“Life in the Land” investigates the relationship between North Americans and deer in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The interaction between various communities and this ungulate is important because the animal—both its physical body and its cultural image—have been at the center of the American conception of nature. Early activists in the twentieth century environmental movement such as Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson drew upon the image of deer to convey influential environmental ideas to the national public. This thesis explains the source of that image in the Euro-American quest for a pristine and innocent nature. The work demonstrates the role of Mormons, the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service in the application of the cultural myth of virgin land to the Kaibab Plateau of Arizona and its deer herd. The thesis also discusses the interaction between Southern Paiutes and the Kaibab deer.
LIFE IN THE LAND: THE STORY OF THE KAIBAB DEER

A Thesis

Submitted to the

Faculty of Miami University

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History

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2005

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Introduction

Deer turn space into place for people. Their presence informs us about the character and opportunities of a landscape. In one of his strips, the cartoonist Bill Watterson illustrates the importance of place in our relationship with these usually benign creatures. The sequence begins with a middle-aged office worker typing at his computer, chatting with a coworker, and unassumingly conducting his morning. His coffee break, though, is disrupted with a surprise gunshot. Hit in the back, the worker falls to the floor. Papers, mugs, and eyeglasses surround his still body. Four deer then enter the office from the elevator holding rifles and standing upright. With smiles of pride they congratulate each other on the size of their trophy. The strip ends with the deer preparing for a photograph. Watterson’s Sunday artwork is a macabre tale, but also plays on contemporary conceptions of place. The office is not normally dangerous and nor do deer belong there, especially as hunters. The story resonates with a national audience because people have encountered deer themselves across the country. Often, the animals are browsing on the edge of a soccer field, city park, or some other meadow. The North American interaction with deer, though, predates the existence of these places in their current form. Our shared history has helped define spaces since the first person set foot on the continent.¹

The relationship between deer herds and human communities in North America has a long history, one which began with the first American Indian settlements. Sustained interaction for hundreds of generations has created a shared history in which the two groups have continually exerted influence upon each other. In many places, such as the Kaibab Plateau of northern Arizona, this mutual past has been the key channel for human integration into local ecosystems. Conversely, this interaction between people and deer has been one of the clearest avenues through which humans have incorporated nature into their culture. The examination of this historical relationship, therefore, is a fruitful endeavor to reveal a dialogue between nature and culture not yet discussed in the growing field of environmental history.

Deer tell a story unique among all other animals. Familiar to North Americans, they inform on a level more commonplace than do animals rare or exotic. And unlike the bison of the Great Plains or the moose of the northern woods, deer have no special geographic attachment because they are nearly everywhere in the continent. New England farmers, Southwestern American Indians, Western ranchers, and wealthy tourists have all encountered actual deer and also received the animal as a cultural image. Together they (willingly or not) have participated in making deer a symbol of American innocence, opportunity, and wealth. Browsing at the edge of a clearing, deer also mark the edge of civilization. They live just beyond its borders and so represent what lies ahead. Culturally and physically they are the animal manifestation of the frontier---whether it’s in the Old Northwest or the Southwest. Deer’s ubiquity allowed Euro-Americans to transform a variety of local landscapes into a national one.

A historical narrative of human and animal interaction is particularly useful for two reasons. First, the method reflects the historical agency of deer, thereby displacing people from their normal position at the center of history. Such a perspective relocates humans as a part of the natural environment. Although people still hold important roles in this framework, other actors and events, such as browse plants and fire, are also significant in the story. Second, this method describes nature as a part of human culture. In a variety of ways, the diverse people of

¹ Bill Watterson, There’s Treasure Everywhere (Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1996), 160.
the Kaibab Plateau have used deer as an integral ingredient in their communities. Studying shared history demonstrates the interconnectedness of humans and nature.

As part of the larger inquiry into the relationship between culture and nature, the literature on wildlife within the field of environmental history has developed rapidly. Andrew Isenberg, in *The Destruction of the Bison*, considers the motives of both American Indians and Euro-Americans in their mutual contribution to an ecological catastrophe on the Great Plains. His work moves beyond the purely human story and demonstrates the agency of nature’s other actors, such as climate, horses and the bison themselves. Most recently, Jon Coleman has further redrawn traditional borders of historical inquiry by offering wolves as partners in colonial and western American history in *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America*. The method utilized by both Isenberg and Coleman is also useful for unearthing the influences between animals and people that help disclose the shared history of humans and deer.

“Life in the Land,” while following the lead of these two environmental historians, takes their approach in a new direction by focusing on deer. Deer have a far different niche than wolves and bison within both North American ecology and culture. Unlike wolves, they are an herbivorous, herd mammal whose usefulness as a natural resource has been recognized by American Indians and Euro-Americans. Accordingly, their cultural significance to human cultures has differed from the predatory wolf. Bison have much more in common with deer, but important distinctions still exist between the two ungulates. Deer herds have never approached the size of the immense bison herds, nor have they captured the American imagination to such an incredible degree. Deer have, however, been a symbol and natural resource to nearly every North American culture. By examining the relationship between deer and people, this thesis reveals other formerly elusive aspects of both human culture and the natural environment.

The examination of the borderland shared by nature and culture also benefits from a bioregional approach. This method, in which an entire ecosystem is viewed as a dynamic stage, is perhaps the most useful for understanding the agency of nature. An analytic focus on one location structures an adherence to the ecological realities of that place within the narrative. Notable successes with this approach include *Land Use, Environment and Social Change* by Richard White and *The Dust Bowl* by Donald Worster. These histories maintain attention to an ecosystem, charting changes that are inseparable from the human history of its inhabitants. Like the stories of people and landscapes offered by White and Worster, the past shared between humans and deer has been an interaction negotiated through the ecological limitations and possibilities of place. This environmental history, then, is set in the fruitful ground of a bioregion.

The meadows of the Kaibab Plateau are the focus of this study. They rest high above the surrounding desert and are almost hidden from it. From the ground covered by sagebrush and yucca thousands of feet below, the plateau is just a dark line on the horizon. Looking in the other direction, the desert is a flatland before it pours into the deep canyons that feed the Colorado River with water and dust. The water does not come from the Kaibab Plateau, though.

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The shallow streams that slowly course through the flat desert instead come from neighboring plateaus. This region—the Colorado Plateau—is a massive mesa itself and also an extensive network of smaller plateaus. A group of these tablelands to the north send their water through the desert that surrounds the Kaibab Plateau. In the west Kanab Creek hugs the cliffs of the plateau as it sculpts a canyon to the Colorado River. Across twenty miles of desert scrub to the east of the plateau, the knee-deep Paria River carves its own canyon to the river. This pattern of mesas forming canyons is repeated over and over again throughout the Colorado Plateau—an area that covers 130,000 square miles in northern Arizona, northwestern New Mexico, southwestern Colorado, and southern Utah.

The dark line on the horizon, though, rests in isolation amid the plateau and canyon country. The lack of streams running from the Kaibab Plateau separate it from its neighbors. Steep, dry gulches form walls on three of its sides. On its fourth the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River forms one of the most insurmountable barriers in the American West. Although nothing in their appearance indicates the beauty of their source, the dusty gulches lead upward to a lush expanse of green meadows that people have called home for thousands of years. Atop the plateau these fields of grass flow nearly the entire length of the fifty-mile long plateau. In places their narrow width nearly allows the bordering coniferous forest to swallow the meadows. And in others their sinuous course opens to grand reaches of open land. In their shape and in their ecology, the meadows are an interaction with the evergreen trees that grow on the remainder of the Kaibab Plateau. Fir, spruce, and aspen surround the grasslands—which at over 8,000 feet are the highest elevations of the plateau. Those trees then give way to the vast stands of ponderosa that cover the majority of the plateau a few hundred feet below. A woods of shorter pinyon and juniper pines form the last layer of trees before the plateau walls drop into the gulches and their cactus. In all these forests deer, cattle, mountain lions, coyotes, and smaller mammals earn their livings. Spending an evening in the meadows, one can witness dozens of deer emerge from the woods to browse. A mountain lion sighting is a rare occurrence, but a patient observer can often see a coyote; the cattle are often difficult to miss. The relative prevalence of each animal has much to do with ecology and also with human history. The isolation of the plateau has had a real effect on these mammals. Unable to cross the surrounding desert, they have remained on the Kaibab Plateau for thousands of years. For that long, however, humans have transcended its boundaries. The history of the meadows is in large part a story of the interaction between animals that have never left the plateau, such as deer and mountain lions, and others who have continually crossed its borders, such as people and livestock. In a variety of forms and for thousands of years, this interaction has shaped the meadows.6

Today the federal government manages the Kaibab Plateau. The U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service are both responsible for policy decisions, although they divide that task geographically. The northern two-thirds of the plateau form the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest (which also has other districts on lands separate from the plateau). Visitors use the North Kaibab Ranger District to snowshoe in winter, graze cattle in the spring, camp in the summer, and hunt deer in autumn. On the other side of a dividing line

The Kaibab Plateau rests at the corner of the Colorado River’s westward bend. Note the high elevation of the Kaibab Plateau that separates it locally from the surrounding desert. The Colorado River drains its namesake region, an area of mesas and canyons. To the east of the Colorado Plateau are the high peaks of the Rocky Mountains. To the north the range meets the Great Salt Lake at the edge of the Great Basin. Characterized by dry north-south mountain ranges, the Great Basin forms the western border of the Colorado Plateau. To the far south the Colorado River flows through the Sonoran Desert, the remaining border of the plateau region. From National Geographic Society, United States: The Physical Landscape (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1996).
Figure 2 Arizona The Kaibab Plateau is in the northwestern corner of Arizona, near the borders of Utah and Nevada.

Figure 3 Federal Management Today the National Park Service and the U. S. Forest Service oversee the south and north portions of the plateau, respectively. Over 400,000 annual visitors see the plateau’s expansive meadow system that has been both a stock range and an American Indian homeland. The Kaibab Indian Reservation is home to the Southern Paiute band who has lived in the region, including the Kaibab Plateau, for several hundred years. Kanab was a winter village and is now the principal town near the plateau. From Rand McNally, *Rand McNally Road Atlas* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 2003).

running east to west, the Park Service manages the southern third of the plateau. Visitors to this region are mostly summertime campers and sightseers. They typically know the plateau by a different name—the North Rim. The southern edge of the Kaibab Plateau is the northern boundary of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. As part of that scenic chasm, the southern portion of the Kaibab Plateau is within Grand Canyon National Park. While the canyon is an international attraction, park goers also spend time watching wildlife, especially deer. For
the last eighty-five years, visitors have reached both parts of the plateau by driving the access road that enters the national forest in the north and ends at the North Rim. The road runs through the great alpine meadows that connect both management areas and are the heart of the Kaibab Plateau and its deer.

The Kaibab Plateau serves as a worthwhile case study of mutual human and deer history because of the infamous increase in deer population, or irruption, that the herd experienced in the 1920s. It has received much attention within the environmental movement and the scientific community, particularly among public land managers. These professionals have often referred to the irruption as the textbook case of ungulate population reaction to the ill-considered removal of predators. Aldo Leopold shared this lesson with a national audience in his influential essay, “Thinking Like a Mountain.” Leopold argued that deer populations must be metered by natural causes to ensure a properly functioning ecosystem. Rachel Carson included the population crisis in her widely-read book, Silent Spring, in which she shared important observations on the environmental recklessness of twentieth-century American culture. For Carson, the Kaibab deer of the 1920s were an example of the environmental mismanagement that typified its time. Although the irruption is significant, it is most useful as a departure point for further understanding. By examining deeper historical relationships, this paper goes beyond the arguments of Leopold and Carson to demonstrate that deer and people have had a far more complex relationship than these authors suggest.

The use of deer as the primary focus for an analysis of nature limits the ecological comprehensiveness of the inquiry, but also draws important historical insights to the fore. Such an approach, for instance, tells us little about the Kaibab Plateau’s geology. In this story the porous limestone bedrock of the plateau sets the stage by determining that meadows are its centerpiece instead of lakes and streams. Throughout the rest of the thesis geology remains the same. Its pace of change is so much slower than human time scales that its consideration can only be a snapshot of its processes. In the case of the Kaibab Plateau, cultural change has been more intimately associated with transformations in biota. A focus on the living aspects of the plateau narrows the history but still retains a great deal of complexity. There a danger still lurks. Any ecosystem’s web of interrelationships is so great that one may quickly become lost. The flow of energy in a Southwestern forest, for example, runs through hundreds of insect, reptile, bird, and mammal species, not to mention thousands of plant species. A central concern, such as the interaction between an animal and people, can act as a guide to allow the scholar see the forest for the trees. In Destruction of the Bison Isenberg focuses on buffalo, a central theme that allows him to harness important observations of the American relationship with nature in the Great Plains. The development of a primary concern for deer draws out the most important changes for people at the Kaibab Plateau. These ungulates have been the plateau’s central natural resource—both physically and culturally. A study of deer offers a path into the human position in the structure of this place.

The Kaibab Plateau also warrants attention because the current literature has not examined the irruption as the product of a long-standing historical relationship, although it has

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included the incident in a number of recent environmental histories. In *Saving America’s Wildlife*, Thomas Dunlap provides a discussion of the Kaibab deer that incorporates the herd into his narrative of changing attitudes towards predators in the twentieth-century United States. He argues that the irruption, and its management by the Forest Service, exemplified the common assumption that predators could only harm herds. 10 Richard Sellars examines attitudes towards the deer irruption within the context of developing National Park Service wildlife policy. His book, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, includes a discussion of the preservation ideal and its inadvertently deleterious effect upon the herd. 11 In *Driven Wild*, Paul Sutter argues that the deer crisis influenced the game management and recreation ideas of Aldo Leopold that discouraged road development on public land. 12 For Louis Warren, author of *The Hunter’s Game*, the deer irruption of the Kaibab Plateau was part of the transition between a local and a national commons that exemplified the closing of the frontier in the American West. 13 Finally, Christian C. Young provides a book-length treatment in his *In the Absence of Predators*, which is concerned with the politics of game management. 14 These environmental histories incorporate the Kaibab deer into several of the important topics, such as federal land management policy and economic patterns, which are central to the field. The bioregional method, though, allows the Kaibab to be placed within a new narrative that draws upon these themes but sets them more firmly into their local ecological and cultural context.

For thousands of years subsistence hunting characterized that local setting. Prehistoric Clovis people ensured their survival by altering landscapes to meet their needs. At the end of the last glaciation ten thousand years ago they migrated from Asia to North America where they quickly spread across the continent. Their culture, like that of any successful community, held the methods by which they could best modify nature. A variety of channels including stories and rock art explained these processes to future generations. Affected by culture the Kaibab Plateau’s natural environment became something both new and familiar to these immigrants, what the environmental historian William Cronon calls “second nature.” 15 Descendants of Siberian deer hunters, the Clovis people structured their perspective of their surroundings by hunting. Learned each generation, the skill included the steps of scanning, stalking, killing, retrieving, and distributing. Scanning required a detailed knowledge of the plateau forests and meadows. Stalking and killing demanded an accurate understanding of deer behavior. The success of these first steps led to the need to retrieve and distribute the animal. These last stages necessitated not only environmental knowledge, but a well-functioning social structure too. Together these requirements resulted in the education of successive generations in the supportive possibilities of their environment. Combined with the reliability of hunting, this storehouse of

knowledge freed American Indian groups from the need to store vast amounts of food.\textsuperscript{16} Hunting is an interactive event between deer and people, and thus has ramifications for the deer too. As the prey of human hunters, North American deer learned to be wary of the Clovis people. More than just the deer’s behavior changed. Over time, their physical bodies even became smaller through predator selection. Adept at their craft, hunters chose the individual prey that they desired. More often than not, they selected the largest animals from a deer herd. For these mastodon hunters the large size of a deer was not a deterrent. They preferentially harvested the large, fully-grown, and mature deer. Clovis hunters left the old and sick deer for the wolves, bears, and raptors. The gradual reduction of deer body size was the result of human predation. The relationship between the two mammals was therefore continuous, direct, and manifested in the physiology of the deer.\textsuperscript{17}

The importance of reproduction, promoted by historian Carolyn Merchant, is also a beneficial addition to the study of bioregions. The focus is useful to examine the relationships of not only diverse groups of people but also flora and fauna in their quests to perpetuate communities.\textsuperscript{18} Reproduction is perhaps the primary motivation of any species, including both people and deer. This shared quest connects them to the physical environment, which strongly influences their potential for success. After the arrival of the Clovis hunters, the North American climate began to warm even more and change the reproductive capabilities of the natural environment. At the Kaibab Plateau, the warmer weather also became drier around 5,000 years ago. Summer clouds from the Gulf of Mexico carried less rain and winter storms from the Pacific Ocean brought less snow. Formerly, spruce and fir covered the flat top of the plateau, but with increased temperatures and less moisture they retreated to the highest (and coolest) elevations near the meadows. Ponderosa pines thrived in the new climate. Heat and aridity support the frequent fires that aid their reproductive cycle. Consequently, ponderosas expanded across the Kaibab and gave the plateau its modern appearance. The new forest also came accompanied by the desert that surrounds it today. At the low elevations nearly four thousand feet beneath the plateau, the warming and drying was extreme and only scrub could reproduce successfully.\textsuperscript{19}

As a barrier the desert shaped the reproductive capacities of the plateau mammals. Separation interacted with many ecological processes and thus became a defining feature of the plateau. Populations of island species, for instance, have better chances of survival in larger habitats. The tabletop shape of the plateau favored the forest types comfortable at the elevations


of its expansive top, the largest habitat present. Other vegetation types held limited area on the steep sides. The zones of spruce, ponderosa, and pinyon that successively layered the undulating plateau surface thus dominated. The animals of these forest types flourished with them. Deer, coyotes, bears, wolves, mountain lions, and other animals were the largest mammals to benefit. Deer especially utilized the meadows and forests successfully for generations upon generations. Eventually they even evolved small physiological variations particular to their population. Isolation proved beneficial for the deer.\(^{20}\) In addition to climate, deer reproduction is also a function of human involvement in a landscape. Not only did hunting help determine the size of deer, at times it even created habitat. For instance, during a period of increased moisture from 800-1400 A.D., Ancient Puebloans living seasonally on the plateau set fires while hunting. The fires were meant to direct fleeing deer into places where they were more vulnerable to arrows. For those deer that escaped, though, the new plant growth following the fire provided rich browse. Searching for those events in the past that influenced the reproduction of deer offers a way to select from among the many ecological changes in an environment such as the Kaibab Plateau. Those events are a path that follows the central concern of the animals themselves. That deer reproduction involved people not only demonstrates the significance of their relationship, but also provides a meaningful way to place humans in their story.\(^{21}\)

For humans, our own reproduction is a measure of how well we can transform nature to meet our recurring needs time after time. A thousand years ago the Numic culture of present-day California’s Owens Valley accomplished that task remarkably well. Their population increased and many of them migrated eastward across the Great Basin. Those that chose the southeastern part of the region as home created an independent culture known as Southern Paiute. In approximately 1400 A.D. (around the time the Ancient Puebloans migrated elsewhere) one band coalesced at the Kaibab Plateau and continued their sustainable relationship with nature there. They were the ones to name the plateau Kaibab, a term that means “mountain lying down.” For these former mountain and valley dwellers, the mesa was a new landscape. To find success in creating a second nature that supported their own reproduction, they applied many of the cultural practices that they brought with them—including deer hunting. Later, other cultures followed suit. They applied the tenets of their own communities to the Kaibab Plateau so that they could, in a variety of ways, make the place home. These diverse cultures have in turn created a story that is rich in change, conflict and continuity. In the late nineteenth century Mormon settlers from northern Utah gained control of the plateau for cattle grazing. By the turn of the century sport hunters such as Theodore Roosevelt had begun to place the Kaibab Plateau on their list of nationally renowned hunting grounds. Their developing ideas of wildlife conservation were soon accompanied by the related forest conservation ideals of the U.S. Forest Service, which began to manage the flora and fauna of the plateau in the early twentieth century. These ideals conflicted with the tourism-oriented goals of the National Park Service, which initiated its presence on the southern edge of the plateau in 1919 with the creation of Grand Canyon National


Park. Examining a variety of cultures and their unique interactions with the Kaibab deer herd can demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between the natural world and people.  

This work’s first chapter, “Mountain Lying Down,” focuses on the early nineteenth-century history of the Kaibab Paiutes and deer. The research and ethnographies of Martha C. Knack, Robert Euler, Isabel Kelley, Edward Sapir and John Wesley Powell represent over a century of first-hand observation regarding this Southern Paiute band that ground the present study. The chapter is a thick description of how the nineteenth-century Kaibab Paiute incorporated deer into their culture and resource strategy. Drawing upon ecological and zoological literature, the chapter illustrates the factors that held importance for herd reproduction, such as browse availability, wolf predation, and Paiute hunting.

The second chapter, “Buckskin Mountain,” discusses the settlement process of Euro-American Mormons. The chapter utilizes historical narratives of the Mormons by Thomas Alexander and Leonard Arrington. Primary sources, such as town records from nearby Kanab, Utah, newspaper accounts, and diaries help create a full picture of this contact. The following chapter, “Tyiav and Buckskin,” investigates the changes in Kaibab Paiute culture following the arrival of the settlers. The chapter pays special attention to possible changes in deer population effected by the incorporation of American Indian economies into a coalescing national market. The section also offers a treatment of Mormon relations with the Paiutes, who the Mormons understood as the descendants of a lost tribe from ancient Israel called the Lamanites. This chapter finishes in the early 1900s, the beginning of the federal period.

The final chapter examines the shift from the use of the plateau as a local resource to its status as a federally managed public land. “The President’s Forest” uses Forest Service documents, Kanab town records, newspapers, and promotional materials from the Union Pacific Railroad to illustrate this change. Beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century, local cattlemen negotiated federal management by asserting their own measures of control over the plateau. In addition, the arrival of the government and national capital provided infrastructure improvements in southern Utah and northern Arizona that transformed opportunities for local development. The chapter gives treatment to the management practices of the Forest Service and

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Park Service, including their recreation and grazing policies. Often their land management goals overlapped with local motivation for integrating local markets into the national economy. “The President’s Forest” also investigates how these new actors affected the deer at the Kaibab Plateau. 25

The goal of “Life in the Land,” as with many environmental histories, is to demonstrate the significance of the interplay between people and the natural environment. At the Kaibab Plateau, the relationship between nature and culture was most significantly exemplified by the mutual history of deer and people. This historical borderland discloses the integration of people into the plateau bioregion and the incorporation of nature into the human sphere. Viewed together, nature and culture form an inseparable place, a natural environment rich in humanity.

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Chapter One

“Mountain Lying Down: Kaibab Deer and Kaibab Paiutes”

Thousands of feet below the plateau’s winter of deep snows, Kaibab Paiutes spent the winters of the mid-nineteenth century on the banks of Kanab Creek. In this seasonal settlement they processed deer hides, harvested riparian plants, ate from carefully stored food caches and told stories that explained the world around them. An elder would begin such a story around a fire by which other individuals would encourage the younger generations to gather. The elders, and sometimes the entire band, acted the scenes of stories using songs and creating voices for the characters. Occasionally, an elder explained a lesson buried within the narrative. Of the various myths, many related the origins of geographic features and the behavior of local animals. Some myths, such as the one below, explained the Paiute place in these surroundings.26

The old woman pointed into the distance and told Coyote to travel in that direction so that he could find a place to hunt. Coyote agreed and walked to where the woman had indicated. Upon arriving there, he encountered a deer, which he killed for the old woman. Coyote returned to the woman and gave the meat to both her and her daughter. The woman ground the bones underneath herself. Again, Coyote left the women to hunt. This time he killed a mountain-sheep buck and carried the animal back to them. The two women ate the meat again, but in this instance the younger ground the neck bone of the mountain-sheep under herself, which broke away all the teeth of her *vagina dentatum*.

Then the old woman told Coyote, “Go ahead! Go and return to your land. Take this sack along with you and do not untie it even if you hear sounds within it.” He agreed and left the two women. When he was far enough away from them, the mischievous Coyote untied the sack and briefly left it unattended. When he returned to the sack, though, trails streamed out of it in many different directions. Of what was left over at the bottom of the sack he made people. After he had done so, all around that place, among houses scattered around him, fires burned.27

This story of Coyote, the deer, the mountain sheep, and the two women closes the origin myth of the Kaibab Paiutes, as told by the informant Tony Tillohash to the linguist Edward Sapir in 1910. No earlier written account exists of this narrative that nineteenth-century Paiutes retold through generations. As a rare glimpse into the storytelling of that time, the myth offers an indication of cultural texture and meaning to the twenty-first century observer. The narrative especially reveals the complexity of the relationship between Paiute culture and the natural environment of the Kaibab Plateau. Female fertility, game animals and fire find their meaning as actors within this interaction between Paiutes and their surroundings. These themes each aid the perpetuation of community in their own way. In the story, fire signifies human conditioning of the landscape for settlement. Female Paiutes represent fertility. Game animals, especially deer, provide the raw matter of human life. By retelling the story throughout several generations, these relationships were continually reestablished for younger members of the band. These

connections between nature and Paiute narrative demonstrate the cultural recognition of the need to maintain perpetual relationships with the parts of the plateau ecosystem that supported community reproduction.  

The deer, or *tikia*, and mountain sheep in the Kaibab creation story were the two large herd animals that the Paiutes traditionally hunted at the plateau. The cultural meaning they gave to big game was primary among the animal species of the Great Basin environment. Nineteenth-century Paiutes defined deer and mountain sheep by the usefulness of the animals’ bodies, whose meat provided the nourishing substance of human life and bones broke the *vagina dentatum*, the prehistoric barrier to human fertility. Game, then, attained meaning as it provided Paiute community with the biological matter necessary for reproduction. In this way, deer and bighorn were deeply tied to the cultural and physical composition of Kaibab Paiute society. Of the two animals, though, they more often hunted *tikia*. Therefore, a focus on *tikia* in this work is a reflection of the primacy of this resource.  

The deer were the most important part of a subsistence strategy that evolved to meet the specific demands of the Kaibab Plateau and its surroundings. The Kaibab band was comprised of approximately ten local, kin-based groups that each had a leader who led seasonal travel. As nineteenth-century Kaibab Paiutes traveled through the canyon and plateau landscape, they connected the reproductive cycles of plants and animals from a variety of ecological zones to achieve the continuation and renewal of their own community. Oral tradition, as exemplified in the creation story recounted above, offered guidance for this coordination from generation to generation. The significance of any place, plant, animal or time was found in its position among this methodically constructed network of community and ecological relationships. Before a meaningful discussion of deer can begin, therefore, it is necessary to examine briefly the rest of this reproductive web.  

When the weather warmed at Kanab Creek, the sedentary season of story telling came to an end. During spring, food was scarce. The flora and fauna of the region were just beginning to rejuvenate themselves from the winter cold. After several winter months, families exhausted the supplies of maize and squash they had stocked from the limited agriculture that they practiced in this riparian environment. During this lean period, Kaibab Paiutes traveled to the inner Grand Canyon's North Rim.  

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29 John Wesley Powell, *Exploration of the Colorado River of the West and Its Tributaries, Explored in 1869, 1870, 1871, and 1872, Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution* (Meadville, PA: Flood and Vincent, 1875), 127,189.

30 Isabel Kelly, “Band Organization and the Southern Paiute,” *American Anthropologist* New Series 40 (Oct.-Dec., 1938): 633-634. These groups interacted with each other frequently and on important affairs. Kelly notes the choice of a new group leader was influenced by the other bands. Of the ten groups identified by Kelly, seven had a leader and the remainder seemed to rely on some form of collective decision making.


Canyon, on the southern edge of their territory, to gather agave, an edible plant whose early season growth benefited from the Sonoran climate of the canyon. Killing a desert bighorn, which inhabited the steep canyon walls, could greatly improve a trip to the inner canyon. Caches of pinyon nuts, wild seeds and other foods were also important in this season of scarcity. As temperatures increased, more plants and animals began to reproduce and enter edible stages of development. Visits to the inner Grand Canyon and food caches were the first in a series of seasonal movements that took Paiutes away from their winter residences toward the valleys, canyons, and plateaus of the region.

In late spring, the Paiutes hunted waterfowl as part of their resource utilization strategy. Unlike similar plateaus to the north, the Kaibab Plateau has not held a great amount of surface water since the last ice age. While scattered ponds have played an important function on the plateau, that role has not included the attraction of large numbers of waterfowl. Kaibab hunters, therefore, relied on the water flowing from the northern plateaus to attract ducks and geese. These birds briefly stopped their breeding migrations over the arid region on the slow moving Paria River, which flows southward from the Aquarius Plateau to the Colorado River near the base of the Kaibab Plateau. The available species included the canvasback, teal, pintail, mallard, and Canada goose. Waterfowl was not a primary resource for either food or material culture to the Kaibab Paiutes. However, duck and goose hunting was an important connection between regional hydrology, environmental diversity and subsistence strategy that eased the resource scarcity of spring.

In the arid environment of the Great Basin reliable water sources, such as the Paria River and Kanab Creek, were the key to any journey or settlement. However, these two streams represent only a pair of locations in a vast landscape. Fresh water was available in a variety of other places within the region. Winter snows filtered through layers of porous rock and occasionally reemerged to the surface where gravity pulled them to a rare opening in the stone and soil. Other water sources were not springs, but bowl-shaped indentations of bedrock in intermittent streams. Long after seasonal creeks stopped flowing, water sat in these reservoirs of varying size. Along with water, though, brush and other debris would collect in these places. To utilize these waterholes, then, Paiutes had to regularly maintain this resource by clearing them of contact, but that this occurred only in the mid-nineteenth century. Richard W. Stoffle and Michael J. Evans “Resource Competition and Population Change: A Kaibab Paiute Ethnohistorical Case,” Ethnohistory 23 (Spring, 1976): 173-197. Stoffle and Evans argue that agriculture among the Kaibab Paiutes has a longer history, dating at least to the 1776 Dominguez-Escalante exploration and possibly to prehistoric times.

35 Isabel T. Kelly, Southern Paiute Ethnography, 50.
36 Ibid., 22.
unwanted obstructions. In acting as caretakers for these widely dispersed water sources, Kaibab Paiutes developed and ensured the existence of the cornerstone of their resource strategy.\textsuperscript{39}

In early summer, scattered springs took on an increased importance. Small kin-based groups gathered at these well-maintained springs which served as a base for gathering seeds in the surrounding area.\textsuperscript{40} Many of these springs, such as \textit{Tu-mur-up-a-gunt}, were located on the valley floors at the base of the Kaibab Plateau. Throughout the surrounding area women collected the seeds of sunflowers and Indian ricegrass in bulrush baskets. The heat of the desert valleys required these plants to conduct their seed-bearing reproductive cycles in the early summer. Utilizing altitudinal variations, women gradually climbed from the lowlands to the higher elevations of the valleys as they followed ripening seeds from early to late summer. Managed grassland fires increased the growth of new plants for the following year.\textsuperscript{41} Spending summers near springs collecting, processing, and eating the variety of valley seeds, Kaibab Paiutes linked the biological reproduction of these plants to their summer subsistence.\textsuperscript{42}

Altitudinal variation also helped support a small variety of game animals in the valleys surrounding the Kaibab Plateau. In the upper elevations, sagebrush characterized the landscape. Paiute bands hunted five species of rabbit among the sage. They made a call which mimicked the communication of mating rabbits to attract and locate the animals. In summer, these small game were primarily a food source to the Kaibab Paiutes, who did not then utilize other attributes of the rabbits, such as their fur. The consumption of rabbit meat during summer provided critical animal protein to the Paiutes.\textsuperscript{43}

Antelope inhabited the lower grassland regions of the valleys, but Kaibab Paiutes rarely hunted them.Unlike other large game, their hide did not offer a long-term durability. On the occasions when Paiutes did hunt antelope, several men worked together to trap the animals in corrals. Such a collection of hunters was unusual on the grasslands where Kaibab Paiutes spent the summer in small, dispersed groups. The size of Paiute groups varied to fit the limits of each resource utilization activity. Seeds, while plentiful in number, were not abundant enough to allow large groups to gather together without quickly exhausting an area. By being more favorable to collection in small groups, the seeds of ricegrass and sunflowers buffered the

\textsuperscript{39}Kelly, “Band Organization and the Southern Paiute,” 633-634. In her comment on resource ownership, Kelly states that springs were privately owned, but does not include whether or not springs could be bought or sold. She only writes that they were inherited. Rada Dyson-Hudson and Eric Alden Smith, “Human Territoriality: An Ecological Reassessment,” \textit{American Anthropologist} New Series 80 (Mar., 1978): 21-41. The ownership and maintenance of reliable springs fits the model proposed by the authors in that they offer relatively abundant and predictable water. Kelly, \textit{Southern Paiute Ethnography}, 6-22; Catherine Fowler, “We Live By Them” in \textit{Biodiversity and Native America}, ed. Paul E. Minnis and Wayne J. Elisens (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 117; Powell, \textit{Anthropology of the Numa}, 133-142. Powell offers detailed maps of these important water sources. Sapir, “Kaibab Paiute Ethnographic Field Notes,” 789-790. Sapir lists the Kaibab Paiute and English names for several springs.

\textsuperscript{40}Kelly, \textit{Southern Paiute Ethnography}, 22.

\textsuperscript{41}Fowler, “We Live by Them: Native Knowledge of Biodiversity in the Great Basin of Western North America,” 114; Powell, \textit{Anthropology of the Numa}, 139.


\textsuperscript{43}Fowler, “Subsistence,” 81; Turner, “Adaptive Continuity and Cultural Development among the Paiute Indians of the Grand Canyon’s North Rim,” 31-33; Kelly, \textit{Southern Paiute Ethnography}, 36-37; Sapir, “Kaibab Paiute Ethnographic Field Notes,” 791-792. In winter, Kaibab Paiutes held communal hunts for rabbits. These large-scale affairs yielded the great amounts of small game necessary to make such large items as blankets.
Kaibab Paiute hunting of antelope. Such third-party mediation was characteristic of a resource strategy that was forced to negotiate the intricacies of a complex ecosystem.  

In late summer and early autumn many Kaibab Paiutes traveled north to Panguitch Lake. The visits by the Kaibab to the lake furthered a set of related cultural and subsistence goals. Once at the lake, the Kaibabs found trout, mountain suckers and whitefish that had grown to adulthood during the summer months. The travelers also met their northern neighbors, the Panguitch band of Southern Paiutes, there. The Panguitch allowed the Kaibab to fish at the lake with the understanding that they would have permission to hunt deer on the Kaibab Plateau later in the autumn. The resource-laden lake formed the territorial center of this northern band, whose name had the meaning ‘fish people.’ For them, the lake was both a natural resource and an integral part of their cultural identity. Allowing the Kaibabs to share in this resource offered them entry into core activity of their culture. The intimacy of this relationship was exemplified by the numerous marriages between individuals of the two bands. However, the reciprocity of resource sharing also maintained borders between the two bands. By providing access to either deer or fish, each band demonstrated that the animal was theirs to give. Sharing, then, was a method not only to bring neighbors culturally closer, but also to delineate cultural boundaries.

Journeys to Panguitch Lake thus intertwined Kaibab Paiute extra-local subsistence activities with their own identity formation as deer hunters on the Kaibab Plateau.

As autumn progressed, the resource strategy of the Kaibab Paiutes took more and more of them to the pinyon woodlands flanking the Kaibab Plateau, the center of their homeland. Like the Indian ricegrass seeds, the pinyon nuts were the fruit of the reproductive cycles of the plant. The nuts began to ripen and offer a temporary abundance in late summer, at which time several small kin-based groups began to gather near the plateau. Nineteenth-century Paiutes used long harvesting poles to beat the limbs of the short trees. This practice not only harvested the nuts, but, by breaking the tips of branches and thereby ensuring new growth, was also a form of resource management. Women used baskets to transport the nuts back to camp, where they roasted them and families ate them. The women also cached uncooked seeds by placing them in sacks made of deer hide, which were buried. Caching allowed the Kaibab Paiutes the opportunity to mediate the seasonal production of the pinyon pine. Covering a large extent of their territory, the pinyon tree was thus a significant resource whose nutritious and storeable nuts were a staple in the Kaibab Paiute diet.

The centrality of this natural resource in their culture is exemplified by the Round dances, a celebration by large groups that gathered to collect pinyon nuts. Songs were an integral part of the affair, many of which were traditional while other new songs were created by individuals for the event each year. The location of the dance varied from year to year, as well.

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45 Sapir, “Kaibab Paiute Ethnographic Field Notes,” 786-788; Fowler, “Environmental Setting and Natural Resources,” 30-1; Fowler, “Subsistence.” Fowler does not explicitly state which band used the Sevier River. She does state that fish were sometimes ignored by the residents of an area. Presumably this situation occurred in areas where fish were scarce, and their gathering was therefore with little benefit.


47 Powell, *Anthropology of the Numu*, 38.

held the celebration near the pinyon groves that produced well that year. Friends and relatives who had perhaps not seen each other since winter shared the experience of singing together. Young people met and began romantic relationships. Children spent time with members of their extended family. Like meetings with other bands, such as at Panguitch Lake, the Round dances gathered people and confirmed their identity as a cultural group. Unlike other important group activities, though, the Round dances did not collect nearly every member of the band.  

In late autumn, the gathering of Kaibab Paiute families culminated on the high Kaibab Plateau, where they hunted, prepared, and consumed deer. These activities were an integral part of the resource strategy formed by the Kaibab Paiutes that wove together the reproduction of diverse plant and animal species and established the region as a place suitable for year-round, human habitation. The establishment and maintenance of this network entailed a constant dialogue between nature and people. At times, the Paiutes actively influenced nature for their own benefit. Their resource strategy network required a great deal of management, especially with resources such as springs and pinyon trees. Paiutes also directed nature when they lit the grasslands afire to ensure the reproduction of grass seeds. In these cases, Kaibab Paiutes participated in the dialogue in ways that they knew nature would listen. They addressed themselves to the parts of the natural environment that could change. Kaibab Paiutes spoke to the reproductive forces in nature to ensure their own sustenance.

Nature was also an active partner in the dialogue. The reproduction of grass seeds and the seasonal arrival of breeding ducks were the products of photosynthesis and migration routes that could only be harnessed, and not created, by Kaibab Paiutes. The Kaibab Plateau environment also significantly influenced social structure within the band. The high concentration of resources promoted the collection of nearly the entire band for the pinyon harvest, while relatively diffuse grass seeds encouraged the dispersal of small groups during the summer. The availability of resources also shaped relations with other bands, and therefore crucial aspects of cultural identity as well. The fish of Panguitch Lake afforded Paiute bands the opportunity to interact and build relationships.

Not every ecological event of the plateau environment was beneficial, though. Floods could race down Kanab Creek and take painstakingly cultivated maize and squash with them. Low pinyon harvests would ensure hunger for the Kaibab Paiutes when caches were completely consumed by early spring. In the most unfortunate circumstances, multiple resources could fail, thus undermining the diversity of their resource strategy. The natural environment of the Kaibab Plateau and its surroundings, therefore, was characterized by both opportunity and risk for its human inhabitants.

49 Ibid., 65; Powell, *Anthropology of the Numa*, 122-128. Powell provides verses for several Kaibab songs.


The dialogue between nature and people at the Kaibab Plateau in the mid-nineteenth century was the interplay between the two actors. Nature presented Paiutes with conditions that were both beneficial and harmful to them. By leaving them a part in the creation of those situations, by allowing people to carefully manage crucial aspects of itself, the plateau opened the door for human habitation. Kaibab Paiutes created the necessary connections between the changing seasons, the varied geography and the multitude of flora and fauna, to identify, establish, and maintain the attributes of the Kaibab Plateau region that could accommodate humans. They shaped the dialogue to give themselves a permanent place within it. By the mid-nineteenth century the dialogue had become the history of the place. Events, whether they were harvests or rainfall, all had both human and natural components. The plateau had been touched by humanity and lived with it for so long that its pinyon groves, creeks and animals all had an element of humanity within them. Nowhere else was that humanity as evident as in the meadows of the plateau, where the band gathered as a whole to hunt deer, celebrate ritual, and confirm cultural identity.

At the plateau meadows, the Kaibab Paiutes began the transformation of deer from animal to usable resource. The process was long and intricate and was not only physical, but cultural as well. The deer were first taken into the human sphere of the natural world through hunting by small male parties. The appeasement of the supernatural was crucial to their success. Killing the animal where they encountered it, hunters carried most of the deer to settlements where its journey continued into the feminine realm of Paiute culture. Women processed the hides to make them fit for human use. They also allocated and cooked the meat of the deer, which sustained the appetite of each generation of the community. Trade of hides allowed the deer to be so integrated into the human sphere that they linked Kaibab Paiutes with other communities far from the plateau. As these steps were accomplished, and the band interacted along various social lines, the cultural identity of the Kaibab Paiutes continually reaffirmed itself and the humanity of the plateau was further established.

Like nineteenth-century Kaibab Paiutes, the deer at the plateau began spring lean from the scarcity of late winter. Deep snows hid vegetation from the Kaibab deer, thus increasing the difficulty of browsing. The deer spent winter eating more accessible plants at the lower and warmer slopes on the southern and western sides of the plateau. Although more easily attainable during winter, the vegetation in these areas was less concentrated than at the higher elevations. When the deep snows of February and March had sufficiently melted, the deer migrated back to the more densely vegetated forests on the top of the plateau. The mule deer followed the new edible growth of a variety of plants as these botanical species began their seasonal cycles, too. During spring and summer, male deer segregated themselves from the females, who fostered their newborn young in groups of individual families. As the summer progressed, mothers became less protective of their fawns who were maturing into adults. Adults, too, gained weight during these warm months. By autumn, the needs to increase body mass for the winter and mate brought significant numbers of the population together at the expansive meadows of plateau.

Kanab Creek: Southern Utah and Northern Arizona (Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon Natural History Association, 1991).

The hunt was significant as the first step in the incorporation of deer into the Paiute community. As with other resources, the Kaibab Paiutes actively managed the plateau deer. By autumn, the mule deer breeding season had ended and the bucks had separated themselves from the does. Earlier in the year when fawns were young the Paiutes did not regularly hunt deer. This limit was not only an effect of their own geographic dispersal during the summer months, but was also a recognition of the importance of a healthy deer population. Like many of the natural resources in the region, the herd was managed as a communal resource among all of the Kaibab Paiutes. Group ownership bound the condition of the herd to the band, rather than any one individual, thus strengthening the connection between the deer and the community. By managing the herd through selective hunting and communal responsibility the Paiutes linked natural reproductive cycles to community sustenance.

During the hunting season, the success of a hunting trip on the plateau was at least partly controlled by supernatural power. The Kaibab deer were under the authority of Qai nacav, a spirit who could mislead hunters and otherwise spoil a hunt. On occasions, Kaibab hunters witnessed the quick appearance of another man nearby, only to see him disappear just as readily. Such an observation was a signal that Qai nacav would not allow the hunter to experience any success that day. At other times the spirit led hunters astray, to the point that they became lost on the plateau. In these cases, Qai nacav placed his being into deer and thereby enlarged the bodies of these animals. The unusual size of the deer enticed hunters, who would then follow the animal only to lose it and find themselves alone and disoriented. Such a fate was ultimately the product of offending Qai nacav. In this way, Qai nacav helped manage the Kaibab Paiutes’ hunting of the deer.

Though the harvest of deer on the Kaibab Plateau was communal only small groups of male Paiutes conducted the actual hunt. Indeed, during winter Paiutes did not even allow women to see the hunter’s snowshoes, for fear of spoiling the hunt. The most knowledgeable individual in the group led the hunters, or tina qarim. This leader would locate and then flush deer (sometimes by lighting a fire) into a desired direction. The group would often splinter into individuals who would follow the deer for several hours if necessary. After awhile, the deer would become tired and the tina qarim could get close enough to draw his bow and make his shot. When hit, the deer might bolt across the terrain in a last, startled effort to evade the hunter. Eventually, though, the terminally wounded deer would stop running and fall to the ground. The final task of the tina qarim was to track the animal to its final resting spot.

Dreams played a significant role in the success of the individual hunter. Songs, such as “The Song of the Deer,” and the foreshadowing of future events came to the hunter in dreams. If the tina qarim dreamt at night of a particular animal, such as a buck or a doe, then he believed his chances for a successful hunt were great for the following day. Unlike an encounter with Qai nacav, the hunter believed that the supernatural element of an encouraging song or dream could

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

help their arrows meet the body of a plateau deer. While a personal event, dreams did connect the experience of the individual with the well-being of the community. Tina qarim shared songs with their hunt parties, who sang them to share in their inspiration. Further, the harvest of a deer benefited the entire community, which used the body of the animal for meat, clothing, and a variety of other uses. Dreams and songs were a channel between the supernatural and the community that expressed themselves through the individual hunter, thus confirming his status as a member of the band.\(^{58}\)

Like all mule deer, the individual deer on the Kaibab Plateau were attuned to the various predators, including humans, who inhabited the plateau. The large ears of the mule deer not only earned them their modern name, but kept nineteenth-century individuals aware of movements on their plateau surroundings as well. When the deer sensed possible danger, they would stiffen their walk and straighten their neck to view the territory around themselves. In the mid-nineteenth century, deer on the Kaibab Plateau had much to fear. After dusk, mountain lions stalked the animals until midnight. In just a few short hours afterward, coyotes began their dawn hunt. During the day, eagles occasionally snatched fawns exposed on the open meadows. In addition, grizzly bears and wolves regularly pursued the deer. The existence of a multitude of predators presented a daily series of challenges to the survival of the plateau deer.\(^{59}\)

Mule deer attacked some predators, such as coyotes, and fled from others. The gait of the deer, called stotting, allowed the animal to achieve speeds over 20 miles per hour on rugged terrain. This skill was useful for taking either an offensive or defensive position. When met with a pack of hunting coyotes, stotting allowed deer dispersed across a meadow to regroup and use their hooves to fight the predators or, alternatively, to seek safety on higher and more rugged ground. When pursued by a predator over open meadow, the deer would seek nearby visual cover, such as the woods at the meadow edges. At times, mule deer on the plateau were successful in their counterattacks and retreats, but not always. As with many of the encounters between the plateau deer and their predators, the confrontations between Kaibab Paiutes and the deer often resulted in favor of the hunter.\(^{60}\)

Paiutes had to process the body of the deer before they could distribute it among the community. This activity was a direct physical connection between the Kaibab Paiutes and the life of the animal. At an average near sixty-five kilograms, the size of a deer was considerable, especially at their yearly peak weight in autumn. To begin processing the animal, Paiute men used a knife to open the stomach and take out the entrails. Among ungulates, the stomach of the

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deer was small. This size demanded that the animal consume easily and quickly digestible plants, thus dictating specific movements across the landscape. In the second step, the Paiute men cut the legs below the knees and discarded them. The legs of the deer allowed the animal the capability to not only travel to places of good forage, but to defend itself against predators by fleeing or fighting with its hooves. The men then skinned the deer and divided the flesh into two hind-quarters, two ribs, two shoulder blades, back bone, neck, two kidneys, two lungs, heart, liver and backbone meat. This flesh was the deer’s muscle, which had allowed it to make a near infinitude of movements that were all, in some way, the manifestation of the animal’s will to survive and reproduce. By dissecting the body of the deer, Kaibab Paiutes terminated the relationship between the individual animal and the plateau. The Paiutes, though, redirected the energy of that relationship to their own needs. The men partitioned the energy stored within the flesh into a size fit for human consumption as meat.

The distribution of the animal reflected an important stage in its transformation. Once butchered, the body of the deer became meat that Kaibab Paiutes divided among the entire community. They distributed the meat not through a hierarchical system of tribute and gift-giving, but through a more egalitarian system of asking. The persons who wanted any part of a deer simply stated their desire, which usually conferred its subsequent ownership. In the process of harvesting deer, the responsibilities of female Paiutes began with this step. Typically, women conducted the apportionment of the meat. Like the male butchering of deer, the female allocation of deer meat demonstrated that the transformation of animal to usable resource was an ordered affair that reaffirmed the importance of community.

Women cooked the meat in a variety of ways once they distributed it. Often, they boiled the meat. They placed an earthen pot on old ashes and built a fire around it. Boiling the meat in the pot was the preferred method to prepare the animal. With other meat, such as rabbit or desert bighorn, they discarded the boiled water. However, Kaibab Paiutes drank the water as a soup when it had cooked deer meat. Besides boiling, they also roasted the meat to transform the animal into food. The Paiute women accomplished this task either by placing the meat into hot ashes or by placing the meat on a spit over a fire. They preferred roasting as a cooking method away from home or when enough time for boiling was not available. Finally, the women also set meat in the sun to make iyap, dried deer meat. They stored iyap in sacks which were buried as caches for winter and spring. As with the distribution of its parts, the various methods for transforming the flesh of the deer into consumable foodstuffs demonstrates the important roles women played.

In addition to ordering gender roles, Kaibab Paiutes used the harvesting of deer to emphasize differences between generations. For example, children and adults ate different parts of the deer. Adults did not, as a rule, allow children to eat the heart, liver, and lungs of the animal. In addition to eating customs, games also ordered generations. Children played sports

62 Sapir, “Kaibab Paiute Ethnographic Field Notes,” 790-810.
63 Gordon C. Baldwin “The Pottery of the Southern Paiute” 16 American Antiquity (July 1950): 50-56. Baldwin notes that the photographs of the Powell Survey do not indicate the use of pottery in the 1870s. In further examining archaeology and early Euro-American accounts of contact with Southern Paiutes, Baldwin argues that pottery was formerly a part of Southern Paiute material culture. Fowler, “Subsistence,” 92.
that mimicked the real hunt of a deer. In the game of wolf and deer, an especially swift boy would run in imitation of a deer while other children would chase him. These other children would pretend that they were wolves as they ran after the deer character. Too young to participate in the actual hunt, young Paiutes infused this sport with enthusiasm and often played the game for several hours at a time. While undoubtedly also a device to entertain children, the sport of wolf and deer did introduce the significant dynamics of hunter and prey to the youth. The practice of children’s games and eating customs identified children as younger generations of the band, but the content of those practices instructed them as, more importantly, the succeeding generations of the band. In this way, community reproduction was at the center of generational differences.\(^{64}\)

Deer hides, or *tyiavuuv*, were an important item in the material culture of the nineteenth-century Kaibab Paiutes. Unlike meat, this part of the animal was the sole property of the individual *tina qarim*, who successfully killed the deer and brought its body to the community. Before they incorporated this part of the deer into their culture, though, they had to prepare the *tyiavuuv* properly, a process that required labor throughout the winter months. Like distribution and cooking, this responsibility belonged to the female members of the band. After they detached the *tyiavuuv* from the body of the deer, women set it on a wooden rack to scrape it. First, though, they moistened the *tyiavuuv* with warm water which allowed them to scrape it more easily. They then thoroughly rinsed and dried the hide so that the water and blood were completely gone. The women then applied a thick glue of water and deer brain to the skin and allowed it to set for a week. At this point, they made another application and allowed the hide to set for a month. When the *tyiavuuv* was worked again, the women cleaned and then rubbed the material against itself. At intervals of several days they repeated this last step. Finally after a long process lasting approximately two months, the *tyiavuuv* became a soft, usable hide, or *tyiav*.\(^{65}\)

Autumn was the best time to obtain hide from deer. During this season, mule deer undergo one of their two molts of the year. Beginning on the ear and then moving down the head, to the neck, and then shoulders and body, the coat changes from its summertime reddish brown color to a dark gray. As the color changes, the thickness of the coat also increases. During this autumn molt, fawns lose their spots for a permanent adult coat. Due to its thickness, the resulting winter hide on both adults and fawns was the most useful for Kaibab Paiutes to transform *tyiavuuv* into *tyiav*.\(^{66}\)

Together *tyiav* and meat represent the two most useful products of nature that Paiutes found in deer. The process of transforming the body of the animal into those products was also an exercise in ordering Paiute community. The hunt was an event that required proper relationships with the supernatural and also demanded strictly male participation. Women, on the other hand, maintained their social position by holding the responsibility for the distribution of meat throughout the community. In addition to perpetuating gender constructions, the deer harvest was also a vehicle to instruct the younger generations in the important relationships between predator and prey. As with the Round dances, the autumn deer hunt allowed people to interact with each other, whether they were interested in friendship, family ties, or romance. The creation of *tyiav*, therefore, was deeply intertwined with the creation of community.

\(^{64}\) Sapir, “Kaibab Paiute Ethnographic Field Notes,” 800-802.
\(^{65}\) Ibid., 811.
Kaibab Paiutes used *tyiav* for a number functions within their culture. They manufactured tumpline, a strap used to help carry loads on an individual’s back, from the material. Cradleboards for infants included *tyiav* to help keep the child warm. Kaibab men and women wore shirts, leggings, belts and moccasins made from the hide. Children wore the same clothes, although they were made from fawn hides, indicating their stage in the community.\(^57\) Paiutes also made sacks for carrying food such as beans from *tyiav*.\(^68\) In addition to these uses, they also traded the material. The extent of its utility represented a final stage in the incorporation of deer into Paiute culture. Transformed into an object of human use, Kaibab Paiutes exchanged deer for other products of the natural landscape, thus creating complicated networks of linked locations that could transport the humanity of the plateau to new places.

In the mid-nineteenth century, trade was a part of Kaibab Paiute resource strategy. They exchanged items, such as *tyiav*, among themselves, with other neighboring Southern Paiute bands, and with Hopis in the trade center Oraibi on the eastern side of the Colorado River. Without horses or mules to carry the hides, transportation limited the trade. Likely, trading journeys were significant for exchanging goods, but also for interacting with neighbors socially. Euro-American trade also took place in the region before 1850. Using maps made from a late-eighteenth century Spanish reconnaissance of the Colorado Plateau, Mexican traders and American fur trappers traveled the Old Spanish Trail from Santa Fe through Southern Paiute territory and to California during the early nineteenth century. In the middle part of the nineteenth century, though, the traffic on the trade route was still minimal and bypassed the rugged and relatively remote territory of the Kaibab Paiutes. The transformation of nature into usable product was still a local event, and the product was not yet commodified on an extensive scale.\(^69\)

Deer sinew best exemplified the geographically closed circle of resource production. Kaibab Paiutes used the material in the manufacture of bows for hunting deer. Wood from local trees, such as locust, serviceberry, willow or oak variously formed the basis of the bow. The craftsmen cut the wood from a live tree and bent it into the proper shape, using a system of pegs and string tied to the ground. When the green wood was dry, the bow was released from the string and pegs. The shape was then permanent, but the weapon was not. Pinyon gum was used to attach deer sinew to the bow, thus making it into a more lasting and useful bow. The bowstring, or *payanwi*, was made by twisting strands of leg sinew. Notches on the bow allowed the hunter to tighten the bowstring and thereby create the necessary power to launch an arrow. Therefore, when the hunter took aim and shot at a running deer a competition between a power of nature found in the quickly-moving legs of the deer, and the power of humanized nature found in the Paiute manipulation of the leg sinew in the bow, determined the fate of the hunter and the deer.\(^70\)


The tension of the bowstring represents more than a single event. The actors in this interaction—deer, people, plants, climate, topography—all have continuous and even cyclical relationships with each other. The contest between hunter and prey, therefore, was not simply an isolated competition between Paiute and deer, but the maintenance of a long-standing relationship. The condition of this relationship was likely healthy in the mid-nineteenth century. Their diverse subsistence strategy pulled Paiutes away from the plateau deer during their crucial growth stage as fawns in early summer. While does were dispersed throughout the forests of the plateau individually nurturing their young, most Paiutes were spending the summer gathering seeds in nearby valleys. Given that deer were present in the nineteenth century, their relationships with other predators, such as bears and wolves, must have been sustainable as well. On the eve of Mormon contact, the interaction between Kaibab Paiutes and deer was a local, long-standing relationship that was the product of two actively-engaged partners. The dialogue was fit within their own, overlapping resource networks that carried them successfully through the ecological web of the Kaibab Plateau.
Chapter Two

“Buckskin Mountain: Mormon Colonization and the Kaibab Deer”

In the 1850s new settlers arrived in the plateaus and valleys of the Kaibab region. They brought with them a culture and resource strategy that fundamentally differed from the relationship that the Southern Paiutes’ had with the plateau. These new settlers were Euro-American Mormons whose migration and settlement transformed the Great Basin in the late nineteenth century. They were, in a word, pastoral. The newcomers were the first community in the region to tend herds of domesticated animals. Mormons, like other Euro-Americans, had lived by sheep, cattle, and other livestock in the eastern United States. Animal husbandry was a successful resource strategy; the animal’s body turned plants inedible to humans into useful protein and energy. The pastoral lifestyle was more than a physical relationship with animals, though. Mormon settlers organized values, emotion, and stories into forms that ensured the continuation of the relationship and so their culture reflected their resource strategy. Perhaps most significantly, pastoralism was a geography—a way of organizing space—that was new to the Great Basin. The application of this pastoral vision to the Kaibab meadows altered the ecological opportunities of the deer, incorporated the animal into a new community, and ultimately propelled the creature into the heart of a national culture.

Pastoralism typified the nineteenth-century America that produced the Mormon religion. The geographic expansion of the United States, and Western culture in general, drew inspiration from its Christian heritage, particularly the Genesis story of Eden. As a pastoral paradise, the plants and animals of Eden’s nature peacefully provided ample food and drink to its innocent residents for eternity. Only after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden did human history begin. The historian Carolyn Merchant has argued that places with no Western history, such as North America, were therefore ripe for association with Eden. Nineteenth-century Americans fashioned themselves as Adam: innocent and possessing the opportunities for abundance offered by an unspoiled nature. This Edenic image also broke their connection with their former European identity. No longer did Americans have a long history to define themselves by. Instead, their collective allegiance to the mythic garden characterized them as a nation. For instance, political founders (most notably Thomas Jefferson) structured the government on the idea of the archetypal yeoman farmer who combined the ambition to farm with the republican ideal to do so autonomously. Opportunity, though, was nothing without work and so Americas labored to cultivate the New World into the garden. They cleared land, grew crops, and raised livestock in the hope that their efforts could transform their earthly pastoral landscape into the image of Eden. Consequently, Americans began their history by measuring their progress towards the garden.

71 “Mormon” is the most common term for members of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints. I use the term for its brevity and widespread acceptance.
Development of the landscape occurred in stages and therefore became the American measurement of time. The classic description of this process is Frederick Jackson Turner’s, who took his audience to the Cumberland Gap so that they might witness “the procession of civilization, marching single file---the buffalo following the trail to the salt springs, the Indian, the fur-trader and hunter, the cattle-raiser, the pioneer farmer.” His illustration articulated nineteenth-century ideas of progress also found in landscape painting and literature. The environmental historian William Cronon has revealed a similar development in the works of painters, including Thomas Cole among others. The scenes in these paintings depict the successive imprints on the landscape left by Turners’ characters and the townsmen and imperialists that the artists added to the parade. Cole demonstrated the progression narrative directly in paintings of the Garden of Eden and in his five-part series *The Course of Empire*. The artist painted the same fictional place in each of the developmental stages that he saw for civilization: the savage, pastoral, imperial, destructive, and desolate. The cultural historian Henry Nash Smith similarly described this narrative of progression in nineteenth-century literature. His *Virgin Land* argues that frontier characters, such as William Fenimore Cooper’s Leatherstocking, were popular among readers for blazing a trail that agricultural settlers could follow. These readers and the viewers of landscape art participated in a national culture held together in part by a common belief that America, especially its West, could be redeemed through settlement stages ascending to the mythic Garden of Eden.

Landscapes had an American age based upon how well their traits fit a particular stage of development. For instance, a place with no roads was a new country, but that with many was old. Progression was the theme of American geography. Places, naturally, had characteristic animals, and so they too became part of the saga towards a revived Eden. Cole, for instance, associated wild animals with savagery in the first installment of *Course of Empire*. Predators caused peaceful deer either to flee or be devoured in this painting and his earlier *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*. In the progression narrative towards reclaiming Eden, deer represented an innocent nature much as Americans imagined themselves to be innocent too. Cole emphasized this point in *Garden of Eden*, which depicts grazing deer at the center of the paradise that flourished before sin extirpated Adam and Eve. Working to once again achieve such tranquility and abundance, though, required the domesticated animals of the *Course of Empire’s* second installment. In this painting, subtitled *The Arcadian or Pastoral State*, horses and sheep gently wander through the pasture at the center of the scene without deer to accompany them. Deer, then, represent a virgin nature, but not a regained nature. The same status is evident in Cooper’s Leatherstocking, who earned his buckskin clothing by hunting the deer of untouched nature as part of clearing the way for the agricultural settlers who would follow him. Deer in this case

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represented the possibility of a pastoral landscape. In nineteenth-century America, situation along the successive stages that led towards a pastoral ideal classified landscapes and their animal inhabitants.  

A final example, though, illustrates the wariness towards this development that also characterized the country. The train of Melrose’s *Westward the Star of Empire Takes Its Way* scares deer into fleeing in much the same manner as the beasts of Cole’s work. Industrialization could threaten both the deer of virgin nature and the pastoral scene they browsed near. An uncertainty in the progression of the country after the achievement of the pastoral ideal was not exclusive to artists, but also pervaded many towns and regions of the country. Upstate New York of the 1830s was one such place whose residents questioned the future of pastoralism. Eventually, they would bring their anxiety and hopes to the Great Basin.

A religious fervor had simmered and then scorched the New York region, thus giving it the name “Burned-Over District.” Many educated New Englanders entered the district not only to establish agricultural communities along the developing frontier, but to found new churches that could offer an alternative to mainstream Christian denominations. Communalism and millennialism characterized the several new faith groups, which included the adventist Millerites, the self-sufficient Shakers and John Humphrey Noyes’ highly organized Oneida community, among others. A desire for shared property and a belief in heaven’s imminent arrival were, in significant part, a reaction against the increasing private industrialization of the country. The Burned-Over District was in the path of the Erie Canal, whose engineered waters allowed the natural resources of the agricultural northwest to be used in the commerce of the east. The canal brought the individuality and urbanization of the Jacksonian Era to the agrarian hinterland. For the religious converts in upstate New York, these transformations had the potential to cause social fragmentation. How could industrialization turn the pastoral into Eden? Oneida responded by constructing a communal system that not only shared material wealth but also emphasized the collective raising of children. The Shakers produced goods (especially furniture) communally and then sold them to the national market. These and other experiments in diminishing private property were aimed at halting the progression of the region towards industrial development. Faith in the return of Christ offered a similar future. Heaven on earth would be a return to Eden, where the garden would provide for people without requiring their work. Even if these new religious sects could not change the nation, they did present their members with the opportunity either to live in a world that maintained its pastoral characteristics or to enjoy the mythic garden. In these paired desires, the Burned Over District was particularly American. The path of development still obeyed the national stages, no matter if the sects wished to halt their progression at the pastoral phase or skip to the mythical garden at the end.

Many of the new faiths either quickly found their demise or lasted throughout the nineteenth century only in small numbers. The most successful group, though, grew dramatically in membership throughout the century. Led by Joseph Smith, followers of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints---commonly called Mormons---also found rejuvenation

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75 Miller, *Empire of the Eye*; Cronon “Telling Tales on Canvas,” 37-87; Smith *Virgin Land.*
76 Cronon “Telling Tales on Canvas,” 37-87
in communalism and millennialism. On a small hill in rural New York, Smith had several times spent a quiet hour in a peaceful clearing in the woods. There in 1827, he received golden tablets that prescribed the tenets of the faith to him. Followers interwove pastoralism with an emphasis on the abundance of the New World and the land’s ability to fill the world with devoted souls.78

Life on earth for nineteenth-century Mormons was an opportunity for a soul to enrich itself for an ultimate salvation back to Eden. According to Church doctrine, more lifetimes lived in a faithful manner meant more souls prepared for this salvation. Accordingly, Church members encouraged practices that increased the Mormon population. Men and women married young to have large families. As the religion evolved in subsequent decades, some men also married several wives under the notion that the arrangement would produce many children. This practice eventually earned Mormons infamy in nineteenth-century American culture. During the 1840s, though, Mormons were already unpopular among their New York and later Midwestern neighbors. In 1844 a mob of Illinois men murdered Smith in the Mormon town of Carthage. Many of his followers believed that moments before his death, the Church leader listened to a comforting religious hymn that included the lines “I warm’d, I clothed, I cheered my guest/ I laid him on my couch to rest/ Then made the earth my bed, and seem’d/ In Eden’s garden while I dream’d.”79 At his most challenging hour, Smith’s faith promised to make this world approach the mythic garden. Surrounded by hostility and with their founder gone, Mormons undertook a series of overland journeys from the Midwest, across the Great Plains, and to the Great Basin in the 1840s, eventually amassing nearly all of their followers there. There they continued their American dream of transforming the earth into a populous Eden and actively recruited many new followers. The Church’s Perpetual Emigrating Fund, for instance, provided loans for converted individuals to travel to the Great Basin and settle there. Together nineteenth-century Mormons sought to fill the region with an abundance of faithful individuals and shape the arid landscape into a garden.80

A conscious relationship with physical nature was therefore at the center of Mormon life. On the initial journeys from the Midwest and across the Great Plains to the Great Basin, the emigrants kept a close eye on nature. They evaluated their surroundings based upon suitability for domesticated animals. Their plans of a large religious community in the American West rested on animal power. The emigrants needed their horses, cattle, and oxen to stay healthy. At times the prospects of their stock appeared dim. In June 1848, Oliver Huntington made a disheartening observation: “The journey this day was over the most desolate region I ever saw covered with Buffalo bones, which said that grass had grown there once, and in fact from where, and before we saw the first buffalo the whole face of the earth to Laramie was covered with Bones, of Buffalo Deer Antelope and many other kinds, so that some were always in sight. The

79 WM. M. Daniels, A Correct Account of the Murder of Generals Joseph and Hyrum Smith: At Carthage, on the 27th Day of June, 1844 (Nauvoo, IL: John Taylor, 1845),10.
country had become so poor, and the chance of feed for teams so bad, it was impracticable for so large bodies together... The inhospitable plains forced Huntington’s traveling party to eventually split into small groups more likely to survive on scant grasses. At other places on the journey westward, emigrants fared better. Traveling with Church president Brigham Young in the summer of 1847, Levi Jackman was pleased when streams were safe for his oxen team to cross: “Wensay 9 fine day. after going about 3 miles we crost Red bank creek, steep banks not verrey high, fine streem, some timber. This morning a camp was sent faseyam to make some arrangmants for crossing the Platt. The road was not near to hilley today as it was some we traveled yesterday. Some deer or Antilope was killed by our hunters about every day. This day we went 19 ½ miles and campd 19 ½ ) on a fine streem called big timber creek.”

The experience of crossing the Great Plains was channeled through the needs of the emigrants’ domesticated animals. When conditions were favorable for their teams, they were also beneficial to the travelers. Estimations of conditions did focus on grasses and streams, but also noticeably included the presence of deer as well. Just as Cooper’s Leatherstocking blazed trails for settlement in buckskin, Mormons used deer to assess the possibility of a pastoral home. In Huntington’s case, deer carcasses indicated a dire landscape. Jackman grouped successful deer hunts with his description of a pleasant country. Deer indicated that the country was ripe for the next developmental stage---Mormon pastoralism.

Agricultural settlement in the Great Basin was a carefully planned process that emphasized a communal life undisturbed by external pressures. Prior to the migration, Brigham Young had enlisted the help of such mountain men as Jim Bridger to select a site capable of supporting a large community. The place also had to be capable of redemption into Eden. For its relative isolation and mountain streams, he chose the western flanks of the Wasatch Mountains. The local abundance of fresh water allowed the settlers to plant their first towns in an arid region. Their stock and crops flourished and became the wealth of Salt Lake City. Church leaders, for instance, founded the city’s banks with livestock as capital. The Church itself organized the infrastructure of the new city and created an internal stability for its residents. The residents, in turn, contributed tithes of grain, produce, or labor to the Church. Often, labor went to building the city’s network of irrigation canals. This system of cooperation supported the goal of self-sustenance and quickly came to characterize early Mormon settlement. The streams of the Wasatch Mountains coursed into the surrounding desert and became the center of life for the early settlers. As the foundation of their new holy land, Mormons blessed the streams with biblical names. Their irrigated Jordan River flowed in a combination of nature, cooperative labor, and faith that prepared the earth for Christ’s second arrival in a new Eden.

81 Oliver Boardman Huntington, “Diaries, 1843-1932,” Diary of Oliver Boardman Huntington, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, MSS 162.20v.
The strive for the garden gave Mormon settlers a narrative to accompany their work. In addition to the stories of daily life they told each other, the immigrants also found meaning in the larger story of Mormon migration. This greater story even helped individuals locate their own experiences in a wider context. As in the general American story of settlement, innocence played the first role in the Mormon narrative. In the authoritative and widely read *Journal of Discourses*, a collection of speeches and essays by Young and his counselors, the Church leaders pronounced the immaculacy of their martyred leader. “Look back six, seven, eight, ten, or twelve years ago, or to the year of 1830, when the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized with six members----which is twenty-two years ago this day, and can you tell me of a year, of six months, or of three months that Joseph was not hunted like the deer upon the mountains…”

In using deer as a metaphor, the authors performed two functions. First, they explained Smith’s experience by referencing the common meaning of deer as innocent that they shared with the reader. Second, they strengthened the readers’ perceptions of the landscape as virgin when they equated deer’s purity with that of their revered founder. In receiving the messages of the *Journal of Discourses*, Mormons took deer as allies in drawing their own story onto the land.

With success in quickly establishing Salt Lake City, the settlers continued to turn their Edenic dream into self-narrative by reaching to the Pacific to build a religious empire. On their several journeys towards ports they encountered much of the American West, including the Kaibab Plateau. Their form of expansion was colonization---the recreation of Mormon villages located strategically across the American West. They replicated the peaceful nature of their utopia against the chaotic exterior of a nation industrializing, approaching civil war, and, in 1857, sending troops to enforce federal law in Utah Territory. This last threat represented the most direct challenge to the Mormon dream. When the first wave of settlers reached the Great Salt Lake in 1847, the region was under Mexican claim, but after the Mexican War the United States organized it as a territory. President Buchanan sent the U.S. Army to the new Utah Territory after hearing reports that Mormons had subordinated territorial law for a theocratic government. The settlers responded by simply working in their gardens and fields as the troops prepared near Salt Lake City for confrontation with the polygamous (and therefore law-breaking) Mormon community. The prospect of violence quickly subsided and so the troops eventually withdrew, but the incident still hardened cultural borders between the remainder of the nation and Mormon Utah ---a place Brigham Young called Deseret. Within this sphere, Mormons pursued their particular brand of the American agrarian dream. Colonization throughout the American West, especially in areas still outside national influence, allowed Mormons to reproduce Deseret.

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The cultural geography of an autonomous interior within an uncontrollable exterior matched the physical nature of the Mormon colonies. The colonists constructed a chain of productive farm villages amidst the harsh deserts of the American West. The need for a port in the Gulf of California pulled Mormon settlers out of the well-watered Wasatch region and southward to the Colorado River which flowed into the gulf. The Virgin River, a tributary to the Colorado, was one of the first oases to be settled. Exploration parties were keenly aware of nature’s possibilities. Robert Campbell commented on the landscape during his journey: “said to be a great deer country by Mountaineers, discover many D tracks…Parley [the trip leader] said he had not seen much of this valley yet, but he never felt so like home since we left the Yohab valley as here, has no doubt but this will be settled, intends to look into it, explore it & report it, felt thankful to find ourselves so comfortably situated to night with thousands of feed for our animals & sheltered by these high, Rocky rugged Mts The grass here richly mixed with fine rushes. Cattle like them---The valley white grass, which is so deep…”87 As with the Great Plains migration, these explorers took deer as a sign of a land’s abundance and readiness for remaking into Eden. The protected, yet open meadows also indicated the same meaning. The colonists wanted enclosed pastures to graze their stock and reproduce Deseret. Not surprisingly, faith too aided in the selection of a site. Brigham Young advised his followers: “If brethren will be content to follow the guidance of the holy spirit they will have the best places.”88 A clearing of grass, like Joseph Smith’s inspirational New York meadow, was the foundation of Mormon community. Between 1850 and 1900, they settled most grasslands whose streams flowed from the north into the Colorado River. The villages of these oases became a series of cultural islands in the desert linked to Salt Lake City, and together formed a comprehensive Deseret.89

In the first decades of settlement, the colonists worked to fit nature’s landscape, their agrarian resource strategy, and their pastoral faith into a harmonious whole. Some southern Deseret settlements, such as St. George on the Virgin River, achieved a permanent cohesion and became regional centers. Others, such as Johnson near Kanab Creek, failed and functioned as towns only temporarily. While nuances in livestock raising and Church practices existed among the settlements, nature offered the greatest variation among Mormon colonies. The number of places capable of supporting domesticated animals was limited in this country of rugged plateaus and dry valleys. Cattle, sheep, and oxen required consistent feed from the landscape. The relatively few accessible valleys with water and grass became the focus of most grazing. Many places, though, simply did not lend themselves to livestock. As across much of the American West, the solution to this problem was to disperse the animals. Mormon settlers married their resource strategy to nature by using vast expanses of previously marginal grasses as pasture for a diffused herd of livestock.90

88 Quoted in Peterson, Take Up Your Mission, 154.
These expanses became the range, and they quickly included the meadows of the Kaibab Plateau. In July of 1866 twelve residents of St. George traveled to the plateau. They hoped to find a nature suitable to their aims. Before them, a few stockmen had been in the area since the late 1850s and had ascertained the character of the plateau. They named it Buckskin Mountain. Knowing the name of the plateau, the interested men from St. George found the prospects of such a landscape enticing. As the town spawned new colonies, the plateau entered the sphere of Mormon pastoralism. Nearby Kanab grew from a small fort on Kanab Creek in the 1850s to a town of several hundred people in the early 1870s. Another sizeable town, Orderville, also developed a similar local prominence by the 1870s. Stockmen from the two towns used the plateau meadows as summer range for their cattle and later sheep. In the late 1870s, the governing body of Orderville obtained the rights to this practice from the Southern Paiutes for the price of a rifle and some ammunition. The deer’s meadows began the change into pasture.

The geographic form of the meadows and their surroundings matched the pastoral structure of interior and exterior spaces. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan has demonstrated that in rural nineteenth-century America farmers demarcated the borders of their Edenic landscape against a profane wilderness. In what he terms “environments of persistent appeal,” people seek places that conform to that model—a domicile enveloped by a less-controlled exterior. This idealized pattern was also evident in Cole’s *The Arcadian or Pastoral State* and in Mormon settlement culture. The Mormon interior was the sphere of domesticated animals and was surrounded by the exterior realm of wild animals. As a child in the early years of settlement in southern Deseret, Mary Ann Hafen understood and felt this division. One afternoon, she and her brother were sitting outside with their family’s horses and cows. A low figure approached them and startled her. When the horses shared her reaction, she became certain of her first impression—she had seen a mountain lion. In a cloud of dust, the horses trampled and chased the wildcat away. The relationship between predator and prey helped construct the line between wild and domestic. At the Kaibab meadows, the forest’s edge provided the physical boundary between the two realms. With mountain lions, wolves, and black bears in the woods and livestock in the meadows, the landscape was a spatial manifestation of pastoral partitions.  

Plateau meadows were useful for livestock in the summer, but settlers’ towns were the permanent places of their interior space. Nature, labor, and faith came to fruition and refinement here. As with the Great Plains migration, Church leaders emphasized organization. Rooted more permanently along the rivers of the Great Basin, they also adopted stewardship as a guiding principle in settling their new landscape. Mormon historian Thomas Alexander has argued that this stewardship promoted reverence for all living organisms and, accordingly, a desire to maintain them over time. Entrepreneurship, though, could threaten long-term reliance on natural resources by exhausting them for short-term profit. To reconcile these contradictory attitudes, Mormons across Deseret formed a communal association, called the United Order, to guide the religious and secular business of each agricultural village. Official Church teachings reinforced the notion of shared property which the organization derived. In a parable from the *Journal of Discourses* concerning private wealth, the Church wrote: “The money was not yours, but the Lord Almighty put it into your hands to see what you would do with it. The gold, the silver, the

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wheat, the fine flour, the buffalo, the deer, and the cattle on a thousand hills, are all His, and He
turns them whithersoever He will...All there is of any worth or value in the world is incorporated
in our glorious religion, and designed to exalt the minds of the children of men to a permanent,
celestial, and eternal station.”

In 1874, Church members organized a United Order chapter for Kanab and Orderville
each. They used the Plat of the City of Zion model developed by early Mormon leaders in the
Midwest as a blueprint for the towns. Irrigation networks (maintained by all capable individuals
without direct compensation) coursed through the villages. The United Order emphasized
togetherness above separation. Rather than living in scattered, outlying ranches near their
livestock, Mormon families primarily lived in town together. The organization held almost all
property in the town and discouraged private ownership. Cooperative stores---businesses owned
entirely by their customers---offered clothes and tools to the town with no profit margin for an
individual owner. Members of the Order ate their meals at the town dining hall, where they
enjoyed side by side the bread, meat, and produce that they labored for together.93 Homes were
small farms that raised corn, sugar cane, vegetables and anything else the Order called for. The
Plat of the City of Zion called for rows of fruit trees, a grid-work of wide streets and most
importantly a center chapel. Every resident of Kanab or Orderville in these years was Mormon,
and so the towns were purely committed to their goals. At town dances men and women joined
in prayer before the bishop called each man to dance with a woman----an arrangement that
sometimes eventually resulted in marriage. Measured both by social equality and nature,
townpeople hoped that communalism and order would allow their settlements to grow towards
an image of Eden. In the spring they looked from the shade of fruit trees to the surrounding
plateaus and began the summertime task of harnessing those high meadows into the life of the
town.94

Pastoralism was more than pasture; it was pasture surrounded by woods. Timber was an
essential material for Kanab and Orderville. Situated on watercourses in low valleys, the towns
were built among cottonwoods. This tree, though, was in limited supply. For fuel, frame houses,
and chapels, Mormon settlers needed more than a few groves of slow-growing trees. The
gnarled trunks of pinyon and juniper found in the nearby foothills made useful fences. To access
more useable timber in the desert environment of the Colorado Plateau, though, the settlers had
to venture to the highest elevations. There trees could grow during cool summers and absorb
winter snowmelt. The Markagunt and Paunsaugunt Plateaus to the north of Orderville, for
instance, were home to useful ponderosa forests. In addition, Kanab and Orderville both had

92 Young, et. al., Journal of Discourses: Volume One, 340-41.
93 A few verses from the folk song “The United Order” exemplifies the communalism of the Orderville settlement
“Forty years ago and over God’s command was given./ Consecrate your earthly substance, learn the law of heaven./ For the heavenly holy Order given to make us free./ Unite together, join the Order, is the call today./ Let us all with hearts rejoicing say we will obey./ Live together, work together, angels do above;/ Each one try to help the other, this will bring true love./ Be ye one in earthly blessings, no distinction found,/ Bless the widow, help the aged, as one family bound.” from Austin Fife and Alta Fife, Saints of Sage and Saddle: Folktale among the Mormons (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956), 325-26; Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 225-294; Alexander, “Stewardship and Enterprise,” 340-364.
94 Arrington, Fox, and Dean, Building the City of God, 225-294; John R. Young to Brigham Young, 1 March 1875,
access to the one thousand square miles of ponderosa on the Kaibab Plateau. These well-spaced, straight trees with small limbs readily lent themselves to the saws of the settlers. With the help of mules and oxen, the settlers transported logs to small-scale mills where they processed trees into lumber. While important to the new towns, timber harvesting in the late-nineteenth century was not extensive. This was particularly true on the Kaibab Plateau which sat far down on the list of easily accessible timber land. The cool summers of the plateaus were instead significant for facilitating an assemblage of activities.95

Combining tasks for the sake of efficiency, the settlers also let their cattle graze the tall grasses of these ponderosa savannas. Livestock, as Brigham Young noted, were a significant resource for Mormon settlements: “It is obvious to the most casual observer, that the natural wealth of this country consists in stock raising and grazing.”96 The animals were a source of wealth not only for Salt Lake City banks, but also the city’s commercial hinterland. On the Kaibab Plateau, the United Order of Orderville held the key to this resource---grazing rights. Although obtained from Southern Paiutes, the character of these rights was internal to Mormon culture. They essentially gave the rights to Orderville residents rather than settlers of other towns. Within this United Order, though, cattle-grazing was initially a communitarian effort. In their dining hall residents shared cheese, beef, and milk along with the bread and produce from their farms. As a community in the early stages of development, carefully managed efforts were necessary to avoid waste. Cattlemen could not run livestock at a scale of their own preference. Other demands, such as construction and harvests, took the time of the settlers. Thus, the early Mormon use of the Kaibab Plateau was determined by the needs of a growing yet still small town.97

By grazing cattle and cutting timber, settlers became increasingly familiar with the plateaus surrounding Kanab and Orderville. Men especially came to know the topography and game of these places. On the white trunks of aspen trees, they frequently carved depictions of rabbits and deer. Stockmen reported locations with abundant deer and the presence of the animals was a regular item for local newspapers. The news sat alongside other notices of successful harvests of nature’s abundance, such as large molasses yields and the construction of agricultural reservoirs. As with their emigrant predecessors on the Great Plains, the settlers of southern Deseret linked deer to the fertility of the land. Like Southern Paiutes, Mormon settlers hunted in the fall when the aspens changed color, winter approached, and the deer were fat. And as deer hunting on the Kaibab Plateau articulated Southern Paiute culture, so too did Mormon values propel a hunter’s bullet. The goal of providing for a community of faithful believers characterized both agricultural development and deer hunting.98

97 Arrington, Fox and Dean, Building the City of God, 225-294.
Primarily men hunted deer and so the contributions of deer hunting were mostly to the male spheres of Kanab and Orderville. With families from the eastern United States, Great Britain, and northern Europe converging on the unfamiliar territory of the canyon and mesa country, the bonds among people demanded strengthening. Such ties were important for men because they were the leaders of public life in the settlements. Shared experiences, whether they were city council meetings or the digging of an irrigation ditch, allowed individuals to grow accustomed to, and eventually rely upon each other. Deer hunting offered men this opportunity to bond by isolating small groups of hunters in a private setting. Such close quarters allowed the older generations to educate the younger ones. Often such lessons took the form of pranks. In one popular form, an older hunter would convince a younger one (who was usually overconfident or otherwise a nuisance) that a large buck was surely visiting a spot near camp at night. The young hunter would stay up all night in the cold to get his animal, only to fail in his efforts. Meanwhile the older hunters enjoyed a warm bed in camp. These pranks not only solidified the hierarchy of generations, but instructed proper behavior. Hunting was a sport for enjoyment and social education.

The importance of the male sphere was apparent to the men of the settlements. To ensure the survival of their bonds for the next generation, they founded chapters of the Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association in several towns. The association promoted the progression of both adolescents and the entire town towards the Mormon Edenic ideal. Many of the men spent summers together tending cattle and labored in public works projects throughout the year. In autumn they frequently took deer hunting trips on the nearby plateaus. Like building a road or bringing range cattle to town, hunting had a clear goal. In all three cases, though, the goal was never assured. Lightning could strike a cow, flood could wash out a road, and a buck could spontaneously bound away from sight. Unlike cowboying and public service, deer hunting had only marginal material benefits for the towns of the Mormon kingdom.

Instead, men hunted to try their luck against chance recreationally. With their settlement plans and detailed Church hierarchy, Mormon towns increasingly became places of order and predictability. Away from town, outcomes were less certain. In hunting, Mormon men could define themselves by their success against nature’s whim. The taking of a deer was a small, yet celebrated, success against a fickle natural environment that Mormons knew well, especially those who moved from a failed settlement. Hunting trips were so popular among young men that a local newspaper reported: “A number of our young men prefer deer hunting in the mountains, to deer hunting in town.” While humorous, the joke also reveals the relationship between the interior space of town and the exterior of uncontrolled nature. The exterior was not vacant, but a place for men to live out the early, unpredictable stages of their cultural narrative of settlement. By letting the hunter portray himself as a frontiersman, the act of hunting also helped Mormon men construct themselves as native to the Kaibab region.

100 Asa Walter Judd, “Asa Walter Judd Diary,” Manuscripts Division, University of Utah Marriot Library, Salt Lake City, 104; In frontier communities across the American West, children and young men commonly hunted game, see Elliot West, Growing up with the Country: Childhood on the Far-Western Frontier (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 83-84, 90, 104-6, 128-29.
101 Washington County News, 12 October 1908.
To evade the hunter, deer seek cover when pursued and thus draw the hunter into the woods and away from the open. In the 1880s, the Kaibab Plateau had plenty of both woods and open space. While the large meadows running north to south date from the early Holocene, the ponderosa forest was itself a savanna. Its treetops did not form an enclosed canopy. An observer from this decade wrote: “The trees are large and noble of aspect and stand widely apart...Instead of dense thickets where we are shut in by impenetrable foliage, we can look far beyond and see the trunks vanishing away like an infinite colonnade...There is a constant succession of parks and glades...The way here is pleasing as before, for it is beneath the pines standing at intervals varying from 50 to 100 feet, and upon a soil that is smooth, firm, and free from undergrowth.” The parklike environment was not only appealing to visitors, but suitable for deer as well. The shade of an aspen or ponderosa provided comfortable coolness, protection from inclement weather, and concealment from predators. And as much as the animals needed cover, they needed open areas to browse too. Deer flourish in places that offer the best of both worlds. Thin woods provide cover and browse, and so do edges between forest and meadow. Deer, then, were unique among plateau animals in the late nineteenth century. They shared the great pastoral meadows with livestock and the woods with predators.

Gender helped clarify the cultural vagueness of deer habitat to Mormon settlers. The peacefulness of the meadows fit their gentle conceptions of feminine character. They easily transferred the nurturing of Mormon mothers of large families to does tending fawns. Such action could only occur within the safety and familiarity of home, of the cultural interior. Settlers could not hunt does under normal circumstances. Bucks, on the other hand, lived in the exterior and could be hunted. Their antlers were more than symbols, they were dangerous. Their bodies were larger than a doe’s and much larger than a person. A buck could physically intimidate a person. Of course, confrontations were rare, if they happened at all. The body of the buck, though, lent itself to an imagining of the animal as guilty of an unbequeathed authority. As part of their settlement process, Mormons of southern Deseret hunted animals that encroached upon their Edenic dreams of the landscape. Hunters could harvest bucks as if they were the savage beasts of untamed nature, and attempt to tame does as part of peaceful pastoral nature. Their browsing on the biological borderland between wood and meadow then opened deer to dual definitions and thus kept them always on the frontier.

Hunters sought more than just deer on the Kaibab Plateau. They also tracked and killed numerous species of predators as those before them had. The first American Indians had hunted carnivorous megafauna, such as the short-faced bear, to extinction in the late Pleistocene and early Holocene nearly 10,000 years before. Southern Paiutes exterminated the grizzly bear on the eve of Mormon arrival. In the late nineteenth century, the newest settlers took aim at the wolf, black bear, coyote, mountain lion, and the many birds of prey. Settlers hung the carcasses of predators from fence posts to demarcate the boundary between innocent and guilty nature. These animals’ crimes were their stalking, killing, and devouring of the domestic animals who were the lifeblood of the settlers. While they differed from each other biologically, their

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common guilt bound them together in the eyes of their hunters. In a popular story, a hare caught by a wolf appealed to a mountain lion for salvation. The lion chastised the wolf for harassing the hare, only to eat the innocent animal himself. The perceived self-interest of the predators knew no bounds and was a grave sin in a communitarian utopia. The settlers extirpated black bears and wolves from the Kaibab Plateau. Mountain lions, coyotes, hawks, and eagles, were also widely killed, but continued to remain in diminished numbers.  

In campaigning against predators, these hunters attempted to protect not only livestock, but all peaceful creatures. Does were among the innocent. The killing of a female deer demonstrated the guilty character of a predator and its need for punishment. Mormon hunters not only sought to punish; they also desired to heal broken pastoral boundaries. A local newspaper reported such an infraction in the story of a captured mountain lion. The animal had entered a family’s home while only the mother was present. She killed the lion, which was later found to have an entire deer in its stomach. The cat had not only broken into the house, but also inverted proper constructions of space by holding a deer within itself. Killing the perpetrator was the only way to thwart a reoccurrence of the crime and reaffirm pastoral boundaries.

Many Mormon towns, especially Kanab and Orderville, found significant measures of success in their pastoral ambitions. The settlements became permanent towns with families, schools, laws, and churches. Residents maintained irrigation canals, harvested crops and grew fruit for generations. Charles Lowell Walker, one of the original settlers of Deseret, remarked one spring: “The leaves on the trees begin to appear fresh and green; also the pretty fruit blossoms delight the eyes and gladden the heart, after 5 years toil to accomplish the beautifying of the desolate and forbidding desert region.” Their image of Eden had fit within the possibilities of the climate and topography so that nature worked towards the Mormon mission. The story of Kanab and Orderville, though, turned as the twentieth century approached. The communitarian aspirations of the United Orders became impractical. In 1900, the Orderville residents disbanded the organization in favor of private ownership of resources. The change coincided with Deseret’s transformation into the state of Utah six years before. The growing railroad network in the American West aided an increase in regional markets that Utahns increasingly participated in. Since the earliest settlement, farmers in southern Deseret had sold molasses, cotton, and fruit to Salt Lake City. National markets for beef, though, enticed residents of Kanab and Orderville to supply cattle to California. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Texas cattlemen were driving their stock across Deseret to the Pacific coast. Mormon cattlemen soon followed suit.

As it dissolved, the United Order of Orderville sold its Kaibab grazing rights into the private sector, a change that held complex ramifications for the plateau’s ecosystem. The balanced needs of a small town no longer determined the scale of cattle grazing on the plateau.


Cattle companies, such as the Bar Z, and sheep companies, such as Young and Little, took greatly increasing amounts of stock to the meadows and ponderosa savannas following the sale. Their impact on the biota of the plateau was indirect, yet influential for its interconnections. Livestock, especially sheep, eat plants that otherwise act as fuel in a ponderosa forest. Ponderosa trees require fire for regeneration and even encourage frequent light fires with their highly flammable needles that litter the forest floor around them. These fires keep understory brush to a minimum and create the open, parklike woodland that deer enjoy. Without frequent fires ponderosas and other plants increased on the Kaibab and thickened the forest, thus decreasing available deer habitat in a large portion of the plateau. The central alpine meadows, though, benefited from their slight (yet crucial) elevation difference and maintained their openness above the remainder of the plateau. The edges of the permanent meadows, however, did change. Cattle grazing decreased the aspen groves that had previously flourished in the transition from alpine meadow to ponderosa parkland. Like deer, cattle enjoyed the trees’ leaves, but their greater numbers produced a larger impact on them. This decrease in aspen degraded deer habitat by reducing resources, especially for does. They had to consequently range farther and more often to find enough browse for themselves and their fawns. Such dispersal increased stressful encounters with other deer for these parents. In addition, more frequent travel posed a greater vulnerability to predation.

Ultimately, the multiple effects of increased cattle grazing combined to challenge the growth of the Kaibab deer herd. The denser ponderosa woods diminished the former (and preferable) parkland and the near destruction of the aspen edges diminished resources. The central meadows were perhaps the saving grace for the deer. Rare across the Colorado Plateau for their alpine character, their high altitude proved to sustain an edge habitat for deer amidst the ecological transformations of cattle grazing. In the absence of a full aspen borderland, the Kaibab deer could find cover in the newly thickened ponderosa woods and be near the open browse of the great meadows.

The deer population on the Kaibab Plateau, then, did not significantly decrease from grazing. The lost deer habitat was marginal, given the large carrying capacity of the meadow edges. Even the Mormon pattern of successively harvesting stands of timber produced edge habitat for deer. Locals still referred to the plateau as Buckskin Mountain in the 1890s and traveled there every fall to hunt bucks. The story of a successful hunting trip sat alongside the news of marriages, town dances, and construction projects in local newspapers. Along with hunting, town residents also enjoyed leisure trips to meadows on the Kaibab and other plateaus. Women and children took part in these scenic family getaways. Encountering deer added to the

pleasure of a fine day in the meadows. The meadows were excellent places to find deer. The decreased number of predators increased the visibility of the herd by making their presence in the open safer and therefore eventually more frequent. The Mormon settlers—both hunters and sightseers—found nature as they wished it to be. Later in life, David King Udall reminisced about the 1880s: “The condition of the country was such that it appeared there was nothing but a bright future before us. The grazing opportunities were seemingly boundless. It, in fact, was a free range, the forest of the Buckskin Mountains and the Upper Kanab country were for use of the settlers as they needed.” In their self-narrative, Mormons had fused innocence with ownership. Their hopes for a fruitful landscape had drawn their eyes to the deer of the Great Plains decades before. Now, laying claim to the plateau, they witnessed the same sign of fruition in the Kaibab deer. Their presence in the meadows was also the product of settlement, and so Mormon culture and nature reinforced each other in the body of the deer.\footnote{\textit{Washington County News} 17 November 1910. Despite causing deer to seek cover, biologists have found that hunting does not necessarily force deer to move their range. Herds frequently maintain a presence in places regularly hunted. Roland C. Kufeld, et. al. “Influence of Hunting on Movements of Female Mule Deer,” 70-72; David R. Patton, “The Ponderosa Pine Forest as Wildlife Habitat,” 361-397.}
Chapter Three

“Tyiav and Buckskin: Frontier Trade and the National Economy”

The Mormon pastoral vision set their relationship with both nature and resident American Indians. The settlers’ faith explained the native’s place in an agricultural world. As hunter and gatherers, Southern Paiutes were just beyond the borders of civilization. The Book of Mormon described them as the Lost Tribes of Israel---people who had lost their pastoral lifestyle, but had the potential to regain it. This cultural understanding of nature structured Mormon and Indian interaction and so did the realities of physical nature. The settlers’ agricultural demands of the plateau environment often conflicted with Southern Paiute land use. Cattle grazing, for instance, significantly hindered the sustained reproduction of grasses important the Kaibab band’s diet. In this, and many other ecological conflicts, the Southern Paiutes were at the losing end of domination by nature. Perhaps the biggest devastation came through disease. Waves of “virgin soil epidemics” hit the plateau country in the last half of the nineteenth century. Disease traveled through the meeting ground between pastoral and hunter and gatherer worlds. It followed the paths of trade, a practice that radiated from Salt Lake City and Santa Fe. Deer were on the periphery of the Mormon economy, although they were historically at the fore of the New Mexico commerce’s raw materials. Venison and buckskin were among the few commodities that American Indians could offer Euro-American traders. The nature of the late-nineteenth century Southern Paiute entry into the national economy structured the fate of the Kaibab deer. It did not diminish the herd, but instead increased it. 111

Trading posts were nodes of interaction among Euro-Americans and American Indians and pulled indigenous people into the coalescing national economy. In the Utah Territory commerce centered on Salt Lake City and ran the lines of Mormon colonization outward to frontier settlements like Kanab. Similarly, Santa Fe had been the economic heart of New Mexico throughout Spanish colonial rule, Mexican independence, and American conquest. Resting in the borderland between these two markets, the Kaibab Plateau’s resources were pulled north to Utah and east to Santa Fe. On their journey, items like buckskin were channeled through native economies and frontier markets. Mormons, New Mexicans, Utes, Navajos, Hopis, and Southern Paiutes all traded deer hides with each other. Exchanges could be as simple as offering a deer hide for a sack of pinyon nuts, or as complex as granting hunting permission for strategic diplomatic reasons. Euro-American traders had stores across the Colorado Plateau where these transactions could occur. In 1871, for instance, the Mormon settler John Doyle Lee established Lonely Dell, a small ranch at the confluence of the Paria and Colorado Rivers, which was also a rare crossing point for the latter. Its location made it a natural place of exchange for.

111 Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492 (Westport, CN: Greenwood Pub. Co., 1972); Alfred W. Crosby, Jr. Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900 (New York: Cambridge University, 1986); William Cronon, Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983). Southern Paiute participation in the intermountain fur trade of the early nineteenth century was limited, if it occurred at all. Jedediah Smith’s visits to Southern Paiute territory were brief (he was one of only a few fur trappers to enter the region) and were for trapping isolated places, rather than for trading with American Indian residents, see John R. Alley, Jr. “Prelude to Dispossession: The Fur Trade’s Significance for the Northern Utes and Southern Paiutes” Utah Historical Quarterly 50 (Spring, 1982): 104-123.
decades. Lonely Dell was also the closest trading post to the Kaibab Plateau and thereby connected the deer to the Santa Fe markets. Regional trade often followed irregular patterns. Conflict and drought, for instance, could close a post or make another prosperous. As a whole, though, the network of trading posts allowed people to bind local economies to the national one emanating from both Santa Fe and Salt Lake. At these posts people came together to share the utilization of the plateau country’s natural resources. In so doing, they also shared disease. Pathogens followed and then altered the lines of ethnic boundaries and social hierarchies. That these systems were changing in the late nineteenth century also meant a change for nature, especially deer.\textsuperscript{112}

Oraibi Pueblo had long been a center of trade before Euro-Americans established a store there. The families of this Hopi community were descendants of the Ancient Puebloans who had left the Kaibab Plateau as part of a widespread eastward migration around 1400 A.D. Many settled in the Rio Grande valley hundreds of miles to the east. The settlers of Oraibi made perhaps the shortest journey. The town is closer to the Kaibab Plateau than the Rio Grande, and like all nineteenth-century Hopi communities was among the westernmost of all Puebloan settlements. Hopis inherited an interest in deer from their ancestors that encouraged hunting. During the flourishing of Ancient Puebloan culture between 1100 and 1400, a rise in population and social hierarchy accompanied increased deer hunting. The harvest of such a large mammal bestowed prestige on the hunter, who inevitably shared his success with the community. The consequent feast required proper practice of rituals—a skill that conferred authority on the ceremony’s leader. Deer were valuable because they were somewhat rare and a kill required the mastery of chance. They were not a continual and reliable resource. To be so would have diluted their significance. Ancient Puebloans instead depended on agriculture and small game for nutrition. Deer feasts, then, were a cultural desire made possible by a separate resource strategy.\textsuperscript{113}

Deer hunting was integral to maintaining hierarchy and the community it supported, though. Demand for the animal continued after the migration. In the nineteenth century, Hopis still hunted and also traded for meat and hides. Traders spoke Numic and exchanged pottery with Southern Paiutes who traveled to Oraibi. The Southern Paiutes, in turn, passed the hides of Kaibab deer into their neighbor’s hands. That they were willing to make the long journey, and that Hopis were willing to learn their language, demonstrates the permanence of this trade and its importance to both groups. In the 1880s an Anglo trader, Lorenzo Hubbell, established a post there, but his success rested more on the federal governments’ distribution of resources in Oraibi. Disease had likely ravished the traditional trade throughout several previous decades. Smallpox from the Rio Grande valley hit the settlement in 1853 and followed trade routes outward. The pathogen decreased Hopi populations by 60 percent in less than two years. When it found Southern Paiutes in Oraibi, smallpox likely traveled with them back to their plateaus on the edge of the Great Basin, including the Kaibab. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Southern Paiute trading journeys across the Colorado River were relics of a previously active business.\textsuperscript{114}


\textsuperscript{114} McNitt, \textit{Indian Traders}, 90-95, 115, 126, 196-97, 204, 220, 266; Stoffle, Jones, and Dobyns, “Direct European Immigrant Transmission of Old World Pathogens,” 181-203.
Like Hopis, Utes traded deer meat and hides to attain social status. While Hopis could take an interest in deer because they had successful agriculture, Utes could wear hides and eat venison because they integrated themselves into the horse and slave trades. These traders lived in the northeastern part of the Colorado Plateau, to the north of Southern Paiutes, Hopis, and Navajos. Their intimate knowledge of the region’s rugged plateaus and canyons gave them the edge in approaching and then taking the women and children of their neighbors. They traded their captives to Navajos and New Mexicans, who employed them in their growing sheep economies. Once subject to slave raids themselves, the Utes used this resource strategy to increase their wealth in horses, buffalo robes, and deer hides.

They used buckskin for a variety of tasks, some of them sacred. In the Deer Hoof Rattle Dance, dancers shook a hoof and buckskin rattle while they faced east and prayed for the sun to reinvigorate plants and animals. Deer also often represented wealth in Ute mythology. One story tells of their ancestors, whose only useful property was their buckskin blankets, clothes, and moccasins. In the story, the introduction of the gun lifts them from poverty. That transformation occurred alongside the acquisition of the horse, which they began to purchase from New Mexicans in the mid-1700s with deer hides. Both horses and guns allowed Utes to enter the Santa Fe economy and gain greater wealth. Animal hides acquired through trade or by hunting on horseback were among their principal possessions and they could be used as tribute to band leaders and neighboring groups. Such diplomacy, though, sometimes failed, especially with Mormons in the late nineteenth century. Antagonism between the two parties hindered both trade and extended hunting trips in the Kaibab region. On their own, the comparatively poorer Southern Paiutes (they had far fewer guns and horses) could not deter Utes from trespass and slave raids. Although both these Indian groups traded with the hinterlands of the Santa Fe economy, the threat of captivity kept them from trading with each other. Despite the Ute’s heavy utilization of deer, then, probably few Kaibab deer found their way into Ute hands. The largest Ute effect on the herd came through the slave raids. The taking of individuals, and its attendant disruption of families, likely lessened Southern Paiutes own hunting pressure on the Kaibab deer.\(^{115}\)

In the late nineteenth century Navajo sheepherders continually crossed the Colorado River to take livestock from Mormon settlements and to hunt deer on the Kaibab Plateau. Like Southern Paiutes, Mormons, and Hopis, they encountered the plateau as part of a gradual migration over the last thousand years. Navajo communities migrated from northern North America to the Colorado Plateau around the fifteenth century. With the adoption of sheep and horses from the Spanish in New Mexico, they embraced a pastoral lifestyle. In the eighteenth century Navajo sheepherding was widespread in New Mexico. Pastoralism became so integral to

Navajo communities that it eventually defined their culture, resource strategy, and their environmental setting. Sheep were a primary commodity and often represented the wealth of a family. Many Navajos exchanged sheep, animal hides, and slaves in expanding Santa Fe markets. Family and labor patterns were tied to this trade and thus evolved to follow the biological needs of sheep and, to a lesser extent, game animals with useful hides. Navajo social values and economics not only accepted animal husbandry, but utilized it and amplified the practice with the growth of Santa Fe markets. Increased shepherding took the form of intensification and geographical expansion. As Navajos extended their pasture for more sheep, they transformed the forests of New Mexico’s plateaus just as Mormon stockmen had done on the Kaibab Plateau. The ponderosa forests became denser and less hospitable to deer, but unlike the Kaibab there were few alpine meadows to preserve edge habitat in New Mexico. It was these ecological changes that helped bring Navajo hunters to the Kaibab Plateau in the late nineteenth century.116

Deer were an important aspect of nineteenth-century Navajo communities. Along with sheep and slaves, the hides of elk, bison, and deer were principal commodities in their economy. Deerskins were useful as clothing, blankets, and shelter. Navajo hunters also enjoyed deer meat in their nearly entire use of the deer body. As in other American Indian communities, the distribution of meat and hides fell along lines of social organization and reinforced them. Hides, for example, made necessary diplomatic gifts between community leaders. When community structures transformed, deer hunting and processing changed accordingly. For nineteenth-century Navajos market expansion was the greatest social change of the time. Increased economic activity promoted larger population, more leaders, and additional gift-exchange. With the expansion of the geographically extensive Santa Fe trade network and the degradation of New Mexico deer habitat, the Kaibab Plateau was an attractive hunting ground for Navajo parties in the late nineteenth century.117

Navajo presence on the west side of the Colorado, though, frequently resulted in conflict with Mormon settlers in the late nineteenth century. Their numerous thefts of livestock came to be known among the settlers as the Black Hawk War.118 The raids were so threatening to the Mormons that they adjusted their colonization process. They favored the less violently contested lands of the Virgin River to the west before they settled other Colorado tributaries, such as Kanab Creek and the Paria River, to the east. When Mormons ventured to these tributaries, it was to first build defenses. The Church enlisted men from the Virgin River colony St. George to build a fort on Kanab Creek in August of 1869.119 Fear and courage marked the attitudes of these settlers. In the words of one man, “There are reports this a.m. Navajoes are on this side of the Colorado River intending to make a raid on some of our settlements. Let them go it. God’s at the Helm.”120 Livestock raids were motivated by Kit Carson’s incarceration of Navajos at

118 Walker, The Diary of Charles Lowell Walker, 303; Peterson, Take up your Mission, 202; Klara Kelley and Harris Francis, “Places Important to Navajo People,” American Indian Quarterly 17 (Spring, 1993): 151-169.
120 Walker, Diary of Charles Lowell Walker, 263.
Bosque Redondo, a small reservation in New Mexico, in 1864-68. Places west of the Colorado River, such as the Kaibab region, were outside traditional Navajo territory—and Carson’s view. 121

After the return of many Navajos from Bosque Redondo, their trips to the Kaibab region increased. Not all interaction between the two groups was marked by conflict, however. Negotiations between leaders (and even occasional marriages) could make trade possible, if not extensive. Accustomed to exchanging deer hides and other items at posts throughout the Colorado Plateau, Navajo travelers traded goods with Mormons at Lonely Dell. In 1872, the manager of the ranch, John Doyle Lee, began to operate a ferry at this important Colorado River crossing. The business and place eventually became known as Lee’s Ferry. For the price of a deer hide or some venison, Navajos used the service to reach both the Kaibab Plateau and the town of Kanab. At Kanab, they exchanged wool for manufactured items from northern Utah. On the plateau, they hunted deer and gathered pinyon nuts, as the Southern Paiutes did. Their presence, if not welcomed, was at least accepted by the Kaibab band. The two parties both required access to the scarce water sources of the plateau autumns. An agreement or arrangement of some kind was therefore necessary to allow the Navajos to continually return for the hunting season. For over a generation since the establishment of Lee’s Ferry, many of them made the journey from their homelands. The proximity of such a large deer herd to both the Kanab stores and the ferry was an important attraction for late-nineteenth century Navajos. 122

The Colorado Plateau was a place of change at the close of the century. The expansion of the Santa Fe market and the establishment of the new Utah market allowed Hopis, Utes, and Navajos to participate in a coalescing national economy. Commercial change, though, was interrelated with ecological transformations of the region’s ponderosa forests. Despite these developments, changes in culture are less clear. Deer had a cultural significance for American Indians for centuries, even millennia. Indians continued to hunt deer, eat venison, and wear buckskin throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The evolving context of these activities, though, does suggest that deer’s meaning was also open to change, however nuanced or pronounced it may have been. At the Kaibab Plateau, these regional developments became local. There, Southern Paiutes negotiated disease, slave raids, and the demands of their neighbors. As residents of the plateau their responses were integral to the Kaibab deer.

Southern Paiute hunting pressure on the deer diminished as the twentieth century approached. Disease, especially the 1853 smallpox from Oraibi, dramatically reduced their population. Ute slave raids clearly decreased the sizes of Southern Paiute bands, but also allowed the transmission of measles. In 1848-49 measles ravished the Kaibab band. Taken with an earlier smallpox outbreak in 1826 and other pathogens from Mormon settlements, disease had reduced Southern Paiute population by nearly 80 percent in 1853—-from a few thousand individuals to a few hundred. The effects of decreased population not only lessened demand for deer, but also disturbed Southern Paiute religious belief. Proper relationships with the supernatural, such as appeasement of the deer hunt spirit Qai nacav, were necessary for the attainment of resources. When bands were rapidly losing members to smallpox and measles,

121 Ibid., 257.

For Kaibab Paiutes the post-disease period was a challenge to maintain both culture and access to resources. The Ghost Dance, a ceremony diffused across the American Indian West, aimed to restore decimated flora and fauna for the Southern Paiutes who performed it during an 1890 celebration in Kanab Creek. Some individuals even sought near-permanent refuge in the lower portions of the creek’s canyon, far from its namesake town. Economically, trade with Hopis continued on a smaller scale. Kaibab Paiutes also entered the growing market of Utah. Some worked on ranches and farms that sold meat and produce to Salt Lake City and Nevada mining towns. Others accepted the market less fully. They instead killed cattle and sheep just as they had previously hunted native animals. Still others accepted the constraints of territorial law and also wished to practice traditional lifestyles. These individuals continued to gather pinyon nuts and sold them to stores in Kanab. With only a fraction of the band intact, family ownership of groves was likely not a limiting factor in harvesting nuts. Available labor and demand determined the size of the commercial harvest. The same was true of the Southern Paiute’s autumn deer hunt. Above what they took for themselves, the band could only supply the market with as many deer as their few hunters could kill and their women could prepare. Market demand for tyiav was limited for the few Kaibab deer hunters who eventually came to own useful horses and guns. In Oraibi gifts, rations, and payments from the federal government supplanted many Hopi needs for the long-distance trade of buckskin blankets and clothes. In Kanab, Mormon customers preferred the Navajo’s wool blankets or manufactured items from Salt Lake City. The response to resource strategy disturbances, then, did not incline Southern Paiutes to increase their hunting of the Kaibab deer.\footnote{Topping, Glen Canyon and the San Juan Country, 151; Walker, The Diary of Charles Lowell Walker, 270, 272; Martha C. Knack, “Nineteenth-Century Great Basin Indian Wage Labor,” in Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives ed. Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 144-176; Richard W. Stoffle, Lawrence Loendorf, Diane E. Austin, David B. Halmo, and Angelita Bullets, “Ghost Dancing the Grand Canyon: Southern Paiute Rock Art, Ceremony, and Cultural Landscapes,” Current Anthropology 41 (Feb. 2000): 11-38; Richard W. Stoffle, David B. Halmo, Diane E. Austin, “Cultural Landscapes and Traditional Cultural Properties: A Southern Paiute View of the Grand Canyon and Colorado River” American Indian Quarterly 21 (Spring 1997): 229-249; Henry F. Dobyns, Richard W. Stoffle, and Kristine Jones, “Native American Urbanization and Socio-Economic Integration in the Southwestern United States” Ethnohistory 22 (Spring 1975): 155-179; For Southern Paiute hunting with guns and horses see Harry W. Gilmore “Hunting Habits of the Early Nevada Paiutes,” 148-153; Martha C. Knack, “The Dynamics of Southern Paiute Women’s Roles,” in Women and Power in Native North America ed. Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerman (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995 ), 146-158. The lack of significant fires on the Kaibab Plateau in the late nineteenth century also indicates that Southern Paiute hunting by burning an area to flush deer had decreased, see Fule, et. al., “Changes in Canopy Fuels and Potential Fire Behavior 1880-2040: Grand Canyon, Arizona,” 231-249. The decrease in deer hunting contrasts with the increased trapping of beaver in northeastern North America that took place when native economies met European markets. For a discussion of that process see the following works, Calvin Martin, Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade (Berkeley: University of}
Although the transcontinental railroad encouraged the economies of Santa Fe and Utah to integrate into the national market, some exchanges of goods and services remained independent in the late nineteenth century. One such transaction was the Kaibab Paiutes’ permission for Navajos to hunt deer on the Kaibab Plateau. Conducted outside of the formal economy, the agreement left no written record. Knowledge of the two groups, though, can aid speculation. If Utes had kidnapped Kaibab Paiutes and then sold them to Navajo sheepherders, then the captives could have reasonably been under the possession or care of Navajo hunters visiting the plateau. A Paiute captive with knowledge of the plateau and relations among the Kaibab band would have been an asset to Navajos seeking hunting permission. With familiarity of both Southern Paiute and Navajo cultures, the captives would have had important skills, such as bilingualism, that were necessary to form agreements year after year for over three decades. The Kaibab band had much to gain by offering the plateau to Navajos as a hunting ground. For instance, the Southern Paiutes had dangerously few horses in comparison to their Ute neighbors. Navajo presence could have also prevented Ute raids. Navajo hunters, too, may have provided Southern Paiutes with deer that they could not hunt themselves. Perhaps some captives were even returned for hunting permission. Of course, Navajos could have simply bullied their way onto the plateau too and offered nothing to the Kaibab band.

Whatever the character of the agreement, Navajo hunting lasted from the Bosque Redondo period in 1860s to the first few years of the twentieth century. To return annually, their deer harvest must have been substantial. They also may have been partly responsible for exterminating elk from the smaller Paria Plateau near Lee’s Ferry. On their route to the Kaibab Plateau, a sidetrip to hunt elk would have been feasible with their hunting equipment already together. Elk hunting would have augmented Kaibab deer hunting. The real limiting factors to Navajo hunting, though, were participation and labor to prepare hides. Large numbers of armed Navajos would have certainly raised fear and anger among Mormon settlers west of the Colorado River---a dangerous atmosphere for the hunters. The proprietors of Lee’s Ferry, too, only observed small groups. So with limited participation, labor to fashion deerskin for transportation was scarce as well. Although Navajos regularly crossed the Colorado to hunt deer, their effect on the Kaibab herd could not have fully supplanted the massive loss of Southern Paiute hunters.

Disease among Southern Paiutes was the significant factor in increasing, or at least maintaining, the population of the plateau deer. Disease also opened the door for Mormon settlement by impeding Southern Paiutes ability to resist them. Amid the economic and ecological changes of the Great Basin in the late-nineteenth century, Mormons thereby came to influence the Kaibab deer more than any other group. The settlers had perhaps more difficulty


transforming the range and river oases into pasture and farm villages than dealing with the Kaibab band. Armed conflict between the two groups does not appear to have occurred, and certainly wasn’t regular. A nineteenth-century Mormon recorded in his journal, “There was some excitement about the Ki Bab-bits, a few Indians who live in the vicinity of the Buckskin Mountains but there is nothing of it as yet.” Another settler pronounced his perspective in a letter to the Deseret News “We had a little trouble with the Pietet [Paiutes]; a few killed or drove away two animals from the herd at bros. Johnson’s…they however, appear friendly, excepting two or three, but I think there is no danger to fear from them.” The character of Southern Paiute culture also contributed to the lack of warfare. Animosity was traditionally limited to ceremonial fistfighting among men for brides. Real conflict between Anglos and Indians was indirectly channeled through natural resource competition, mainly the grasses collected by Kaibab women and also grazed by the Mormons’ cattle. More direct competition occurred over water sources—a contest always won easily by the settlers. Here Southern Paiute seasonal resource strategy weakened their ability to protect resources. Leaving a spring behind to gather pinyon in the foothills, they allowed Mormons to take ownership of the water or other natural wealth without confrontation. In describing a canyon near Kanab, cattleman Zeke Johnson remarked, “The floor of the valley was covered with thick grasses from six inches to a foot high…good for cattle and sheep…[there were] camps of roving Indians…no permanent settlement since ‘ancient cliff dwellers.’” Interaction, then, was not peaceful, but it was also not violent. The two groups were even comfortable enough with each other that Kaibab Paiutes often approached the settlers’ homes for Christmas gifts or temporary work.

To Mormons, Southern Paiutes lived quietly on the edge of the pastoral economy. The Euro-American pastoral mindset quickly associated these American Indians with deer. Traveling through Southern Paiute territory on the Old Spanish Trail in 1848, Orville C. Pratt commented on their timidity towards his party, “Pah Eutahs here in great numbers, but they run from us like wild deer.” Mormon settlers understood other American Indian groups as living on a similar cultural border, although their presence was sometimes threatening to the Mormons. In folk stories and everyday language, the settlers referred more aggressively to native men of any tribe as “bucks.” In one tale, the capture of a young Mormon girl disrupts a frontier Christmas dance. A search for the perpetrating bucks fails and the father eventually dies from the rigor of his unfulfilled quest. The mother died from sorrow on the third anniversary of the crime. Years later, though, the townsmen discovered the girl living as a slave in a Crow camp. Among them, the child had spent the years relating Biblical stories and in the process became beloved by the tribe. In the end, the girl had always been safe. The real change occurred with the American Indians. Once child stealers, they came to revere Christianity. The tale reinforces the Mormon

128 John L. Smith to Deseret News 17 April 1852 quoted in Euler, Southern Paiute Ethnohistory, 55.
theology that defined Indians as Lamanites, a lost nation in need of religious conversion. If they were not currently innocent, then the Mormon faith could pacify their savagery through redemption. Calling Indians deer not only put them on the edge of civilization, but also wrote them into the Mormon narrative of development. Folklore also legitimized progression by recounting how nature preferred Mormon aims over American Indian’s. In one tale, the frontier diplomat Jacob Hamblin is the hero. Often called the “Buckskin Apostle,” Hamblin was famous in nineteenth-century Deseret for negotiating treaties and agreements with Indians living on the borders of Mormon settlement. As this particular story goes, an irrigation ditch ran well through a farm village but dried as it neared the Southern Paiutes’ gardens. Reasonably upset, an elder appealed to the band’s medicine man who prayed and conducted a ceremonial fire. His efforts, though, brought no results and Hamblin grew worried that the Indians would seek retribution. Representing the farm village, he made his own spiritual appeal to solve the problem. His prayers were quickly answered. Raindrops gently fell on Hamblin while he was still on his knees and the Paiutes’ corn was saved without any sacrifice to the settlers’ crops. Religion in this folktale controls nature. Without the proper faith, nature will not produce resources for people. Commitment to their own religion, then, both compelled Mormons to establish their Edens in the American West and sanctioned their appropriation of American Indian resources to do so.

At the end of the nineteenth century, ecology and culture had combined to make Mormon settlers the most powerful group over the nature of the Kaibab Plateau. Disease had impaired the Southern Paiutes while Mormon culture completed the final step by authorizing ownership of the plateau. A fifty year period of mixed American Indian hunting and Mormon stock grazing had maintained edge habitat on the plateau for deer and diminished hunting pressure by both humans and predators. Environmental conditions were ripe for an increase in the herd’s population. From 1900 forward, Mormon actions structured the history of the plateau and the growing Kaibab deer herd. Like American Indians, Mormons located deer on the margins of their economy. Buckskin was laborious to make and could stretch and shrink inconveniently when wet. Venison made a welcome addition to a kitchen’s stores in autumn, but was far from a regular item on the dining table. Instead, the image of deer was useful to the Utah economy. Similarly regarded as living on the edge of civilization, American Indians too were utilized by Mormons as symbols of the frontier.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the most prominent theater for frontier imagery was William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s profitable Wild West show. The celebrity’s attention turned to the Kaibab Plateau in 1892 when he examined its possibilities for incorporation into the show. The entertainment played out American cultural notions of the frontier, particularly the need to protect domestic life from Indian warfare. In its many variations (the show ran from 1883 to

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132 Fife and Fife, Saints of Sage and Saddle, 150-51, 152, 238; Walker, The Diary of Charles Lowell Walker, 405-06. Many Mormons thought that Indians merely wanted to hunt, and therefore not climb back to Eden as the settlers desired to do through farming. In the words of Brigham Young, “Some of the Indians believe that when the die they go to some pleasant hunting grounds, where there is plenty of buffalo, elk, and deer, and where they can revel in the enjoyment of the chase” see Brigham Young, His Two Counselors, The Twelve Apostles and Others, Journal of Discourses: Volume 17 (London: Latter-Day Saints Book Depot, 1877), 308. Nineteenth-century Euro-Americans often referred to young women as “fawns,” see Austin Fife and Alta Fife, Ballads of the Great West (Palo Alto, CA: American West Pub. Co., 1970), 49-50. Redemption sometimes took the form of purchasing American Indian children from slave traders, see Van Hoak, “And Who Shall Have the Children?: The Indian Slave Trade in the Southern Great Basin, 1800-1865,” 3-25.

133 Austin Fife and Alta Fife, Saints of Sage and Saddle, 204-205.
1916), Buffalo Bill fought off armed Indians who had attacked a white pioneer cabin. The show’s primary storyline was the creation and protection of domestic space against an uncontrolled exterior. With this narrative goal, deer also had a role to play. At times Buffalo Bill or a fellow hunter would arrive at a cabin with a fat deer strapped to their horse and offer it to the woman of the house, thus harvesting and also conquering the nature that lay beyond the settlement. Considering the similarities between Mormon belief and national culture, it is not surprising that Buffalo Bill would have been intrigued by the Kaibab Plateau and that locals were willing to offer it as a locale for his brand of entertainment. Mormon faith and folklore described American Indians as sometimes hostile, and always beyond the border of civilization. Their deer hunters, too, stalked the animal to reap the fruit of the landscape and become native to it. In some important ways, then, Mormon settlement retained its original American character. For some Mormons, this area of cultural overlap was a financial opportunity. John R. Young, for one, had promoted the Kaibab Plateau to Cody after he had obtained its grazing rights himself. Unfortunately for Young, Cody never agreed to use the plateau for his show, but his visit was a preview of twentieth-century developments. Through the first decades of the century, local Mormons used the narrative of their frontier experience to guide the attention of a country increasingly looking to the American West for a confirmation of their national identity.  

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Chapter Four

“The President’s Forest: The Kaibab Deer in the National Landscape”

Jim Owens was perhaps the only individual whose fame was built on the Kaibab Plateau. He was the federal government’s first employee there, and was responsible for protecting the deer when the plateau became a game preserve in 1906. He hunted wolves, coyotes, black bears, and especially mountain lions—all of which preyed upon the Kaibab deer. Owens’ work became an adventure story for readers when western-genre author Henry Irving Dodge made him the hero of his 1927 magazine serial, “The Hour and the Man.” Before working for the government, Owens had learned to hunt predators as a cattleman. Shooting a wolf or coyote was part of maintaining a large herd on its way across the range to a railroad depot. “Uncle Jim,” as he came to be known, was indicative of his time. A generation before, a man tending cattle on the Kaibab would have shot wolves, but worked for the United Order. Economic self-sufficiency had characterized Mormon theology as far back as 1830, through the Utah War and its aftermath, and especially during the United Order experiments. In 1906, though, Owens was free to pursue his private interest, which in his case meant earning a wage from the federal government. Owens case was typical of the rural Great Basin—private profit and federal agencies went hand in hand. Both worked toward the same goal of development, of carrying the country through the stages it saw for itself. On the nation’s economic periphery the task was to integrate isolated rural communities into the national market. The creation of infrastructure, such as rail and automobile roads, was a primary goal among both capitalists and government officials. Together, local and national motives ran through men like Owens and turned the Kaibab Plateau into a national landscape.135

American citizens had considered the Colorado Plateau (and much of the American West) theirs since the conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war between the two countries, but the Compromise of 1850 determined how the lands would be incorporated into the United States. Among its many measures, the legislation created two territories—New Mexico Territory and Utah Territory. For thirteen years the Kaibab Plateau was within the borders of New Mexico Territory, but then in 1863 Arizona Territory was carved from its western half. From then on the boundaries of the three territories were set and have since become their states’ borders. Statehood for Utah followed six years after the Mormons’ Manifesto of 1890, which outlawed polygamy within the Church. Less populous during its territorial stage, Arizona did not achieve statehood until 1912. Throughout these changes, much of the land in northern Arizona and southern Utah remained under the political care of the federal government. Not until the turn-of-the-century, though, did that mean much.136

The presence of the federal government took many forms in the American West, but its reason was almost always related to aiding settlement and economic development by its citizens. In the Great Plains, for instance, the U.S. Army fought Lakota Indians to clear the way for Euro-

American agriculture. At the Kaibab Plateau, disease and cattle ranching had done the same to Southern Paiute communities. Instead of the Army, it was the Forest Service, Park Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs that initiated federal influence in northern Arizona and southern Utah. The Forest Service had evolved from a series of legislative efforts to avoid waste in the timber industry. The 1891 General Land Law Revision Act authorized the president to preserve public ownership of forested land, and the 1897 Organic Act set the purpose of these reserves as the continuous supply of timber. Benjamin Harrison created the Grand Canyon Forest Reserve in 1893 to conserve timber on the Kaibab Plateau, and in 1908 its designation changed to Kaibab National Forest. With this change from forest reserve to national forest came, for the first time, actual foresters. The Forest Service was designed to better the national economy by maintaining a healthy wood supply and the Park Service likewise aided the economy by increasing national tourism. Created in 1916 to preserve the country’s scenic wonders, the national park system added Grand Canyon National Park three years later in 1919. The large park preserved the canyon and much of its rim, including the southern third of the Kaibab Plateau. The beginning of a tangible federal presence on the plateau came in a quick fifteen years after five decades of official control.137

National attention of the Kaibab Plateau began earlier in 1875, though, when the Smithsonian published John Wesley Powell’s story of his scientific journey down the Colorado River. After an initial expedition in 1869, Powell received funds from the Smithsonian and Congress to expand the geographic scope of his survey throughout the 1870s. Mormon towns made base camps for the Powell Survey and Southern Paiutes often became guides. The scientists and artists that composed the government team trekked extensively across the plateaus and canyons of the region. In his popular book, entitled the Exploration of the Colorado River and its Tributaries, Powell related his observations on geology, ethnography, and natural history of the Colorado Plateau to the nation’s reading public. It was a combination of genres, all tied by the drive for progress. At times he wrote in the language of the sublime—-an appreciation of untouched nature that emphasized wonder and danger. “This has been a chapter of disasters and toils…not devoid of scenic interest, even beyond the power of pen to tell. The roar of [the Colorado’s] waters was heard unceasingly from the hour we entered it until we landed here. No quiet in all that time. But its wall and cliffs, its peaks and crags, its amphitheaters and alcoves, tell a story of beauty and grandeur that I hear yet—and shall hear.”138 In some instances, Powell described the Colorado Plateau as a new settler might. “The little valleys above are beautiful parks; between the parks are stately pine forests, half hiding ledges of red sandstone. Mule-deer and elk abound…”139 Nearly throughout, though, Powell was the Enlightenment scientist observing and searching for natural laws. Exploration details the mineral composition of the Grand Canyon and catalogues ethnographic data of American Indians. In all three descriptive


138 John Wesley Powell, Exploration of the Colorado River of the West and Its Tributaries: Explored in 1869, 1870, 1871, and 1872, Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution (Meadvilled, PA: Flood and Vincent, 1875), 30.

139 Powell, Exploration, 19.
styles, Powell sought to dismantle the stigma of the Southwest’s harsh, uncontrollable, and useless deserts. The sublime illustration gave the Colorado Plateau value, while the pioneer’s picture gave it abundance and the scientific measurement gave it order. Together these characterizations later allowed Americans to apply their belief in development to the plateau. In the late nineteenth century, though, the Colorado Plateau was still inaccessible except through books and magazine articles. But the Powell Survey had demonstrated the values Americans would use to assess the Kaibab Plateau. 140

The cultural themes of scientific management and frontier character reinforced each other in the conservation movement’s attitude towards hunting. The historian John Reiger has demonstrated the close ties between sport hunters and political action to conserve game and other resources, including timber. At the Kaibab Plateau, the Forest Service managed both the woods and the animals in it. Theodore Roosevelt designated the plateau as a national game preserve in 1906, thus overlapping game and forest management. Hunting game animals was forbidden in this protected breeding ground, which was given the name Grand Canyon National Game Preserve. The Biological Survey and the Forest Service employed game wardens and rangers to protect the deer herd by hunting mountain lions and other predators. Natural historians, such as William T. Hornaday, made scientific arguments for protection that supported the government’s policy. In The American Natural History, Hornaday catalogued the nation’s wildlife and their condition in 1904. For the mule deer he wrote that “the present scarcity of really large antlers in the possession of taxidermists is a sure sign of the approaching end of the species.” 141 In his opinion, only well-informed management could save the deer from their fate. 142

Many hunters across the nation agreed. Outdoor pursuits had become immensely popular among a rising class of affluent, urban professionals. In the rural hinterlands of eastern cities, they took to fly-fishing and deer hunting in great numbers. The sport hunters’ quest for hunting ground brought them to the American West—for either an actual trip or one in the imaginative space of magazines like Scribner’s Monthly. For them, hunting was necessary because it ensured the continuation of important social forms, especially masculinity. In one Scribner’s article, the author demonstrates the tie between manliness and hunting when he abhors the thought of killing

140 The themes of sublime, frontier, and science are also evident in the journals and publications of other Powell Survey members. The photographer J.K. Hillers, for instance, recorded several deer hunts on the second Colorado River trip, see Jack Hillers, “Photographed All the Best Scenery:” Jack Hillers’ Diary of the Powell Expeditions, 1871-1875, ed. Don D. Fowler (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1972), 25, 30, 53, 55, 86, 95-99, 141-147; Thomas Moran accompanied Powell to the Kaibab Plateau where he made sketches of the Grand Canyon and summer thunderstorms. Used with Hillers’ photographs, he painted his Chasm of the Colorado of 1873-74 which now hangs in the National Gallery of Art as an example of sublime landscape painting. The Geologist Clarence Dutton combined geologic analysis with natural awe in his Tertiary History of the Grand Canon District, see Donald Worster, A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 209-210, 302-305, 324, 471. Dutton also remarked on the pastoral beauty of the Kaibab’s meadows at length and included an illustration of browsing deer, behind which the scene opens into the comfort of the plateau’s wide, yet enclosed grassland, see Clarence Dutton, Tertiary History of the Grand Canon District (reprint, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), plates xxvi and xxxvii. Also see Wallace Stegner, Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954); Kevin J. Fernlund, William Henry Holmes and the Rediscovery of the American West (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).


a fawn, “I was never tempted to harm an inexperienced and careless fawn, or the doe cumbered with maternal cares… I think the man that can kill a ‘papoose’--unless impelled by the hunger that knows no law--is no better than an Indian. He is a grade worse. 143  The ethic of a male sport hunter was to protect the virtues that represented family and thereby uphold civilization. Without deer, though, this protection was impossible. Hunters joined natural historians to create game preserves. The suspension of hunting in one place would allow the practice elsewhere. In many cases, such as President Roosevelt, the same individual supported preserves for both science and hunting. And like other hunters, Roosevelt was behind timber conservation and the Forest Service, too. During his presidency, he protected both the Kaibab deer by designating the game preserve and their ponderosa woods by approving the creation of Kaibab National Forest. 144

Local Mormons shared the conservation sentiment that Roosevelt applied to the Kaibab Plateau. In an article that ran in several rural newspapers, Utahns celebrated Roosevelt as a hunter who refused to pursue the chase on Sundays. 145  Restraint and respect for game laws was a real factor in how residents living near the Kaibab Plateau hunted. For instance, on a March weekend not long after the game preserve’s establishment, the cattleman Jim Maxwell was riding on the western slopes of the plateau near the deer’s winter range. He came upon the unusual sight of two bucks with their horns locked. One had outlasted the other who had died in the duel. Rather than let nature be, Maxwell sought help and contacted the game authority. The preferred solution was to free the living buck. With the aid of his friend Ed Cox, Maxwell returned to the deer and attempted to free them. They quickly realized, though, that the effort was a serious risk to their own lives. The buck was stressed, frightened, and ready to fight. The two men resolved to shoot the living deer instead of letting it starve or possibly hurt them. In the end, the buck was taken to a taxidermist and hung as a prize, and probably as a centerpiece for a memorable story. 146

Today the incident holds insights for the modern observer into game laws and local hunting just after the creation of Grand Canyon National Game Preserve. First, by deferring to the game warden Maxwell demonstrated compliance with the established order. He also revealed his ethic as a hunter by not immediately shooting the buck. The kill would have come with too much ease and without an opportunity for the buck to escape or have a fair chance. No honor could have attended such a decision. The attempt to free the buck, too, reveals a seemingly paradoxical sympathy towards the animal he eventually shot. In that effort Maxwell and Cox were like many Utahns who distributed hay for deer after heavy snowfall or became concerned when forest fires supposedly harmed deer habitat. But again, without being able to hunt the buck properly, the best course of action for the men was to allow someone else the

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opportunity later. Of course, not all Utah hunters necessarily obeyed these rules of sportsmanship, but many did. The local, conservation-minded Dixie Rod and Gun Club, for instance, boasted over a hundred members in the early years of the game preserve. Exclusion from the Kaibab Plateau also did not preclude local residents from hunting. Pine Valley Mountain and other plateaus of southern Utah were home to many deer as well—a situation which would have eased compliance with the game preserve restrictions. Finally, by following those restrictions, local residents didn’t just show themselves as sportmen, they also demonstrated their willingness to accept the demands of conservation that national culture placed on the plateau.147

While national and local sportmen had a cultivated understanding of hunting, not everyone agreed with their recreation. Game protection was also popular for its halt (if only temporary) to deer killing. A series of children’s bedtime stories, called “Daddy’s Evening Fairy Tale,” provided Utah parents with tales that described innocence in nature. In one fable, “The Misses Deer,” two does discuss their troublesome relationship with their human neighbors. Their conversation begins with the news that Miss Deer has overheard farmers complaining that deer had been eating their wheat. Thankfully, one of the farmers explained to the others that deer don’t eat the valuable part of the crop. Upon hearing that “some one had told the truth,” Deborah Deer became relieved for she had been “careful” when eating the wheat.148 Their discussion continues to their worries over the upcoming hunting season. They describe their hopes—that hunters will realize their love for deer and pursue them only with the camera. The story ends, though, with a loud gunshot and the fleeing of the two deer into the forest. The tale persuades the listener (or speaker too) that deer should not be hunted by declaring their innocence. This status is demonstrated by their benign effect on crops and reinforced by their gender. As females, violence towards the does ought to be unthinkable. The story, too, offers ways to correct this unfortunate situation. Telling “the truth” reclaimed the innocence of the deer, and so can also lead to their protection. For some individuals, game preserves were important because they maintained the honest virtue of a community.149

Hunting restrictions, though, did not represent virtue to everyone. For American Indians game laws could be direct forms of imperial subjection. The rules constrained elite, urban hunters comparatively less—they could seek an alternative location for their hunting vacation. Indian residents on the other hand typically had less mobility and in many instances relied on deer and other animals for food or fulfillment of cultural needs. To some Euro-American sportmen, these native hunting practices violated a proper hunting ethic. For instance, in the Scribner’s article mentioned above, the author equates American Indian hunting with the doe killing he detests. To be an authoritative relationship with nature, sportsmanship had to regulate

149 Ibid.
all hunting including American Indians’. The Grand Canyon National Game Preserve thus excluded Southern Paiutes from an integral part of their culture. In a letter of appeal, one man expressed his serious concern, “Indians of this trib would like if you would let them Kill Deer of their mountain what they used call their own, but now it is closed We can’t get in. it would be alright if you could Just let us have game…I and my trib are poor, and…the white people are thick and they are holding us from starving in want of food.”

Already devastated through cultural and ecological conflicts, Southern Paiutes only became officially marginalized in the Kaibab region with the creation of the game preserve. A year later the federal government assigned them an unproductive tract of land to the northwest of the plateau as the Kaibab Indian Reservation. In its administration of the reservation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs acted as an arm of the overarching Euro-American drive for development. Official removal of the Southern Paiutes cleared the way for the cultural creation of the Kaibab Plateau as an Edenic landscape. With natives gone, management became an affair seemingly unmarred by imperial ambition. Foresters and game wardens could make decisions for development instead of conquest.

Road and railroad construction was a central issue for development in early twentieth century Mormon country. The task united local and national funding for a shared aim—the increase of production. The financial resources of the country’s east and west coasts united at Promontory Point in 1869 at the first connection of a transcontinental railroad. Directed by Mormon leaders, northern Utah residents also actively began a network of railroads across the state by privatizing former Church property. Privatization was an attempt to minimize the observable role of the Church in economic affairs and also to allow Utah businesses collaboration with outside capital. In 1871, Brigham Young and the Union Pacific Railroad agreed to build an extension to southern Utah that would eventually follow the remainder of the Old Spanish Trail to Los Angeles. For the Union Pacific, the deal promised more freight on its rails, and therefore more profit. And for the Mormons, the agreement had the potential to connect Salt Lake City with the quarries, mines, and fruit farms of the south.

Villages as far south as Kanab, though, had to wait much longer for these advancements to reach them. In preparation, these towns also decided to privatize many resources. The irrigation network of the former United Order of Kanab, for instance, became the property of shareholders. In 1881, these men (many of whom were once members of the Order) organized the Kanab Irrigation Company to control the waters of Kanab Creek. Privatization and increased commerce were a primary concern in southern Utah after the demise of the United Orders. For decades, newspapers reported developments that could lead to extending the railroad into their communities. Possible sales of timber on the Kaibab Plateau frequently garnered attention. Called “one of the richest sections in the west,” the plateau’s forests were potential capital for railroad companies. The building of a rail line would provide the infrastructure for timber cutting, which in turn would fund the railroad. Mining, too, offered the same promise although mineral deposits were actually few and far between on the plateau. The papers encouraged their readers to “Boost all the time for Dixie” and espoused wisdom like “Build good roads and you

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150 Quoted in Martha C. Knack, “Interethnic Competition at Kaibab during the Early Twentieth Century” Ethnohistory 40 (Spring, 1993): 216.
152 Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 257; Charles L. Keller, “Promoting Railroads and Statehood: John W. Young,” Utah Historical Quarterly 45 (Fall, 1977): 289-309.
build up the country.” The natural wealth of the Kaibab, whether it was ponderosa or copper, became the meeting ground for local initiative and national capital.153

In 1908, decisions concerning natural resources on the Kaibab Plateau became the responsibility of the U. S. Forest Service. Like game preserves, national forests were intended to preserve frontier abundance by applying scientific management of resources. Federal management of once local land sought to direct private interests, but did not uniformly exclude them from the plateau. Forest Service organization was highly decentralized to include local opinion and also to offer local jobs.154 Forestry instructors from Yale Forest School, for instance, taught classes at Utah State Agricultural College to train local men as foresters. On the ground, rangers began the work of a newly-established national forest by surveying available timber for harvest. At the Kaibab Plateau a small local mill was the only operation to take advantage of the first timber survey in 1910. Later estimations of the forest again determined it was “mature” and ready for cutting—a point advertised widely in local booster newspapers. A ranger’s duties also involved local interest when they turned to livestock regulation. Gifford Pinchot, the Chief of the Forest Service, included grazing as a necessary use of national forest land. In the Use Book—a forester’s manual for the field—Pinchot instructed his rangers to cooperate with local stockmen, who in many cases had been using the land before the creation of the Forest Service. This was a natural task for first-generation rangers. In many cases, they came from ranching families and their relatives and neighbors held grazing permits. Dan Judd and William Mace, for instance, had worked for cattle companies before becoming rangers for Kaibab National Forest. At work they improved the range by developing springs for livestock, constructing trails to the water, and building corrals and fences. Encouraging grazing also meant protecting stock (not just game) from predators. One ranger in nearby Dixie National Forest gained local fame for successfully hunting an infamous cattle-killing grizzly. The work of the Forest Service on the Kaibab Plateau, then, was a brand of scientific management married to local aims.155

This marriage, though, was complex. Spending weeks during the summer of 1909 surveying a line for a barbwire fence across the plateau, Ranger Mace was at the center of the relationship. Forest Service supervisors met frequently with locals to explain the agency’s

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155 Interaction between the federal government and the Mormon towns near the Kaibab Plateau began when Powell visited the plateau and Kanab as part of his survey. Residents, especially Jacob Hamblin, aided the Powell Survey throughout their stay. Donald Worster has noted that this help likely came with the realization that the cartographers’ work could benefit or harm Mormon control of the region. This negotiation of power continued with the Forest Service over a generation later. See Donald Worster, River Running West, 266; “Northwest Notes,” Davis County Clipper, 21 September 1917; Washington County News, 30 November 1922; Char Miller, “Grazing Arizona: Public Land Management in the Southwest,” Forest History Today (Fall 1999): 15-19; Patricia Nelson Limerick, The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1987), 293-321; Washington County News, 24 September 1908; William Mace was born in Kanab and Dan Judd’s family was among the first generation of Kanab residents, see Mace, “Will Mace Memoirs,” 64-73.
responsibilities and even to settle range disputes. Mace held such a meeting the previous winter to arrange a compromise among the Forest Service, the California-based Bar Z cattle company, and several smaller livestock operations. This last group complained to Mace that cattle permit numbers were artificially low because estimations of the range’s carrying capacity were based upon not only the grazing associated with their own cattle, but the effects of the Bar Z’s trespassing animals as well. The livestock from the large company had been drifting on their own accord from the east onto national forest land of the plateau. After negotiating, the three parties agreed that a fence would adequately separate the herds. The Forest Service supplied the materials, while the smaller companies delivered them from the nearest railway depot (over a hundred miles away), and the Bar Z built the fence. Mace then spent part of the summer using the surveying skills he learned at Utah Agricultural College to calculate the best location for the barrier. He had to leave accessible springs on both sides and also ensure that the fence wouldn’t trap animals traveling downhill from high elevations in late autumn. Compass in hand, Mace’s experience was the intersection among local residents, a national company, federal regulation, and ecology. Much as they guided the ranger’s fieldwork, the interaction among these actors shaped the plateau deer in the decade following the establishment of Kaibab National Forest.\footnote{Washington County News, 15 October 1908; Alexander, “From Rule-of-Thumb to Scientific Management,” 179-194; Mace, “Will Mace Memoir,” 64-73; The Forest Service introduced itself to places like southern Utah and northern Arizona as an agency meant to improve range quality. Experiments in “experimental pastures” were meant to find the best possible practices for stockmen, see “Forestry Service,” Washington County News, 13 February 1908; Reilly, Lee’s Ferry, 191, 209, 214.}

The effects of these relatively new actors amounted to a transformation of plateau ecology. Compared with grazing, the impacts from timber harvesting were minimal. In the first few years after the Forest Service began its work only a few thousand board feet was harvested annually. Such isolated, small-scale changes to the forest structure bore little relationship to deer populations. Mining too was minor---nearly all sites were claimed by cattlemen for their water. A new grazing visitor, though, could have initiated some ecological adjustments in those same first ten years of the twentieth century. Let loose or escaped from ranches, wild horses migrated from the east onto the Kaibab Plateau where they formed a band of perhaps two hundred animals. With sizeable appetites they may have competed with deer and cattle for food such as aspen shoots. Wild horses, though, only partially filled a large gap left by sheep. In the 1890s sheep had become much less profitable, and stockmen eventually stopped grazing them on the plateau. As competitors to cattle, sheep were often unwelcome on the range and many cattlemen embraced the Forest Service as liberators from the sheepherders. For a short time afterward cattle grazing went on unimpeded by the sheep. In 1911 the era of large cattle herds—-which often numbered over 5,000 animals—-on the Kaibab Plateau came to an end. The horse bands also diminished, possibly to the point of extermination. Subsequent reintroduction of sheep in 1914 added a couple hundred stock animals back to the plateau, but the overall trend from 1900 to 1920 was a large decrease in stock on the Kaibab Plateau.\footnote{The first large timber sale on the Kaibab Plateau did not occur until 1950, see Forest Service Southwestern Region, Timber Management on the Kaibab National Forest (Albuquerque: United States Department of Agriculture, 1989). The mill actually burned down in the early 1910s, possibly suspending timber harvests. Keeping with the Forest Service’s prioritization of local businesses, a small sawmill was operated by William Judd (relative of Ranger Judd) in the 1920s, see Mace “Will Mace Memoir,” 64-73; Washington County News, 30 November 1922. For mining see, “Care is Exercised to Preserve Water,” Washington County News, 2 October 1913; “Kiabab Copper” Washington County News, 22 July 1909. For sheep see, Johnson “Zeke Johnson Biography,” 133, 156; “Many Persian Sheep on Kaibab Forest,” Washington County News, 5 March 1914. For continued cattle
By 1914 a common question among southern Utah’s cattlemen didn’t concern the range. Instead, they asked each other, “How’s the oak?” A large increase in browse-hungry deer had accompanied the large livestock withdrawal and diminished the region’s oak trees. That same year Forest Service officials estimated the number of mule deer on the plateau at twenty thousand. In another five years estimates had grown to thirty thousand. The difficulty of calculating a correct number of deer by a few officials in a large, rugged area was considerable. Although the specific numbers are probably unknowable it seems certain that deer were increasing rapidly in the 1910s. In addition to less stock, other influences like climate patterns, fire suppression, the hunting of predators, and the elimination of deer hunting could have each contributed to an increased deer herd. The processes of climate patterns and fire suppression, though, can leave their effects ambiguous. Heavy winter snows can cause deer to starve by covering vegetation, but their spring melt can also cause lush browse for the animals. Like climate, fire-fighting could have produced opposing effects. In ponderosa woods, suppression would have diminished deer habitat. But in the deer’s winter range of pinyon pine on the west slopes of the plateau, suppression could have increased habitat. The influences of hunting were much clearer. The overlapping management strategies of the game preserve and the national forest included removing as many predators as possible. The extermination of wolves, and the near-extinction of black bears and mountain lions, greatly diminished hunting pressure on the deer herd. The exclusion of human hunters, of course, did the same. The intricacies of all these influences—no matter how unobservable their details were—made one clear and simple statement to Euro-Americans. The Kaibab Plateau became better because Euro-American use of the plateau increased its deer.

During his summer sighting a line for the range fence, Ranger Mace made two observations among his many measurements that especially concerned the future of the plateau deer. The task took him into the farthest reaches of the Kaibab, places he described as touching “roads or trials only at remote intervals and [were] so infrequently visited by man that when we encountered deer or wild horses while on foot the animals would seldom show alarm until they got our scent.” The deer’s behavior indicated a human geography. To Mace the plateau was still primitive and untouched by modern life. The ranger’s other intriguing observation was less tranquil and more surprising. Watering his horses at a spring in the meadows, he encountered a party of tourists from Kanab who had traveled there by automobile. The car was one of the first to make the journey to the plateau. Throughout the next twenty years Mace’s two experiences became more closely associated. Tourists began to take auto excursions on a large scale to places that offered them a scenic beauty unavailable in cities. Just as deer revealed an unspoiled charm to Mace, the animals also gave tourists the chance to experience a similar nature. Auto tourists increasingly traveled to the Kaibab Plateau in the following years to camp, see the Grand Canyon, and watch the deer.

160 Mace, “Will Mace Memoir,” 68.
161 Ibid., 64-73. For cars and scenic tourism see Paul Sutter, Driven Wild. Residents of Kanab and other nearby towns had taken pleasure outings to the plateau for generations. In the last few years preceding the automobile,
Although scientific management was the central responsibility of the Forest Service, the agency also allowed—and at times promoted—recreation. In a public relations publication, *The Use of the National Forests*, Pinchot explained that “Quite incidentally, also, the National forests serve a good purpose as great playgrounds for the people.” The agency ran advertising articles in newspapers across the country that described the pleasures of touring the national forests. Tourists could enjoy themselves by hiking, hunting, fishing, and tending a quiet camp at the end of the day. Deer were advertised as welcome visitors to an evening campfire (either as venison or a friendly face). The advertisements also promoted the Forest Service’s “magnificently planned system of roads” that would get the tourist to camp. As recreation engineer, Frank Waugh directly studied the issue of national forest infrastructure for tourism. He toured the Colorado Plateau in 1922 and found that “the Kaibab Forest, with its fine timber stand, its sightly parks, and especially its herds of deer…is the crowning feature of the entire country.” In his report to the Washington office, Waugh declared the agency’s need to particularly value the concerns of local residents especially stockmen. He judged that current forest use, such as grazing, was compatible with tourism. The recreation engineer emphasized that abundant browse was still available to deer—the primary attraction. In keeping with local needs, Waugh recommended that the Forest Service make special considerations to increase tourism on the Kaibab Plateau. His list included advertisement, maintained campgrounds, new trails, available drinking water, and, finally, “a better road to the Forest.”

His encouragement of road construction aligned Waugh with the interests of local residents. The railroad never reached the Kaibab Plateau, despite the continuing hopes of Kanab businessmen. While newspapers still mentioned the abundance of plateau timber in the 1910s and 1920s, tourism’s opportunities took the attention of Utah’s boosters. For them, cars and roads held the promise of economic development. With this new aspiration in mind, the creation of the tourist destination Glacier National Park received special recognition among Utahns, who compared its abundant deer with their own plentiful wildlife. To citizens living amid millions of acres of federal (and marginally productive) land, the government held the key to road building. Upon the announcement in 1913 that the Forest Service had begun plans for construction of a road from Kanab and through the Kaibab meadows to the Grand Canyon, a local newspaper declared, “The government’s cooperation in road building, especially on this road, will give to Utah the assurance that the road to the Grand canyon will be made so admirable that Utah’s share of traffic to the canyon will become an important factor in the State’s enterprise, as quickly as the beauty of the trip becomes known to a larger number of tourists.” As an active set of auto tourists, Utah’s Salt Lake City Commercial Club supported the road building, which quickly spurred business on the plateau. Both the Kaibab Lodge and Wylie Way Camp served tourists enjoying the Kaibab meadows during the 1910s and 1920s. The Forest Service also operated and

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165 Ibid.
166 *Washington County News*, 2 October 1913.
advertised a free campground at VT Ranch, “in the edge of the meadow in sight of the deer.”

Traffic increased with road improvements, especially after 1923 when the agency implemented Waugh’s suggestions. Business, though, was as much dependent on the deer as on roads and services. The Forest Service regulated camping so that tourists and their cars would not frighten deer and spoil the attraction. Together, the agency and local businesses collaborated to begin the plateau transformation from cattle range to scenic destination.

As with hunting, auto tourism was a practice that allowed Euro-Americans to consider themselves native to the North American landscape. Campers took to lands that the government held in trust for the nation’s citizens. With legal ownership, a cultural claim was easy to follow. Tourists could celebrate a frontier heritage by leaving behind modern luxuries for the rugged adventure of camping in the wilderness. Some auto campers, though, were especially explicit in asserting that the forest represented their heritage. In the 1920s, the Kaibab Caravan Association made annual trips to the plateau from Salt Lake City. The club of over one hundred people restricted their tours to members, all of whom were Master Masons. Their outings emphasized shared identity by threading official membership with ritual, common experience, and place. In its literature, the association wrote that its goal was to investigate “the origins, arts, and customs of the strange people of the long-ago, the cliff-dwellers, who had lived in this land of mighty walls” and especially their symbols “which may have a Masonic significance.”

Looking to the plateau’s oldest known residents for their own origin story, the auto club attached its self-narrative to the Kaibab. In their membership ritual, they again articulated this claim by declaring that their customs were borrowed from those ancient American Indians. The ceremony took place in a “sacred kiva in the Kaibab Forest,” a secret enclosed space where new members heard stories that helped them cultivate a full appreciation of the plateau’s primitive landscape. The experience, and that of the entire journey from Salt Lake, was an opportunity to bind the recently initiated with their new brethren. The “beautiful drive of forty miles through a forest fairy-

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170 Ibid.
land...engender[ed] the joys of fellowship with congenial companions.” For all members, the outing produced a community and a geography to match it. While eccentric, the Kaibab Caravan Association drew upon cultural themes accessible to all auto tourists. In the 1920s, the meadow road let more tourists from more places create the Kaibab Plateau as their own.

The potential of the plateau for tourist development was apparent to not only Utah communities, but to the state of Arizona as well. Although Mormon settlements were the only Euro-American communities to control the Kaibab Plateau in the nineteenth century, the region actually fell within the borders of Arizona Territory. The 37th parallel (running a few miles south of Kanab) divided Arizona from Utah when each was a territory and after they became states. The Colorado River was a natural barrier from the south to the Kaibab Plateau, and so it was relatively isolated from the great remainder of Arizona’s land. Accordingly, the plateau and other separated land north of the river became known as the “Arizona Strip.” Like many territories and states in the American West, Arizona promoted itself as a land of abundant opportunity. Booster publications like the 1884 History of Arizona Territory illustrated nature’s generosity to settlers and investors. Articles in Harper’s Weekly advertised the desert’s ability to become lush farmland when given the proper care. With the economic growth of the territory at the turn-of-the-century, its politicians and businessmen began to consider the Arizona Strip’s natural wealth. The timber, pasture, and wildlife of the Kaibab Plateau made it the gem of the region.

Arizona boosters sought the commerce of tourism, while allowing the tourist to claim the plateau as their cultural heritage. Arizona, The New State Magazine ran articles by Sharlot Hall in the early 1910s that chronicled her journey through the Strip, a place where the frontier was still alive. Amid the danger of outlaws and scarce water, the opportunity for abundance sat undiscovered. She wrote that the Kaibab Plateau was notable for its large deer herd and that American Indians “used to make it their hunting ground,” thus imparting an intriguing past on the plateau and advertising its openness to new claims. For Hall and the editors of the magazine, promotion of abundance and availability was the key to developing the state. At times, though, Utah similarly incorporated the Strip into its own vision of economic growth. Before Arizona achieved statehood in 1912 Utah made several attempts to annex the region. A full-page, front-cover article in The Salt Lake Herald gave the Kaibab deer widespread attention at Utah’s Sunday kitchen tables in 1905. “Tales of Picturesque Arizona Strip” detailed the potential of the region for economic development. Among the resources was the combination of rugged topography and wildlife that made the Kaibab Plateau “the greatest natural game preserve

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171 Ibid.
172 For a discussion of Euro-Americans using American Indian imagery to construct their own heritage, see Philip J. Deloria, Playing Indian (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); For how auto touring created an image of national identity among upper-class tourists, see Marguerite Shaffer, “Seeing America First: The Search for Identity in the Tourist Landscape,” in Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West eds. David E. Wrobel and Patrick T. Long (Boulder, CO: Published for the Center of the American West by the University Press of Kansas, 2001), 165-193.
in the world." Even with public excitement, however, Utah never took political control of the area. Instead Arizona and Utah cooperated in many ways to develop the plateau. Accompanied by Utah’s road commissioner, Arizona Governor Hunt took a reconnaissance trip to the Arizona Strip in 1923. Both men marveled at the scenic Kaibab Plateau. For these promoters of a desert region, the image of deer browsing on the border of a cool, green meadow was memorable. After the tour, Hunt mailed the commissioner photographs he had taken at VT Ranch. He also suggested a loop road that would connect the Strip and southern Utah towns with southern Arizona. With the popularity of the Kaibab meadows apparent, all possible parties were anxious to share in its abundance.176

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, the local and regional push for development took two routes to the Kaibab Plateau—stock trails and roads. Cattle grazing and tourism sat alongside each other in the meadows because they were both successful methods of harnessing the resources of the plateau. A biological abundance was available in the cattle, while the deer offered a symbolic picture of plenty. Forest Service management encouraged grazing and tourism because scientific conservation was meant to serve the economy. Cooperation between Utah and Arizona also occurred because they shared that goal. And local businesses, whether they were lodges or livestock outfits, welcomed national capital and federal regulation because they too sought economic development. In the 1920s integration into the national economy was necessary to progress through the stages that Americans had outlined for themselves. Articulated in landscape art, such as John Gast’s American Progress, the railroad was the agent of local incorporation into the national market. Neither the limited copper nor the great ponderosa stands of the Kaibab Plateau could attract the train, though. Instead the deer—the image of untouched abundance—brought the train’s passengers. In 1919, the plateau became part of Grand Canyon National Park. Working with railroad companies like the Union Pacific, the National Park Service created its parks as a network of tourist destinations across the American West. In southern Utah tourists disembarked from their trains in Cedar City and took luxury coaches in a loop trip through Zion, Bryce Canyon, and Grand Canyon National Parks. The economic abundance of the train, if not its iron and steel, thus made its way to the Kaibab Plateau in the 1920s. Of course the sublime Grand Canyon was the headline attraction, but the tourist experience also included the broad meadows and their deer. As the train of Gast’s painting moves westward, though, deer flee from the commotion. American culture did not expect economic progress and wild nature to rest comfortably side by side. But for a time at the Kaibab, they seemed to do just that and it made the plateau exceptional.177

In 1921 the popular writer of the outdoors, Emerson Hough, visited the plateau to see the sizeable herd himself. Stephen Mather, the director of the National Park Service, accompanied the author, as did several other traveling companions. Together the group resembled the party led by John R. Young and Buffalo Bill Cody that visited the plateau nearly thirty years before. Both trips surveyed the Kaibab Plateau for its tourism possibilities. In 1892 the investors found the natural game sanctuary too remote for a profitable venture. The intervening decades, though, brought enough change to the region to make the prospect of tourist development certain to

175 “Tales of Picturesque Arizona Strip: Something About the Tract of Land Which May Be Annexed to Utah” The Salt Lake Herald, 26 February 1905.
Mather and Hough. For the writer, the plateau was a worthwhile attraction because it was just remote enough to be a wilderness, but accessible enough to enjoy. The following winter Hough published a pair of articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* that proposed that this condition be preserved. He offered the new name “President’s Forest” to suggest an American brand of Europe’s royal forests. Hough frequently disagreed with the Forest Service’s approval of grazing in the national forests and also had had a qualm over Park Service wildlife policy in Yellowstone. His proposal for the Kaibab included management by the Presidential administration, with no land agencies involved. For him, this arrangement promised a more permanent conservation. Above all else, what Hough wanted for the plateau was permanence. He admired European countries for maintaining their wildlife in royal forests as a national treasure for future generations. In the Kaibab Plateau he saw the same opportunity, except on a grander scale. Hough called the deer “the greatest stag herd ever known in the United States” and the plateau itself “the unparalleled landscape of all the world.” The protection of this grand and wild landscape was important because it preserved the visitor’s experience. And for Hough, that journey was a unique combination of past and present. Atop the plateau he and his traveling partners drove their cars excitedly through the meadows, “our speedometer showed twenty, twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five miles an hour. We could have done fifty the hour if we had liked. We were on the best wild road in the world…A great exhilaration came to us as we swept on up, in and into the high sweet air…We were alone—the world was gone. It is to-day. But we were in the yesterday of our country.”

The plateau’s attraction was the opportunity to relive a moment from an imagined past, a past that let Hough claim the plateau’s history while still offering him the car’s mobility in the same moment. And the automobile was integral to the experience because it allowed an increasing number of people to relive that fantasy of seeing an untouched abundance—apparent in the great deer herd—for the first time.

Although the suggestion of a “President’s Forest” never came to fruition, Hough’s articles demonstrated a yearning in national culture for an historical innocence punctuated by nature’s plenty. The plan found support in Utah, especially with Senator Reed Smoot who proposed it as a bill. The editors of the *Salt Lake Tribune* also backed the idea, but expressed concern that the preservation measure might harm local cattlemen. Tourism was welcome, but not at the exclusion of other development. This desire structured first the human geography of the plateau, and then later its ecology. As early as 1913 the Salt Lake City Commercial Club began investigating the possibility of making the Kaibab Plateau into a national park. The grazing cattle posed a problem, though—they were eating all the scenic wildflowers. If park tourism was against Forest Service policy, then the reverse held true too. Despite the lack of current acceptable bids, the district forester argued against park status for the Kaibab because the plateau had timber that would be useful in the future. When Grand Canyon National Park was finally created in 1919, its borders provided at least a temporary solution to competing land use ideas. The Park Service managed the southern third of the plateau and the Forest Service maintained the northern two-thirds, which included most of the meadows. On one point, though,

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all parties could agree. Roads were of the utmost importance for the development of the Kaibab Plateau.  

Stephen Mather oversaw a great amount of road building and hotel construction during his tenure at the National Park Service. He entered the agency as a successful businessman, and continued with that approach as its influential first director. The Park Service was a welcome developer in many parts of the rural American West in the 1920s. Senator Smoot, for instance, avidly lent Utah’s support for new national parks. The parks formed an industry around offering tourists an attractive image of nature, which the Park Service both advertised protected. The tourists’ dollars went to travel costs like hotels, restaurant meals, gasoline, and train tickets. In its early years, though, the agency had few funds to develop that travel infrastructure. With his business acumen Mather teamed the Park Service with railroad companies who were more than willing to offer capital for access to the tourist’s wallet. Together the agency and the railroads developed several parks, including Grand Canyon National Park. The agreement drew upon a tradition in the American West that combined rail travel with scenic tourism. Throughout the late-nineteenth century, publications like Crofutt’s Trans-Continental Guide had described the region’s scenery and wildlife to early rail passengers eager to see the country. In northern Arizona and southern Utah, the Park Service partnered with Union Pacific to bring twentieth-century travelers to the plateaus and canyons. 

Beginning in 1925, the railroad company advertised the Kaibab Plateau as part of a tour that included Bryce Canyon, Zion, and Grand Canyon National Parks. After leaving their train cars, the tourists stayed in the luxurious Hotel El Escalante in Cedar City, Utah. From there they traveled newly-built roads by luxury coach to the parks. Their drivers acted as guides and also as friendly faces for the tourists who were far from home. College educated, the drivers comfortably reflected the social class of the travelers. That they studied at Utah Agricultural College and other Utah schools also made them different than the tourists in an important way. In promotional literature the Union Pacific declared that, “natives of this country, they can explain it to you as no one else could.” In taking cultural ownership of the landscapes, the guides offered the tourists an ordered and socially unchallenging experience. The parks were regionally different than the tourists’ homes, but the same in class and manner. Thus, travelers could experience places like the Kaibab Plateau as exotic and yet their own. The Union Pacific assured tourists that upon entering each park a “trim, khaki-uniformed Park Ranger stops each bus for a moment, inquires what state each passenger comes from, and passes the party through.” The border formality defined the landscape within as different from its surroundings. Meanwhile


the charade of answering the ranger with their home state provided the tourist access to the interior---thus making it one’s own---while still keeping that place alluringly unique. 182

Like Hough, Mather used the Kaibab deer to advertise the parks. At the 1926 national parks conference in Washington D.C., the director brought a Kaibab fawn named “Chummy” to entertain guests, who included the Congressmen that determined Park Service funding. Mather himself enjoyed the animal so much that he even kept two Kaibab deer at his estate. The Union Pacific also promoted the Kaibab deer as a primary attraction of this intriguing American landscape. In souvenir books they offered pictures of the deer browsing at sunset in green meadows. In brochures the company described the meadows as a “well-kept park” that nature herself kept clean. As for the deer, “no park is complete without its animals, and the Kaibab has them----more than 20,000 deer that roam at peace through what was once a famous hunting ground for the Indians.” Here in the meadows nature provided the order and friendliness introduced by guides and rangers. And within that comfortable picture deer demonstrated that abundance was both natural and found in orderliness. Within the gaze of the tourist, the Kaibab deer became a symbol of a national plenty---innocent and American. 183

Those Americans who could afford transcontinental tours were often the same wealthy families who also moved to the suburbs of eastern cities in the 1920s. There, they cultivated a landscape of tranquility that matched the pastoral in aspiration, if not in agricultural practice. These quiet neighborhoods sat away from the chaotic downtown factories that novelists such as Upton Sinclair described as a new wilderness. Suburbia was their new counterpart, a twentieth-century Eden for the professional class. Despite its cars and pavement, residents intended the nature of this paradise to be similar to that of the nineteenth-century pastoral ideal. Large green lawns bore clear similarities to the lush pastures coveted by frontier settlers. In both instances deer demonstrated life and peace. The poet Henry Morton Robinson articulated this sentiment in a 1929 poem, “Suburban Dawn,” which runs:

Nothing is paler than suburban dawn;
Nothing in mountain forests have I seen
More shyly tranquil than the dappled fawn
Of daybreak, crossing squares of dusty green.
Dawn is a white doe pasturing between
The hedge and house, the sidewalk and the lawn,
Cropping the berried bush of darkness clean,
While all the curtains in the town are drawn.

Over the pavement lean the dreaming trees
With lashes of their drowsy lids turned down;
Brown ivy-sparrows tune their mourning glee.;
The day is trying on her newest gown----
And dons it quickly, hearing on the breeze

By placing an innocent fawn in the softest moment of the neighborhood, Robinson let the reader imagine suburbia as the location of a pure nature—the Eden Americans had sought for generations. When the professional class of the nation’s eastern cities sought a scenic nature in the American West, they had an interpretation of the natural world prepared that matched the image of deer found in Union Pacific brochures.\(^{185}\)

The currents of national culture and local ecology came together in the visitor’s overnight stay. In the 1920s accommodation was available at auto camps, a hotel in DeMotte Park, and the Union Pacific’s Grand Canyon Lodge. The railroad company emphasized the togetherness that guests could enjoy. Around the fireplace, advertisements suggested, new friendships could be formed and plans laid for the next day. The sublime views of the Grand Canyon were naturally a highlight and so were the deer. By then the deer had been increasing for decades due to the complex natural and ecological processes that made the Kaibab Plateau a human landscape. Visitors found that the herd was the focus of some of their fondest memories of their sojourns out west. A Milwaukee resident recalled in 1925 his previous summer’s trip when he traveled through “the depths of the Kaibab Forest with deer leaping before us sometimes in herds of fifty or more.”\(^{186}\) An Omaha man remarked that “the fifty-mile ride through Kaibab, not considering the hundreds of deer feeding along the roadway in the mornings and evenings, was something long to be remembered.” For him the Grand Canyon was “the fitting climax to a wonderful drive.”\(^{187}\) Another tourist declared that the “sight of hundreds, yes thousands, of deer back in the Kaibab makes this part of the trip never to be forgotten.”\(^{188}\) Enthusiasm for interacting with the deer even occasionally became dangerous. The Forest Service had to caution drivers not to race with the animals along the meadow road. For tourists the increase in deer was a pleasurable event to be held in one’s memory as a recollection of adventure, as a moment when they shared in Hough’s “yesterday of our country.” When the deer population irrupted, though, the animals challenged that sacred idea.\(^{189}\)

In the mid-1920s the population soared to the point where the deer did not have enough browse to eat. Aspens and junipers became stripped of foliage as high as a deer could reach. The deer became emaciated and many—likely thousands and perhaps even tens of thousands—died of starvation. No one knows exactly how long the herd had been increasing. Scientific estimates were compromised by the sheer difficulty of the task. The animals could be observed in the meadows, but they were much harder to detect in the forest. Officials were never certain if they counted the same animal twice or if they had seen each animal. While of quantitatively

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\(^{188}\) Ray B. Kurtz quoted in Union Pacific, *They Say*, 17.
\(^{189}\) In its ads the Union Pacific urged potential passengers to “see it from the new Grand Canyon Lodge. At last this thrilling spectacle can be seen in its fullest glory, for the towering North Rim. You can gaze in complete comfort directly into the gorgeous abyss from the broad verandas of beautiful new Grand Canyon Lodge—gathering place of travelers from all the world” see, “Display Ad 50,” *New York Times*, 2 August 1928; Union Pacific, *They Say*; Forest Service, “Kaibab National Forest.”
limited usefulness, estimates point toward clear qualitative results. The Kaibab deer increased dramatically in number since at least the 1906 creation of the Grand Canyon National Game Preserve. The population crest probably occurred in 1924 or 1925 and the lethal decrease lasted into the 1930s. The biological reason for the irruption lies in the cultural and ecological web of the plateau. Precipitation patterns, predator control, livestock removal, and forest structure all played a role. And the deer themselves were actors too. Generation after generation they had evolved responses to their environment that aided their own existence. The irruption was as much an extra summer rainstorm or a dead mountain lion as it was a pregnant doe safely eating a lush aspen. And for that matter, the irruption was a low wool price and the dream of a road, among nearly countless other human influences.  

As part of that web, national culture felt the impact of the irruption. The varied responses among federal agencies, the state of Arizona, the conservation community, and public opinion reflected the two general perspectives people had taken towards deer. In one camp there were those who supported culling the herd to avoid a mass starvation. The others opposed hunting the protected animals. The debate quickly became national when the irruption crested in the mid-1920s. The New York Times ran an article in 1925 entitled “Forest Reserve Becomes Range of Death” that described the situation to a national audience. The cause of this “tragedy,” the author argued, was the extirpation of predators on the plateau. In the minds of Forest Service officials a new predator was needed to augment the lost wolves and mountain lions. As early as 1922, though, the agency was concerned that hunting would do irreparable damage to the Forest Service’s image, especially among any part of the public that did not understand the measure from a scientific viewpoint. As a solution, rangers attempted to trap deer for shipment elsewhere. Many of the animals, though, harmed or even killed themselves trying to escape their cages. Actually capturing the animals in the first place proved difficult too. In the end only a marginal number of deer were saved by this method. As a result, the agency opened hunting seasons in the mid-1920s for the first time since 1906.

Deer hunting on the Kaibab Plateau met the opposition of both the state of Arizona and the National Park Service. As wildlife, the deer were legally the property of the state. The game warden’s office refused to issue permits for hunting on the Kaibab and arrested those individuals who did hunt with permits issued by the Forest Service. Arizona had made a clear decision that the deer herd was more valuable for scenery than for sport. The state game warden himself had boasted that “the immense deer herd of the Kaibab Forest” was “well worth the cost and time of

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the entire trip” from southern Arizona.\footnote{G.M. Willard Scott quoted in Union Pacific, \textit{They Say}, 9.} His support for scenic tourism accompanied the state’s plan to bridge the Colorado River at Lee’s Ferry for auto access between the Strip and the populous southern remainder of the state. The Park Service was also concerned that deer hunting would harm tourism. Mather himself denied that the deer were even in any serious danger. Throughout the irruption, the agency continued its policy of banning hunting within its borders. While the Park Service and Arizona shared the same outlook, the contrasting viewpoints between the state and the Forest Service became a Supreme Court matter. In Hunt vs. United States, the judges ruled that the Forest Service could issue hunting permits for use within the boundaries of the game preserve. The 1928 decision proved more significant as a precedent than as a real solution to the irruption. By the latter part of the decade, the deer population was already far along its downward trajectory.\footnote{Hunt vs. United States, 278 U.S. 96 (1928); “Governor Hunt of Arizona and Party Tour Strip,” \textit{Washington County News}, 11 October 1923; A.H. Ulm, “Grand Canyon’s Bold Cliffs to be Bridged by Man,” \textit{New York Times}, 27 December 1925; A. R. Hromatha, “A Bridge Rises High Over the Mighty Colorado,” \textit{New York Times}, 15 July 1928; Governors of California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah invited to official opening, see “Arizona is Prospering,” \textit{New York Times} 2 June 1929. The completion of a mule and hiking trail through the Grand Canyon from its South Rim to its North Rim on the Kaibab Plateau provided an adventurous connection between tourist operations and the Kaibab deer, see “New Kaibab Trail,” \textit{New York Times}, 1 February 1925.}

The contrasting responses to the irruption obscure their binding similarity---the Kaibab deer were powerful symbols of abundance to everyone. A desire to keep that meaning intact was at the heart of each reaction. For the tourism industry and its political support, a real abundance came from the deer’s image. To reach the plateau for an exhilarating ride through the meadows, or for a quiet evening watching the deer, meant spending money. For the industry this was the true wealth of the deer. Euro-American hunters found nature’s plenty by re-enacting the frontier scene of harvesting free resources offered by a virgin land. Whether a particular hunter supported game restrictions for breeding or was the first to grab a permit during the irruption, hunters took the body of a deer as a harvest. Hunters could be local cattlemen or urban sport hunters. Both parties cooperated with the Forest Service whose scientific management was directed at ensuring a continual abundance of both timber and game. Above all else, people needed the deer because they represented their relationship to the landscape.
For decades afterwards, the tragedy of the irruption was a lesson in game management. The profession was young in the 1920s; the Kaibab deer represented its first big mistake. As an innovator in game management, Aldo Leopold articulated the Kaibab lesson most clearly. During the 1930s and 1940s he used his various positions as a writer, Forest Service administrator, and university professor to argue for the inclusion of predators in ecosystems. Written near the end of his career, his essay “Thinking Like a Mountain” recalled a wolf hunt many years before and related the ecological need for the predator. “We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes---something only known to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters’ paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.”

The essay (especially this often-quoted excerpt) became a primary work in the canon of twentieth-century environmental literature.

While Leopold drew upon America’s affinity for deer to demonstrate the emerging principles of ecology, others also continued to use the deer’s image in much the same way early twentieth century promoters of the Kaibab Plateau had used it. In 1928 Felix Salten published the English-language version of Bambi, or a Life in the Woods. The work set peaceful nature against the violence of men. In the story Bambi enjoys an idyllic life full of youthful discovery. Browsing for the first time in a meadow, for instance, the fawn learns that butterflies are not flying flowers, but animals like him. The climax of the story arrives when his mother is shot by hunters. For ever after, the young deer had to negotiate life on his own. The tale was popular enough to become Walt Disney’s classic animated movie, Bambi, in 1942. The film and book entertained a public enchanted with pristine nature.

But deer have never been untouched by humans. They have always shared a past with people. Whether through landscape transformations or hunting, deer and people have been inseparable in North America. Perhaps this nostalgia for a mythic past is also just as old. The literary critic Raymond Williams argues in his Country and the City that for centuries English writers have imagined a past that was both simpler and more meaningful than the present. They have used the countryside as the stage for these stories. There nature conforms to the peace and tranquility that urban readers desire. Williams notes, though, that such a landscape has never seemed to exist---except in the imaginations of writers and readers. Critics of American literature have arrived at a similar conclusion. In discussing nineteenth and early twentieth century novels, Leo Marx finds that technology has always been a part of the American relationship with nature. In The Machine in the Garden, he demonstrates that writers on this side of the Atlantic have cultivated nostalgia for a mythic past devoid of industrial impulse in much the same way that Williams argues that English writers have imagined a similar history. Marx

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194 Leopold, A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There, 129-133.
describes American pastoralism as a fantasy “generated by an urge to withdraw from civilization’s growing power and complexity.”

Story, as Marx and Williams disclose, can meander away from the course of events that form the past. For game managers, the lesson of the Kaibab was that their story of nature had been too far from the truth to effectively guide policy. The tale of vanishing wildlife that experts such as William T. Hornaday supported was too simplistic to account for ecology’s complex interrelationships. While many species were heading towards extinction, protection was vastly more complicated than naturalists had hoped. The plateau deer needed predators even if American culture deemed them antithetical to the Edenic dream. The notion of a nature without the violence of predators bore resemblance to the falsely tranquil picture of nature that Marx found in the works of novelists like Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, and James Fenimore Cooper. The irruption was, in significant part, the application of the cultural myth of pristine nature to the Kaibab Plateau. Extermination of predators helped increase the deer population. The fantasy of virgin nature impeded the processes of plateau ecology because it did not accurately represent that system. Leopold’s insight that prey needed predators was a correction to the cultural narrative of pristine nature. “Thinking Like a Mountain” took its readers to a more complicated nature—-one closer to the real thing.

Leopold’s writing was among the most influential in environmental thought of the twentieth century. He was able to guide game management and other land use disciplines towards the growing field of ecology. The field studies the interrelationships of a place to build new understandings of nature. Essentially, this science is fuel for new narratives about the natural environment. While emphasizing all parts of an ecosystem, the field still needed to utilize a less comprehensive language of nature to win public approval in its early stages. As a symbol of desirable nature, deer proved valuable to the discipline. The image of deer helped make predators valuable and the idea of a working ecosystem possible. Leopold made it clear that wolves and mountain lions kept deer populations stable and prevented starvation of the peaceful creatures. Only in a well-working system could deer be truly cared for. Although mitigated by other interests (such as bureaucracy and private business) ecological management held wide approval for several decades after the irruption.

The Kaibab lesson restored the American relationship with nature after the crisis threatened the wisdom of its foundational commitment to virgin land. The holistic principles of ecology became the scientific basis of the environmental movement. In the latter part of the twentieth century, though, the accuracy of the lesson quietly came under critique. Analyzing populations of Himalayan thar in New Zealand, the ecologist Graeme Caughley found that predators alone do not determine the herd population of their prey. In 1970 he argued that other factors, including climate and food availability, were more important than ecologists previously suspected. Caughley investigated the Kaibab incident as well, and found that predator removal was just one of the many factors that caused the irruption. At the same time, another ecologist examining population dynamics also disagreed with the Kaibab lesson. Daniel Botkin found that numbers of moose on Michigan’s Isle Royale fluctuated constantly and did not seem ever to become stable. In Discordant Harmonies, Botkin argued that understanding nature as a system—-especially one as precise as a machine---is too simplistic to truly represent the natural environment.

197 Marx, The Machine in the Garden, 9; Williams, The Country and the City.
Nature’s haphazard course may not form a clean theory, but it does form place. Events influence subsequent events and pile upon each other in the same location. At the Kaibab Plateau, variations in snow, fire, hunting, grazing and other factors combined eventually to increase the deer herd. The plateau was never static and was instead a scene of successive changes. As an event, the irruption was the plateau. If the working of a system is difficult or impossible to discern, many relationships are still observable. They have been available to all the diverse groups that have claimed the Kaibab Plateau as theirs. In games Southern Paiute children played the roles of wolf and deer to demonstrate the interaction between those two animals. Origin stories and other narratives articulate many of the other relationships that have been important to them. And the Mormon settlers, the federal government, and tourists also have each had their stories. Each represents a different relationship with the plateau. What they represent---how they fit the Kaibab Plateau---guides the way nature and culture enter the same channel. As the irruption demonstrates, choosing that story is itself an interaction with nature.
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