article referred to Paiute slavery as an adoption program. She argued that Mormon settlers, after purchasing these children, saw them as their own. However, in the article, she ignored the fact that Mormon settlers bought and then resold children, as in the case of David Lemmon, who was purchased and then sold to the Lemmon family in Rockville in exchange for oxen. These children were definitely commoditized, but it’s a point she disregarded while focusing instead on the instances where families showed real affection for their “adoptees.” These interpretations of Mormon and Paiute interaction simplified the complexity of these interactions while also whitewashing some of the more difficult issues. In memory and in written history, Mormon settlers appeared nobler than what they always were. These new versions of the pioneers came to dominate local history, obscuring understandings of the past and shaping Mormon perceptions of themselves and the Paiutes.

## CONCLUSION

The development of Zion into a national park changed a great deal for the Mormons and Paiutes who once called this landscape home. It removed a large swath of land from the subsistence economies of both groups and altered the purpose and role the canyon served in their communities. Zion's transformation into a national park altered the very foundation of the region's economy and ushered in rapid modernization. This change was nuanced and complex, as Zion Canyon took on a new identity during these transitional years. It became "the Home of the Spirits" and the "Flaming Canyon," a place set apart from the people who gathered wild plants here, kept farm fields, and ranged livestock. This new identity and its associated narrative became a draw to thousands of American tourists, who wanted to experience a beautiful and mysterious wilderness. This new narrative, however, completely ignored the complex histories and interactions of the Paiutes and Mormons who had depended on and utilized this area.

For Paiutes, Zion Canyon represented a part of their homeland and traditional territory. A place they had always known, and from their perspective, a place they had interacted with from the time of their creation. It was a part of their subsistence economy and held numerous unique and abundant resources they could depend on. It was another part of the desert "good lands" that their creativity and flexibility as a people allowed them to fully take advantage of. It also served as a place where they could practice their religious and cultural traditions as well as a gathering place to socialize and reestablish community connections. Zion Canyon was very much a part of the Paiute homeland and, as such, worked to connect Paiutes to the land, each other, and their culture as a whole.

The movement of Euro-Americans through Paiute territory and the general settlement of Mormons in the area disrupted and challenged Paiute traditional ways. The marginalization of



Paiute communities from the best farmlands and competition with livestock for the landscape's limited resources altered Paiute connection and interaction with their homeland in general. They could no longer depend solely on their traditional lifeways to survive but had to incorporate Mormons and wage labor into their subsistence strategies. This worked to separate them from some of their cultural and religious traditions, which had been so entwined with their hunter/gatherer lifestyle. These changes were reflected in how Paiutes viewed their landscape, as old land formations gained new meanings that celebrated Paiute resistance to Mormon and Euro-American control, reconnecting them to their lands in new ways. In the Upper Virgin River valley, Paiute dispossession was gradual. Although it lacked space, Paiutes continued to use the area into the early twentieth century. Their numbers decreased over time because of tensions leftover from the Black Hawk War and exposure to European diseases; however, they still used the land in traditional ways when it made sense to do so. Despite the many challenges Paiutes faced, they managed to hold onto many of the core aspects of their identity and continue to relate and utilize Zion's landscape in culturally appropriate ways.

Zion's transformation into a national park only widened the divide between Paiutes and the canyon. The Park Service essentially drove out Paiutes physically and prevented them from using the land and its resources, as they had done for generations. This represented the true break between Paiutes and Zion Canyon, as for most of the twentieth century, Paiutes saw Zion as a place where they were not wanted. The narrative created for Zion as national park also denied any and all Paiute connection to the land, as Zion became the place they feared rather than the place they hunted, gathered plants, and grew gardens in. This storyline made Zion strictly a place only Euro-Americans could enjoy, regulating Paiutes and all Native peoples to outside of the canyon.

For Mormons, the landscape in and around Zion Canyon served as an expression of the idyllic communities they wished to create as a part of their religious empire. By transforming the desert and making it blossom, Mormon settlers hoped to transform themselves as well, proving their worthiness to God and their church. The Paiutes and other Native peoples the Mormons encountered were incorporated into this religious vision, as their assimilation into Mormon culture served as an extension of the land's metamorphosis from a wilderness into a garden. The environmental and cultural realities of this undertaking, however, proved extremely difficult to overcome, creating numerous hardships that tested their faith as well as frustrations with both the land and the Paiutes who resisted these changes. Through these hardships, Mormons forged a closer connection to the landscape and their communities. What they ultimately created was an amalgamation of green agricultural fields and red rock that also symbolized the complicated relationship they had with the land and each other, as the canyon became both "Zion," their religious ideal, and "Not Zion," a place where people sometimes acted against the church's teachings. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Mormons viewed Zion Canyon and all of southern Utah as their own. From their point of view, it was a hard won landscape that they had managed to largely alter to suit their needs and therefore, belonged to them completely.

When Zion became a national park, Mormons still felt very much a part of its history and its present. Tourism boosters, the Park Service, and the numerous journalists who wrote about the park emphasized Mormon history and role in making Zion a tourism destination. These articles largely celebrated Mormons, referring to them as tamers of the desert and "true pioneers." The economic benefits and the new services and business opportunities the park created more than made up for the loss of agricultural lands. This was a new era for these settlements, as the area was quickly ushered into the twentieth century and its associated

technologies. These rapid changes altered how Mormons thought of their history in the canyon and themselves, as they remembered all of their interactions with the landscape through the lens of what Zion would become. Mormons romanticized their history in the canyon as well as the pioneer era in general, forging a strong identity in the twentieth century based on their perception of unerring ancestors who worked solely for their faith and families. At the time of Zion's development into a national park and the first decade after, local Mormons continued to feel very connected to the canyon as a landscape. The base of the relationship had changed, as it was no longer an agricultural space, but it still served as a symbol of Mormon pride and history.

Today, Paiutes and the descendants of the Mormon settlers continue to have a very complicated relationship with Zion as a national park. Paiutes, who largely remained on the park's periphery for most of the twentieth century, have begun to rebuild their connections to the canyon in the twenty-first. The Stoffle report on Zion's ethnohistory was one of several outreach efforts that helped create a new relationship between the current Paiute bands and the Park Service. Starting in the late 1990s, the Park Service began waiving entry fees for Southern Paiutes who wished to enter the park for non-recreational purposes and granting permits to allow plant gathering in the park. Since then, Paiutes have been invited to give talks on their history in Zion to both Park Service employees and the general public in attempts to create better understandings of their history and their concerns regarding tourist usage in Zion. The relationship still remains tentative at times and there are still many misconceptions regarding their history, but these efforts have helped to reconnect a new generation of Paiutes to Zion's landscape not as a national park but as a part of their homeland. This is very much an ongoing process, as old narratives of Paiute fear of the canyon still remain quite dominant even in Park Service circles, but it is gradually improving.

Mormon relations with Zion have also grown more complicated since the park's initial development. Although Mormons had not really felt dispossessed during the early years, that changed starting in the 1930s once the boundaries of the park began expanding. Several families, including the Crawfords, felt they were being forced to sell their lands to the Park Service. Lucy Schiefer, who sold land twice to the national park (once in the 1930s and again in the 1960s), summed up her experience, stating "You can't dispute with the government because you don't have the money to fight them. They wanted that place so all we could do was to give it up."<sup>198</sup> These experiences along with increasing tourism to the area created new resentment towards the park, as the local communities felt the Park Service took actions that hurt their interests. These feelings only grew as more restrictions were placed on ranchers who kept livestock in Zion's backcountry and as more families felt pressured to sell. The increased popularity of Zion in the last 20 years has also not helped the situation, as many locals feel that they can no longer enjoy the park because of all the people. The introduction of the shuttle system, which relieved overcrowding issues, created new frustrations as well, as it restricted people from driving in the canyon, the way most locals had experienced it. Today, the local communities and the descendants of the Mormon settlers have a love-hate relationship with Zion, as they appreciate the business and economic opportunities the park generates but also resent the fact that they can no longer interact with Zion as they did in the past. They still feel pride in their role in the park's development and creation, but in some ways, they also feel it has been stolen from them by the Park Service and the millions of tourists who descend upon the canyon every year.

At the beginning of this thesis, I stated it was exploration of perception. How places become meaningful for people and how the connections people make to place can alter other

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<sup>198</sup> Schiefer, Lucy, interview by Ellen Wagner, Jan 18 1982. Zion Archives Box 5, p.19. Courtesy of National Park Service, ZION 12352, Zion National Park Museum Collection.

groups' relationships with it. Zion is a place of overlapping significance for multiple groups-the Paiutes, the Mormons, the Park Service, and the American public. Zion, through the course of its history, has been reshaped from a homeland, a homestead, and finally to a haven. All of these identities changed how each group related to this landscape, as they competed for its limited space and resources, altering their understandings and relationship with the area. Today, the overwhelming narrative of Zion as a national park and wilderness dominates how most people view this land. In this thesis, I hope I managed to shed light on Zion's various identities and the connections both Paiutes and Mormons had to this landscape before it became a national park. From my perspective, I feel it is important to not allow any one of these identities to overshadow the other as Zion encompasses all of these identities simultaneously. For the Paiutes today, the descendants of the Mormon settlers, and the current visitors to the canyon, Zion holds significance for all these groups, creating a culturally dynamic and unique place that is far more interesting than the "mysterious canyon" constructed by the early Park Service. Zion is a storied place both geologically and culturally and should be remembered as such.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

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### **Education**

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV

M.A. U.S. History minor in Public History (expected graduation), Fall 2016

Johns Hopkins University Baltimore, MD

M.A.T. Secondary Social Studies, 2007

University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

B.A. History, December 2004

### **Relevant Graduate Coursework and History Projects:**

- Wrote sections for the upcoming “Zion Roads” book on Mormon settlement history in and around Zion Canyon as well as early tourism in the park, publication date is yet undetermined, Fall 2015
- Conducted and transcribed an oral history with a member of the Southern Paiute tribe, using the interview for a paper which was delivered at the Southwestern Oral History Association conference in Albuquerque, Spring 2012
- Completed research and paper work for Mojave Road's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places
- Designed and created original lesson plans for Walking Box Ranch, a historic ranch located near Searchlight, NV operated by the Bureau of Land Management, which is being renovated for educational purposes
- Created interpretative posters for Walking Box Ranch, describing the social lives of its famous occupants, Clara Bow and Rex Bell, and various buildings located on the property
- Helped organize and plan an open house sponsored by UNLV's Department of History for Walking Box Ranch, orienting the local history community to educational opportunities at the ranch and providing food and entertainment

### **Professional Experience:**

Visitor Use Assistant 2012-Present

Zion National Park

- Regularly greeted, oriented, and collected appropriate fees from visitors in a high volume setting while maintaining high standards of courtesy, accuracy, and speed to ensure a positive visitor experience
- Updated Zion National Park's Fee Manual for the 2016 season, including all changes that have occurred in prices and passes since 2014.
- Utilized Recreation.gov and campground reservation systems to check campers in and out of sites and perform general campground duties
- Worked with volunteers for the campgrounds, assisting them in the field when needed and helping to train volunteers regarding their duties.
- Helped plan and organize events that promoted team-building or recognition for fellow staff members and volunteers: cookouts, etc.
- Served as Entrance Station Liaison 2014-assiting in new seasonal employee training, conducting audits, managing and responding to entrance station safety and operational issues, and coaching rangers on how to improve their customer service skills and generally improve entrance station operations
- Regularly trained/mentored fellow rangers in the proper procedures for operating the park's fee stations, campground stations, and Zion's tunnel/ oversized vehicle escort system to ensure operations follow the park's established protocols and maintain the park's high standards for safety, efficiency and visitor satisfaction

#### Education Technician Volunteer 2013

##### Zion National Park

- Assisted Educational Technicians with in class programs in southern Utah for grades 3, 4, and 6
- Led games and programs at schools on numerous topics, such as Zion's wildlife, microorganisms, and its environmental systems
- Assisted in the operation of Zion's Nature Center, guiding children and their parents through the various activities and educating them about the park
- Led various programs, including the Children's Station at the Visitor Center and Nature Games at Zion Lodge

#### Graduate Assistant 2010-2012

##### University of Nevada, Las Vegas

- Gathered and researched resource materials for the upper division course, "The History of the National Parks", which explored such topics as visitor use and preservation policies (Dr. Foster)
- Collected resources for an upcoming book on the history of tourism in the West (Dr. Wrobel)
- Assisted professors with the planning of quizzes, exams and the grading of all class assignments (Dr. Foster, Dr. Gallo, and Dr. Loader)

- Taught discussion sections in class and online, directing student reading and facilitating their understanding of the coursework (Dr. Loader and Dr. Gallo)

Education/Interpretation Internship 2011-2012  
Pipe Spring National Monument Fredonia, AZ

- Designed original lesson plans for use in nearby school districts for Kindergarten-9th grade based on Utah's curriculum standards and Pipe Spring's interpretative themes
- Correlated Utah's Social Studies and Science curriculums to Pipe Spring's interpretative themes, identifying how Pipe Spring's resources could be utilized to teach Utah's education standards
- Researched, created, and led tours of the historic fortified ranch house and a nature walk of the surrounding desert habitat of Pipe Spring National Monument.
- Performed educational demonstrations of pioneer activities (cattle roping, cross stitching, knitting, cheese making, and hands-on historical object table)
- Created original interpretive talks, site bulletins, and handouts for park visitors over a variety of topics (geology, Native American and pioneer gardening techniques, chuck wagons, and other points of interest throughout the monument)

Teacher U.S. and World History  
Carver Vo-Tech High School Baltimore, MD

- Developed lessons and activities to convey information on a variety of historical concepts and topics in correlation with Maryland State and Baltimore City Content Standards for World and United States History
- Regularly communicated with parents and school staff regarding student progress and behavior in order to foster an environment for maximum student achievement
- Utilized a variety of software and hardware on a daily basis, including Microsoft Word, Excel, Internet Explorer, Power Point, multimedia projectors, copiers, and fax machines to create, research, and execute lessons
- Developed partnerships with local museums and organizations to enhance student motivation and appreciation of the local history around them every day
- Led field trip to Baltimore City's Inner Harbor and local museums, describing local history and important city sites on the bus between destinations
- Directed and led student volunteers regarding the greenhouse rehabilitation project