A HISTORY OF *Grand County*



Richard A. Firmage

UTAH CENTENNIAL COUNTY HISTORY SERIES

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Richard A. Firmage

Grand County, Utah, contains some of the earth's most spectacular and celebrated landforms. It attracts visitors from throughout the world and has been home to human inhabitants for at least 10,000 years. This volume traces the history of human habitation of Grand County, following those who have tried to make a home in the beautiful but often harsh terrain. Beginning with the earliest Native Americans, it continues through the Spanish exploration and later trapper eras to the ill-fated Elk Mountain Mission of the early Mormons in Utah.

Renewed settlement efforts in the late 1870s are traced, and though many early communities soon were abandoned, the growth of Moab is chronicled, including the incredible growth years of the uranium mining boom of the 1950s and 1960s, the subsequent economic depression of the area, and the more recent rise of tourism and recreational use and the attendent controversy over public land use and management which has put Grand County at the heart of the current national debate about the future and direction of the American West.

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1996
Utah State Historical Society
Grand County

Frontispiece photo: Delicate Arch, Arches National Park

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Dedicated to
M., M., and M,
. . . and D.

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General Introduction

When Utah was granted statehood on 4 January 1896, twenty-seven counties comprised the nation's new forty-fifth state. Subsequently two counties, Duchesne in 1914 and Daggett in 1917, were created. These twenty-nine counties have been the stage on which much of the history of Utah has been played.

Recognizing the importance of Utah's counties, the Utah State Legislature established in 1991 a Centennial History Project to write and publish county histories as part of Utah's statehood centennial commemoration. The Division of State History was given the assignment to administer the project. The county commissioners, or their designees were responsible for selecting the author or authors for their individual histories, and funds were provided by the state legislature to cover most research and writing costs as well as to provide each public school and library with a copy of each history. Writers worked under general guidelines provided by the Division of State History and in cooperation with county history committees. The counties also established a Utah Centennial County History Council

to help develop policies for distribution of state-appropriated funds and plans for publication.

Each volume in the series reflects the scholarship and interpretation of the individual author. The general guidelines provided by the Utah State Legislature included coverage of five broad themes encompassing the economic, religious, educational, social, and political history of the county. Authors were encouraged to cover a vast period of time stretching from geologic and prehistoric times to the present. Since Utah's statehood centennial celebration falls just four years before the arrival of the twenty-first century, authors were encouraged to give particular attention to the history of their respective counties during the twentieth century.

Still, each history is at best a brief synopsis of what has transpired within the political boundaries of each county. No history can do justice to every theme or event or individual that is part of an area's past. Readers are asked to consider these volumes as an introduction to the history of the county, for it is expected that other researchers and writers will extend beyond the limits of time, space, and detail imposed on this volume to add to the wealth of knowledge about the county and its people. In understanding the history of our counties, we come to understand better the history of our state, our nation, our world, and ourselves.

In addition to the authors, local history committee members, and county commissioners, who deserve praise for their outstanding efforts and important contributions, special recognition is given to Joseph Francis of Morgan County for his role in conceiving the idea of the centennial county history project and for his energetic efforts in working with the Utah State Legislature and State of Utah officials to make the project a reality. Mr. Francis is proof that one person does make a difference.

ALLAN KENT POWELL
CRAIG FULLER
GENERAL EDITORS

Introduction

Preparations began a number of years ago for the celebration of the centennial of Utah statehood—a celebration that will take numerous forms before the state settles into its second hundred years. One of the first decisions was the selection from among the state's many wonders of a remarkable rock structure whose image would adorn the special commemorative automobile license plate. I refer of course to Delicate Arch, which is found in Arches National Park, which in turn is located in Grand County—which is the subject of this book.

Among other projects honoring the state at its one hundredth birthday is the one of which the present volume is a part: the publication of histories of all twenty-nine Utah counties. The Utah legislature has seen fit to provide funds for the writing and publishing of these volumes, and its members should be commended for their foresight. Although in one sense we never escape our history—those who do not know it being condemned to repeat its mistakes, the old saying goes—history is in another sense a fragile thing, most easily lost or distorted. Among the things for which future generations will

most thank those of the present are reliable accounts and summaries of how we lived and what has transpired—just as we value such accounts from the past. Such information can easily be lost beyond recapture and recall; thus, our histories will likely be treasured more by many in the future than our freeways or other examples of our life today.

Grand County, with an area of 3,692 square miles, is the ninth largest of Utah's counties. Its population of 6,620 (1990 census) ranked it twentieth in population, as it was also according to the 1980 census, although its population then was listed as 8,241. The county thus experienced a loss of 1,621 people—almost 20 percent of its population—during the 1980s as a downturn in the mining and oil industries hit the county hard. Thus far in the 1990s, however, Moab, the county seat and major population center, has experienced renewed expansion, and even greater growth is occurring nearby in the unincorporated area of Moab/Spanish Valley. In fact, more than 90 percent of Grand County's human residents live within a dozen miles of the center of Moab—a fact which makes Grand County an *urban* county in actuality, even though the average population density is barely two people per square mile.

This is not to say that there are not people in other parts of the county, only that not many people *inhabit* those regions. There are, in fact, at any given time thousands of visitors and tourists in the county congregating in a few well-known spots, with perhaps a few hundred others tramping lesser-traveled roads, trails, paths, and pathless areas. On some weekends visitors may well outnumber county residents by a ratio of more than three to one, as Grand County at the time of this writing experiences a boom in tourism and visitation. There are those who claim that areas of Grand County are among the most wonderful places on earth (I am among them), and that given a chance they would prefer to live there. Those "chances" must be rare, county residents remain few; but the opportunities for visitation seem to be abundant, causing a mixture of consternation and delight among area residents as the land that people love is in some ways being loved to death. Grand County currently is certainly a place of controversy that evokes powerful emotions in residents and visitors alike.

Grand County has always been an easier place to visit than to wrest a living from; those who have managed to stay have always been relatively few—from before the coming of Euro-Americans to their arrival and subsequent domination of the political, social, and economic landscape. The story of human interaction with the land is the focus of this study, which yet wants to emphasize that the land itself is the true stage for any human action upon it. Grand County is a very real patch of land, but its boundaries are mostly abstract, artificial creations of human beings. They are lines on a map, invisible lines on the land, that separate areas and people that might normally be part of the same story. Much that pertains to the county, or that has influenced or been associated with the county, extends beyond these abstract and artificial lines. Topography, physical features, geologic and historical eras, as well as many of the actions of various peoples pay no heed to county lines.

This study does attempt to pay attention to county boundaries, however, especially since it is meant to be one of a series of county histories being written concurrently. There are some instances when it has been necessary to paint a broader picture, including information that might more strictly belong to another county's story. These instances will be few, however; and it is hoped that this method also will excuse the lack of information about areas such as Green River and La Sal that many normally associate with Grand County. So too, for example, Canyonlands National Park will be little discussed, though much pertaining to the park centers in Grand County. Lines must be drawn somewhere; once drawn, they help provide necessary definition and focus. It can get awkward, if one becomes too mired in minutia. Thus, if you drive to Dead Horse Point State Park, you will enjoy Grand County scenery along the way and in most of the park. The actual vista point, however, is in San Juan County. Still, it is all one land to be celebrated. It may be helpful to remember that.

It was a good choice, that selection of Delicate Arch to represent the state on the centennial license plate—the arch is certainly a landform worthy of celebration and thus a fitting symbol for another type of celebration. The famous writer, passionate lover of wilderness, and onetime resident of Grand County Edward Abbey wrote in *Desert*

Solitaire that Delicate Arch can mean different things to different people.

> There are several ways of looking at Delicate Arch. Depending on your preconceptions you may see the eroded remnant of a sandstone fin, a giant engagement ring cemented in rock, a bow-legged pair of petrified cowboy chaps, a triumphal arch for a procession of angels, an illogical geologic freak, a happening—a something that happened and will never happen quite that way again, a frame more significant than its picture, a simple monolith eaten away by weather and time and soon to disintegrate into a chaos of falling rock. . . . Suit yourself. You may see a symbol, a sign, a fact, a thing without meaning or a meaning which includes all things.

Delicate Arch can be seen as an image well representing the land itself—land that is remarkable for its unusual beauty, but land that is also fragile; land that does not easily lend itself to human purposes unless those purposes are to admire and care for what has been given. There are also several ways at looking at history or telling a story. What you are gazing upon now is one of them. The reader no doubt will discover that this writer has a somewhat expanded concept of history: I hold that it is much more than the tale of human habitation on the land; it is the story of the land itself, and at least an accounting (and to me a celebration) of those other creations—plant, animal, and inanimate—that have also shared and formed the land, currently or in the past.

Images and symbols can only extend so far, however. This is also the history of the people who have dwelt upon and passed through this land in the southeastern section of Utah. I have endeavored in these pages to accurately and fairly tell their story. To tell the story, I have been indebted to many people. I am especially indebted to Kent Powell and also to Craig Fuller of the Utah State Historical Society. Kent encouraged me to undertake the project, and both men were most willing to read and comment upon the various chapters, assisting me as they were able. Others at the historical society were also helpful in many ways throughout the course of the project, particularly in helping me find my way amid the extensive archival holdings.

Readers of the manuscript, including Jay Haymond and Roy Webb, made many helpful suggestions while spotting errors of fact or expression. Special thanks are extended to Gary Bergera for his fine copy-editing of the work; it is always humbling for an editor to see his or her own work edited. In this case, certainly, the work is a better one for the editing.

Many people in Grand County deserve a special word of thanks. First and foremost, Bruce Louthan has been of tremendous assistance, always willingly doing what he could to facilitate the project. Other members of the Grand County Centennial History Committee and interested others are also thanked for their help and for the encouragement they provided; they include Lloyd Pierson, Bette Stanton, Bette Wimmer, Jean Akens, Vickie Barker, Paul Menard, Noel Poe, and Adrian and Sam Taylor. All were helpful, and I'm certain that most would have loved to provide much more assistance than I asked for. Unfortunately, much of the wealth of detailed information that these and other folks possess could not be included in what had to become of necessity a limited and general history. Hopefully, they will have other occasions to make their knowledge better known. Sam Taylor is a veritable treasure trove of information (and opinion), and I enjoyed the time he willingly shared with me. His kindness and graciousness, shown towards one who has not always been on the same side of every issue, were heartwarming; his assistance was most welcome. His attitude—his recognition that there are many folks who love the land in many ways—helps provide hope that the people of Grand County will find good ways to live together on the land they love. Thanks, Sam.

A number of Moab City and Grand County officials also answered my queries; Vauna Randall of the County Recorder's Office merits a special thank you for the help she and her fellow workers generously offered me. Similarly, the good folks at the library and the Dan O'Laurie Museum in Moab were always pleasant and gracious; Jean McDowell was extremely kind and generous with her time and information. Others in federal agencies and various organizations generously offered their time and assistance. Old friends in the area made me feel welcome while assisting me as they were able. Thanks especially to Steve and Vicki Mulligan, Clarke Cartwright Abbey,

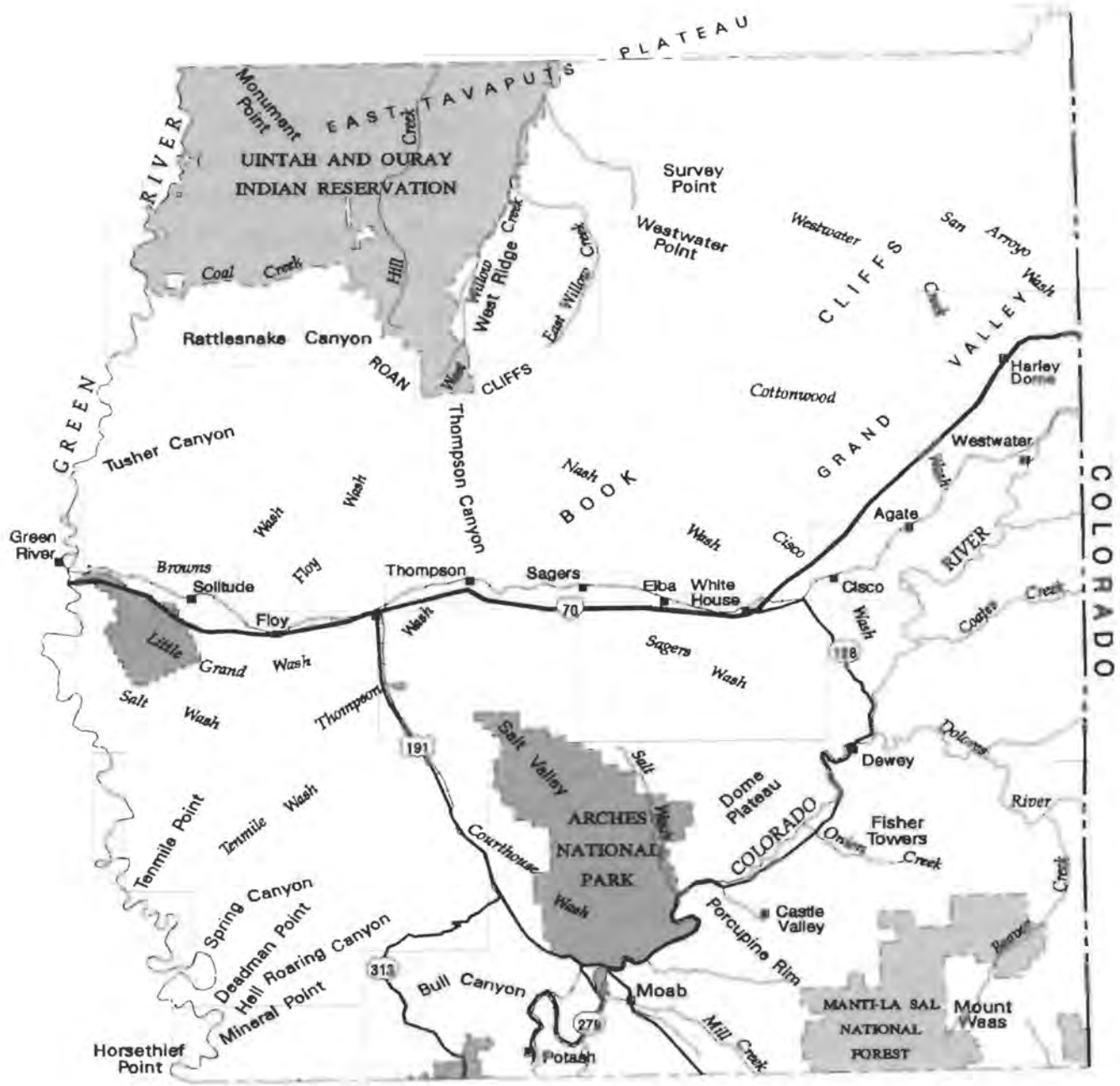
Diane Fouts, and Joe Knighton. There are many others who kindly assisted me or shared information or opinions. Thank you all. As I suppose is often the case, there were a few whose promise of assistance never materialized, and I encountered one woman whose only answer to my queries was a bevy of expletives interspersed amid muttering about outsiders asking questions. I'll remember her, but my fondest and much more frequent memories will be of those like Bev Shaw at the Silver Grill Cafe in Thompson and of many of the members of the Lange family at Crescent who willingly shared their recollections and knowledge with me. To all those named and unnamed here, I offer my gratitude for your kindness and help.

As an "outsider" to the area, I found such assistance more than usually valuable in helping acquaint me with people, locations, and events unknown to me but commonly known by local residents of the county. The kindness and patience of those I encountered have been greatly appreciated, and I hope that those virtues will also color the response to this book by these folks and the other residents of the county. I am certain that the book will differ from some expectations for it, and for this I offer no apology—I have tried to be accurate and fair—although I do hope that no one will feel unduly slighted by my method. The task of researching and writing a full-length historical study in one year is daunting. Also, due to the limited resources available for the project, even that one year could not be completely devoted to the task if I were to be able to keep a roof over my head and bread on the table. As a result, realizing that it would be impossible to gain an intimate knowledge of the area in the time available, I determined to try to turn this disadvantage into some sort of advantage. Rather than try to name all relevant names, and thus face the great probability of leaving many important figures out, I determined to name as few names as possible, concentrating instead on the basic pattern or sweep of events. I was greatly aided in this by those books that have been written about the general area, most especially *Look to the Mountains* by Charles Peterson, *The Far Country* by Faun McConkie Tanner, and *Grand Memories* by the Grand County Camp of Daughters of Utah Pioneers. I encourage all readers to consult these works for more detailed information about many of the subjects treated in this book. *Canyon Legacy*, the journal of the

Southeastern Utah Society of Arts and Sciences, has also proven to be of great value to me in my research, as the reader will have many opportunities to notice.

By about the time this book is published, Moab and Grand County will have had the distinction of having had a continuous weekly newspaper for more than a century—the *Grand Valley Times/Times-Independent.* The newspaper was a resource I determined to make the most of, reading (or at least scanning in some detail) every extant issue of the paper. In fact, in some respects and for certain periods, this present book could almost be termed a history of Grand County as recorded in the pages of the local newspaper. This method of writing through the newspaper's eyes allowed me both to personalize and add detail to these pages while including a contemporary point-of-view and chronological timeframe to the work. Though the book thus becomes somewhat dependent upon the original accuracy and completeness of newspaper accounts—a somewhat shaky foundation for exhaustive historical accounts—this work is not, nor does it pretend to be, exhaustive. I have, however, supplemented newspaper accounts with extensive research in government archives and the reading of many books and articles by scholars who have studied in detail topics that relate in some way to Grand County. I must, of course, take responsibility for errors in the book. I hope they are not too numerous, that they be more of omission than commission, and that I be forgiven by any I have unintentionally or unfairly slighted.

I hope that this book may help provide a reliable foundation for future detailed studies that will develop or expand upon themes, individuals, or events only mentioned in passing or briefly treated here. I hope that it also may spur the recollection, recording, and preservation of individual accounts to help future historians piece together the fascinating historical puzzle. If that does happen, I believe that the legislature's hope and intention will be better realized, as the people of Grand County will be motivated to preserve accounts and relics of their heritage that the past may remain vital and a rich source of satisfaction and learning to those of the always changing present. It is, after all, a *grand* county.





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GRAND COUNTY

1

Geography and Geologic History

Grand County is a political section of the state of Utah; one of twenty-nine counties within the state. It has an area of 3,692 square miles—slightly over 4 percent of the state's total area—and it lies in the southeast portion of the state. Its boundaries are for the most part arbitrary—only to the west where the county line is designated as the center of the channel of the Green River do the county's boundaries follow a natural geographical feature (although even here the present boundary is not where most would expect). All the other county boundary lines (with the small exception near the northeast corner) are abstract designations. The county is bounded on the north by Uintah County, on the west by Emery County, on the south by San Juan County, and on the east by the state of Colorado.

In a larger sense, the county is a section of the planet Earth occupying a portion of the Colorado Plateau geographical province, one of thirty-four such provinces making up the continent of North America. The Colorado Plateau covers some 130,000 square miles of southeastern Utah, southwestern Colorado, northwestern New Mexico, and northern Arizona. It is characterized by large expanses of

arid, largely rocky land carved by great river-cut canyons. Grand County is in the heart of the plateau. It is remarkable land, noted throughout the world for its spectacular beauty. And, though another of the basic four ancient elements (earth, air, fire, water) is seemingly most notable by its comparative absence, it is water that has been most important to the oldest history—the geologic history—of the county.

Water! The word punctuated with an exclamation point may seem fitting to anyone who has visited Grand County in the often blistering heat of summer. Water would be the cry of anyone long on the land. It is most notable for its lack, or perhaps for its inaccessibility if one were stranded on some such cliff promontory as Dead Horse Point looking at the liquid coursing far below. But water is not just life giving—if any one thing can be said to have most shaped the land of Grand County, it is water.

Seas have periodically washed and bathed the area for hundreds of millions of years, often submerging the land while depositing marine sediments upon it, or preparing a bed for other sediments washed down or blown in from the lands above. The leveling action of the seas has created the multilayered oceans of rock of the great plateau area.

And then there are the rivers—relentlessing carving the land, revealing as much as two billion years of the earth's history through the exposed rocks of the county's spectacular canyons. This stratigraphic record has shown that the history of the general region—the Colorado Plateau—has been remarkably stable and unified as a geologic province, in contrast to much of the earth, which has been torn and disrupted by various mountain-building or continental plate disruptions. This is not to say that the area has always looked as it does now. Quite the contrary, in fact: the spectacular land forms we celebrate and marvel at today are actually very recent in geologic time—less than 10 million years old.

The land is also the foundation of the life and economy of most of the county's residents. Through its spectacular beauty which has attracted millions of visitors from throughout the world to its untallied but vast mineral wealth, Grand County's land has provided countless dreams for its human inhabitants, has filled the material dreams of a few, and has at least provided the basic means for others

to remain on the land to continue to dream their dreams or to dwell amid the land's spectacular beauty.

The oldest land exposed in Grand County would probably only be considered spectacular in a few people's aesthetic judgment, but it is definitely ancient—some 1.8 to 1.4 billion years old, according to geologists. It is a highland area encompassing Westwater Canyon and nearby southern highlands in the east-central portion of the state. It is a portion of a larger area called the Uncompahgre Uplift (or Plateau) by geologists and mapmakers.[1] The ancient rock is called metamorphic rock—a mix of gneisses, shists, and quartzites—which was formed deep within the earth under intense heat and pressure billions of years ago. The rock was transposed from its original constituent elements by great subterranean pressures, and it contains various mineral elements, including tungsten, barite, and fluorspar. This great uplift has been periodically uplifted and depressed during the ensuing millennia; what remains is a remnant of its last great period of uplift that has been exposed by erosion.

Metamorphic rocks come from the Precambrian era—that most early and undifferentiated of geologic time periods, some four billion to 570 million years ago. Metamorphic rock is also exposed in the Grand Canyon and forms the bedrock of the entire Colorado Plateau country. These rocks were subsequently covered by sedimentary rock and other deposits, some of which were likely eroded, leaving no trace today (a situation in the rock record that geologists call an "unconformity.") Other sedimentary rock deposited during the next billion or so years of the Precambrian era did remain; in fact, in some places it is several thousand feet thick.

Some 1.5 billion years ago, the plateau bedrock experienced a number of faults or fractures: some oriented in a northwesterly direction, others northeasterly. They were wrench faults—lateral (sideways) movements along breaks in the rock—and these deep fractures have subsequently greatly affected the Colorado Plateau country as it developed through eons of time. These faults are thought to have been caused by the movement of continental plates, movement which compressed the plateau from the north and south (somewhat as though it were in a great vise). The northwest-trending faults underlie the present-day salt valleys of the area, including Moab,

Castle, and Salt valleys in Grand County. The Colorado River flows generally along the line of a major notheast-trending fault through Grand County from Grand Junction, Colorado, to the eastern edge of Arizona's Grand Canyon.

Later in Precambrian time, block faulting also occurred: breaks in the rock where land masses move vertically in relation to each other along a fracture, or fault, line. This is the more dreaded type of faulting, familiar to Utahns living near the Wasatch Fault or other fault systems. Precambrian block faulting near the Grand Canyon area tilted the land northward and helped create the rock folding of the Uinta Mountain system north of Grand County.

The Cambrian period began about 570 million years ago. It was the beginning period of the larger block of geologic time known as the Paleozoic ("old life") era, in which lifeforms began to flourish in the world's oceans. The oceans themselves generally began to rise in relation to the land. Water began to extend eastward from the Pacific, and much of Utah was submerged. Seas covered Grand County. Deeper, quieter water covered the earlier beaches, and sediments were deposited in the form of mud filled with the shells of sea animals. This limey mud covered the earlier beach sand and has been called by geologists Ophir Shale. By the end of the Cambrian period some 500 million years ago, seas retreated and beach sand and tidal flat mud (called by Utah geologists the Ignacio Formation) had been deposited to depths of from 500 to 900 feet in eastern Utah. The Colorado Plateau area was then subjected to great underground pressures and elevated in relation to the sea; part of it existed for some 100 million years as a shallow marine continental shelf; other even higher areas were exposed above the sea and subsequently eroded.

Some 400 million years ago ocean levels again began to rise. The pattern was set: for the next 350 million years the land would be periodically covered by the ocean, or would rise (or the seas subside) to become a sandy beach area, or a swamp, or a dry plain, which would then in turn be covered by sediments and sand eroded from ancient highlands and mountain ranges.[2] Broadly speaking, limestones and shales were deposited during periods when the land was relatively deeply submerged; sandstones were the result of shallow beaches or times when the land was raised and received wind- or stream-borne

sand deposits from higher landforms undergoing erosion, such as from the ancestral Rocky Mountains or the great ancestral range to the west near the present Utah–Nevada border. Less homogenous rock formations occur as a result of more mixed conditions or changing conditions that did not allow great beds of only one type of sediment to form or be deposited. Coal, oil, and natural gas deposits stem from periods when the land supported lush forests and swamps, teeming with life.

At the beginning of the Pennsylvanian period some 320 million years ago, important developments began. Seas were advancing and it also was a time of great earthquakes and earth building, caused, according to some scientists, by the crashing of the great subterranean South American continental plate into the North American plate. Whatever the cause, great changes in the land were a result. This was the time when the ancestral Rocky Mountains (among other great mountain ranges) were formed through great block-faulting activity near or at the earth's surface.

The Uncompahgre Uplift became a large mountain range that was part of the ancestral Rocky Mountains. The mountains rose rapidly by geologic standards—some 12,000–15,000 feet in only a few million years. After forming, the mountains began to erode into the nearby low-lying areas and basins. There was a great amount of iron in these rocks that oxidized to a red color—a general range of color that characterizes many of the rocks of the Colorado Plateau today. (Other colors in the sedimentary rocks are caused by deposits of copper, manganese, and other minerals.) In time these great mountain ranges were eroded back to the metamorphic bedrock, which itself was also greatly eroded before being covered again by sediments (known to geologists as the Chinle Formation) of the Triassic period some 220 million years ago. However, we are getting a bit ahead of ourselves—by some 100 million years.

One of the larger basins associated with the ancestral Rocky Mountains was the Paradox Basin at the base of the Uncompahgre Uplift in southeastern Utah and southwestern Colorado. It was a northwest-oriented seaway some 200 miles long and 80 miles wide, extending from near Green River, Utah, to Shiprock, New Mexico. It was deeper on its east than on the west side, and it may have been

20,000 feet deep at its deepest part. There are many faults beneath this basin in the bedrock and other layers. The eastern portion of the basin generally filled with sediment from nearby mountains. The western part was invaded by the ocean during Pennsylvanian time (320–285 million years ago). Salt settled out of the generally shallow and stagnant seas that were isolated from the main ocean by land masses to the south and west. The periodic evaporation of these shallow seas allowed several thousand feet of salt to accumulate in the basin. Utah was actually closer to the equator at this time in the planet's history—the North American continent had not progressed to its present latitude—and the higher temperatures of the region facilitated the periodic evaporation of the shallow seas, creating the salt deposition. Interlayered with the salt are deposits of organic shales containing oil and natural gas reservoirs, potassium salts, and other minerals. The geologic pattern is complex: some twenty-nine cycles of deposition are thought to have occurred, averaging about 100,000 years each.

Salt is a surprisingly plastic material, flowing somewhat like putty or caulk when under pressure—which is just what the salt of the Paradox Basin experienced when sediments from the Uncompahgre Uplift to the east were deposited on top of it. The salt flowed away from the burden until it encountered one of the major solid underground fault blocks of the basin, at which point it was deflected upward, creating a bulge, or anticline, as it pushed up, or sometimes even through, the sediments overhead. The salt on the flanks of the anticline was eroded as it migrated to the lower basins and valleys through which streams of water flowed, dissolving the upper reaches of the salt. The underground salt continued to flow for some 150 million years—until the end of the Jurassic period some 145 million years ago—and according to the obstacles encountered under the surface, there was a great disparity in the amount of salt various areas contained; in some places it is several thousand feet thick.

While the salt anticlines were formed during the early Pennsylvanian period (320–285 million years ago), the salt basins gradually retreated to the northwest because of the pressure of newly deposited sediments from the east; and by mid-Pennsylvanian time deeper seas deposited limestones that alternated with retreating seas

depositing sands along the beaches. Additional sand eroded from the mountainous areas to the east.

We have now reached the time—the Permian period (285–245 million years ago)—when many of the red rocks associated with the canyon country began to be formed. There was a tremendous amount of erosion from the highlands above. Sea levels fluctuated greatly during this period, creating shorelines and sand dunes, while more sands, rich in iron, washed down from the Uncompahgre highlands to the east. There were complex variations in the general pattern which add to the variety of the record of the rocks. For example, white sand is found cross-bedded against red in many places, revealing the shifting, wind-borne character of many of the deposits as well as revealing that they eroded from different areas. White Rim Sandstone, most noticeable today in areas of Canyonlands National Park, was laid down during this period.

In the Triassic period (245–210 million years ago) the area that we now know as Grand County generally subsided to a marshy, tidal area that later was buried by deposits washed down from the higher areas to the east—the Chinle Formation, as we have seen. Later in the period there was also a general elevation of parts of the land as well. Great amounts of sand were deposited and blown into the area during the late Triassic and the Jurassic periods (210–145 million years ago). Great sand dunes covered the area—sand that as it in turn became compressed and buried by later sedimentation was transformed and chemically cemented into the great sandstone and other rock formations for which the plateau country is most noted. These began with the great red cliffs of Wingate Sandstone, notable as one travels down Moab Canyon between Crescent Junction and Moab, through the less structural Kayenta Formation to the great lighter-colored cliffs and rock outcroppings of tough Navajo Sandstone, seen in some of the great river canyons as well as in Capitol Reef and Zion national parks. It was a time of major uplifts of land in the west, which became a major source of the sediments.[3]

Above the Navajo Sandstone is a rock mixture geologists call the Carmel Formation, a siltstone or mudstone that is also known in Arches National Park as the Dewey Bridge Member (or subdivision) of the Entrada Sandstone. Above that is the Entrada Sandstone

proper (or, as it has been more recently designated, the Slickrock Member of the Entrada). This is the beautiful red sandstone that forms many of the cliffs, fins, monuments, and most of the arches in Arches National Park. It is a sandstone that is hard enough to maintain a structure, yet so composed that it also weathers and decomposes to form arches, hoodoos, and other rock formations that have intrigued and delighted observers since they were first discovered. The unique circumstance of erosional processes having exposed the Entrada Sandstone at this period in the earth's history, coupled with the rock having been fractured by the underlying salt anticlines beneath the park, has made the Arches National Park area of Grand County the place with the greatest concentration of natural arches in the world. More than 2,000 arches have been discovered within the park alone, and there are dozens if not hundreds of others throughout the general region.[4]

The Morrison Formation, littered with the bones of Jurassic period dinosaurs, lies above the Entrada Sandstone. This is the rock that contains most uranium deposits and, where visible, is often marked with the scars of bulldozers and other heavy equipment from mining investigations and operations. Quarries west and north of Grand County—the Cleveland-Lloyd Quarry in Carbon County and Dinosaur National Monument in Uintah County near Vernal—have produced some of the best examples of the ancient beasts' remains in the world, and other remains are found in the formation within Grand County itself. Copper deposits in the Morrison have helped create the beautiful and intriguing blue-green rock found in Arches and other areas of the county. The Morrison Formation represents a complex series of deposition. The period was one of floodplains and lakes—a freshwater environment where the great beasts held sway.

The Cretaceous period followed the Jurassic, and during this period (145–65 million years ago) seas again invaded the area and great thicknesses of marine deposits buried the salt anticlines. A deep ocean covered much of the central and western parts of the continent from the Gulf of Mexico towards Alaska, including the Colorado Plateau. Sharks, oysters, and shellfish inhabited the oceans, their fossilized remains found in the great depths of mud that were deposited to become Mancos Shale, visible in much of northern Grand County,

particularly in and near the Book Cliffs region, where it is more than 3,500 feet thick in places.

Rather late in the Cretaceous period, the seas retreated enough under the pressure of fluvial deposits from the west to create zones of lush swamp forests in low-lying areas. This vegetation was later transformed into coal deposits as it decayed and was subsequently buried by later deposits. Above the Mancos Shale is a more sandy rock formation, deposited when sea levels were again fluctuating and much of the county was a marginal shoreline area. Oil and natural gas deposits have been found in these strata. The seas left the area some 80 million years ago and have not returned. For the last fifteen million years of the Cretaceous period, streams from the west deposited sedimentation, burying the marine deposits. The Mesozoic ("Middle Life") era came to an end after some 150 million years with the closing of the Cretaceous period.

The time in which we live, the Cenozoic era, began with what geologists call the Tertiary period, from 65 to 1.5 million years ago. This also was a time of great geologic activity in the region, including mountain building and general elevation of the land. In early Tertiary time the Colorado Plateau was tilted to the north by great subterranean pressures. Many geologists believe that this cataclysmic period was caused by the collision of great subterranean plates—in this case, a collision between the North American plate and the larger and heavier Pacific Oceanic plate. This caused great compressional forces on the land from the west, helping build the Rocky Mountains and other ranges of the western United States. The San Rafael area was uplifted as were also the Uncompahgre highlands. The accompanying northward tilting of the land resulted in the characteristic tilted appearance of the area's rock strata to this day. Erosion at the time was generally to the north, filling a great basin and lake area in what is now Uintah County.

Later, during the mid-Tertiary period some 35 million years ago, the plateau area as a whole, including the Rocky Mountains, was gradually raised up, quite uniformly, by several thousand feet. Rivers and their subordinate drainage systems that still exist were generally established at this time when the land was much more level. The sluggish streams meandered across the land, gradually cutting chan-

nels in the elevated tablelands and making their way south and west towards the Pacific Ocean. Erosion began to shape the land over time into the area as we know it today, and the process was accelerated as the rivers began to cut more deeply (and steeply) into the layers of sedimentary rock. The process continues today—if the earth is not being built up, it is in the midst of natural leveling forces.

Yet the earth in Grand County was not finished with building processes. Some 25 to 30 million years ago, subterranean forces again altered, resulting in a stretching of the area in a west–east direction, replacing the earlier compressional forces. This movement most likely allowed the area's deep basement faults to open, which allowed magma, or molten rock, to work up towards the surface.

The La Sal Mountains were formed at this time, as magma began to flow upward from deep within the earth's core. With the La Sals (and other area mountains, including the Henrys and Abajos), the magma didn't break through the surface to create volcanoes; rather, it pushed up the land above it, entering layers of the sedimentary rock and remaining below the surface where it gradually cooled. Such formations are called laccoliths. The mountains are thought to have originally been some 5,000 feet higher than they are at present. Through time, erosion has stripped much of the sediment above the intrusive rock, which now is exposed in the mountain peaks and is itself being eroded.

Erosion has been continuing to carve the Colorado Plateau for the last 25 million years, resulting in a land of incomparable beauty. Erosional forces are most spectacularly revealed in the great canyons carved by the area's streams and rivers, especially the Green and Colorado. Although the human lifespan is too brief to allow for the detection of much change in the landscape carved by natural processes, the process is rapid in geologic terms. The process is simple. Water cuts through the soil, picking up sediments which are then transported farther downstream. The channel gets progressively deeper and wider as it transports greater volumes of water and as gravity and wind action work on the exposed cliff-faces and outcrops, causing them to eventually collapse and further widen the channel or canyon. Over a few hundred years the results can become very impressive, and much of the land of Grand County and



Balance Rock, Arches National Park. (Utah State Historical Society)

throughout the Colorado Plateau is intersected and cross-hatched with deep canyons and arroyos, making the land a place of wonder and great variety to the hiker and sightseer but a nightmare of impassable mazes to ranchers, mine developers, and road builders, among others. This is the land of which Wallace Stegner wrote: "Start across the country in southeastern Utah almost anywhere and you are confronted by a chasm too steep and too deep to climb down

through, and just too wide to jump. . . . It is a country that calls for wings."[5]

River canyons are widened not so much by the rivers themselves, which merely continually cut a relatively small channel through the underlying strata, as by the action of wind, rain, snow, and gravity after the initial cutting. Flash floods can tear at and enlarge the channel, wind cuts at the exposed walls, and the walls themselves slump and fall as they are continually undercut or washed by the elements. The canyons widen most rapidly in areas and times when weaker conglomerate rock is exposed; they widen much more slowly when more resistant rock such as cliff-forming Wingate or Navajo sandstones are exposed.

There are some puzzling aspects to the general scenario, however. The Paradox Salt Basin has been mentioned. It received its name from a puzzling aspect of the valley of the same name above it. Early settlers noticed that the Dolores River crossed that valley at a right angle rather than flowing along it as one would normally expect. Not only was this a paradox, it was not unusual in the area—many of the river systems in the region, including the mighty Green and Colorado rivers—cut across or through major land features instead of flowing along or around them. The question naturally arose: Why?

Briefly, the answer according to geologists is that the rivers were essentially there first—already established in their basic paths some 40 to 50 million years ago, before the whole plateau region was uplifted. Meanders of the rivers such as the one at Dead Horse Point were established by the lazy rivers at an early date. They then quickened their paces but remained essentially in their previous channels, cutting down through obstacles such as the Book Cliffs regardless of their composition and even cutting across the northward tilt of the sedimentary layers of the land.

The plateau region presents a marvelous pattern of erosion that has been proceeding regularly now for the past 10 million years or so when the general plateau uplifting was completed, with the basic pattern being from south to north—the more recent rock in the county being found in the plateau area of the Book Cliffs, while earlier rocks are exposed in the deep canyons of the Green and Colorado rivers as they flow south and west through the land. Exceptions such as the

rocks of the Uncompahgre Plateau have been exposed through local variations—all of the overlaying sediments have been eroded away—which is also the case with some of the most recent rocks, the nearby intrusive rocks of the La Sal mountain peaks.

Let's look briefly at some of the more notable features of the land that have been exposed or shaped by the geologic past. The two great rivers of the county and region—the Green and the Colorado—cut great gashes across the land, emerging only briefly from their spectacular enclosing canyon corridors. Their tributaries also carved canyons, and the great canyon walls of the river systems are certainly among the most notable of the county's landforms. The massive cliffs are generally composed of harder sandstones laid down in Triassic and Jurassic times some 210 to 140 million years ago. Wind-blown and stream-deposited sediments from neighboring highlands covered much of the area, often to enormous depths. Dinosaurs and other early land creatures roamed the floodplains and savannas. The Wingate, Navajo, and Entrada sandstones were laid down successively, in some areas to depths of well over 1,000 feet. All are quite hard and have formed imposing cliffs and other structures of the canyon country during the past 10 million years that the rivers and other natural forces have been carving the land. Intermittent layers such as the Kayenta Formation between the Wingate and Navajo sandstones are softer and form the less stable slopes of the region.

The spectacular arches, fins, and other structures of Arches National Park are formed from Entrada Sandstone, laid down some 165 million years ago on top of the more resistant Navajo Sandstone. Some parts of the Entrada Sandstone are weaker than others, and the natural cement of silica, calcium carbonate, or iron oxide bonding the grains of sand begins to dissolve when exposed to water—for example, ground water collecting at the base of exposed rock—facilitating the formation of alcoves and caves that can become true arches when additional rock breaks away. Wind and gravity aid the sculptural forces; but perhaps the most significant factor in the arch-making process was the formation and subsequent collapse of the salt anticline beneath the area, which has caused the fracturing of the neighboring rock, creating joints in the rock which become exposed

as fins and can in time erode to become the sculpted arches, hoodoos, and other wonderful features of the area.[6]

Grand County is a land of great variety and contrast. The northern portion of the county features the Book Cliffs, Roan Cliffs, and other sections of the great Tavaputs Plateau which rises sourthward from the Uinta Basin, reaching a height of from 8,000 to 10,000 feet. The Book Cliffs form the first bastion of the great landmass. They rise abruptly from the desolate Mancos Shale plains of the Green River and Cisco deserts and the Grand River Valley to the south, sweeping in a great wall extending in an arc across the entire width of the county—from the west where they are cut through by the Green River (before they continue west into Emery and Carbon counties) to the east as they extend beyond the Colorado state line. The cliffs have presented a most effective barrier to settlement and even to basic travel: no major settlements have been established in the history of Euro-American settlement, nor have any major roads cut through the area—only a few trails and four-wheel-drive access roads have been built there.

The Book Cliffs were formed during the Cretaceous period, some 100 to 65 million years ago, when eastern Utah was covered by a shallow sea. Thousands of feet of sediment were deposited, which in time became shales and mudstones. As the seas gradually retreated eastward, sand was deposited along the shorelines, eventually forming sandstones. Lush swamps and forests flourished above this zone; they in turn were transformed into the area's coal deposits. Other sediments in turn gradually covered the land in the past 65 million years. The Roan (or Brown) Cliffs above the Book Cliffs are composed of Tertiary period deposits. They are set back from the Book Cliffs by a bench some ten miles wide, and they reach a height of as much as 9,000 feet in Grand County.

When the region was uplifted—first tilted to the north and subsequently uplifted as a whole—the process ending about 10 million years ago, the upper sandstone fractured, exposing the more easily eroded shales beneath and forming distinctive "badlands" still found eroding in the plateau today. The marine shale is highly alkaline (salty), with the result that few plants can grow in the badlands and tableland portions of the cliffs or in the desert plains at their base.

The Tavaputs Plateau area above the Book Cliffs and sloping northward from the summits of the Roan Cliffs is actually the southern part of the great Uinta Basin. The land generally slopes to the north, and erosion in this area has exposed rocks of the more recent Tertiary period. Some of this land is much more thickly forested, typical of high plateau areas throughout the state, and is home to many species of wildlife, including what is said to be Utah's largest elk herd. The entire region contains tremendous mineral wealth in the form of oil, natural gas, coal, tar sands, and oil shale.

Another major feature of the county—in fact, one that is life-sustaining to most of its human inhabitants—is found in the southeastern section: the La Sal Mountains (only about half of which actually lie within the bounds of the county). The entire range is quite small to those accustomed to such mountain ranges as the Rockies, the Sierra Nevada, or even the Wasatch and the Uintas. The La Sal range is some six to eight miles wide and fifteen to twenty miles long, and it is divided into three groups. It extends along a general north–south axis roughly bisected by the boundary line of Grand and San Juan counties. The range lies entirely within Utah, although some of its foothills, slopes, and drainages extend into western Colorado. The western side of the range generally is more steep and broken than the more gently sloping eastern side.

The northern group—called North Mountain—is the largest of the three masses and consists of three major peaks, the summits of which are all in Grand County, although the southernmost, Mount Tomaski, is almost on the county line; its southern flank is part of San Juan County, as are the other two mountain masses. The highest peak of the northern group is Mount Waas, at 12,331 feet also the highest point in Grand County. The middle mass contains Mount Peale, the highest peak of the La Sal Range at 12,721 feet. It was named for Dr. A. C. Peale, a geologist with the Hayden Surveying Expedition to the area in 1875. Mount Waas and Mount Tomaski were named for Native American guides of that expedition.[7]

The La Sals are a beautiful sight, visible on clear days for 100 miles or more, a delight to contemporary folk and an invaluable reference point and landmark to travelers of earlier eras whose lives in the surrounding deserts depended upon the moisture wrung out of

the air by the peaks. The mountains were named by the Spanish, recorded in the journal of the Dominguez–Escalante expedition in 1776. La Sal is Spanish for "the salt," and the mountains were named for the salt deposits exposed near the flanks of the mountains and known by Utes and other tribes who informed early Spanish explorers and traders of them. The mountains are laccolithic and some 25 to 30 million years old, as mentioned. The intrusive molten magma has cooled into rock known as diorite porphry. As the overlying sandstone and other deposits pushed up by the intrusive magma have eroded over the past 25 million years, the diorite porphry has been exposed on the peaks and higher flanks of the La Sals, which areas are much steeper than the lower elevations of the mountains that still remain covered by sedimentary rock. Adjacent to and within these rocks are deposits (probably not too extensive) of other minerals, including gold, silver, copper, and lead, and the mountains have been visited often over the past two centuries by prospectors in search of these valuable metals.

The La Sal Mountains are essential to much of the life in Grand County, collecting from the prevailing westerly air currents moisture in the form of rain and snow, recharging the aquifers and water tables while feeding the mountain streams that provide the water for many lifeforms, including humans, the majority of whom live in or near Moab at the foot of the mountains. The mountains contained glaciers (they are the only glacial mountains of the Colorado Plateau) during the recent ice ages, and, though no glaciers now remain, large amounts of snow still fall on the summits and remain throughout the spring and even late into the summer after winters of heavy snowfall or summers of moderate heat. The beauty and cooler temperatures of the mountains provide refreshment to local inhabitants and the ever-increasing numbers of visitors.

The salt anticlines of the Paradox Basin are more than 10,000 feet thick in some places and have been instrumental in shaping much of the contemporary landscape—particularly in Arches National Park and the populated Moab, Castle, and Spanish valleys. Moab sits on a collapsed salt anticline: water dissolved the salt deposits near the surface, forming a valley depression which was partially filled in by sedimentation from nearby higher land that washed down from the

mountains or sloughed off from the nearby cliffs. Little salt is visible, except on the flanks of some of the anticlines, often near faults which have forced it near the surface.

Although Grand County is considered one of the lower-risk earthquake zones in the state of Utah, faults and joints are visible in the area and are not at all uncommon. Joints are fractures in the rock along which no visible movement has been detected. They form in brittle rock (such as sandstone) when the rock layers are under stress—in Grand County, this stress is often caused by anticlines. The joints are wonderfully visible in Entrada Sandstone.

Faults are breaks in the rock along which there has been movement—either lateral or vertical. The displacement can be hundreds or even thousands of feet over time. The Moab Fault on the west side of Moab Valley has a vertical displacement in some areas of more than 2,500 feet, and the displacement is very evident in the area immediately adjacent to the entrance station of Arches National Park.

The great rivers of the plateau—the Green and the Colorado—have played prominent roles in both the structure and history of the county and join together a few miles below the county's boundaries to form the historic Colorado River. As mentioned, the Green marks the county's western boundary; the river enters the county in the last few miles of Desolation Canyon—named by Almon Thompson, a member of John Wesley Powell's first expedition as it traveled the river in 1869. The canyon has little vegetation—basically only a ribbon of green near the river itself—towered over by rough cliffs and buttes. The Green River then enters Gray Canyon, where the Tavaputs Plateau breaks to form its first terrace, the Roan (or Brown) Cliffs. The river valley widens and sandstone cliffs give way to shale and other rocks. Gray Canyon ends at the Book Cliffs, and the river then flows through an open stretch of the Green River Desert. This area was long called Gunnison Valley and the place where the river was crossed was called Gunnison's Crossing, named after the ill-fated government explorer Lieutenant John W. Gunnison, who was killed west of here along with other members of his surveying party in 1853.

Here in a twelve-mile stretch where the river is easily approached is the historic crossing of the Green River, and it is also where the later bridges of the railroad, Highway 6/50, and Interstate 70 have

been erected. The river then winds east of the San Rafael area into Labyrinth Canyon, eventually leaving the county as it heads toward the confluence with the Colorado River. Powell's historic 1869 and 1871–72 expeditions down the Green and Colorado rivers first brought them extensive national attention, and, at the present time, thousands of people yearly trace portions of the explorers' routes through the great river canyons of the county and the plateau region.

The Green River was reportedly called the Bitterroot by Ute Indians. In 1776 Spanish Franciscan friars and explorers Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante named it Rio San Buenaventura ("River of Good Travel"). The name Green was probably given to the river and popularized by early American and British trappers; John Frémont called it the "Rio Verde of the Spanish."[8] Originating in the Wind River Range of Wyoming, the Green River drains an area of some 44,400 square miles, which is about 1.7 times the area of 25,900 square miles drained by the Colorado River (formerly Grand River) above the confluence of the two mighty waterways, at which junction the combined flow was historically known as the Colorado River. At an annual average of 6.7 million acre-feet of water, the Colorado above the confluence usually produces a slightly greater volume of water than does the Green with its 5.6 million acre-feet average; however, the Green River's length of 730 miles is much greater than the 423 miles of the Colorado.[9] The Green River flows along the sinuous western border of Grand County for almost 120 river miles, while the Colorado (Grand) River cuts through the county for more than 80 river miles.

The Colorado River cuts through the county near the midpoint of its eastern border with Colorado and then travels a general southwestly route until it exits the county near its southwestern corner—a few miles above its confluence with the Green River in the heart of Canyonlands National Park. At its entrance to the county, the Colorado is at about 4,330 feet in elevation; at the confluence its elevation is 3,875 feet. The river exits the county at an elevation of approximately 4,080 feet, after following a generally tranquil descent through the county, with the notable exception of rough-and-tumble Westwater Canyon. The average gradient of both the Colorado and Green rivers through Grand County is from about 1.25 to 1.5 feet per mile.

The Colorado River has been known by various names throughout recorded history, including the Rio del Tizón ("River of the Firebrand"), Rio de los Martires ("River of the Martyrs"), Rio Grande de Buena Esperanza ("Grand River of Good Hope"), and Rio Mysterioso ("River of Mystery"), among others. Colorado ("Red") was among the river's early names—so called for its color, laden with silt from the plateau country—and this name became common on Spanish documents by the 1770s. Colorado was the name friars Domínguez and Escalante used for the river and which their expedition's cartographer, Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, used on his map of the region published in 1778.

The Colorado River enters Grand County from the east, bending around the ancient rocky highlands of the Uncompahgre Uplift (one of the few geologic forms that has altered the course of the great rivers of the region). It is near here at the narrow stretch of Westwater Canyon that the river is most tumultuous within the county. Though the river becomes only moderately challenging at best after leaving the canyon, this doesn't deter thousands of modern argonauts and adventure-seekers who sign up for the "daily" runs embarking from the Moab area. Moab, by the way, is the only town in Utah located on the Colorado River. The stretch of river by Moab was informally named Meander Canyon, and, after passing Moab, the river meanders to the confluence. Only south of the county's boundaries below the confluence does the greatly augmented river challenge the most intrepid at Cataract Canyon in Canyonlands National Park.

Though it is a fine name for such a spectacular place, the county's name actually derives from the earlier name for the Colorado River above its confluence with the Green River. This portion of the Colorado River until the 1920s was called the Grand River. There will be more on this later; for now it is necessary only as it helps clarify references to the Grand River, references that will be abundant in the following pages.

ENDNOTES

1. See William Lee Stokes, *Geology of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah Museum of Natural History,1986), for a basic introduction to the geology of the region. For more detailed regional information, see also F. A. Barnes,

Canyon Country Geology (Salt Lake City: Wasatch Publishers, 1978), and Don L. Baars, *Geology of Canyonlands Country* (Salt Lake City: Canyonlands Natural History Association, 1989). See also the bibliography.

2. See Michael J. Price, "Introduction to the Geology of the Colorado Plateau," *Canyon Legacy* 13:2–8, in addition to sources mentioned in the note above. Another good geologic summary is found in *Geology and Grand County* (Salt Lake City: Utah Geological and Mineral Survey, 1987).

3. See Michael J. Price, "Geologic Names of Sedimentary Units in Southeastern Utah," *Canyon Legacy* 18:16–23, for a more technical discussion of various geologic strata in the canyon country.

4. Moab *Times-Independent,* 2 June 1994.

5. Wallace Stegner, *Mormon Country,* p. 299.

6. See John F. Hoffman, *Arches National Park: An Illustrated Guide and History* (San Diego: Western Recreation Publications, 1981), for detailed information on rock structures in Arches. It also includes useful general information about geological formations in the region.

7. See Lloyd M. Pierson, "Some La Sal Mountains Place Names," *Canyon Legacy* 18:11, and other articles in that volume. See also John W. Van Cott, *Utah Place Names* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), for more information on place names of natural features in Grand County and nearby areas.

8. John Weisheit, "Place Names Along the Rivers in Utah's Canyonlands," *Canyon Legacy* 18:24–31. See also other articles in the same issue by Richard F. Negri, Lloyd M. Pierson, Vicki B. Webster, and Michael J. Price for additional information about Grand County area place names. John W. Van Cott, *Utah Place Names* (1990), is an essential source for anyone interested in the subject.

9. Weisheit, "Place Names Along the Rivers . . . ," p. 25.

2

Climate, Ancient Life, and Natural History

In discussing the geologic history of the area, we have touched upon the great eras used to classify life on the planet: the Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic. Signifying Old, Middle, and Recent life, they are useful categories for specialists. What follows will be far from comprehensive. In fact, the information presented here is meant to promote awareness that we are not now, nor have any lifeforms ever been, alone upon the land. As we are bound to the land, it appears obvious to me that we are bound also to our fellow-travelers. It would be pleasant if the bond were one of mutual caring and respect; it is essential for our own well-being that it at least be acknowledged and not threatened too high-handedly.

The ancient oceans of the area harbored ancient forms of life, some of which were fossilized in the sedimentary rocks of the Paleozoic era. The fossils are usually of relatively simple sea creatures: shellfish and crustaceans. It is with the Mesozoic era that most people's attention sharpens. During this great span of time, organisms emerged from the seas and began to walk, crawl, or slither upon the land. Towards the end of the Paleozoic era, some 240–225 million

years ago, amphibians began to decline as the dominant land creatures and there was a rise of primitive reptiles.[1]

We can assume that the lifeforms—both plant and animal—in the Paleozoic-era lands and oceans that periodically covered Grand County were representative of their time; it would be brash and of little purpose to attempt to expand upon such matters here. So, too, with the county's inhabitants of the Mesozoic era. This is not the stuff of a centennial history of humans in a political landscape. But the reason it is mentioned is because it is important that we have an understanding of just how *long* the land has supported life and how *recent* is our own tenure on the land. We should be aware that humans on the land are an extremely recent phenomenon in the history of the planet.

The Mesozoic era—lasting almost 180 million years—usually commands general attention, however, because of some of its lifeforms: the dinosaurs of the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. Humans seem to be generally fascinated by these great reptiles, and Grand County certainly doesn't disappoint the saurophile. The Colorado Plateau region as a whole was rich grounds for dinosaurs. Although much of the region was a hostile desert environment in the early and middle Jurassic periods, areas around streams provided habitat as well as wet sands and shores in which tracks of the dinosaurs could be preserved and through which we are able to derive information today about the ancient past. There is a wealth of dinosaur tracks in Grand County, with more being discovered. Tracks of dinosaurs, other reptiles, and mammal-like forms have been found in the southern part of the county along the Colorado River and surrounding area in the Wingate, Kayenta, Navajo, Entrada, and Morrison strata. Tracks of the large herbivore brontosaurus as well as those of large carnivores have been recently found near Moab.[2] These tracks have proved valuable and complement the extensive fossil discoveries abundant in the dinosaur quarries to the north and northwest of the county as well as those remains found to the south in San Juan County. There have been extensive fossil remains of the animals found in Grand County as well. For example, at Yellow Cat Flat northeast of Arches National Park two tons of dinosaur bones were found on the surface by the Beckwith expedition of the 1920s.[3]

The canyon country is a wonderland to the paleontologist. Not

only do the rocks harbor the tracks and fossilized remains of past life-forms, there is little—except more rock—to impede research: little obscuring vegetation, little moist soil in which the remains would decay, little human impact on the land to disrupt or destroy the evidence. As we have seen, geologists and paleontologists can actually reconstruct the changing landscapes of the area millions of years ago from the fossil remains and the composition and layering structure of the sedimentation. For example, the extensive Mancos Shale deposits in the northern part of the county are filled with billions of sharks' teeth and other marine fossils from the oceans that covered the area some 70–90 million years ago. Swamps and lush growth that flourished in the area of the Book Cliffs formed the coal seams in Sego Canyon and elsewhere in the area, indicating that life was abundant in those long-ago seas and shoreline areas.

The Cenozoic era of the past 65 million years has featured the rise and dominance of mammals as the dominant land fauna. Though the Tertiary period has covered by far the greater part of this era, people are most interested in the period in which we live—the Quaternary, which has lasted for the past 1.6 million years.

Much more recently, humans entered the Colorado Plateau region—perhaps as early as 15,000 years ago—towards the end of the most recent ice age.[4] As the name implies, the general climate was much colder then—a condition that existed in Grand County as well. This is not to say that Grand County was a bleak, arctic wasteland—in many ways it would have looked much as it does now, only a little greener. Also, there would be some glaciers present in the La Sals. The area was home to a number of large mammals (megafauna, according to paleontologists) that have interested humans only slightly less than the earlier dinosaurs. Huge mammoths, mastodons, giant sloths, sabretooth cats, spectacled cave bears, and long-horned bison all roamed North America, and evidence of some of them has been found in and near Grand County. Within the past few years more than forty remains of mammoths have been found on the Colorado Plateau, and three have been found in Grand County. The most recent remains—found just east of Moab—may be only slightly more than 10,000 years old.[5] These great creatures—somewhat larger than a modern elephant—were predominantly grazers, feeding on the lush

grasses, sedges, and other small brush plants of the region, which at the time was more moist than at present. There is also a rock art image called the "mastodon petroglyph" near the Colorado River south of Moab that has been interpreted by some people as depicting that great animal, though many others remain unconvinced. There is no dispute, however, that the animals existed in the county and were quite possibly hunted there by humans.

Yet mammoths and more than a dozen other large mammal species became extinct some 10,000 to 11,000 years ago, towards the end of the last ice age. Scientists are not certain why there was such a massive extinction pattern; climatic change must have played a major part as the continent generally warmed and habitats changed. Some 14,000 years ago the continent entered a transition period—an interglacial stage—with gradual warming. This change in climate forced plant and animals communities to adapt. Some speculate that ice age hunters contributed to the extinction of the great beasts by taking advantage of their weakened condition and more predictable behavior as the animals tried to adapt to changes in their climate and habitats.[6] Plant species obviously also changed with the weather conditions, necessitating a change in the diets of many of the large animals, most of which could not easily adjust and adapt. There was probably an immediate decrease in biodiversity, altering the plants available to many of the animals. Authorities have estimated that as much as 70 percent of the region's large fauna species were extinct by 11,000 years ago. The land was a good deal wetter with less evaporation, more precipitation, and increased stream flows and lake levels.

Temperatures generally continued to rise, reaching a peak some 4,000 years ago. Scientists believe that they then cooled slightly to their present average. For the past 4,000 years, the general climatic conditions of Grand County have been close to what they are now: semi-arid. It would be a mistake to consider them regular in any strict sense, however. In our own lifetimes we witness wet and dry cycles, warmer and colder patterns. If these persist beyond a year or two, people talk of floods or droughts. A twenty- to fifty-year pattern could be devastating to many lifeforms, and certain people believe that that is exactly what happened to the inhabitants of the plateau some 700–800 years ago, as we shall see.



Fisher Towers. (Utah State Historical Society)

At the present time, Grand County's weather, like that of the state as a whole, is dominated by a general westerly flow and weather pattern. For most of the year it is predominantly northwesterly, bringing in storms periodically from the Pacific Northwest, the Gulf of Alaska, and points beyond. Much of this moisture is stripped by the Wasatch and Uinta ranges and the highlands of the Wasatch and Tavaputs plateaus before it ever gets to the county. During the summer months the area often is washed by weather patterns from the southwest, particularly in the form of brief but often violent thunderstorms. The average annual precipitation of the non-mountainous areas of the county is less than ten inches of water. The average annual precipitation at Moab this century has been slightly above eight inches; wet years may have some sixteen inches, dry years have been as low as three inches. The average annual precipitation a few miles away at the 11,000-foot level of the La Sal Mountains has been estimated to be almost twenty-nine inches.[7] Precipitation figures at Moab for the past twenty years reveal that October is the wettest month, with 1.36 inches average precipitation. It is followed by March, July, and April, with 0.99, 0.95, and 0.94 inches, respectively.

Most months range between 0.60 and 0.80 inches; but the wide scattering and lack of steady patterns are indicated by the low precipitation months: June and February, at 0.29 and 0.31 inches of precipitation, respectively.[8]

Temperatures in Moab have ranged from more than 110 degrees to as low as -20 degrees Fahrenheit, with a mean annual temperature of 56 degrees. Among Utah's major weather-reporting stations, only St. George consistently has higher temperatures than does Moab at some 4,000 feet of elevation in its sheltered valley between towering cliff walls. The frost-free period at Moab averages 184 days a year. For the past twenty years, the average high temperature at Moab has ranged from 39 degrees Fahrenheit in January to 99 degrees in July, while average low temperatures have ranged from January and February at 18 degrees to July at 64 degrees. April and October averages have almost matched each other—with average high temperatures of 72 degrees in April and 74 degrees in October and a shared low temperature average of 41 degrees.[9]

Although intense heat is common in the lower elevation and desert areas of the county during the summer months, the climate is classified as temperate. Even during summer, the temperature in desert areas can drop by as much as 50 degrees or more at night. One does not need to be in the mountains to feel extreme cold; snow is common in most areas in winter, although it rarely accumulates to great depths or lasts for extended periods of time. Klondike Bluffs in Arches National Park is said to have been named for the bitter weather experienced there.

Lifeforms—plant and animal—are always subject to changes affecting their living conditions or ecological situation, and they must continually be able to adapt or they will perish. This situation far antedates human life on earth; however, humans have had a tremendous impact on other living organisms—an impact far beyond our biological numbers. Let us look briefly at some of the other plants and animals with which humans share the land, water, and air of Grand County. This is only a small fraction of the natural biological wealth of the county—but enough, it is hoped, to help us gain a perspective of our shared place on the land.

Although the climate of Grand County is generally dry, there are

still many animal and plant species that inhabit the county. Actually, with its great physiographic and geologic variety, including the Tavaputs Plateau and Book Cliffs to the north, the desert areas south of the cliffs, the riparian areas of the Green and Colorado rivers and their major tributaries, and the La Sal Mountains thrusting up some 12,000 feet to capture moisture in the southeast corner, the county is actually home to a wealth of lifeforms—some unique to the area. The physiographic variety that attracts humans also provides varied habitat and range for many other species.

The climate of Grand County could be considered a harsh one for many plants—it is mostly dry, with highly restricted areas of water and limited precipitation; yet plants can be found in some very unexpected locations. Shales, mudstones, and siltstones are composed of finer particles than are sandstones and trap water more effectively or force it out of a cliff-face, creating moisture seeps which can become home to plants, creating hanging gardens in the canyons. Many varieties of shrubs are found in the lower elevations and along canyon bottoms. Desert shrubs including shadscale and saltbrush dominate the area to about 5,000 feet. Juniper and pinyon intermix somewhat with the abovementioned plants and extend to the 6,000 to 7,000 foot level. In drainages and along north slopes sagebrush, serviceberry, mountain mahogany, and shrub oak may be found. At about 7,500 feet the mountain brush changes to aspen, spruce, and fir forests, which can extend as low as 6,500 feet on moist, cool north slopes and reach as high as timberline, up to 11,400 feet at present.

Grand County includes five of the six life zones found in Utah, ranging from the Upper Sonoran through the Transition, the Canadian, and the Hudsonian, to the Arctic-Alpine zone.[10] The majority of the land is considered Upper Sonoran—it ranges in altitude from 4,000 to about 7,000 feet, and one of its characteristic plants is sagebrush. In more alkaline soil greasewood, rabbitbrush, shadscale, blackbrush, and various grasses are common. Saltbush and alkaline-resistant grasses are among the few things that grow in the Mancos Shale badlands and desert areas at the foot of the Book Cliffs. Pinyon and juniper grow in the higher elevations of this zone in Grand County as elsewhere in Utah.

In the riparian areas of the zone, the largest tree is the cotton-

wood; more common small trees and bushes include varieties of birch and willow. The tamarisk, a non-native introduced species, is the most common riverbank shrub. Although beautiful to many people's eyes, tamarisk is considered by many others to be a pest. It has rapidly spread throughout the region in the past few decades, and some people who do not agree on much else join in their hatred of this plant. It flourishes in disturbed soil, such as riverbanks and associated sandbars, and can present a vast wall of underbrush preventing access to the rivers in many places, but it does not seem destined to take over the entire riparian area as some have feared; established species seem able to hold their own away from the more disturbed riverbank areas.[11]

Chokecherry, alder, boxelder, dogwood, bigtooth maple, netleaf hackberry, and river hawthorn are also often found in canyon bottoms and along stream courses throughout the county. Moving up the slopes, one may find elder, Rocky Mountain maple, Gambel oak, curlleaf mountain mahogany, quaking aspen, juniper, pinyon pine, Douglas fir, and ponderosa pine, with subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce, and limber pine near timberline in the La Sals. Above timberline (some 11,000 feet) can be found some small plants, including cinquefoils, sedges, and grasses.

The Book Cliffs-Roan Cliffs-Tavaputs Plateau area of the northern third of Grand County rises to some 9,000 feet elevation in the county and at its highest reaches receives an annual average of up to twenty-four inches of precipitation. The plateau area as it slopes towards the Uinta Basin is typical of the high plateaus of Utah in its flora and fauna, ranging from pine and fir habitat in well-watered areas to desolate and barren stretches, especially in the eastern part of the section, that at best have provided only very limited grazing for wild and domestic herd animals. Even in better-watered areas the Tavaputs Plateau highlands have only marginal use as grazing land due to the steep terrain and relative inaccessibility. Douglas fir, pinyon pine, and Gambel oak are among the larger plants of the area and are found along with mountain mahogany, serviceberry, big sagebrush, and other shrubs in elevations above 5,200 feet. Precipitation in the area decreases with elevation.[12]

The plateau areas often terminate abruptly in cliffs—hence the

names Roan and Book cliffs. Where the Book Cliffs terminate—at 4,700 to 6,200 feet—the annual precipitation can be as little as eight inches per year. The Roan (or Brown) Cliffs were named by early settlers for their color; the Book Cliffs were named by the 1853 Gunnison survey party for their supposed resemblance to the leaves of a partially opened book, due to the steep escarpment intermittently cut by vertical indentations caused by erosion.[13] The steeper rocky areas to the west provide habitat for bighorn sheep; larger mammals found elsewhere in the region include mule deer, elk, mountain lion, black bear, bobcat, coyote, and pronghorn.

In the Green River and Cisco desert areas below the alluvial fans and pediments at the base of the Book Cliffs, the land ranges from 4,000 to 5,000 feet in elevation in a band from five to twenty miles wide. These largely barren areas of Mancos Shale receive from five to eight inches of precipitation a year. A portion of the area can provide some winter grazing for livestock, the more alkaline and dry areas are home to sparse shadscale, saltbush, and other salt-tolerant shrubs and grasses as well as various insects, reptiles, and a few small mammals including jackrabbits, mice, and kangaroo rats. The area also contains numerous small washes that can support a greater variety of life. In historic time, sheep have competed with pronghorn for the desert grasses and vegetation. Also, fire-suppression activities of humans have led to an increased growth of brush in wetter areas of the region; as a result, the habitat has become more conducive to mule deer and less suitable to the native bighorn sheep.

Farther south from the Mancos Shale lowlands, sandstone begins to appear among sparse soil and broken terrain. Sagebrush and blackbrush are commonly found, along with some pinyon and juniper in favored locations. To the east is the Uncompahgre highland, cut through by the Colorado River. The area slopes up to the foothills of the La Sals and contains a range of varied and broken terrain, somewhat suitable for rangeland, with rainfall as much as fourteen inches a year. Along the Colorado River some of the land is suitable for irrigated farming. This is also the case along the Green River; but such use is very limited along both rivers due to the difficulty of getting water up from the river channels.

The collapsed salt-anticline valleys vary in their suitability for



Park Avenue, Arches National Park. (Utah State Historical Society)

human use as rangeland or farmland: Spanish Valley and Castle Valley are superior to Salt Valley for farming, with the first superior to the second due to its greater water resources with both Mill and Pack creeks flowing through the valley from the La Sals. This is the major reason for the development and continued growth of Moab as the major area of human habitation in the county. The benches and foothills of the La Sals receive more precipitation than the valleys and flatlands below and are characterized by a greater variety of vegetation and animal life. There is an increase in the types of grasses and shrubs, making much of the area good rangeland and wildlife habitat. Streams and springs originating in the La Sals provide increased habitat and sustenance for flora and fauna; those water sources that are virtually perennial have also fostered human agricultural pursuits with the attendant introduction of plants not native to the area.

It has been estimated that, despite the general arid conditions, there are probably more than 1,000 native species of plants in the county. Native plants range from hardy grasses and small shrubs such as sagebrush and saltbush of the alkaline badlands to more familiar

"desert" species—including Mormon tea, cacti, and yucca—which are better adapted to a relative lack of moisture than those well-watered plants of seeps, pools, and riparian areas. Foothills, high plateaus, and mountains with their alpine meadows provide the botanist abundant variety of plants for study while giving the rest of us much to appreciate. In *Desert Solitaire,* Edward Abbey wrote of some of his experiences in the 1950s as a seasonal ranger at Arches National Monument. He recounted viewing the land from a snake's perspective and also wrote of a juniper, "hoping to learn something from it, . . . to make a connection through its life." Though Abbey confessed that the essence of the juniper probably eluded him, he learned to appreciate the adaptation of plants (and all living things) to their habitat, whether it be cacti and yucca to the desert or the gnarled, twisted but beautiful flowering cliffrose, which is superbly adapted to its environment while being useful to humans as a medicine and for its fibers. It also could be considered a teacher: Ed Abbey was one who learned; he wrote that "we are obliged, therefore, to spread the news, painful and bitter though it may be for some to hear, that all living things on earth are kindred."[14]

Flowering plants are varied and are found throughout the area. They include (to name a few): the cliffrose, sego lily (the state plant of Utah), verbena, prickly poppy, death camas (responsible for the untimely demise of many sheep and perhaps a few settlers), columbine, Russian thistle (or tumbleweed), penstemon, wild onion, prickly-pear cactus, hedgehog cactus, wild rose, Indian paintbrush, scarlet gilia, globe mallow, wallflower, buffaloberry, sunflower, desert marigold, lomatium, milkvetch, snakeweed, bee plant, mules-ears, columbine, lupine, dandelion, chickory, wild violet, and fleabane daisy, to name just a few. Flowers can begin to blossom in the warmer low-lying areas as early as late February and can be found in the high mountain meadows into late summmer and early autumn.

Introduced species of plants can be found in Moab and other communities in the county. These include peaches, pears, apples, and other fruit trees for which Moab was at one time famous. Other garden and ornamental crops also flourish in the area, which has the advantages characteristic of a warm but temperate climate. The relative lack of water has been the main limiting factor inhibiting plant

growth and variety in the county, although the quality of the soil is also most important to those who attempt to make their living from the land. Much of the soil of the county is thin and/or alkaline, and bare rock is also common. There are good soils found in some of the benches, draws, and valleys of the county, however—soil that can nourish vital plant life and that has been studied, analyzed, and classified by government agencies and agricultural experts.

Animal life is also of great variety and some uniqueness. The isolated character of the La Sals makes them biological "islands" in the surrounding high desert lands of the Colorado Plateau, itself highly disected by deep canyons and rivers, which provide their own natural barriers to the migration of living species. Stephen Durrant wrote of this years ago: "The diversification physiographically of the province is no more remarkable than the variation exhibited in the mammals which occupy the region. The impact of the barriers . . . caused by the entrenchment of these streams is markedly reflected."[15] This has led to the development of unique species of lifeforms in the county. Unique species and subspecies of mammals in the La Sal Mountains include porcupine, marmot, and bats. The mountains also house squirrels, chipmunks, marten, ermine, mink, black bear, mountain lions, elk, and mule deer, among others. Beaver, badger, skunks, bobcats, pronghorn, mountain sheep, coyotes, and gray and red foxes are some of the county's other larger mammals.

Within historical time bison, gray wolf, and grizzly bear also have inhabited the county; for example, wolves were mentioned as a "menace" in the *Grand Valley Times* of 8 December 1911. None of these species are found in the county at the present time, however. An effort was made to eradicate wolves in the first decades of the twentieth century, and fourteen of the animals were reported killed in April 1921 in San Juan County by the Moab newspaper; after that time, mention of the animals effectively dropped from newspaper reports. River otters and black-footed ferrets also inhabited the area in the historical past; attempts have recently been made to reintroduce the former species to the rivers of the region, but the ferret remains among the most endangered of North American wildlife.

The land is also home to other creatures: hundreds if not thousands of species of insects and other small denizens of the wild; some

two dozen species of reptiles (including many varieties of lizards and snakes); and, in Arches National Park alone, at least eight species of amphibians including frogs, toads, and one species of salamander.[16] The waters of the county refresh all the creatures mentioned above and provide a home to some of them as well as to more than a dozen species of native fish, including four on the endangered species list: the Colorado squawfish, humpback chub, bonytail chub, and razorback sucker. Native coldwater species include the Colorado River cutthroat trout. Channel catfish were introduced into the Colorado River near Moab in 1919 through the efforts of county resident Horace S. Rutledge. By 1927 fishing for catfish was sufficiently good in the area that the sport was mentioned in an article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*. Catfish continue to flourish in both the Green and Colorado rivers at the present time. Another introduced sportfish is largemouth bass; other introduced fish in the county's waters include carp, red shiner, fathead minnow, black bullhead, and green sunfish.

Birds (both resident to the area and migratory species sojourning briefly within the county) from black-chinned hummingbirds to hairy woodpeckers to meadowlarks, mourning doves, red-tailed hawks, and great blue herons can be found throughout the region. Dozens of species reside in the county; the count depends upon the criteria of the particular study. One study by the Bureau of Land Management's Moab District found 305 bird species either resident or transient in the area.[17] Among the birds known to frequent or inhabit the area are pinon jay, scrub jay, titmouse, gray vireo, housefinch, warbler, many varieties of sparrow, raven, lark, shrike, nighthawk, sparrowhawk, prairie falcon, snowy egret, mallard, sandpiper, flicker, magpie, wren, grosbeak, and turkey vulture.

In the pages that follow, one creature will be the subject of special mention: there are also human beings on the land.

ENDNOTES

1. The reader is referred to encyclopedia entries for a general history of ancient lifeforms. There are also good books on the subject in many libraries. Specific information relating to ancient life in Grand County can be found in some of the entries found in the bibliography.

2. Martin Lockley, "Tracking the Rise of Dinosaurs in Eastern Utah,"

Canyon Legacy 6:2–8. See also other articles on paleontology in the same issue, including Frank L. DeCourten, "The Long Walk Quarry," pp. 15–22.

3. John W. Hoffman, *Arches National Park*, p. 35.

4. Saxon Sharpe, "A Brief Look at the Recent Past," *Canyon Legacy* 4:25.

5. Larry Agenbroad, "Mammoths on the Colorado Plateau," *Canyon Legacy* 4:27–28.

6. See Janet L. McVickar, "Late Ice Age Extinctions: Whodunit?" *Canyon Legacy* 6:28–30, and sources cited in that article by the author. See also Saxon Sharpe, "A Modern Day Mammoth Hunter," *Canyon Legacy* 12:28–29, which discusses Gary Haynes and his book *Mammoths, Mastodonts, and Elephants* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

7. Lloyd M. Pierson, *Cultural Resource Summary of the East Central Portion of the Moab District* (Salt Lake City: Bureau of Land Management, 1980), p. 10.

8. Bette L. Stanton, comp., *Moab and Grand County Community Profile* (Moab: Grand County Economic and Community Development, n.d. [1993]).

9. Ibid.

10. Scientific classification schemes vary in their acceptance and use among scientists and writers. This account does not attempt to rely on any specific system, instead presenting only a general overview. The reader is referred to appropriate works in the bibliography and libraries for more specific information.

11. Dave May, "Maligned or Malignant: Tamarisk: The Plant We Love to Hate," *Canyon Legacy* 4:3–7.

12. See Pierson, *Cultural Resource Summary,* and Hoffman, *Arches National Park,* for basic catalog lists of plants in the area.

13. Van Cott, *Utah Place Names,* pp. 44–45.

14. Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire* (New York: McGraw Hill, Inc., 1968), p. 21.

15. Stephen D. Durrant, *Mammals of Utah* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1952), p. 485.

16. Hoffman, *Arches National Park,* p. 25.

17. Pierson, *Cultural Resource Summary,* p. 11.

3

Early Humans in the Region

Human beings are thought by many anthropologists to have entered the Western Hemisphere by way of the Bering land bridge between Russia and Alaska during the last ice age when water locked up in the great ice fields of the earth resulted in the exposure of more of the land, providing a dry, though very cold, crossing platform from one continent to the other. Geologists have determined that the land bridge was exposed during a timeframe between 25,000 and 11,000 years ago, and that there were periods when climatic conditions would have made movement of hardy peoples between the two continents possible. They also believe from genetic studies of Native American peoples that the migration was not an isolated event: different groups probably crossed the land bridge at various times during the period when it was exposed above the ocean level. These migrations may have taken place as early as 20,000 years ago—evidence indicates that people were well established on the continent some 12,000 to 14,000 years ago, and that they generally migrated to the south and east in search of game and better living conditions.[1]

Though it was not likely one of the first areas settled, it is pos-

sible that Paleolithic (old stone age) hunters may have been in the Colorado Plateau and Grand County by some 11,000 to 12,000 years ago, most likely having migrated into the area from the eastern plains of North America. Some students believe that the entrance dates of these people into the Colorado Plateau are more recent—from 10,000 to 7800 B.C. These dates have been established by cross-dating the few artifacts that have been found with similar artifacts in other better-dated locations.[2] Among the animals these Paleolithic people hunted were the horse, camel, and ancient mountain goat, which along with the ice-age megafauna mammals such as the mammoth mentioned earlier were extinct before the arrival of European "discoverers" in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of the present era.

It is known that these Paleo-Indian people were hunters, following the great megafauna of the period. In the Colorado Plateau area, these earliest hunters are known as the Clovis culture—named after a place in New Mexico where some of their large, distinctive, and finely crafted spear points were found. These hunters included the mammoth among the creatures they hunted, and it is possible that the land of future Grand County was part of their sphere of activity. They were succeeded by other hunters—the Folsom—also named after a location of their highly accomplished style of stone weapons' points. Folsom points as well as other later Plano culture types have been found in the Grand County area. These weapons are among the few surviving artifacts of the age, and changes in the lithic technology provide archaeologists reference and classification categories to distinguish the various groups on the land.

Little is known about the lifeways of the Paleo-Indian peoples of the region. What evidence exists allows researchers to speculate that the earliest hunters primarily inhabited the valley areas; later hunters made more use of the mountains, perhaps following some of the surviving large game animals which retreated to these cooler areas as the general climate became warmer and drier.

Both Folsom and Plano hunters are thought to have also hunted those larger animals that had survived the ice age, most especially the bison. Their spear points are smaller than those of the Clovis culture, indicating that the animals they hunted were smaller. It should be said that large mammals did not constitute the sole diet of these

people—they of course would eat nuts, fruits, berries, plants, and smaller game as they encountered them—it is just that the larger animals were the focus of their activities and lifestyle. These hunters are thought to have migrated out of the area to the Great Plains following their quarry since the Colorado Plateau as it dried out did not offer extensive grasslands necessary for the bison.[3]

Between 7800 and about 6000 B.C. (authorities differ) what are known as Archaic people entered the Colorado Plateau area. They were a hunting and gathering people who foraged throughout the land, with a greater reliance on gathering plant and smaller animal foodstuffs. The area was becoming much more arid, and desert flora and fauna similar to those found today were beginning to be common in the region. These people erected rudimentary brush shelters that included post holes, storage pits, and cooking pits. Their tools included smaller projectile points (for the smaller animals they hunted) as well as nets and snares. The atlatl, a throwing stick that gave added force to a spear it launched, was another of their tools. Split-twig figurines constructed of willow and other twigs are ingenious effigies that are thought to have been used as imitative magical items by hunters to help secure a successful hunt. Some have been found that are more than 3,000 years old; they appear to represent deer, elk, and bighorn sheep.

Our knowledge of these people is fragmentary at best; what we know is based on those artifacts of the culture that have survived. Such artifacts are most helpful if they are found in the context in which they were left; once an artifact is removed from a site archaeologists lose a tremendous amount of potential information about the artifact—hence the pleas from scholars and officials to the public not to disturb any evidence of the ancient past they might encounter.

The Archaic people must have been highly skilled and adaptable people with an immense knowledge of the natural resources of the region. They adjusted well to the area and greatly increased their range and population over the ensuing millennia. Hundreds of sites occupied by them have been found, many in the county. Although clothing and other more perishable items of their culture have not survived the ravages of time, the evidence of tools, weapons, and habitations indicates that Archaic people were in the county at least

5,000 years ago. The similarity of these remains over a great area indicates that there was some cultural contact and harmony among the small bands scattered throughout the region. A style of rock art known as the Barrier Canyon Style has been found in southeastern Utah that at least one authority believes dates back to Archaic time, perhaps as long as 6,000 years ago. Among the most haunting of rock art representations, the Barrier Canyon style features somewhat ghostly or otherworldly anthropomorphic images that have been associated with shamanistic activities and rituals of the people and perhaps give a clue of their religious beliefs.[4]

Between 2000 B.C. and A.D. 500 the nomadic Archaic hunter-gatherers gradually began to adopt a more sedentary, group-oriented, and village-based mode of existence. This was basically due to their adoption of agriculture—particularly the cultivation of corn (and later of squash and beans), which was first domesticated in Mexico. The practice and art of agriculture then migrated northward, including eventually the region of Grand County. At first it is likely that corn was planted somewhat haphazardly, to be harvested later as just another food when the planters (or others) returned to the area in their foraging migrations. Over the course of centuries, as the farming techniques improved and the value of the reliable food source was more appreciated, increased care no doubt was given to the farming of the agricultural crops. This in turn necessitated that the farmers remain close to the plants to protect and care for them, facilitating a more settled pattern of existence and formation of village groups as people congregated in favorable agricultural areas.

This was, of course, a major development in human history. A more sedentary lifestyle allowed for the construction and evolution of more permanent and durable living structures. It also fostered more and different types of social interaction, soon resulting in a regularized division of labor in which various tasks were assigned to individuals who then were able to develop specific skills and tools to better perform those tasks. With increased success in providing for the basic necessities of life—food and shelter—there was also time available to cultivate luxuries of goods or improvement of tools or to experiment, think, or dream. Elaboration of basic tools and utensils was a natural result; increased concern for decoration soon followed—the arts as we

know them began to flourish. Spiritual expression perhaps found new forms as a result of the larger communal groups and social divisions. It is to be expected that concerns for nurturing and harvesting supplemented earlier activities designed to foster successful hunting.

With an anticipated crop and social divisions of labor, the old nomadic foraging traditions progressively weakened, though undoubtedly there were always hunters in the groups as well as occasions and seasons in which many people participated in various hunts or harvests. A concern for the storage of surplus foodstuffs developed, which led to improved storage containers and structures. A modern attitude developed along with the prosperity: a concern for the morrow, and with this concern accompanying societal preparations to meet the future's anticipated needs.

The Grand County region of the Colorado Plateau—particularly those areas around the Colorado River and the Green River—throughout historical time has been a meeting ground or area of interaction among various groups. This is in part a natural result of the scarcity of accessible water throughout much of the plateau area—major water sources would doubtless be known attractions not only for their water but also for the accompanying plant life and animals attracted to the resource. It seems possible that the natural barriers created by the rivers and canyons would also tend to serve as limits of spheres of occupation or control. Whether the county was a furious battleground or instead became a sort of neutral territory for many groups to peacefully share is not known. I believe that it would not be too farfetched to suggest that there were possibly periods of both types of interaction in Grand County in the distant past. Evidence of habitation in the Moab area has been found dating back to 300 B.C., and there are ample reasons to believe that the Spanish Valley/Colorado River location attracted people much earlier.[5]

The best-known of the ancient cultures of the plateau area is the Anasazi (a Navajo word commonly defined as the "Ancient Ones"). Though not the only group inhabiting the plateau area, the Anasazi are well known because of their spectacular cultural remains: architecture, basketry, pottery, and rock art. The Anasazi are thought to have developed from the Archaic culture, which most archaeologists

begin to term Anasazi when it reached the beginning of the present (or Christian) era and had achieved a basic agricultural lifestyle.

Anasazi culture has been classified and divided into various periods characterized by particular developments in the tools, decoration, architecture, and/or communal structure of the group. The periods are termed Basketmaker or Pueblo (with accompanying numerical subdivisions), and through them students have outlined the general history of some thirteen or fourteen hundred years of Anasazi habitation in the Colorado Plateau.[6]

Grand County was part of the northern limit of Anasazi habitation, on the periphery of the people's sphere of influence. Some scholars, in fact, do not include Grand County north of the Colorado River as Anasazi territory. Most do, however; especially since there are traces of Anasazi habitation in the Arches area. Yet that is about the known extent of Anasazi habitation presence north of the river; the limited finds of Anasazi pottery in the Book Cliffs and in other areas of the county are thought by most scholars to have been trade goods brought to the areas in question by Fremont people and those of other cultures. Some artifacts found in the Moab area date back to early Basketmaker times. In July 1990 a large (72 inch [55 cm.] high, 29 inch [70 cm.] diameter) Anasazi burden basket from Basketmaker II times (A.D. 1–400) was found in a cave in a cliff area southwest of Moab.[7] There have been other finds in the county from Anasazi times, but this is one of the most spectacular.

As the name implies, the Basketmaker Anasazi culture was noted for its beautifully woven basketry. It also represents the basic societal shift to a sedentary lifestyle of somewhat crude camps in small villages. The Basketmaker III period (A.D. 400–700) saw a more settled village life in valleys and highlands suited to agriculture. Settlements featured pithouses, great communal kivas for social and religious activities, and storage structures. Pottery began to be developed as did rather crude figurines that perhaps had magical uses promoting fertility. The bow and arrow were used in hunting, turkeys were domesticated, and turquoise was used in decoration.

Subsequent Anasazi history is subdivided into what are known as Pueblo periods, distinguished by various developments of architecture, community life, rock art (both painted pictographs and

incised or pecked petroglyphs), and ceramic development and decoration. Pueblo I (A.D. 700–900) saw the growth of villages, the introduction of the important subterranean religious structure, the kiva, and the domestication of cotton. The following two hundred years of the Pueblo II period saw the Anasazi culture reach its maximum geographical distribution (possibly including the occupation of hitherto unoccupied parts of Grand County and certainly into areas of nearby present-day San Juan County) and probably its greatest population. Villages could be quite large—perhaps of one hundred or more individuals—and featured multiroomed contiguous masonry and rock structures, such as those at Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. Roads and signal towers connected settlements and enabled rapid communication throughout their networks.

The Pueblo III period (1100–1300) witnessed what most people regard as the most spectacular Anasazi architecture—the great structures in alcoves, sheltered caves, and cliff-faces, including those at Mesa Verde National Park in southwestern Colorado. It also was the time of the disappearance of the Anasazi. Although many scholars suspect that the Anasazi migrated south to become the Pueblo people of the historic period, their disappearance from their protected villages has been a profound mystery. Why they left is still debated. It seems likely that it was due to a combination of factors: a severe drought (indicated by dendrochronology or tree-ring dating to have afflicted the plateau area between 1276 and 1299); potential water and soil erosion affecting their agricultural capabilities; possible cooler climatic conditions affecting the growing season; a perceived threat from outside invaders, indicated by the highly protected sites for their dwellings; and possibly even internecine competition. Some remains have suggested that the Anasazi may even have resorted to cannibalism,[8] which, if true (and the theory is by no means universally agreed upon), could be a testimony to desperate conditions, stern societal judgment upon transgressors of its laws, or a ferocious hatred towards one's enemies. Other remains have suggested that the Anasazi departure from the area was sudden. Discoverers of some remains reported that in some instances it looked as though the inhabitants had just left—pottery, tools, and other items were left apparently undisturbed. Whatever the cause, the reasons must have

been compelling for the Anasazi to have left behind such cultural and technological wealth. However, it must be recognized that if the Anasazi people had different material values than those of most contemporary Americans they could have deemed it easier to make new pots and tools than to transport such heavy goods for long distances.

According to scholars, Grand County was not an area of major Anasazi habitation, although there is the possibility that extensive village occupation of the Moab area could have occurred and been subsequently destroyed by those coming to the area later. It is thought that the Anasazi made use of the streams exiting the La Sal Mountains, especially as they neared the Colorado River. Mill Creek and Pack Creek in the sheltered and relatively lush Moab Valley must have seemed good areas of habitation to many for millennia; the possibility exists, however, that the locale was just too good and too lacking in natural defenses to be held for long—group after group succeeding each other on the land.

Some rock art and pottery remains found in the Moab area, the river canyons, and in the Arches area have been identified as Anasazi. Anasazi architectural remains have been scanty in Grand County: a few burial and pithouse remains, evidence of temporary campsites and rock quarries in the Arches area, west of Moab, along Mill Creek, and in Castle, Fisher, and Spanish valleys. Art work is somewhat more extensive. Grand County was far from the centers of Anasazi culture to the south—it was on the fringes of the culture's extent and did not feature elements of the culture's highest flourishing.[9] Some local pottery could have been imported, and the Anasazi people were probably influenced by the Fremont people to the north, who are thought to have spoken a different language but with whom they shared some of the land that is today Grand County.[10]

The Fremont culture has only recently been identified as a major cultural group by archaeologists—the name comes from remains discovered in the Fremont river area of central Utah. The Fremont culture has been extensively subdivided by specialists, but it essentially represents a melding of Colorado Plateau and Great Basin cultural traits and peoples. The culture flourished for hundreds of years from the beginning of the Christian era contemporary with, related to, but distinct from the Anasazi, who most likely spoke a different language, among other differences. Grand County was a meeting ground of the

two cultures, and in the county there was likely greater cultural interchange than in other areas where the two cultures were physically more widely separated. Most Fremont artifacts have been found north of the Colorado River, although some rock art drawings and a few artifacts are in the area of Canyonlands National Park.

Although they remained more a hunting and gathering people than did the Anasazi, still the Fremont had adopted an agricultural lifestyle including corn horticulture and pithouse architecture by A.D. 500. They retained certain traits relating to the Plains Indians, such as wearing mocassins rather than sandals such as the Anasazi wore. They also used tipis and shields and did not develop extensive villages like the Anasazi. They had no kivas or other ceremonial structures.

The Fremont did leave hundreds of traces of their habitation on the land, however. These include tool and weapon fragments; some pottery and basketry; some evidences of habitation; a curious, well-constructed type of figurine; and their distinctive and exquisite monumental rock art. Dozens of small sites, graneries, and storage pits have been found throughout Grand County—from the Arches area to the canyons and draws at the base of the Book Cliffs. Four Fremont structures have been excavated from the Book Cliffs to Sevenmile Canyon, northwest of Moab. What is known as the Turner-Look site in the Book Cliffs area of the county was important to archaeologists in actually forming the concept of the Fremont culture. When discovered, the Turner-Look site contained ruins of some nine rooms with masonry walls, numerous hearths, more than 4,000 potsherds, numerous basketry fragments, and side-notched projectile points, among other information of great value to archaeologists. Unlike the great Anasazi ruins to the south, the Fremont structure remnants are not spectacular to the layperson, but remains of hamlets in the Arches area and elsewhere fascinate specialists. When Arches was made a national park in 1971, the National Park Service commissioned a survey of archaelogical sites in the park, and the Bureau of Land Management also conducts surveys and catalogs the findings throughout their county-administered lands. Fremont potsherds identify many sites as relating to the culture. Fremont pottery was a relatively simple gray coil-and-scrape ware, sometimes painted with black decoration or incised or corrugated; it lacked the vibrant



Petroglyphs on cliff walls along the Colorado River south of Moab. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

color and aesthetic decoration of Anasazi polychrome black, red, and white pottery. Another distinctive Fremont artifact is what specialists call their one-rod-and-bundle style of basketry, fragments of which help archaeologists determine the culture's range and lifestyles.

Although little is known of Fremont religious activities, we do know that they constructed small unbaked clay figurines—many with stylized features as well as sculpted and painted decoration. Many of the figurines are anthropomorphic—some abstract and monumental, others more readily recognizable, even representing such things as babies in cradles.[11] It is not known how or even whether these artifacts were featured in the group's religious and social activities; but no matter the use, the figurines bear charming testimony to the artistic skill and inventiveness of the people.

The greatest artistic and cultural monument of the Fremont people, however, is their rock art. Their pictographs emphasize human figures more than does Anasazi rock art. Also, Fremont art seems to possess a type of spirituality or monumentality that is distinct from the more abstract, flexible, or playful Anasazi art. Many figures feature a distinctive trapezoidal shape and rise up on their cliff-faces in dignity and grandeur, often replete with headdresses,

earrings, necklaces, or other decorations. Sometimes eyes are prominently represented, although they seldom have the ghostlike stare that archaeologists have assigned as Barrier Canyon Style pictographs—one of the many styles into which rock art is classified.[12] It is believed that rock art can tell us much about cultures and the movement of concepts and ideologies among the peoples of the region. The spiritual character of Fremont rock art may relate to the fact that the Fremont did not use ceremonial kivas as did the Anasazi, perhaps utilizing their rock art panels for spiritual expression.

The study of rock art is in its infancy and much is being discovered and reclassified almost daily. Theories abound concerning the origins, meanings, and intended purposes of the rock art of various peoples and cultures. Some art in the plateau region is thought to be more than 6,000 years old, and the work ranges through the millennia to historic Ute and other Indian rock drawings from the nineteenth century. Euro-Americans passing through the canyon country often inscribed their names and dates of passage—some of which information has come to be highly valued by historians, as we shall see. In more recent times, such information has had less value—in fact, it is viewed as destructive, and those who have marked the rock in recent years have been seen as defacers of the landscape. Such marking is now illegal.

As disturbing as such handiwork is, another type of destruction—the theft or wanton defacement of other ancient rock art—is a national tragedy. The theft of whole rock art panels deprives us all of the treasure—it is akin to the theft of a masterpiece from an art museum, with the added injury of marring the "museum" itself. Greed at least motivates these "collectors," and it is to be hoped that the original work at least survives somewhere, even if in damaged condition. No such understandable motive is present for those who senselessly destroy, deface, or attempt to erase or obliterate other examples of rock art. It is mindless and senseless vandalism by beings who must be particularly suited to the crime. In a matter of moments artwork that has endured for hundreds or thousands of years can be destroyed. In the cliffs near Moab in April 1980 such a senseless crime was committed. The exquisite Courthouse panel was vandalized, the defacers actually attempting to erase it from the walls while adding grafitti of their own. Restoration experts have been able to repair

some of the damage, but the panel is only a pale echo of its former magnificence and is a bitter reminder of how fragile is our past, how subject to vicious acts of human violence.

Many artifacts have been stripped from the land—tourists, collectors, and other "discoverers" claiming them. This seems to be in part a legacy of our general culture but more particularly of our nineteenth-century approach to the lands of the public domain: land that could be scoured for private gain—whether it be an individual coming upon an arrowhead or great corporations "developing"—that is, stripping—the natural resources of the land. Native Americans have lamented the desecration of their heritage for decades, and laws are being enacted to return some cultural artifacts to the tribes from which they were taken. We would do well to consider that if any of our histories are to survive, we all must cultivate a respect for others and for our common heritage.

Perhaps it is fortunate that some of the stripping of cultural artifacts was done by or for great museums and other collections that have preserved the artifacts for posterity. Unfortunately, however, much information that we could have gained about the Anasazi, Fremont, and other ancient people was lost when the pieces of the physical culture were removed from their site contexts. Archaeologists, like geologists, reconstruct the past using the principle of stratification—elements normally are successively buried over time and thus relate chronologically to other elements buried above or beneath them. This produces a type of relative dating that is linked to an actual time period by such scientific analyses as carbon-14 dating or dendrochronology. Archaeologists face the challenge of examining the past while at the same time endeavoring to protect it from the ravages of time and nature, let alone the senseless destruction or theft of the artifacts by other humans. That they have been able to understand much about the past and its people is a credit to their intelligence and ingenuity; more information can only be gained with the informed cooperation of the general public.

Such protection was recently evidenced with the great collection of rock art in Sego Canyon in northwestern Grand County at the foot of the Book Cliffs a few miles north of Thompson. Ute Indians consider the site to be sacred, and the canyon is an archaeological treasure, featuring pictographs spanning centuries of occupation of the area. Recently, in 1993, in the process of protecting some of the art

panels, other pictographs that had been obscured by water-seepage stains on the rock were restored to view through the work of preservationist Constance Silvers.[13]

The Fremont people appear to have abandoned Grand County (and the entire region) around A.D. 1300–1400, near the time that the Anasazi abandoned their own area. Perhaps the two groups faced a similar threat, although there are some students who believe that the Fremont were absorbed by or emerged as the historic Numic-speaking Ute, Piute, and Shoshoni people of the region, who in any case are known to have moved into the area by the sixteenth century. Their incursions are thought by some scholars to have begun as early as the twelfth century. The Fremont may have reverted under pressure—whether climatic or hostile invasion, or a combination of both—to the hunting-gathering lifestyle they had never completely abandoned. They also may have moved to areas more suitable for agriculture, as it is thought that the Anasazi did.

The new inhabitants of the land were hunter-gatherers who lived in rudimentary brush structures and practiced a simple lifestyle compared to that of their predecessors. They did not cultivate agricultural products or practice masonry building. They are thought to have produced a small amount of pottery (though it is possible that they salvaged some of what they used from that left by the earlier inhabitants of the area), some basketry, and also some rock art to celebrate their tenure on the land. It is these people—primarily the dominant Ute tribes—who occupied the land at the time of its discovery by Europeans in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

ENDNOTES

1. The interested reader is again referred to good encyclopedia articles for a basic background on theories of migration to the North American continent; more specific studies can be found in the bibliography.

2. See Robert H. Lister and Florence C. Lister, *Those Who Came Before* (Globe, AZ: Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1983), for an excellent study of the ancient civilizations of the American Southwest. The references cited in that book provide additional information.

3. Lloyd M. Pierson, *Cultural Resource Summary of the East Central Portion of the Moab District* (1980), presents a good summary of archaeo-

logical evidence of past cultures in the Grand County area. This is currently in the process of being updated by the Bureau of Land Management. I have been allowed to study the draft of the document, written by Jonathon C. Horn, Alan D. Reed, and Susan M. Chandler. It is titled *Grand Resource Area Class I Cultural Resource Inventory* (1994), and when it is made available to the general public it will provide an excellent summary of archaeological research in the general Grand County area.

4. See David Succec, "Seeing Spirits: Initial Identification of Representations of Shamans in Barrier Canyon Rock Art," *Canyon Legacy* 16:2–11.

5. See Bruce D. Louthan, "Orchard Pithouse," *Canyon Legacy* 7:26–27. Other articles in that same issue also provide information about archaeological discoveries in the area.

6. See Lister and Lister, *Those Who Came Before* (1983).

7. Julie Howard, "Anasazi Burden Basket," *Canyon Legacy* 7:21–23.

8. Shane A. Baker, "Rattlesnake Ruin: The Question of Cannibalism and Violence in the Anasazi Culture," *Canyon Legacy* 17:2–12.

9. Lloyd Pierson has pointed out that in their relation to their cultural center, inhabitants of the county could be seen as analagous to those residents of the county today in their own relation to the urban lifeways of general American culture. Pierson, *Cultural Resource Summary*, p. 64.

10. A new classification—the Gateway culture— recently has been proposed by some archaeologists to account for sites on the fringes of Anasazi and Fremont cultures, such as the area south of the Colorado River in Grand County. Although this may come to be widely accepted, for a general study such as this the earlier classification of such sites as outlying Anasazi should be adequate. As with most scientific disciplines, concepts of physical anthropology are constantly undergoing scrutiny and revision.

11. See Jacki Montgomery, "The Huntington Canyon Figurines," *Canyon Legacy* 7:6–10. See also David B. Madsen, *Exploring the Fremont* (Salt Lake City: Utah Museum of Natural History, 1989).

12. Among the many good books on rock art of the Colorado Plateau country are: Sally Cole, *Legacy on Stone: Rock Art of the Colorado Plateau and Four Corners Region* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1990); Kenneth B. Castleton, *Petroglyphs and Pictographs of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah Museum of Natural History, 1979); F. A. Barnes, *Canyon Country Prehistoric Rock Art* (Salt Lake City: Wasatch Publishers, 1982); and Polly Schaafsma, *The Rock Art of Utah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971). Good books on the subject are being regularly published, and the interested reader is advised to consult libraries for other works.

13. Jerry Spangler, "Project Aims to Restore Rock Art Panel," *Deseret News*, 21 August 1993, p. B-1; see also Christopher Smith, "Activists Don't Want Prehistoric Billboards Ruined Again," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 October 1993, p. D-9.

4

The Historic Period: Native Americans and the First Europeans

In historic times the dominant Native American group in the Grand County area has been the Ute Indians. The ancestors of the Ute Indians are thought to have migrated into the area of the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau perhaps as early as the twelfth century, after beginning their wanderings sometime around A.D. 1000 in the area that is now southern California. The Utes as well as the Paiutes and Shoshone Indians speak Numic—a branch of the Uto-Aztecan language. Although there is some dispute regarding the date of their entrance into the area and the extent of their domain, they were the dominant Native American group at the time of extensive European contact in the eighteenth century.

The Utes shared the land with members of other tribes. In the late nineteenth century there were Paiutes in Grand County, and their ancestors may have been there long before; however, it appears to modern researchers that many frontier observers classified as Paiutes some people who were actually Utes. It is also possible that Navajo Indians immigrated into the region as early as the fourteenth century, although there appears to have been little occupation of

Grand County, the Athabaskan-language-speaking Navajos taking up land farther south. However, a Navajo burial site of undetermined but substantial antiquity was discovered in Courthouse Wash near Moab in 1916 according to the 25 February issue of the *Grand Valley Times* that year. Unfortunately, the remains were removed and subsequently exhibited; they were not examined by scholars and it is not known what happened to them.[1] In 1855, Navajos were among those living in or frequenting Spanish Valley.

Prior to their contact with Europeans, the Utes ranged throughout much of the Great Basin and northern Colorado Plateau territory following a hunting-gathering lifestyle singly or in groups of two to two dozen people. These small groups were largely family units and were part of larger bands in the area—the bands being to a great extent defined by the territory they inhabited. The great variety of territory and environmental settings in which the various groups lived—from mountains to plains to riparian areas to deserts—led to different lifestyles and strategies for survival. The different bands considered themselves distinct, yet interrelationships including intermarriage and trade were maintained among the bands.[2]

Archaeological studies reveal that Utes in the area were skillful basketmakers and that they also made a simple brown style of pottery. They created rock art—both pictographs and petroglyphs—throughout the area. Some is identifiable by its subject matter, such as portraying people on horseback (horses not being associated with Archaic, Fremont, or Anasazi peoples), but experts often are further able to identify the rock art of different periods and peoples by their distinctive styles and motifs. Ute Indian technology included making fire with fire drills; the Utes also used bows and arrows with stone points as well as other stone tools in the years before they made contact with Europeans. They decorated themselves with paints and various ornaments, and clothed themselves with animal skins. Pieces of their games and toys have been found. Brush and willow shelters and windbreaks were most common, but caves and other natural areas were also used for dwelling places and protection from natural elements. Some groups in the nineteenth century used a four-pole-foundation tipi covered with elk or buffalo hides. Evidence of both cremation and burial of the dead has been found.

The foraging bands followed the cycle of the seasons, coming together into larger units for special harvests and hunts as well as for social and religious activities. Records from historical times confirm the basic archaeological picture of the Native Americans. Almost all types of animals—from elk and bison to smaller mammals and birds to lizards and insects—were hunted by means of stalking, driving, ambushing, or through snares and traps. Some Utes fished using basket traps, spears, weirs, or bows and arrows. A wide variety of plants was used for food, implements, and shelter. These included acorns, pinyon nuts, berries, roots and tubers, grasses, sunflower seeds, yucca, and cacti. Wild tobacco was smoked. Meats were dried and preserved. Food could be roasted, baked, or even boiled in pitch-lined baskets by means of dropping hot stones into the water-filled containers. A rudimentary agriculture employing irrigation techniques was also practiced by some Native Americans, as is evidenced by the garden plot with corn, melons, and squash that the Mormons found when they came to settle Spanish Valley in 1855.

The Utes are believed to have acquired the horse from contact with the Spanish around the year 1640. Southern Utes acquired the animal first, and its use spread gradually northward, although some Ute bands never did use horses for travel. Those who did use the animal soon became expert horsemen, ranging from their mountain strongholds out onto the plains in hunting and raiding parties. It is thought that Utes in Utah did not make much use of horses until about 1820. By the time of extensive historical contact, Ute lands extended from the area of Fillmore, Utah, to as far east as present-day Colorado Springs and the Colorado Front Range, and from northern New Mexico to southern Wyoming.

Utes in New Mexico generally had more peaceful relations with the Spanish than did the more northern bands, which raided Spanish and Pueblo settlements in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ute deer hides were in demand as a trade item, and between their raiding and trading activities many Utes became powerful and well mounted. The Utes generally maintained good relations with the western Shoshone people—also Numic speakers—of the Great Basin, with whom they intermarried. However, as a slave trade developed

with the Spanish, the more aggressive mounted Utes began to prey upon their unmounted Shoshone and Paiute neighbors.[3]

Historians differ in their count of the major Ute bands; the number seems to vary between six and ten according to the criteria used by various historians because of the loose social organization and group mobility of the Utes—each band being roughly defined by the territory over which it ranged. The Utes adapted to the resources of their particular territories, those in the western desert areas of Grand County following a hunting-gathering lifestyle similar to that of the Paiutes of the Great Basin and the Archaic culture people of earlier millennia. These Utes did not make use of horses for transportation in contrast to those Utes inhabiting the La Sal Mountain area.

It appears that Grand County was an area frequented by many different Ute groups: those of the Colorado Plateau deserts to the north, south, and west, those of the mountains and plains to the east, and those of the Book Cliffs and Uinta Basin to the north. Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century sources seem to indicate that the land was part of the territory of the Weeminuche band of western Colorado, although some historians place the county within the sphere of other Ute bands such as the Parianuc and the Tabeguache (Uncompahgre). This disagreement indicates the paucity of information available to historians and the limited studies that have thus far been conducted.

It is also possible that all these bands (and more) did frequent the area—territorial boundaries were flexible among Native Americans, particularly those of the same general tribe. Utes were not inclined to aggressively defend their possession of an area, especially since all the bands were highly mobile, particularly those with horses, and some individuals were exceptionally great travelers, journeying regularly on trading or raiding expeditions as far as southern California and New Mexico from areas of eastern Utah and western Colorado.

The Utes in the area of Grand County included both desert dwellers who used the horse only occasionally for food or trade and those Utes from the mountainous areas who used the horse for transportation. All of the various Ute bands are thought to have been basically friendly to one another, maintaining a loose confederation. Intermarriage was a frequent occurrence; the lifestyle seemed gener-

ally relaxed and informal. Bands were generally small and mobile, larger associations being formed only for special purposes. As one historian expressed it, leaders developed "because people chose to follow them, not because they chose to govern."[4]

Ute people in general had a developed spiritual awareness and an animistic approach to nature; Indian ways were generally well-adapted to the land in which they lived. The land was treated with respect and conservation of resources was the rule. Shamans and healers were important to the people; so too were dancing and song. Birth, puberty, and death were marked by important rituals—the Sun Dance was especially noteworthy: through it the group bonded together and various individuals also used it as a vehicle to attain visions or spiritual direction. There was a definite belief in immortality among the people, a belief that facilitated the missionary activities of the incoming Mormons and others. The Utes in common with other Native Americans valued their culture; their life was centered around the family—an extended family that included grandparents and cousins. Households were generally matriarchal, and there was a regular division of labor practiced by the sexes; children were often indulged, and elders were treated with respect.

Native Americans—including the Ute people—could be aggressive and warlike towards those outside of their own tribe, and prowess in hunting and warfare was prized. Certain Indian manners and customs were considered barbaric by the European and American newcomers, who often did not recognize their own warlike aggression which they clothed in concepts like "civilization," "Christianity," and "Manifest Destiny." Nevertheless, the intergroup raiding, killing, and slave capturing and trading are sufficient to show that the inhabitants of the continent had not achieved a paradise on earth, though it must often have been remembered as almost paradisiacal to those who witnessed the troubles to come.

Many of the Indian societal character traits put them at a disadvantage in the new scheme of things being gradually imposed upon them and upon the land by the explorers and the immigrants who followed. The two groups neither conceived of nor valued property in the same way: wealth was shared by most Indians rather than husbanded, and the notions of competition and status were not the

same. Although they did gain such goods as horses, tools, and western weapons, ultimately contact with the newcomers was detrimental to the Utes as it was to almost all other Native American people. Resources were gradually stripped from the land—most dramatically the beaver and bison—and soon the land itself was appropriated, the parcels considered less desirable being apportioned to the surviving Indians. These people had often become dependent upon some of the more destructive of white men's goods, such as alcohol. The once proud people were effectively relegated to the margins of a society which had thrust itself upon them. It is a sad and troubling story—one enacted in Grand County as elsewhere.

In 1919 Peter Gottfredson recorded what he claimed was a Ute and Paiute myth of creation in which the Indians endeavored to account for the differences between themselves and the whites. In the beginning, so the account goes, all the world was lovely and at peace, with abundant resources for all to share. Towats, the creator god, lived in the south and had two sons. The older was quiet and independent—the father of the Indians. The younger was a crybaby who wanted all that he saw. He was the father of the whites, who inherit his disposition and are more clever at getting what they want.[5]

In 1540 the Spanish conquistador Francisco Coronado had traveled as far north as Kansas in his search for riches, and other Spaniards began to roam extensively in the Southwest shortly thereafter. Besides the Seven Cities of Cibola for which Coronado searched, the Spaniards had also heard rumors of fabulous Lake Copala and El Gran Teguayo, which historians have related to the lands around the Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake. It is possible that Juan de Oñate, governor of New Mexico, was told of the Utes in the early 1600s. Spanish historical records mention the "Yutas" as early as 1620 but do not mention the extent of their domain. In 1626 Fray Geronimo Salmerón wrote of the Yutas, by whom he meant all speakers of the Shoshonean dialect.[6] To help provide a work force and domestic help, from their early period in Mexico and their northern province of New Mexico the Spanish enslaved Native Americans, some of whom learned the Spanish language and acquaintance with European tools and other goods. Occasionally members of various tribes, including Utes, were freed by the Spanish to serve as inter-

preters and help foster relations with their tribes during a 200-year period of shifting alliances and warfare among the Spanish, Utes, Comanches, Apaches, Navajos, and other Native American tribes. Called *genizaros,* these Indians helped introduce their fellows to European practices and goods.

The greatest Ute acquisition from the European newcomers was the horse, which altered their way of life as they adopted certain aspects of Plains culture such as the use of tipis and various items of dress. When the Spanish were briefly driven from New Mexico with the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 more horses were appropriated. Colonial records were destroyed at that time, resulting in a loss of much information, possibly including records of early contacts between Utes and the Spanish newcomers. The earliest known records of Utes being enslaved by the Spanish are from 1716; what may have happened before is conjecture. What is known, however, is that Ute tribes with the horse often adopted an aggressive, raiding lifestyle that greatly increased their wealth, power, and territory at the expense of the Spanish and other Native American tribes. Ute society became more complex as family groups gave way to larger, more predatory raiding groups.

The Spanish regained control of New Mexico in the 1690s and renewed their exploration and trade activities. With Spanish expansion, the slave trade became more lucrative and was expanded, young Indian women and children being particularly desired by the newcomers. Utes not only provided captured slaves of other tribes to the Spanish but were themselves sometimes captured. The resulting exchange of cultural and geographical information was a benefit to the Spanish, who thus learned about the Utes and their lands—information that later aided the explorers, missionaries, and traders who soon ventured into those areas, including Grand County. In an attempt to avoid unduly irritating Native Americans on the frontier and thus jeopardizing official relations, the Spanish began to prohibit unauthorized groups from venturing into Indian-controlled territory. In 1712 Governor Juan Ignacio Flores Mogollon forbade Spanish traders from venturing into Ute lands.[7] This, however, did not stop some daring and ambitious traders from entering the area. Professor Ted Warner has written that "there are numerous sugges-

tions in documents . . . that Spaniards on authorized as well as unauthorized expeditions penetrated southeastern Utah before 1776."[8]

The Utes made a trade treaty with the Spanish in 1749 and the two groups generally coexisted peacefully, the Utes being especially effective procurers of slaves for the Europeans. The first documented historical contact between Indians of Grand County and Europeans occurred in 1765, although it is believed that at least one trading group had earlier entered the general area and that a few punitive military forays had traveled north after the colony of New Spain (New Mexico) was established in 1598.[9] How many others set forth illegally into the unknown will forever remain unknown, but the number could never have been large.

In 1765 Juan María Antonio de Rivera led what were long believed to be two trading and prospecting expeditions from Santa Fe into the area of southwestern Colorado. The discovery of Rivera's journal in 1975 reveals that he was instructed by Governor Tomás Vélez Cachupín of Santa Fe to head a reconnaissance expedition to verify if possible the existence and nature of the Colorado River and its canyons in the upper reaches of the river, which had become the subject of much legend. The expedition was small—only a few whites accompanied by some *genizaros.* Due to the hostility of Ute Indians to any Spanish military reconnaissance, the members of the group were disguised as a trading party. According to historian G. Clell Jacobs, the fact that the basically unarmed groups were able to accomplish their purpose was in great measure due to Rivera himself: "It succeeded, despite the odds, on the basis of its leader's great personal courage, determination, and diplomacy with the native groups."[10]

The group first journeyed to the Aneth area south of present Grand County in June and July 1765. After returning to Abiquiu, New Mexico, the party set out north again in October. Utes in southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah tried to obstruct the journey and discourage the group. The Indians concocted stories of fearsome people along the proposed route; some of these mythical folk had enormous ears, others had only one large foot, some had tails, some strawheads, some were made of stone, others ate children.[11] The Spaniards persisted in their journey. They were finally led

to a Tabeguache Ute camp southwest of present-day Moab. The local chief, Tanampechi, tried to dissuade Rivera and his group from finding and crossing the Colorado River, but Rivera began to see through the plot to keep him from the river and persevered in expressing his desires. He eventually wore down the Indians' resistance and led his party to the Colorado River. Rivera's journal indicates that he reached the Colorado River in Grand County, perhaps traveling a route through the La Sal Mountains and then down Castle Valley to its junction with the river, which was crossed at that place.[12] Some authorities believe that he came down Spanish Valley to the river; others think that he could have come up to the river from the Kane Springs area to the south. On a large white poplar in the meadow near the crossing Rivera left a carving of a large cross with the words "Viva Jesus" above and his name and the date below; however, the inscribed tree has never been found nor has any mention of it been discovered in others' journals, leaving the exact point of crossing a moot point.[13] Although the exact crossing point is not known, Rivera crossed the river and met some friendly Ute Indians on the other side. It is then believed that his party returned by way of Castle Valley in late October or early November.[14]

Rivera's expeditions were among many sent out by colonial authorities in New Mexico who were intent on broadening their understanding and control of the Southwest after putting down the Pueblo Revolt and regaining control in 1692. The crossing-point of the Colorado was known by the Spanish as the Ute Crossing, and what became known as the Ute Slave Trail (later Old Spanish Trail) continued from that crossing to the crossing of the Green River. Other explorers and traders most likely ventured into the vicinity after Rivera, the most noteworthy being the expedition of Domínguez and Escalante in 1776.

The Domínguez-Escalante expedition, the journals of which include written descriptions of parts of Grand County, was guided in part by two *genizaro* Ute Indians, who were named Silvestre and Joaquin by the friars.[15] Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez was the head of the expedition, charged among other things with finding a route between the Catholic missions in New Mexico and California. Fray Silvestre Vélez de Escalante had resided longer in New Mexico

and kept the official journal of the expedition, resulting in his greater familiarity to modern readers. It is believed by some historians that Domínguez and Escalante actually intended to follow Rivera's route but got lost in the mountains of southwestern Colorado. The delay eventually forced them to abandon their own goal of reaching the California missions. They finally returned to Santa Fe after a time of much trouble trying to get past the barriers of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River. Although this expedition never actually set foot in Grand County, it paved the way for further explorations of the area. The expedition's cartographer, Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, also made the first reasonably accurate maps of the region.

The Franciscan friars recorded the name La Sal for the county's mountains, which they saw to the west—a name known to their Ute Indian guides and to their Spanish guide, Andres Muniz. Escalante wrote in his diary that the Indians called the range "Sierra de la Sal because close to it there are salt flats where, according to what we were told, the Yutas who live hereabouts get their salt."[16] The importance of this expedition was profound and is well documented; the knowledge gained by the friars and the good will that they fostered with the Ute Indians of the region, particularly the powerful Tumpanawach band around Utah Lake, were important to other explorers, traders, and fur trappers who followed.

Within a couple of years of the Domínguez-Escalante expedition, in 1778, Spanish colonial authorities reissued a proclamation of 1775 that prohibited unofficial trade with the Utes. According to the governor, Francisco Trebol Navarro, the prohibition was enacted to protect the Utes from unscrupulous traders who might well anger the Indians into undertaking hostile activity. However, the Domínguez-Escalante expedition encouraged many individuals who were still willing to break the laws. Spanish colonial records show that various individuals were prosecuted for trading with the Utes in the 1780s and 1790s.[17] The laws stayed in effect until Mexico took over political control of the territory when it gained independence from Spain in 1821 and again opened trade with the Ute Indians. Even before this, however, the restrictions were relaxed in the early 1800s, and the Spanish authorities did encourage some official trade with the Utes and with other tribes, in part to help gain them as allies against the

increasing numbers of Americans. Mexican authorities continued to woo the Utes, using as a diplomatic tool the trade goods, including metal implements and weapons, in which the Utes were interested.

Frederick Dellenbaugh contrasted the Spanish padres with the newcomers—the mountain men and the immigrants who followed them—by using a few effective images when he wrote:

> The former fitted well into the strange scenery; they became a part of it; they fraternized with the various tribes native to the land, . . . They were like a few mellow figures blended skilfully into the deep tones of an ancient canvas. But now the turbulent spirit of the raging river itself pervades the new-comers who march imperiously upon the mighty stage with the heavy tread of the conqueror, out of tune with the soft old melody; temporising with nothing; with a heedless stroke, like the remosrseless hand of Fate, obliterating all obstacles to their progress. Not theirs the desire to save natives from perdition; rather to annihilate them speedily as useless relics of a bygone time.[18]

Though Dellenbaugh overstated his case in some ways, the fact remains that the attitude of the two groups was different, and although some of the early trappers worked harmoniously with the Native Americans, even to the extent of marrying into tribes and almost fully adopting their ways, these newcomers still comprised the vanguard of a new invading and conquering army that would sweep the Native Americans from their paths and former lifeways.

Although unofficial trading was illegal for the remaining years of Spanish control until Mexican independence in 1821, extensive illegal trade and mining activity is thought by many historians to have flourished throughout the West. The fact that regular trade was readily established in 1821 suggests that traders were well acquainted with those with whom they traded. The recorded journeys to the Utah Lake area by Manuel Mestas in 1805 and by the Maurico Arzé–Lagos García party in 1813 indicate that such expeditions were not unusual to either the travelers or the Native Americans.[19] The latter group, in fact, was forced to flee the area over a slave trade disagreement and retreated to a river crossing—either the Green River or the Colorado River at Moab, the record is not clear—where they met a chief

Guasache (Wasatch) of the Utes, who, it was reported, was there to trade with them "as was his custom."[20]

It is thought that early in the 1800s trappers and fur traders from the United States began to enter and become familiar with what was to become Utah Territory, and it is believed that they made use of much of the same territory as did the New Mexicans, perhaps even entering into joint trading or trapping ventures with the latter. Because of the prohibition on trade, however, little is known about such activities; much must be inferred from later developments and the mutual familiarity that was noted and remarked upon once restrictions were relaxed in 1821. The fur trade then really began to flourish, and for the next twenty-five years or so the West was explored as never before by hundreds of trappers and mountain men searching especially for beaver pelts to satisfy the fashion demands for hats in Europe and the eastern United States.

For many years a tale told by Daniel Coyner in 1847 of events that supposedly happened in 1810 (or perhaps as late as 1813) was believed to show that American trappers were in the vicinity of Moab at that early date. Though the tale is now believed to be a fabrication, it remains possible that anonymous American trappers were in the area around that time or shortly thereafter. Briefly, the tale relates that two American trappers, James Workman and Samuel Spencer, were among three survivors of an Indain massacre of seventeen of their comrades while trapping in the Rocky Mountains. They attempted to reach Santa Fe by descending what they thought was a tributary of the Rio Grande. Instead, it was a tributary of the Colorado River which they followed until they came to a well-traveled trail intersecting the river (at present-day Moab). They began to follow the trail east until they met a trading caravan heading in the opposite direction to California. They joined the caravan and wintered in Los Angeles, returning by way of the trail to Santa Fe the following spring. It made a good story, and though many historians feel that the date is too early for an established Old Spanish Trail, others are not so certain. What is known is that within a few years the Spanish Trail was a major thoroughfare in the Southwest. The trail flourished during the brief period of Mexican control of the area; it faded to

only occasional use as other routes developed about the time the United States gained control of the area in 1848.

In the 1820s trappers began to frequent the region in increasing numbers, many of them being based in Taos, New Mexico. In 1824 William Wolfskill and Ewing Young, among others, were trapping the headwaters of the San Juan River in Colorado, and Antoine Robidoux and the French-Canadian Etienne Provost were among those farther north trapping the southern headwaters of the Grand (Colorado) River. Provost and a partner, François Leclerc, traveled west and established a base camp at the junction of the Green and White rivers in today's Uintah County, Utah. It is believed that they traveled through areas of Grand County, most likely along an established Spanish or Indian trail, especially through the Book Cliffs region and the area of Westwater Creek in the northeastern portion of the county. The general route through the Book Cliffs to the rich trapping and trade areas of Uintah County (particularly Browns Hole) is now known as the Old Trappers Trail, although all branches of it were most likely Indian paths and trails before trappers began to use them. Trappers of many nationalities, including Juan Valdez, French-Canadian Jean Baptiste Chalifoux, Kit Carson, and Antoine Leroux (who was born in St. Louis of French and Spanish parents) were among the many thought to have been in the Tavaputs Plateau region in the 1820s and 1830s. The Old Trappers Trail had many branches and areas of entrance (or egress) from the canyons exiting the Book Cliffs, but Westwater Creek was perhaps the most used of the southern routes. In any event, it is among the most noted, as it is the location of a famous inscription carved on the canyon walls by Antoine Robidoux in 1837 as he traveled north to establish a forerunner of his famous trading post Fort Uintah in the Uinta Basin.[21]

In 1825 William Ashley floated down the Green River into Desolation Canyon, perhaps entering present-day Grand County. In the autumn of 1826 James Ohio Pattie claimed to have followed the Colorado River from Arizona to the Rocky Mountains; if his narrative is truthful, he thus would have passed through the heart of the county. By 1830 most of the area was well known to fur trappers, and it is that year which most historians assign as the opening of the great

era of the Old Spanish Trail as a trade route, though parts of the trail certainly were used previously.

Like the Old Trappers Trail, the Old Spanish Trail was not a single well-defined path—it had many variants, some of which passed through Grand County. The route connected the missions of southern California on the west with the New Mexico centers of Taos and Santa Fe on the east. It was a long, meandering route with a major loop to the north crossing Grand County and extending well into the central portion of Utah before continuing southwestward out of Utah through what is now Washington County and on through Las Vegas Springs, eventually reaching Los Angeles. From 1830 to 1848 it was the major trading and travel route through the Southwest, a more southerly direct east–west route being avoided because of hostile Indian tribes and even more forbidding desert conditions. Good crossing points of the Colorado and Green rivers are few in the plateau country; once a northern route was opted for, it was necessary for the trail to intersect the great rivers at convenient crossing points. The Colorado at Moab and the Green River at the site of the future Utah town of the same name are natural crossing points of the two great rivers. It is possible that the trail looped so unexpectedly far north after it crossed the Green River in order to take advantage of trading opportunities with the powerful and wealthy Ute tribe (the Tumpanawach) of the Utah Valley region.

The main route of the Spanish Trail entered Grand County by coming northwest from southwestern Colorado up over the foothills of the La Sal Mountains from the south into Spanish Valley, then descending that valley to a crossing of the Grand River at two or three possible places near Moab. (A variant of the main trail entered the county via Lisbon Valley and Kane Spring, then went upriver to a river crossing near Moab.) The trail then proceeded up Moab Valley or Courthouse Wash to a known water source at Courthouse Springs. It then continued northwesterly towards the Book Cliffs and a crossing of the Green River near the present city of that name, exiting the county. A major variant of the trail—called by many the northern branch—traveled east of the La Sal Range, entering Grand County one of two ways: via the Dolores River or by way of the Grand River Valley farther north. The first variant crossed the river near present-

day Dewey and proceeded northwest until it met the other northern route traveling west along the Grand River Valley/Cisco Desert area near the face of the Book Cliffs, which it roughly paralleled to the above-mentioned crossing of the Green River.

Grand County was thus at the heart of both major variants of the trail and was crossed by hundreds of travelers during the brief heyday of the route. The basic paths have continued to be used in subsequent years: the northern branch is currently the route of I-70 and the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad line, while the main branch through the county is approximated by U.S. Highway 191 from Crescent Junction through Moab and then south through Spanish Valley to Blanding, Monticello, and points south.

The first documented use of the complete trail from Santa Fe to Los Angeles was by American trappers William Wolfskill and George C. Yount, who led a party across the trail in the winter of 1830–31. They remained in California, thus also becoming the first immigrants known to have used the trail. In the following twenty years more than 150 other New Mexicans immigrated to California along the route. In 1837 William Pope and Isaac Slover moved their families from Taos to California along the northern branch of the trail. They used a wagon, showing that such travel was possible on the northern branch; no wagons are known to have been used on the main trail.

The Spanish Trail was primarily a trading route—a route for pack horses and mules, usually traveling in great caravans along the difficult path. A lucrative trade developed in which New Mexican blankets were exchanged for California horses and mules. Regular yearly caravans of hundreds of animals and up to 200 men developed along the trail. A brisk trade in Indian slaves also developed, as has been mentioned, the warlike Utes often capturing and selling the less aggressive Paiutes and others. In addition, the Spanish Trail was also used by horse thieves—Indian and white—who periodically raided the vast California ranchos, stealing thousands of animals.

Sheep were also moved along portions of the Spanish Trail prior to 1847 by Miles Goodyear, who brought some of the animals from Santa Fe to his trading post on the Weber River at present-day Ogden. The California Gold Rush created a great demand for livestock after 1849 and it is believed that thousands of animals were

trailed to California along both branches of the Old Spanish Trail. A Captain Angley herded 8,000 sheep to California in 1850; Dick Wooten trailed 9,000 there in 1852, and others later followed.[22]

Trappers made use of eastern portions of the Spanish Trail during the brief period from the mid-1820s to the 1840s, during which time those areas in the county not previously known to the Spanish were most likely explored by American fur trappers. As mentioned, the Uintah Basin was a major center of activity, and the Green, Colorado, and their tributaries were well explored and trapped. Narratives, including those of travelers Rufus B. Sage and Joseph Williams, indicate that trappers worked in the vicinity of Grand County. Additional evidence is found in inscriptions carved on canyon walls by early trappers.

Perhaps the most notable scribe, though little known as a trapper, was Denis Julien. Called the "mysterious" D. Julien by historians for many years, a little more is now known about the man, who it appears was born in the 1770s and is mentioned in parish records in St. Louis. His name is far more widely known from some half-dozen inscriptions he carved in canyon walls throughout the region of the Green and Colorado rivers. Eight inscriptions are known, but the authenticity of a few is doubted by some researchers. The earliest is dated 1831; the latest, 9 June 1844, is found in the Devils Garden area of Arches National Park. Julien is thought to have been a trapper and trader based for a time at one of Robidoux's forts. His most famous inscription is from the mouth of Hell Roaring Canyon in Grand County; it features a drawing of a winged object and also a boat with a sail, leading to much speculation about his mode of travel on the rivers. It and two others are from the year 1836, and some historians speculate that that year Julien traveled upriver from at least Cataract Canyon (one inscription is now buried by the waters of Lake Powell) to Labyrinth Canyon and north on the Green River. Besides revealing his desire to memorialize himself, the Julien inscriptions show a wide-ranging trapper, indicating that if others did likewise—a reasonable assumption—the area of Grand County was well known to trappers long before the mid-nineteenth century.[23]

Beaver pelts (worth at the time from five to fifteen dollars each) were the regional currency for the period of the trapping era; how-

ever, with the depletion of the beaver and the changing taste of fashion, the era was brief. By the 1840s it was history and Grand County was little used by anyone except the area's Native Americans and the trading caravans that passed along the Old Spanish Trail. North of the county, Antoine Robidoux's Fort Uncompahgre was burned by Ute Indians in 1844 and his Fort Uintah was soon abandoned. Although it was brief, the era of the trapper and the beaver trade had a lasting impact: it transformed the West, making it known to Americans, many of whom were bent on claiming it for their own.[24]

The Utes were thought to have become friendly with many American trappers while also taking advantage of the desire of the Mexican authorities to win their friendship as allies against the incoming Americans, whose numbers were already beginning to worry the Mexican government. The Ute Indians participated in the trappers' rendezvous from 1825 to 1841 and generally traded furs and pelts for guns and for other tools and equipment.[25] The Americans, with more manufactured goods and weapons, had superior trade goods to those of the Spanish.[26] In the process of trading, many Ute bands became quite well armed, employing the smoothbore musket, or fusil, of the period. However, many also were introduced to and debilitated by liquor supplied by the whites. Ute culture was definitely undergoing a metamorphosis during that period.[27]

The fur trade and the trade on the Spanish Trail both perhaps initially benefitted the Utes of the plateau area. There was some increased prosperity as the bands were able to exchange pelts, horses and mules, and captured Indian slaves for goods. In the case of the trail, some powerful Ute bands were even able to exact a toll or tribute from trading caravans: it is known that by 1837 the powerful Ute leader Walkara (Walker) was employing his power to his advantage, exacting a toll from trading caravans at the crossing of the Green River near the present-day Utah city of that name. Certain authorities maintain that in the nineteenth century the area around Moab was actually the territory of a small band of Utes called the Sheberetch. Little is known about this band except that they were in the area at the time of the first entry of Mormons into Spanish Valley and that they remained there until disappearing from history in the 1870s.[28]

Some trappers were aware of the lucrative horse-stealing forays

made by Indians against Mexican southern California ranchos in which hundreds and even thousands of horses and mules were stolen at one time and then herded east along the Old Spanish Trail. Actually, in fact, it is thought that the American fur trapper Pegleg Smith began stealing California horses as early as 1829 and perhaps inspired certain Utes to take up the practice. In 1840 Smith joined with some thirty others including Old Bill Williams and Walkara to steal more than 3,000 animals. Though the thieves often lost many of their stolen animals to heat and thirst—in the instance above, some 50 percent of the animals died along the trail—what remained was usually sufficient to make the rewards profitable. With friction increasing between the United States and Mexico, some trappers were able to reason that they were performing a patriotic service when they joined the ranks of the thieves. During the Mexican War, black mountain man James P. Beckwourth considered his horse-stealing forays to be patriotic, weakening the enemy. In fact, with the coming of peace and California soon to be joined to the Union, many U.S. trappers ceased their rustling. Pegleg Smith summed up their attitude: "I never make war on my own people."[29]

The area that was to become the state of Utah was still claimed by Mexico until 1848; but with the notion of Manifest Destiny sweeping the United States and that country's citizens in turn sweeping westward across North America, it began to seem inevitable—even God's will, according to some—that the continent would become American territory. John C. Frémont, the great western explorer and son-in-law of Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton, who was one of the great proponents of Manifest Destiny and American expansionism, passed north of Grand County in 1843 and 1845 on his government-sponsored expeditions which began to map and assess the country that nominally belonged to Mexico.

Although the entire continent never became U.S. territory, much of it was gained by the far more powerful American forces after war developed between the United States and Mexico following the annexation of Texas in 1845. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ending the Mexican War ceded to the United States a great tract of land south of the forty-second parallel, including all of the Colorado Plateau and present state of Utah. Much of that land had already

been tramped by thousands of American feet: previous to the signing of the treaty, the Great Basin of the intermountain West was beginning to be settled by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon church) who had followed their leader Brigham Young to the hoped-for safety of the Great Basin after having been driven from their city of Nauvoo, Illinois, following the murder of the church's founder Joseph Smith, Jr. The Mormons crossed the central plains in 1847, arriving in July 1847 in the Great Salt Lake Valley where they hoped to create their religious Zion and, if possible, their own independent secular kingdom as well. They met no resistance from Mexico, which claimed the land at the time of their first arrival; however, they soon were confronted with the claims of the United States to their new homeland.

Orville Pratt was a lawyer commissioned by the U.S. government in 1848 to travel the Old Spanish Trail and assess its merits as well as those of the country (including portions of future Grand County) through which he passed. Pratt traveled with a military escort of sixteen men from east to west, crossing the future county near Arches National Park on 17 September and exiting it at the Green River on 18 September. He was pleased to have crossed what he called the "Rubicon of this California trip,"and one of his men caught a six-pound fish at the river.[30]

Also in 1848 Lieutenant George Brewerton traveled east along the Old Spanish Trail in a party with Kit Carson. Brewerton left important descriptions of trading caravans on the Spanish Trail as well as the difficult crossing at the Green River. The men of his party attempted to cross that formidable barrier by building a raft, and they encountered numerous difficulties in the process, losing "six rifles, three saddles, much ammunition, and nearly all our provisions." The trail was a tough one, and those parts of it in Grand County were among the more difficult, including two major river crossings which drowned uncounted humans and animals; in addition, there were the bleak desert stretches with little water or feed for the animals through which the travelers of both the main and northern branches traveled with all the speed they could muster.[31]

The discovery of gold in California and subsequent gold rush beginning in 1849 brought thousands of fortune hunters through the

area, some via the Old Spanish Trail. In addition, an aggressive Mormon policy of proselytizing and gathering of the faithful to their new Zion led to a rapid expansion and colonization of the huge, new Utah Territory which was established by Congress in 1850. Mormons effectively controled the area, and the federal government recognized the fact by appointing Brigham Young the first territorial governor.

The U.S. government established trade regulations and required licenses for those who wanted to trade with the Indians of the territory. Trade items had to be approved by the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in New Mexico. Brigham Young refused licenses to traders who it was felt intended to trade for slaves; some who did were arrested and tried. Legislation was enacted in 1852 in Utah Territory forbidding slave trading; however, the practice persisted, particularly by Chief Walkara and his followers. It was observed that Walkara's method was to attack a group of Paiutes or other weak Native Americans, killing the men and taking the women and children prisoner. These unfortunates would then be sold into slavery to Mexican slave traders who would trade horses, weapons, or other desired goods for them.[32]

Southeastern Utah was far removed from the centers of activity during the first years of Mormon colonization and received little attention. The Indians were happy to keep it that way. When a group of men under the leadership of Mormon apostle Parley P. Pratt were sent south in 1849 by Brigham Young to explore the area west of the Wasatch Front and Wasatch Plateau, they met Chief Walkara near the Sevier River, who, according to the official report, "did advise the explorers not to pass over the mountains southeast, as there was no good country over there."[33] For the time being, the Mormons were content to leave the areas to the east alone and to keep their colonizing activities on the western side of the Wasatch Front.

The area did not elicit great attention from the government either. But the government was very much interested in linking up the rich lands of the Pacific Coast with the rest of the United States, and therefore it began to sponsor a series of exploratory and surveying expeditions throughout the West. In 1853 three different exploratory parties passed through northern Grand County—all searching for a central transcontinental railroad route through the

country and all traveling from east to west along the northern branch of the Old Spanish Trail—the route entering the state by way of the Grand River Valley and from there traveling along the Book Cliffs until exiting the county at the Green River crossing, which was about 3.5 miles north of the present town.

The first of the three groups was led by Edward F. Beale, a surveyor and Indian agent, who undertook an unofficial railroad survey along the thirty-ninth parallel in the early summer at the request of Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, whose state would benefit greatly if a central route for the transcontinental railroad was chosen. The party was guided by Antoine Leroux and its members spent two nights in the future county's area from the time they reached present-day Grand Junction, Colorado, until they crossed the Green River on 25 July 1853. To cross the river, which was at a high water level, the men constructed a makeshift boat of a wood frame covered with hides and India-rubber blankets smeared with tallow and other ingredients in an attempt to make it waterproof. It was—just barely—though it required constant bailing and four trips to get the party's supplies across. The boat was left for the local Indians to salvage and the party moved westward.[34]

An official government party commissioned by the U.S. War Department and led by Lieutenant John W. Gunnison came a few weeks later, in part following the same route since it employed the same guide, Leroux. The large party of some seventy men and eighteen or nineteen wagons was commissioned to explore and survey the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth parallels for a possible railroad route. Gunnison and his group reached the Green River crossing on 23 September and were able to cross the river without much difficulty the next day when local Indians crossing the river to trade with them showed them the crossing route. Lieutenant E. G. Beckwith, the party's second in command, left descriptions of the route and crossing which were published by the government in 1855 in volume two of *Pacific Railroad Reports.* These volumes became popular guide books, and volume two led many successfully over the parts of the Old Spanish Trail which were described in its pages.[35]

The third group was led by John C. Frémont for private investors. It traversed the country much later in the year and went on to be

trapped by snow in the Wasatch Plateau country to the west. Only after great suffering and hardship was the group able to reach safety at the Mormon settlement of Panguitch and thus avert disaster, something the ill-fated Gunnison party had been unable to avoid. Near the Sevier River earlier in the year, Gunnison and eleven of his party were attacked by Indians, the lieutenant and seven of his men being killed in the attack.[36]

A central transcontinental railroad route did not seem promising although all the explorers would have had little complaint about the Grand County portion of such a route, which with its wide, relatively level expanse and unbroken ground was well suited to railroad construction. In their haste, none of the exploration parties made extensive studies of the county, and when alternative railroad routes to both the north and south were selected, the area became virtually ignored by the United States (which was caught up in its various crises that would lead to the Civil War) and left for the time being the unchallenged land of Native Americans. That "time being" was short-lived, however; new challenges were on the horizon.

ENDNOTES

1. John F. Hoffman, *Arches National Park: An Illustrated Guide and History,* p. 50. See also *Grand Valley Times,* 25 February 1916.

2. The material on Native Americans in this chapter is based on a number of studies including: Donald Calloway, Joel Janetski, and Omer C. Stewart, "Ute," in *Great Basin,* volume 11 of *Handbook of North American Indians,* William C. Sturtevant, ed. (1986); Fred A Conetah, *A History of the Northern Ute People* (1982); Craig W. Fuller, "Land Rush in Zion" (1990 Ph.D. dissertation); James Jefferson, Robert W. Delaney, and Gregory C. Thompson, *The Southern Utes: A Tribal History* (1972); Franz Kolb, "The Northern Ute Indian Reservation" (1983 M.A. thesis); June Lyman and Norma Denver, *Ute People: An Historical Study* (1970); Floyd A. O'Neil, "A History of Ute Indians of Utah Until 1890" (1973 Ph. D. dissertation); and Floyd A. O'Neil and Kathryn L. MacKay, *History of the Uintah-Ouray Ute Lands* (n.d.). See the bibliography for additional information.

3. Calloway et al., "Ute," pp. 339-40.

4. Conetah, *Northern Ute People,* p. 9.

5. Peter Gottfredson, *Indian Depredations in Utah,* p. 321.

6. Conetah, *Northern Ute People,* p. 27.

7. David J. Weber, *The Taos Trappers: The Fur Trade in the Far Southwest, 1540–1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968) p. 23.

8. Ted J. Warner, "The Spanish Epoch," in Richard D. Poll et al., eds., *Utah's History* (1978), p. 36. Other sources for information about Indian contacts with the Spanish and Mexicans include: William J. Snow, "Utah Indians and the Spanish Slave Trade," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 2; Joseph J. Hill, "Spanish and Mexican Exploration and Trade Northwest from New Mexico into the Great Basin, 1765–1853," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 3; S. Lyman Tyler, "The Myth of the Lake of Copala and Land of Teguayo," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 20; Tyler, "The Spaniard and the Ute," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 22; and Tyler, "The Yuta Indians Before 1680," *Western Humanities Review* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1951): 157–60.

9. G. Clell Jacobs, "The Phantom Pathfinder: Juan Maria Antonio De Rivera and His Expedition," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 60:201.

10. Ibid., p. 203.

11. See Donald C. Culter, "Prelude to a Pageant in the Wilderness," *Western Historical Quarterly* 8:5–14.

12. Fran A. Barnes, "A Journey to the Rio del Tizon," *Canyon Legacy* 9:16–22. See also Lloyd M. Pierson, *Cultural Resource Summary of the East Central Portion of Moab District*, p. 75. Other historians still believe that Rivera crossed the Colorado River near Moab, coming to the area either through Spanish Valley or from the Kane Springs area to the southwest.

13. Culter, "Prelude to a Pageant," p. 11.

14. G. Clell Jacobs, "The Phantom Pathfinder," p. 218.

15. Ted J. Warner, ed., *The Dominguez–Escalante Journal*, p. 23.

16. Herbert E. Bolton, *Pageant in the Wilderness*, p. 148.

17. Weber, *The Taos Trappers*, pp. 25–28.

18. Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, *The Romance of the Colorado River* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), p. 106.

19. Pierson, *Cultural Resource Summary*, p. 76.

20. Leroy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *The Old Spanish Trail*, pp. 85–86.

21. James H. Knipmeyer, "The Old Trappers' Trail Through Eastern Utah," *Canyon Legacy* 9:10–14. See also William B. Smart, *Old Utah Trails* (Salt Lake City: Utah Geographic Series, 1988).

22. Charles W. Towne and Edward N. Wentworth, *Shepherd's Empire* (1946), pp. 88–91, 111.

23. See Hoffman, p. 57, and also *Canyon Legacy* 9 for information on Julien and other early trappers and explorers in the county. See also Charles Kelly, "The Mysterious 'D. Julien,'" *Utah Historical Quarterly* 6(3): 83–88;

Otis Dock Marsdon, "Denis Julien," in Leroy R. Hafen, ed., *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West,* vol. 7 (1969), p. 177; and Gary Topping, "History on the Rocks," *Beehive History* 15:23–26.

24. See Allan Kent Powell, ed., *The Utah History Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1994), for articles on the Spanish Trail, the fur-trapping era in Utah, various trappers, and forts as well as other topics of early Utah history that relate to the general area of Grand County.

25. Hafen and Hafen, *The Old Spanish Trail,* p. 86.

26. Weber, *The Taos Trappers,* pp. 27–28.

27. Carling I. Malouf, and John M. Findlay, "Euro-American Impact Before 1870," in *Great Basin,* ed. by Warren L. D'Azevedo; Volume 11 of *Handbook of North American Indians* (1986), pp. 504–5. General overviews of trapping in the American West include: Frank Bergon and Zeese Papanikolas, eds., *Looking Far West: The Search for the American West in History, Myth, and Literature* (1978); Leroy Hafen, ed. *Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West* (1969); and David J. Weber, *The Taos Trappers: The Fur Trade in the Far Southwest,* 1540–1846 (1971).

28. O'Neil and MacKay, *Uintah-Ouray Ute Lands,* p. 2.

29. William Smart, *Old Utah Trails,* pp. 49–51.

30. C. Gregory Crampton, "Green River Crossing," *Canyon Legacy* 5: 24.

31. Smart, *Old Utah Trails,* p. 54.

32.Hafen and Hafen, *Old Spanish Trail,* pp. 274–78.

33. Milton R. Hunter, *Brigham Young, the Colonizer,* p. 43.

34. Steven K. Madsen, "The Spanish Trail Through Canyon Country," *Canyon Legacy* 9:27.

35. Crampton, p. 26.

36. See Richard A. Bartlett, *Great Surveys of the American West* (1962).

5

Attempted Colonization and First Settlement Years, 1854–1855

Today there is little physical evidence of the first attempted white settlement in Grand County: a few piled stones nestled in the weeds near a line of trees directly north of Moab close by the wetlands preserve. There is, however, a plaque and monument commemorating this effort—called the Elk Mountain Mission—which was undertaken in 1855. Unfortunately, the plaque, located at the visitor station north of Moab, has been moved from its original site to that location to make it more easily accessible to tourists—a relocation that results in the fact that the information on it about the location of the old fort is inaccurate. Perhaps there is a symbolic story here about the conflict of historical accuracy and commercialism, but it will be left untold in these pages (and it has resulted in a situation that has helped preserve the few remains of the fort); the story of the establishment of the Elk Mountain Mission is ample fare here.

Once established in Salt Lake City, the Mormon church under Brigham Young embarked on a vigorous program of territorial expansion. Young envisaged a huge temporal empire to reflect its spiritual counterpart—ideally a sovereign power, but, if necessary, a

part of the American Union. It was called the State of Deseret, after a word in the *Book of Mormon* meaning "honey bee." Church members were "called" by church leaders and sent out to colonize areas along the Wasatch Front within a few months of the establishment of Salt Lake City. With thousands of new Saints arriving, the policy of colonization was not only effective in consolidating territorial control but necessary to provide space for the newcomers.

The proposed State of Deseret eclipsed even Young's colonization plans: it comprised the entire Great Basin area, the Colorado Plateau, and a major section of southern California including the coast from San Diego almost as far north as Los Angeles. It is an immense area—one which the LDS leader had even minimal claims to only the smallest fraction—but Young was nothing if not ambitious, and the proposed Kingdom of God could certainly be counted on to make good future use of all that territory and more. For the time being, the church leader reasoned in his draft petition to Congress that the area was essentially a wasteland, enclosed by natural barriers, and too expensive to maintain or colonize by normal methods—a strong authoritarian leader (Brigham) was needed to direct settlement activities to the forbidding and far-flung reaches of the area. He claimed (accurately) that the church had already done more than any other entity to secure the lands for the United States (though this was not its intention), and therefore it would not only be logical but just to allow the Mormons' petition of statehood for the area.[1]

The U. S. Congress was not sympathetic to Brigham Young's dreams for the earthly kingdom of God. The land in question had only recently come under U.S. control with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on 2 February 1848, which ceded to the United States basically all the lands claimed by Mexico between the 42° parallel (the present-day Utah–Idaho border) and the Rio Grande. The proposal for the State of Deseret, planned to be presented to Congress in May 1849, included a large portion of the lands ceded to the U.S. and known as the Mexican Cession. However, Congress was unwilling to place such a large area in the governing hands of anyone, let alone a religious group regarded by many with misgiving. In fact, Congress did not even grant California's petition

for statehood at that time, waiting until 1850 to take such action, in which year it also created the Territory of Utah.

The original Utah Territory, although only approximately half the size of the proposed State of Deseret, was still a huge territory embracing almost all of present-day Nevada, all of Utah, and substantial portions of Wyoming and Colorado. The political setback of the rejection of Deseret did not hinder Mormon colonization efforts, which continued unabated and even perhaps with greater impetus once it became clear to the Mormons that they would not have the territory to themselves. Non-Mormons were beginning to be attracted to the area. Thousands passed through on their way to the California gold fields, and some of the non-Mormons stayed, realizing that merchants and other industrious men could gain gold in the Great Basin more readily than most miners could in California, especially since Salt Lake City was now on a major trade route between the west and east coasts. Mormons called those not of their faith gentiles, and almost from the beginning of settlement non-Mormons and disaffected Mormons shared the territory with the Latter-day Saints, who still, however, always constituted a majority within the territory and most of its towns.

Brigham Young and other LDS church leaders were determined to settle the area and maintain it as a safe haven from which Mormons could never be driven. To help accomplish this, a corridor of settlements was planned and undertaken which extended along the Wasatch Front and then down the western flank of the Wasatch Plateau in the center of the territory. Within three months of settling Salt Lake City, Bountiful and Farmington were established to the north, and by 1851 more than fifty settlements stretched along the corridor from Brigham City on the north to the Iron Mission at Cedar City on the south, with more settlements on the way. Missionary efforts were increased (especially throughout the United States and western Europe) to find the Saints who would populate the vast area, and converts were encouraged to gather to Zion with the faithful. The Mormon church established the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company to facilitate immigration and seemed determined to colonize the area of Deseret despite the federal government's refusal to recognize that entity.

That area of Deseret was essentially defined by natural bound-

aries, and even with its reduction to the Territory of Utah there were few natural entrance corridors into the region. Church leaders wanted to establish control of those few corridors that did exist, even if they happened to be outside the borders of the territory. One of the early Mormon colonization efforts was at Genoa Station in the Carson Valley at the foot of the Sierra Nevada on the route to San Francisco. San Bernardino in southern California was colonized by Mormons in 1851. Las Vegas Springs was established by Mormons on the route to southern California in 1855—it was an important watering point in the desert along the trail. It also was in New Mexico Territory. Fort Lemhi in Oregon Territory was established by Mormons that same year; it controlled the Salmon River area to the north. The major northeastern entrance to the territory was secured with the establishment in 1853 of Fort Supply in present southwestern Wyoming to assist immigrants, and this control was consolidated with the purchase of Fort Bridger in 1855.[3] It also was important to church leaders that they establish a major control point on the Old Spanish Trail to the southeast. This they set out to accomplish.

In October 1854 Mormon church leaders sent out a party of twelve men—eleven whites and one Indian guide—under William Huntington and Jackson Stewart to explore the southeastern part of the territory around the Grand (Colorado) River for areas of possible settlement and to trade and establish good relations with the Navajo Indians, if possible. The group left in the midst of what has come to be known as the Walker War, named after the powerful leader Walkara (Walker) of the Tumpanawach Utes of central Utah, who roamed freely over much of the region of central and eastern Utah.

Mormons had avoided much Indian hostility when they first came to the Salt Lake Valley, among other reasons partly due to the fact that they had settled in an area regarded by the region's Native Americans as a communal ground or buffer zone, none claiming territorial rights they were prepared to defend. Also, the Indians saw in this influx of people new opportunities for their own trade and enrichment; consequently, good relations were at first the norm, with only a few isolated problems considering the numbers of immigrant Mormons. Within a few years, however, the area's Native Americans were becoming filled with anxiety. The newcomers' ranks were con-

tinually swelling and they were spreading rapidly across the land into areas that the Utes and others had long used for their own subsistence. To make things worse, Indian resentment and counteraction were severely punished—it seemed that Mormon settlers could take their land, but if an Indian then happened to harvest a cow on that land, that Indian might be killed. Walkara and other Utes were further angered by the Mormon prohibition against the slave trade and other raiding activities that had enriched them.

By 1853 Walkara had decided to fight back. Indian raiding of livestock and Mormon settlements with attendant armed conflict was the result. By this time, however, the Utes were already outnumbered and overmatched. It has been estimated that there were 4,500 Utes in Utah in 1859—there could not have been many more six years earlier—and they were scattered throughout the territory, not able (or accustomed) to coordinate their activities in warfare.[3] The Indian resistance was soon broken; Walkara was forced to accept peace terms and died soon thereafter, in 1855.

It could be considered a grave undertaking, however, for the Huntington party to travel into the heart of Ute country in 1854 with a handful of men. William Huntington and his party certainly exhibited bravery, faith, and obedience to their leaders; they also must have used uncommon tact, skill, and good sense, for the expedition members returned safe and unharmed. That they had their doubts and fears was revealed in the report of the expedition published in the *Deseret News* of 21 December 1854: "We never felt more gloomy and doubtful, or undertook what appeared to us a more hazardous work, during an experience of twenty years in this church. A wild, mountainous, and dreary desert, hitherto almost entirely unknown, lay before us, and what was still more formidable, Indian Walker and his allies had decreed that we should never pass."

The group intersected the Old Spanish Trail northwest of the Green River crossing, following the trail across that river and then southeast to a descent of rough and rocky Moab Canyon (nicknamed by later settlers "Hell Canyon") until they reached a steep escarpment of the Moab Fault just west of the present entrance to Arches National Park. There the five wagons of the party had to be dismantled and lowered by rope down the 25-foot "jumping-off place." The Grand River was then

crossed and the wagons proceeded to the head of Moab/Spanish Valley, where they could no longer be used due to the terrain. Huntington and his companions proceeded south and east, eventually discovering the Hovenweep Anasazi ruins near the present Utah-Colorado line. They traveled south to the St. Johns (San Juan) River and met with the Navajo Indians, who were at first hostile but then became more friendly, trading with (and stealing from) the Mormons, according to Huntington's report.[4] The Navajos counseled the men against going to other villages in the vicinity, as control of some of the angry Indians of the area could not be guaranteed. They then gave the party supplies for the return trip to Salt Lake City, receiving in return seeds for planting and other goods.

The group left three of their wagons and some of their supplies cached in Spanish Valley, which the expedition reported as being "a beautiful valley" with good soil and grazing range that was described as "well-timbered and watered." The party then journeyed homeward and reached Salt Lake City in December after some two months of traveling in little known and hostile land.

Brigham Young and other church leaders must have been pleased with the report they received from Huntington, for the next year, at the April conference of the church, forty-one men were called by church leaders to establish an outpost in Spanish Valley at the foot of the La Sal Mountains, then known on the few American maps of the area as the Elk Mountains, a name likely given to the range by early trappers. The colonizing effort, under the direction of Alfred N. Billings, was known as the Elk Mountain Mission.[5] It was also charged with establishing good relations with the local Indians. An unstated but important objective was to establish control of the approach to Utah Territory along the Old Spanish Trail.

The Elk Mountain party members received their official mission ordinations and then assembled and outfitted at Manti, the county seat of San Pete County (as it was then written), which at the time included all the land through which they were to travel and establish their mission outpost. Billings was the group leader; Oliver B. Huntington, a brother of William Huntington who had led the previous year's reconnaissance party, was chosen official clerk of the company; and Joseph L. Rawlins was the wagon master. The company traveled in military fashion: bugles sounded prayer calls and

other movements, order was maintained, and guards were posted at night throughout the journey. Huntington kept the official journal of the company; he also kept a private diary which included information not otherwise recorded. Billings also kept a journal as did a few others of the company.[6] Unless noted, the following material is taken from the official journal kept by Oliver Huntington.

The missionaries left Manti on 21 May with fifteen wagons full of equipment to use in establishing a settlement; they also carried other goods to trade with the Indians. The inventory included thirteen horses, sixty-five oxen, sixteen cows, two bulls, one calf, two pigs, four dogs, and twelve chickens. The wagons carried more than 14,000 pounds of flour, thirty-two bushels of wheat, thirty-three bushels of potatoes, and more than two bushels of corn, four bushels of oats, and twenty-two bushels of peas. Equipment included a whip saw, axes, scythes, trowels, hoes, shovels, and five plows. In his private diary Huntington included the same information but also added to the list of the inventory carried a set of blacksmith's tools, carpenter's tools, stonecutter's tools, 200 pounds of lead, 99 pounds of black powder, and 37,800 gun caps—an interesting omission from the official record, and one that suggests that the missionaries included ammunition among their trade goods, a supposition that seems to have been borne out by later events.

This is the first of a number of confusing, inconsistent, or ambiguous portions of the Elk Mountain Mission record, in which some happenings are obscured or dressed in a finer manner than the actual events seem to have warranted.[7] The members of the Elk Mountain Mission are certainly not unusual in this regard. In fact, their bravery and religious dedication are worthy of respect. The discrepancies in the historical record are only introduced here because without them it is more difficult to understand the abrupt and tragic end of the enterprise.

The Elk Mountain missionaries were well armed and supplied, it seems evident. Though the journey was difficult, the men were also disciplined and organized. Horsemen would ride ahead of the main body scouting the road, and with shovels and other tools they would make it more passable for the wagons. Tasks were assigned and alternated. The official and unofficial accounts document the terrain, the route, and travel conditions, disagreeing generally only in the estimate of miles traveled.

They traveled to Salt Creek (Nephi), east into Sanpete County, and south to Salina Canyon. They then crossed the high plateau to the east through Wasatch Pass, reversing the route that the Gunnison expedition had taken two years before. They then traveled through present-day Emery County's Castle Valley to the vicinity of present-day Castle Dale, and on the advice of local Indians left Gunnison's route (which had looped north) and were able to find and commence traveling on the main Spanish Trail. They passed through Buckhorn Flat, where they had difficulty finding water, and rejoined Gunnison's route at Saleratus Wash. They followed the wash south and arrived at the Green River on 2 June. The missionaries thereupon preached to the Indians who were camped at the river. According to Billings's journal, "We had a talk with them, told them our business was to learn them the principle of the Gosple and to rais grain. They seemed to have the Spirit of the Lord upon them and to be well pleased with what we had told them."[8]

The men then spent seven days getting their equipment and livestock across the river, the oxen being especially difficult, many having to be towed behind a boat that the company had brought and used on the trail as a wagon box. The one piece of bad luck—an ox breaking its leg—was viewed sanguinely by Huntington, who wrote: "That was good for we needed beef." After finally getting all of their men, supplies, and livestock across the Green River by 8 June, the party traveled rapidly on the main Spanish Trail, reaching the "jumping-off place" on 10 June. Some of the men had gone ahead to construct a crude but effective dugway, and after a few hours of difficult labor the party was able to get their livestock and wagons down this road that evening and bring them to the banks of the Grand River.

On 11 June the men transported some of their supplies and cattle across the river; the next day the process continued while Billings, Huntington, and four others crossed the river on horseback to scout a location for their fort and settlement and to retrieve the supplies cached by William Huntington the year before. They proceeded to the head of Spanish Valley, up Mill Creek and then Pack Creek to the foothills of the mountains, where they were able to find the cache of three wagons and other goods. On their return down the valley the party came across a ten-acre section of land near the center of the valley that had been cleared, planted, and irrigated by Indians. The

methods were somewhat crude but effective: a stick was used to poke a hole in the ground into which the seed was placed; the hole was covered and the ground periodically flooded by damming the creek. The seeds for the crops of melon, squash, pumpkins, and corn had been given to the local Indians the year before by the William Huntington party. Crude dams had been formed on Mill Creek to flood the land, and though the Indians later told the misssionaries that their first crops had been devoured by pests, this second venture was doing well when these missionaries first arrived.

Those left behind that day worked at getting the livestock and supplies across the river; observing their activities were some Indians who appeared friendly, although the day before one of the oxen was found with an arrow embedded in it to the depth of about an inch. An Indian apologized and claimed that his young son had wounded the animal by mistake while playing with his bow and arrows. The Indians said that they "wanted the Mormons to live there in peace."

Oliver Huntington was impressed by the "wonderful mountain precipices" all around the valley: "The mountains all around us are barren, soft and red sand rocks carved and molded into every shape." Sagebrush was about the only timber at hand, but it was the largest sagebrush any of the men had seen and was an indication to them that the soil was rich and fertile, although Huntington wrote that it was "all sand except about two miles square near the river which is good meadowland made by the Spring Creek we are on."

All of the equipment, livestock, and supplies had been transported across the river by 15 June and a location was chosen for a fort in the lower part of the valley. The company was divided into four "messes"—groups that would work together on assigned tasks according to schedules. The fort and temporary camps were laid out and ground was cleared and plowed for crops, which were then planted. A dam was constructed on Mill Creek but soon broke; a beaver dam farther upstream was then utilized and a three-mile-long ditch was made to the crops. On 18 June men were sent up the valley to retrieve the cache of goods. They returned with the "wagons, a little tobacco and lead, and ten spades, but all the other property, amounting in value to three hundred dollars, the Indians had found and taken." This indicates that although the missionaries who found the cache and the

Indians' garden had not seen any Indians, they were likely being watched or their movements were traced a short time later.

Except for those few Indians present when the ox was shot with the Indian boy's arrow, there were not many Native Americans to be found in the vicinity for the first few days, and the missionaries commented in their journals on their absence. Finally, on 30 June, an Indian named Quit-sub-soc-its (called St. John by the missionaries), the local chief of the Elk Mountain Utes, came to the missionaries' encampment with four other men. Huntington wrote that they demanded great presents for the intrusion upon and use of the land; however, according to the official journal, "after eating and smoking with the president, they seemed to soften down." Billings, the president, wrote in his private journal that the chief seemed well satisfied after he was given a blanket and two shirts.

Other Indians soon began to come to the increasingly busy area, and the whites were soon occupied not only with building structures and planting and tending crops but also with trading with the Native Americans. A corral was soon finished and the rock fort was begun. All was generally peaceful, but all was not well. On 11 July Chief St. John spoke at a public meeting and counseled his people to treat the Mormons well and live in peace. According to Billings's journal, however, he also said that "he did not want us to bring any more men out Here that that [*sic*] we had a plenty to Live amongest them to to [*sic*] trade [and] learn them to work." Some Indians were pleased with the coming of the Mormons, others were hostile; but it seemed that all of them wanted to trade.

Arapine, a brother of Walkara, had taken his brother's place as one of the major Ute leaders and he appeared to be well-disposed towards the Mormons at the time. He arrived at the mission on 14 July bringing mail from the "settlements" to the overjoyed missionaries. The next day he spoke in both Ute and Navajo languages to the assembled Native Americans, indicating that members of at least both those tribes were present. He counseled the Indians to keep peace with the Mormons, threatening that he would take the missionaries away if the Indians stole from them or were hostile. This also seems to indicate that both Arapine and the other Indians saw the Mormons as a resource to be utilized for trade and acquisition of

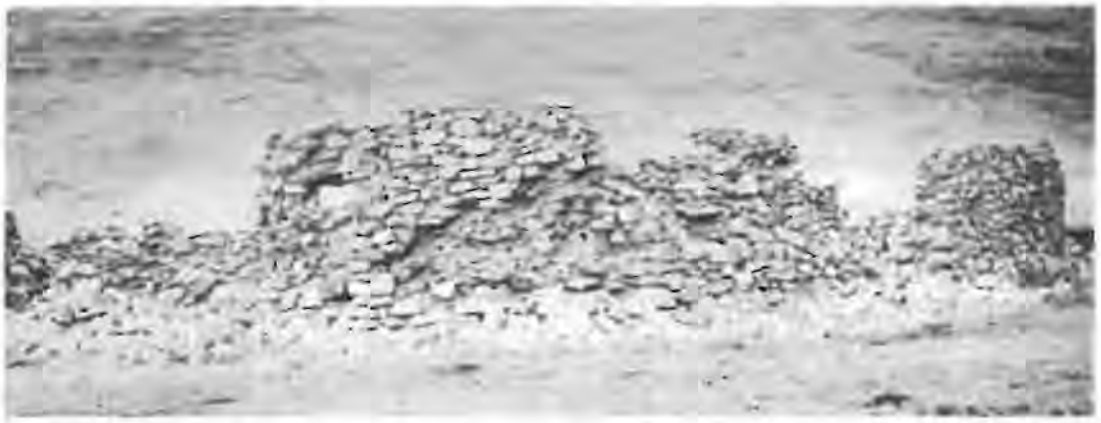
goods whatever their other feelings about the whites might have been. The coming of the missionaries was an opportunity that should not be lost. Thus, though the missionaries were seeking converts and allies, the Indians were more interested in being managers, dependents, and/or trade partners of the newcomers.

At that meeting, Chief St. John also spoke in favor of good relations with the whites. The missionaries viewed the occasion as an event in which the Spirit of the Lord was made manifest. Afterwards, Arapine headed south to trade and try to make peace with the Navajos in the San Juan County area. Paiute children were included among the goods he intended to trade for horses.

The missionaries held many meetings with the Indians in which they preached their gospel message. On 22 July more than a dozen Indians were baptized and four of them were immediately confirmed to the Mormon priesthood as elders after receiving a new name—generally one from the Bible or the *Book of Mormon.* Though the move seems hasty, it was probably viewed by all parties as helping forge an alliance; as events were to reveal later, it certainly did not seem to come about because of the Indians' understanding of or commitment to the gospel message they had been given.

Indians from distant parts had by this time heard of the Mormons, and a steady stream of them came to the fort to see and presumably to trade or receive presents. The area seemed traditionally to be a type of general meeting ground; it was now made even more so by the new attraction of the Mormons. However, a cauldron of mixed feelings was simmering—much of it probably unperceived by the missionaries. The Indians not only had mixed feelings about the missionaries but also were at odds among themselves—there was a major intertribal dispute between various factions of Utes and Navajos. The white newcomers were courted by the disputants as potential allies. According to Billings's journal of 29 July, a great many Indians came to the mission with reports that the Navajos were "determined to fight with them. . . . Appeared to be afraid that our Big Captain will call us home and leave them to Starve to death. . . . the Cheif [*sic*] Almes said we ware the only friends they had."

Arapine sent word in August that he was coming with some Navajo leaders to make peace with the Mormons. On 8 August he



Ruins of the Elk Mountain Mission Fort near Moab. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

arrived with four Navajo chiefs. The Navajos said that they wanted peace but "would kill all" if it was not made. An ox was given to the Native Americans by the Mormons, and it was immediately slaughtered and divided. According to Billing's journal, Arapine then said that although some wanted to buy their land it was not for sale: "the great Spirit did not give [it] to Sell or give away for then they would have no place to live." The next day the Elk Mountain Utes returned to the Navajos all of the latter's stolen horses they could find, indicating that the local Indians did have some anxiety and were attempting to make peace with their powerful neighbors. Ethan Pettit reported in his diary on 13 August that eight or ten Indians came with St. John to the fort: they had found a "brestpin" one of them had lost and "they thought we had fixed something to kill them all off such is their superstition."

The walls of the rock fort had been completed in July. The fort was 64-feet square with four-foot-thick walls at the bottom, tapering to one and a half feet at the top of their twelve-foot height. One crop of alfalfa had been harvested, and other crops were being tended while homes and other structures continued under construction. The missionaries seemed to feel good about things—secure enough that on 21 August fifteen of them, including Oliver Huntington, left to visit their homes along the Wasatch Front. Huntington therefore was not present during the troubles that were soon to come, and he later copied the relevant entries from President Billings's journal to complete the official mission journal.

On 30 August five of the remaining missionaries, including Billings, left to visit the Navajo camps to the south. Billings was aware of some tension, writing in his journal that some Elk Mountain Utes were making threats against the Navajos. The intrepid missionaries made the journey, trading buckskins and ammunition for horses and blankets.[9] They arrived back at the fort on 12 September. Mixed signals greeted their return. On one hand, now that the crops were maturing, theft was becoming a major problem, and on 14 September the missionaries began cutting their corn to save it from the thieves. On the other hand, two Indians were baptized on 18 September. Billings further reduced the contingent the next day, allowing six men to leave for the settlements along with eighteen horses they had traded for and thirteen head of cattle. One historian has commented on the success of the mission as a horse-trading venture—beginning with thirteen animals, the missionaries were able to send sixty-nine horses back to the settlements and still have enough to mount each of the missionaries and leave five other animals behind when the mission was abandoned.[10]

The following day (20 September) things took a major turn for the worse: Billings wrote in his journal that Indians that day had dug up and stolen all the beets, some turnips, and many of the missionaries' potatoes. The whites dug up all that remained and were able to salvage about three pecks (twenty-four quarts). Billings then added: "The Natives are Stealling evry chance they Get they Stolen and carred off all our mellons Squashes." The next day promised some respite as most of the local Indians had left the valley to go on their winter hunt, and Billings allowed two of the missionaries to also journey into the mountains to go hunting.

It was a deceptive lull—events exploded into tragedy on 23 September. It appears that the Mormons, uneasy about the increased aggressive attitude of the Indians, had moved their cattle the previous day to a different grazing ground where the animals could be better watched. A group of Indians led by one the missionaries called Charles, a son of Chief St. John, rode up to the fort. "They were very saucy and impudent," Billings wrote, and they wanted to know why the cattle had been moved. The Mormons began to load their guns, and the Indians cooled down somewhat and then retreated a little

ways away to counsel among themselves. Three of them then started toward the field where the Mormon cattle were feeding; James Hunt went with a rope towards a field to get his horse, with Charles following him on horseback. When they were about a mile from the fort, Charles distracted Hunt and shot him in the back. He then took Hunt's horse as well as one that he had traded just days before for the gun he used in the attack. Mormon herdsmen alerted those at the fort; some went to retrieve Hunt, others to retrieve the stock.

It seems to me that the Indians probably had no preconceived plans to attack the missionaries but that events escalated and emotions became inflamed until they decided to make a direct attack on the fort. It must have seemed to them that there was no turning back possible once the troubles started. One estimate of the Indians involved included as many as twenty-five or thirty, but that figure seems excessive according to accounts of the subsequent gunfight.[11] The Indians attacked the men retrieving the fallen Hunt, and Billings was wounded by a bullet that hit his finger, the only additional casualty the misssionaries suffered before they were able to reach the fort. A gun battle ensued, Indians were shot and the Indians set fire to the haystacks and attempted to fire the corrals and buildings. The battle continued till dark, the Mormons exchanging gunfire periodically with the Indians while also attempting to extinguish fires.[12] Charles and some of the other Indians were seen riding towards the mountains, from which direction shots were soon heard—they had seen and killed the two Mormons, William Behunin and Edward Edwards, who were returning from hunting.

Back at the fort, Indians and Mormons were talking while exchanging gunfire, lamenting the sad state of affairs. The Indians denied having killed the two hunters and claimed that two or three of their companions had been killed and others seriously wounded. They wanted revenge. More peaceful counsel prevailed, however, and they were finally persuaded to leave after they were given all the bread that the Mormons had on hand. They said that they would return in the morning to settle the difficulty.

That night James Hunt died. With fewer than twenty men, the Mormons realized that they were in a perilous situation, but according to the official journal they expressed their willingness to fight and

die if President Billings directed them to stay. He didn't. According to the journal, the men met the next morning with the Indians, who admitted killing the two hunters. From Billings's journal it appears that they gave the Indians six head of cattle, presumably for a guarantee of safe passage, fearing that things could only get worse since it was thought that the Indians were sending runners to the mountains to get reinforcements. Not taking time for breakfast, the Mormons packed what little they could, mounted their horses, and left the fort, abandoning five horses and twenty-five head of cattle.[13]

After crossing the Grand River they met a brother of St. John and uncle of Charles, the instigator of the trouble. The unnamed man and his sons commisserated with the missionaries, telling them that they would retrieve the cattle and make certain that the bodies of their friends were buried. At great personal risk, the man and his sons crossed the river and supposedly disabled two hostile Indians who tried to stop them.[14] However, other Indians began shooting at the cattle. The friendly Indians succeeded in rounding up fifteen head of cattle which were then brought to the Mormons, who had fled and were resting at a spring (possibly Courthouse Springs) some fifteen miles away. Eight head were delivered to the missionaries, the Indians keeping seven others that were badly hurt and bleeding. Three of these animals were shot and butchered there and then, the missionaries being given some of the meat. The Mormons then traveled warily for almost a week, splitting up to take different roads and posting written notices to warn any others traveling towards the misssion. Most of them reached Manti on 30 September; one who lagged behind with a tired horse subsequently became lost and was not found until 3 October. Thus ended the Elk Mountain Mission; no attempt was made by the Mormons to return to the site, and it would be twenty years before any whites are known to have tried to settle the area.

It appears to me that the actual battle at the fort was the outgrowth of an impulsive action of one individual with little premeditation and no plan. This resulted in tragedy and the abandonment of the mission, but there existed a number of inherent contradictions or natural problems with the Elk Mountain Mission enterprise that well may have doomed it to failure anyway. Consideration of such problems may help to explain why no further attempt was made by

the Mormons either to convert the Indians or to control the area and secure its routes, as many historians have claimed was their primary aim. The dictum of Brigham Young that it was much cheaper to feed the Indians than to fight them is well known, and, in general, compared to many other whites in competition for lands with the Native Americans, the Mormons were among the least hostile, evincing no desire or plans to exterminate the Indians. According to Mormon theology, the Native Americans were descendents of the Lamanite people of the *Book of Mormon*—a people who were a part of the House of Israel and certainly of worth in the Almighty's plan. Mormon concern for Native Americans and attempts to convert them through the establishment of missions must be considered to have been sincere and well-intentioned.

Prior to the establishment of the Elk Mountain Mission, Brigham Young counseled the Latter-day Saints to treat the Indians well. In the "Journal History" for 9 October 1853 he is reported to have said: "When you go among the Lamanites, deal with them honestly and righteously in all things. Any man who cheats a Lamanite should be dealt with more severely than for cheating a white man. . . . I am sorry that some of our brethren have been killed by the Indians, but I am far more sorry that some of the Indians have been slain by the brethren. . . . White men know better, while Indians do not."

As laudable and direct as the statement is, it does reveal a paternalistic attitude that was often even more clearly expressed, as in an 1864 statement by Young in which he maintained that the Mormons could well kill the Indians as others had done but that

> It is not our duty to kill them, but it is our duty to save them and the lives of their children. This is the land they and their fathers have walked over and called their own, and they have just as good right to call it theirs today as any people have to call any land their own. They have buried their fathers and mothers and children here; this is their home and we have taken possession of it and occupy the land where they used to hunt. But now their game is gone and they are left to starve. It is our duty to feed them.[15]

A notion of superiority coexistent with the idea of duty is evident—even if the Mormons might claim that they did not consider

themselves superior, that they were only more blessed and hence more responsible for the welfare of the less fortunate. Whatever the sentiment, there is a cultural bias and a latent racism or hypocrisy that Native Americans were quick to sense. In fact, in the first edition of her history of Moab, Faun McConkie Tanner reported a story of the Elk Mountain Mission, a story that was subsequently deleted from the revised edition of her book but one that could perhaps help explain some of the Indian resentment that exploded into violence:

> One interesting story is told of how at one time the men called a meeting with the Indians and told them how they had come to live among them in peace, to be one with them, to work with them and marry. The Indians evidently took this literally and the next morning brought a number of young Indian girls to the fort, all dressed and painted in their best. They told the white men to take their choice. This resulted in some difficulty when the men could not accept the invitation and it was only through the influence and tact of the interpreter that trouble was averted."[16]

Though Tanner unfortunately did not list her source for this story, it has a ring of plausibility.

In his book *Indian Depredations in Utah,* written in 1919, Peter Gottfredson did credit the Indians with generally being hospitable and truthful, and he maintained that they expected the same from others. Unfortunately, it was an expectation not always filled—even from those concerned with their immortal souls. It should also be mentioned that both Billings and Huntington repeatedly mention in their journals that the missionaries would periodically repent of their folly and rededicate themselves to their mission. Just what their "folly" was not specified, but it was also reported in the journals that the Indians once reproved the missionaries for levity.

To help avoid such problems, Brigham Young had counseled church colonists not to become too friendly or familiar with Indians, since "it makes them bold, impudent and saucy and will become a source of trouble and expense to you. Keep them at a respectful distance, all the time, and they will respect you the more for it."[17] According to Milton R. Hunter, Young counseled the missionaries to set up an official trader with the Indians to keep accounts and prices

regular, thus hoping to prevent anyone from making exorbitant demands or feeling cheated. In the trading frenzy that erupted when the missionaries arrived in the Moab area that counsel was forgotten until 1 August when the missionaries designated one of their number as the official trading agent.[18] However, even this seems to have been later neglected from Billings's mention of the Indian named Charles trading a horse for the gun he used in the attack. It is certainly likely that in a heated trading atmosphere some would feel they had been taken advantage of, and bad feelings would easily have been fostered.

It is interesting to note that Charles and other Indians involved in the attack had actually been baptised by the missionaries, according to the journal of Alfred Billings.[19] Perhaps there was some accumulating bitterness or feeling of resentment; perhaps it was merely a case of the attackers not understanding the meaning of their baptism, or at least its meaning according to the missionaries, who seemed anxious to perform the rite regardless of its comprehension by those baptised. It is also possible that the attack had nothing to do with religion, that Charles and the others either saw an opportunity for gain that they felt they must sieze or else that they gave vent to their feelings of anger, frustration, or resentment.[20]

One cannot help but feel that the Elk Mountain Indians didn't fully understand what the missionaries were trying to accomplish. They, in turn, also looked upon the Mormons as a resource and as potential allies in their own struggles and concerns. However kindly paternal the statements of Brigham Young quoted above about the Indians and the land, the fact remains that the Mormons kept the land they had siezed and from which they had displaced the Native Americans. In fact, Mormon claims to much of the land of central and southeastern Utah (aside from the normal common claim of forceful possession being nine-tenths of the law) were based on a treaty that Arapine had signed with the Mormons in December 1856. In this document the Indian leader deeded to the Mormons all of what was then Sanpete County—a huge area of land including all of present-day Grand County—in return for which he and the Indians received "the good will of the Mormons." There was nothing of tangible value deeded to the Indians by the Mormons in return. As the author of the "Sanpete County Historical Sketch" commented: "This

deed dated December 23, 1856 which is found in Church Transfer (Deeds) p. 107 (see entry 133) is of particular interest because it was more characteristic of Mormon than of Indian practices; the Mormons so disposed of their property as a means of protection against their lack of land rights."[21]

The document reads:

> Be it known by these presents, that I, Arropine (Sugnerouch) of Manti City, in the County of Sanpete and Territory of Utah, for and in consideration of the good will which I have to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, give and convey unto Brigham Young, Trustee in Trust for said Church, his successors in office, and assigns, all my claim and ownership of the following described property to wit: That portion of land and country known as Sanpete County, together with all timber and material on the same, valued at $155,000.00. [He then mentions livestock, weapons, and tools with their value.] . . . Total amount $155,765.00, together with all the rights, privileges and appuntenances [*sic*] thereunto belonging or appertaining:
>
> I also covenant and agree that I am the lawful claimant and owner of said property, and will warrant and forever defend the same unto said Trustee in Trust, his successors in office and assigns against the claims of my heirs, assigns or any person whomsoever,
>
> Arropine (Sugnerouch) X his mark
>
> Witness:
>
> George Snow
> R Wilson Glen
> John Patten[22]

The most unbiased would have to conclude that it is doubtful that Arapine knew what he was signing (or that he had authority to dispose of the land in question). It must also be considered shameful of Brigham Young to have even presented such a document of legal fiction to justify a usurpation of land. Though the Mormons may sincerely have felt that they would serve the Indians well while they helped transform them into Americanized farmers and citizens, in practice what they accomplished was just another in the series of betrayals and displacements by white Americans of the American Indians—betrayals and displacements which periodically led to a

counterattack by those being displaced, who reacted in confusion, desperation, or anger. The Elk Mountain Mission represents another instance of this conflict of cultures, though in this case the Indian resistance helped preserve for them their lands for another generation.

Indian occupation of Grand County was facilitated by other events of the era—events that first occupied Mormon attention and later led to a change of Mormon policy. By the mid-1850s the Latter-day Saints were facing a crisis that threatened their own existence—the so-called Utah War and advance of U.S. Army troops under Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston to put down by force if necessary a supposed rebellion of the Mormons against American authority. That story is told elsewhere; in these pages it is necessary to mention it only as it affected the area of future Grand County. The Mormons retrenched in the face of the invading army, and it is possible that the missionaries at Elk Mountain would have been recalled to help defend the settlements even had things been going well for them.

After that crisis cooled and U.S. Army troops were established at Camp Floyd in Cedar Valley, Brigham Young realized that the gentiles were going to be among the Mormons to stay and that an outer cordon of settlements and forts protecting the region would no longer be necessary. The problems would now be political and social, not military. Elk Mountain was not needed as an outpost; settlement of the territory could proceeed at a more natural pace, expanding gradually as necessary. For the time being there was plenty of available land much closer to church headquarters in Salt Lake City. Also, the Indians were angry—it must have seemed more desirable not to court trouble in the area. In fact, during the Black Hawk War of the mid-1860s Mormons abandoned a number of their fledgling settlements in central Utah; southeastern Utah, including future Grand County, was in effect left for the time being to the Indians.

ENDNOTES

1. Dale L. Morgan, *The State of Deseret* (1987), p. 27.

2. See Milton R. Hunter, *Brigham Young: The Colonizer* (1973), for a basic overview of Mormon colonization efforts.

3. Fred A. Conetah, *A History of the Northern Ute People* (1982), p. 42.

4. *Deseret News*, 21 December 1854.

5. See Faun McConkie Tanner, *The Far Country*, p. 48, for a list of the forty-one missionaries. Ms. Tanner cited the official journal report extensively in her history, including extensive mention of names. With this information readily available, I have chosen not to include it here, helping establish a pattern in this history that will deemphasize the inclusion of lists of names in favor of a more generalized telling of the basic history. Publications by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Moab Chapter, in conjunction with the *Grand Valley Times/Times-Independent, Canyon Legacy*, trade newsletters, and *The Far Country*, among others, include details and information not possible to include in this particular history.

6. See Oliver B. Huntington, *Official Elk Mountain Mission Journal* (1855); Oliver B. Huntington, "Personal Diary" (typescript); Alfred N. Billings, "Personal Diary" (typescript); Ethan Pettit, "Diary" (typescript); Peter Stubbs, "History" (typescript). All these sources are found in the library holdings of the Utah State Historical Society.

7. See Andrew Jenson, "The Elk Mountain Mission from the Official Journal of the Company by Oliver B. Huntington," in *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 4 (1913): 188–200, for what could be considered a Mormon church-approved retelling of the story—one which omits mention of the ammunition carried by the missionaries.

8. The typescript of Alfred Billings's private journal has been unedited and uncorrected, revealing numerous spelling, grammatical, and syntactical errors. These have remained uncorrected here, as they have a clarity, charm, and direct force of their own.

9. See Ethan Pettit, "Diary," entries for 14 August and 22 August.

10. Charles S. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains*, p. 14.

11. See Peter Stubbs, "History." Though it is possible that there were that many Indians involved in the initial attack, the number Stubbs includes seems excessive—perhaps by the conclusion of the troubles that many had become involved. The diaries and reminiscences of the missionaries contain some unusual discrepancies, one of which in Peter Stubbs's account will be mentioned in a later note. A further instance is found in the autobiography of Joseph Rawlins, the future senator from the State of Utah, whose father was the wagonmaster. The account that he records of the troubles hardly agrees with any of the other accounts in *any* particular and would seem to have been created out of whole cloth. One doubts that his father had much part in the telling; certainly the reminiscences of one or the other—if not both men—were faulty. See Joseph L. Rawlins, *The Unfavored Few: The Autobiography of Joseph L. Rawlins,* edited and amplified by Alta Rawlins Jensen (Carmel, CA: A. R. Jensen, 1956).

12. The evening of the gun battle is a most difficult period to reconstruct from the written records. It is difficult to make chronological sense

of all the events: fires, talk, gunshots, the leaving and returning of Indians. The basic account by Faun Tanner in *The Far Country,* though somewhat confusing, is based on the official journal and remains valuable, especially for the extensive quotes which I have chosen not to duplicate here. The interested reader is encouraged to consult *The Far Country,* chapter three.

13. The account of Peter Stubbs is puzzling at this point. He wrote in his "History" of events the night of the battle: "We held a council of war and it was determined that the best action to take would be to vacate the fort and make our way for the settlements. Next morning we left for Manti, no Indians were seen. We left 15 head of oxen and 9 cows at the fort and the body of poor brother James Wiseman Hunt unburied." The account is in conflict with the official journal, taken from Billings's own journal. Further research is necessary to reconcile the differing versions.

14. *The Far Country* goes into detail here, but again there are inconsistencies and difficulties with the account, and it seems to me that it would be difficult for the missionaries to know exactly what took place since they were fleeing the scene at the time and were certainly out of sight of the events. Doubtless, the Indians who returned the cattle could have informed the missionaries of the events, but considering the propensity of the missionaries to put things in the best possible light I have chosen to keep the account unembellished by deeds of glory, though I do believe that the very act of seeking to return the Mormons' cattle was an act of great bravery.

15. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 2:264.

16. Tanner, *A History of Moab, Utah* (1937), p. 22.

17. Quoted in Hunter, *Brigham Young: The Colonizer,* p. 318.

18. Hunter, *Brigham Young: The Colonizer,* pp. 318, 340.

19.Alfred N. Billings's journal entry for 23 September 1855 includes the statement, "The Indians engaged in this sad affair were all baptised"; but he also wrote the curious entry that "they do not belong to our particular band." What that particular "band" was is not elaborated upon.

20. It may be instructive in this regard to note that near this time in Santa Clara, Utah, Paiute Indians who were discouraged by the differences between themselves and the Mormons gave up trying to emulate the missionaries, saying "we cannot be good, we must be Paiutes." Quoted in Hunter, *Brigham Young: The Colonizer,* p. 325.

21. See "Sanpete County Historical Sketch," *Inventory of the County Archives of Utah, Number 20, Sanpete County* (Washington, D.C.: Works Progress Administration, 1942), p. 18.; located in the Utah State Historical Society Library.

22. Ibid., pp. 18–19.

6

Renewed White Settlement: Moab in the 1870s and 1880s

An old Mormon story related the opinion that God filled southern Utah with the rocks and other debris left over after the Creation. A more serious editorial in the *Deseret News* of 11 September 1861 claimed that the plateau land of southeastern Utah was "one vast 'contiguity of waste' and measurably valueless, excepting for nomadic purposes, hunting grounds for Indians, and to hold the world together."

Almost twenty years passed before there were any known attempts of whites to settle the area that was to later become Grand County. It is possible—even likely, in fact—that with the gold fever of the period an occasional prospector ventured into the La Sals or the Book Cliffs, and it is likely that travelers made some use of the Old Spanish Trail; however, the historical record has not been augmented by such information. The country was essentially conceded to be the domain of Native Americans, who in general were not particularly friendly at the time. Besides the Elk Mountain troubles, Utes in Colorado had risen up in anger against the white newcomers in

1854 and 1855, raiding extensively in southern Colorado and even attacking a U.S. Army fort there.

Western immigration continued, both Mormon and gentile, and the lands of Utah Territory and the West in general were gradually being settled by white Americans. The discovery of gold near Denver in 1858 led to a general influx of people into Colorado, and the Utes in the Rocky Mountain area were pushed west. Colorado Territory was established in 1861 and the present western state boundary was established at that time, taking the huge area that is now western Colorado from Utah Territory.

Native Americans must have faced the tide of immigration with dismay—their lands and lifeways were disappearing and there seemed to be little or nothing that could be done. Anger erupted into violence all too often, but that violence was met with the heavy fist of the U.S. Army. Some citizens claimed to befriend the Indians; but too often it was merely a case of gaining some advantage through the supposed friendship that ended with eventual fraud or betrayal of the Indians' trust. The federal government endeavored to enter into treaties and other arrangements with the Native Americans, many of which were intended to establish them on protected reservations. Sometimes the intentions were good, other times it seems that the white treaty makers were dishonest from the start; but always the result was an ever-shrinking domain for the Native Americans.

In Colorado and Utah, increasing immigration led to concerted efforts to restrict the region's Ute Indians to reservations. The Uinta Valley of northeastern Utah was loosely set aside as a Ute reservation by President Abraham Lincoln in 1861. By 1864 whites in Utah were agitating for the removal of the Utes to those lands, and the Uintah Reservation was actively established. A treaty was signed in which the Utes gave up their lands in Utah and Sanpete counties (in the latter of which both present-day Emery and Grand counties were included) in exchange for removal to the Uintah Reservation and a payment of $1.1 million to be paid over a period of fifty years—approximately sixty-two cents per acre of land. According to historian Fred A. Conetah, however, the Indians didn't even receive this—Congress never officially ratified the treaty and so the Indians were not paid, though they were forced to move to the reservation.[1]

In Utah the Black Hawk War later erupted throughout the central part of the territory in the mid-1860s. Black Hawk was a Ute leader who included among his followers Indians of various bands living in the central part of the state. His influence extended to southeastern Utah once the Indian troubles of that period began. His followers were resisting the forced move of Ute Indians to the newly established Uintah Reservation in northeastern Utah, but they were also reacting to the immediate threat of starvation of their people who had been displaced from their lands as well as from access to their traditional resources. During the harsh winter of 1864–65 the Native Americans were faced with severe food shortages. White settlements in the Sevier Valley and other areas of south-central Utah were raided, and some of the settlements were abandoned by the whites, who fled to more secure "forted up" locations.

A follower of Black Hawk told Daniel Jones in 1870 that it was hunger and starvation that caused the raids. He maintained that Indian agents stole the goods sent by Washington for the Indians and that for their part the Mormons had stolen the Native Americans' land and then forced them off of it: "When they asked the Mormons for some of the bread raised on their lands, and beef fed on their grass, the Mormons insulted them, calling them dogs and other bad names. They said when the Mormons stole big fields and got rich, other Mormons, who were poor, had to buy land from them, they were not allowed to steal it from the first owners same as the first Mormons stole it from the Indians."[2]

Other Indians soon joined the rebellion, using it as a catalyst to express their own frustrations, anger, and resentment. There were no white settlements at the time in the Grand County area, but the war is mentioned here because the Elk Mountain Utes were said to be among Black Hawk's most important supporters; it is one of the few times they are mentioned in historical literature before they disappeared entirely from the pages of history.

Although it seems likely that Utes of the Sheberetch band from the area that was to become Grand County did aid Black Hawk, reports from the time were often exaggerated. In 1866, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Utah F. H. Head reported: "Black Hawk, having secured a sufficient number of recruits among the Elk

Mountain Utes to swell his force to three hundred warriors, was then setting out from the Elk Mountain country to attack the weaker settlements in Sanpete County." Head greatly overestimated the Elk Mountain Utes, calling them "the most powerful tribe in the Territory who can bring into the field upwards of four thousand warriors."[3] This at a time when others have estimated that there were barely that many Utes in the entire territory.[4]

Whatever their numbers, which could never have been large due to the limited resources of the land (and which is further believed to be small due to their rapid disappearance—and limited mention—in the historical record), the Utes from the Elk Mountain area were still angry in the 1860s—they continued to raid white settlements and the livestock herds of those whites. The continuation of the Black Hawk War in 1868 was due to their activities; Black Hawk himself kept the peace. In August 1868 a group described as Elk Mountain Utes agreed to go to the Uintah Reservation—there were twenty-six warriors and approximately seventy women and children in the group. However, in 1870 the new superintendent of Indian Affairs, J. E. Tourtellotte, would write: "The Elk Mountain Utes, Fish Utes, Sheberetches, and Yam Pah-Utes, are the most wild and disorderly Indians of this superintendency. On their hunting expeditions they sometimes visit frontier settlements, for purposes of begging and stealing. . . . They continually promise to cease depradations, but they do not keep such promise."[5] Note that he listed the Sheberetch as being distinct from the Elk Mountain Utes, though most historians have equated the two when they have mentioned the Sheberetch at all. It indicates, if nothing else, how little is known about the mixed group of people in the area that was to become Grand County. Sheberetch Utes were described by various observers as being in Arizona, Utah, and Colorado. They were also said to be well fed, well dressed, and excellent horsemen—"their isolation from white intrusion probably being the reason."[6] In a report of 1873 John Wesley Powell described the Utes of the region as being "a wild, daring people, and very skillful in border warfare. It may be stated that for the last ten years they have subsisted chiefly on the spoils of war."[7]

It is believed that an epidemic struck the Indians of the Grand County area in 1873. The ravages of disease and warfare, coupled

with increasing pressure to remove to reservations, resulted in the loss of a separate identity of the Sheberetch Utes (if they ever really had one apart from the ideas of white observers). One study concludes: "Not a great deal is known of this band except of its conflict with the whites and its struggle for existence which failed. In the 1870s and 1880s it was scattered and became part of neighboring bands of Utes."[8] Another adds: "Whoever the Elk Mountain Ute People were, they had completely lost their identity by 1880 and were never referred to again as a separate group. Perhaps they became part of the Uintah Band. Perhaps the name was never more than a catch-all for traveling Ute People who appeared from time to time at one or another of the settlements or agencies."[9]

Aside from Utah militia efforts against the warring Indians, people from agencies of the U.S. government, a few prospectors, and occasional travelers on the Old Spanish Trail were the only ones to have anything to do with Grand County lands or peoples during the years of strife from the abandonment of the Elk Mountain Mission in 1855 to the mid-1870s. In 1859 Captain John M. Macomb led an exploratory party into the region of southeastern Utah to find the confluence of the Green and Grand (Colorado) rivers and to study the geology and lifeforms of the area. The group followed the Old Spanish Trail to Dry Valley in present San Juan County, where they discovered petrified dinosaur bones while conducting other scientific observations. They then headed southwest and claimed to have succeeded in viewing the confluence of the two rivers, the first white men known to have made such a claim. However, with the extensive fur trapping in the area earlier, they were probably not the first to reach the confluence—many authorities claim that Denis Julien had traveled along the river at least as far south as Cataract Canyon in 1836.[10] In fact, most scholars, including Frederick Dellenbaugh (who traveled the rivers with John Wesley Powell), doubt that the Macomb party actually reached the confluence of the two great rivers.[11] It is known that the party of explorers, including noted expedition scientist John S. Newberry, didn't quite enter the area that was to become Grand County, restricting their studies to the south of the present county in what is today Canyonlands National Park.

The famous claim of James White that he had traveled the Grand

River from above the confluence all the way through the length of the Grand Canyon by raft in 1867 was believed by many people in the years after he was pulled from the Colorado River near Callville at the mouth of the Virgin River in what is now Nevada. Though since discredited by Frederick Dellenbaugh and others, the story had its origins in Grand County, where White claimed that he and two companions were attacked by Indians.[12] One of the men was killed and White and the other retreated down a side canyon to the Grand River where they constructed a crude raft of cottonwood logs and set off on their attempted escape, which turned out in White's telling to be an epic adventure. His companion drowned, but after the requisite trials he made it through the great river gorge alive. The inconsistencies in the story and its disparity with what was later learned of the nature of the river channels led eventually to the discrediting of White's account.[13] One item that Dellenbaugh failed to discredit was the claim by White that he and the others were prospecting in southwestern Colorado; White's mileage estimates on the river would have placed them in Grand County, giving the county some notoriety in the tall-tale department of the Old West. One item that would not be discredited, however, would be such an attack by Indians in the area. It is likely that some unfortunate prospectors did meet the fate of White's companions in the future county.

Indian agents and peace commissioners in Colorado and Utah endeavored to control and restrict Ute and other Indians in Colorado and eastern Utah through the establishment of treaties and reservations. A treaty signed in 1868 essentially gave the Utes the western third of Colorado, although miners were to be allowed in the reservation territory. However, gold was then discovered in the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado and agitation to remove the Utes from Colorado Territory continued. In 1873 the Brunot Agreement took the San Juan Mountains away from the Utes. The various Ute bands were becoming increasingly weakened and were further decimated by disease and periodic starvation while also being confused and betrayed by broken treaties and promises. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, various bands frequented or made occasional use of Grand County lands: Yamparika, Parianuche, Weeminuche, and Uncompahgre (Tabeguache) Utes are all men-

tioned in historical literature as being in the area. Reservations were established in areas outside of Grand County, so that sad tale must come to focus elsewhere than in these pages. However, the lands of the county continued to be frequented by Indians of various tribes and bands, including some of the more rebellious and angry who either escaped the reservations or resisted confinement and found in the isolated, sparsely populated, and rough land of Grand County and southeastern Utah some respite from white domination.

In 1875 two survey parties with the regional surveying expedition led by Ferdinand V. Hayden for the U.S. Geological Survey joined together on the east side of the range and were subsequently able to complete their work in the Elk (La Sal) Mountains. The groups, a combined thirteen men strong, led by James Gardner and Henry Gannet, entered the La Sals from the east and spent two weeks in the area, surveying and naming many of the mountain peaks (including Mount Peale, Mount Tukuhnikavats, and Mount Waas) after themselves and other associates. Although they were aware that the local Indians—Utes, Paiutes, and Navajos—could be hostile, they were not molested or bothered by Indians while they were in the La Sals, but they were forced to flee for their lives and abandon their equipment, many of their records, and the expedition itself when they were attacked on 15 August by Indians as they journeyed south to the Abajo (Blue) Mountains of San Juan County.[14]

The other major government-sponsored exploration parties of the period in the area were led by Major John Wesley Powell, who subsequently achieved a measure of immortality in Western history due to his two journeys down the Green and Colorado rivers—the first in 1869, the second in 1871–72. His observations relating to Grand County are limited to his comments on the Green River and surrounding areas as his exploratory parties passed through Desolation, Gray, and Labyrinth canyons, and the open area of the Green River crossing of the Old Spanish Trail between the latter two canyons. His parties had no trouble with Indians while they were on the rivers—Powell was adept at cultivating good relations with these people, who sensed his respect for them—although three members of his first expedition were killed in southern Utah or northern Arizona when they left the expedition in the Grand Canyon and

attempted to walk to the Mormon settlements. It has been claimed for years that the men were killed by Shivwits Indians, although recently this conclusion has been called into some question, with certain whites in the region being considered possible culprits.[15]

Although Powell and his men named some of the features of the county, and their findings were of great importance to later travelers, and though Powell's own reflections on the land and its management were farsighted and of value to those who would try to settle the land, the direct impact of his expeditions on Grand County was minimal—basically there was no one except the Indians to impact. Also, he did not travel along the Grand River, restricting his voyages to the Green and the Colorado below the confluence—thus he only skirted the western margin of the future county.

Therefore, although the area was becoming somewhat better known by white Americans, in the mid-1870s it was still essentially unknown—a refuge and domain of Indians who were not known for their friendly attitude towards whites. Events were transpiring to change much of that, however—if not the attitude of the Indians, at least the familiarity of white Americans with the area. Western immigration was proceeding rapidly; in fact, the transcontinental railroad had been completed and joined at Promontory, Utah, to the north just a few years before, in 1869. This facilitated immigration but also had a tremendous impact on local manufacturing, mining, and agriculture, making it possible not only to import heavy machinery more easily but also to export the ores, produce, livestock, or other goods produced in the area. Expansion of mining and livestock production was an immediate result.

Colorado had achieved statehood in 1876, and pressures not only continued but increased to remove all Ute Indians from the new state. Tribes were lumped together indiscriminately—friends and foes of each other and of the government—and were being forced onto reservations in the Uinta Basin and in northwestern Colorado. The gold discoveries in the San Juan Mountains in the 1870s brought hundreds of miners to western Colorado, and camp followers were not far behind, bringing goods and services for the prospecting camps. Cattlemen were quick to see opportunities to supply the

camps, and livestock began to be trailed into the general area of the northern Colorado Plateau.

Utah's population also continued to grow rapidly; pressure to expand the ranges increased as available grazing, farming, and timber lands were appropriated and/or depleted. The Great Basin was rapidly becoming overstocked. Enterprising cattlemen in central Utah and western Colorado began to be curious about the land between, and, with the increased demand from the miners of western Colorado, beef prices rose, a fact that soon tempted Utahns. Charles Peterson reports that in the late 1870s cattle that sold for ten dollars a head in Utah fetched between twenty-five and thirty dollars in Colorado. This fact that was not lost on Utah cattlemen, enticing many of them to consider ways to transport their stock to Colorado.[16]

The land that was to become Grand County, lying as it did between the Mormon cattle ranges and the Colorado market, began to be a subject of increased interest. Rumors and stories (many originating with Mormon Elk Mountain Mission members and exaggerated by those who retold the tales) were told of land in southeastern Utah where the grass grew as high as the belly of a horse, enticing some to brave the attendent dangers presented by hostile Indians.

Perhaps as early as 1874 whites again entered Grand County seeking to gain a livelihood from the land. Some descendents of Crispen Taylor claim that he journeyed from Juab County to the Moab area in 1874 to look the land over after hearing about it from John and James Ivie, members of the Elk Mountain Mission. The next year, accompanied by two nephews, Taylor is said to have brought a herd of cattle to the area. Ute Indians drove the men from the valley and the cattle were lost to the Indians. Also in 1875 (perhaps as early as 1874) two brothers, George and Silas Green, came from Levan, Juab County, with a herd of about 400 cattle. They lived in or near the old Elk Mountain Mission fort. Some accounts claim that they arrived before Taylor and were among those who told Taylor of the area.[17]

The Green brothers continued to graze cattle in the Moab Valley area until the winter of 1876–77 when they were both killed, probably by Indians. One of the brothers, Silas, had led a group of cattlemen (reportedly including Crispen Taylor) to the Green River area



Early Moab, 1888–1889. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

that winter. The men wanted to winter their cattle there, and Green left the company to meet his brother around Christmas in the Moab area. Neither was ever seen alive again: the body of Silas was found in upper Spanish Valley by a prospecting party the following spring; the body of George was never found.

The tragedy and mystery of the Green brothers did not long, if ever, deter others from coming to the area of the future county. Even before the Greens died, a Texas cattleman by the name of George Winters met them when he passed through the area, looking it over. The next known residents of the area were a black, William Granstaff (known as Nigger Bill), and a French-Canadian whose name has not come down through the historical record.[18] "Frenchie" and Bill were prospectors who came together with their burro to the area, probably early in 1877. They took up residence in the old fort and reportedly were saved from starvation by finding one of the Green brothers' cows. They likely found more than one, for Granstaff was later said to have run a number of cattle (none of which are known to have

been purchased) in the canyon north of Moab that now bears his nickname. The men reportedly raised garden vegetables, including melons, squash, and corn, and each laid claim to half the fort and a section of the valley. They were well established when others began trickling into the area, their fresh produce a welcome change of diet to the newcomers, according to a story told by Fred Powell, who arrived in 1878. Powell related that the flour his party carried was used to make flapjacks, for which the two inhabitants of the fort were happy to exchange some of their produce—both groups well satisfied with the trade and change of fare.

Tom Ray and his family came through the area from Mount Pleasant, Utah, perhaps as early as the spring of 1877 but more likely in October of that year. They arrived with a herd of about sixty dairy cows. Although the chronological order of many of the early events seems confused in the various retellings over the years, and though some of the journeys were perhaps conflated or omitted, the Ray family seem to have met Granstaff and his companion on 11 October at the old fort, where they remained till New Year's Day 1878 while they checked out the area. They then proceded south to the La Sal area over the hill on the south side of the mountains where they established their homestead. It is possible that some members of the Ray family arrived in the spring and that it was other members of their family in company with the Maxwell and McCarty families who followed that fall, crossing the Grand River on 11 October and remaining in the valley at the old Mormon fort till New Year's Day 1878, at which time they continued to the La Sal area.[19]

Although most accounts report that the Rays were the first to pass through the area, it has been written that in the autumn of 1877 three families—the Maxwells, the McCartys, and Neals Olsen (some also say the Rays)—with five wagons and some livestock stayed briefly in Moab/Spanish Valley (then known as Grand Valley) before continuing up the valley and over the hill to what came to be the town of La Sal in future San Juan County. One of the party—Cornelius Maxwell—reportedly had been through the area about 1873. Philander Maxwell and Dr. William (Billie) McCarty, who were with the group, were said to have brought 2,000 head of cattle to establish cattle operations at

La Sal. Whether they brought them initially or later is not clear; I suspect that they were not all brought initially.

In his excellent book *Look to the Mountains: Southeastern Utah and the La Sal National Forest,* Charles S. Peterson quotes portions of a journal kept by Arthur Barney of Sevier County, who was hired by Billie McCarty to help the latter move supplies to McCarty's ranch on what he called the "LaSalle Mountain in Colorado." Although Peterson seemed to conclude that this was part of the above-mentioned Maxwell party, I believe it must have been some time after that date, due to confusion of dates and the fact that McCarty already had a "ranch" established to which to move supplies. Nevertheless, Barney's account must have been of events in 1878 or soon thereafter. Barney wrote in his journal that "at that time it was a wild unsettled country from Salina, except 3 or 4 families on Grand River." When the group got to the Colorado (Grand) River they found a sign on the northwest bank with the words "No Camping Allowed." The sign was promptly thrown in the river and two of the group proceeded to cross to the other side where they

> found the whole country covered with grass about a foot high. We looked up the valley about a half mile and seen a house, so we headed for the house. When we got to it a woman came out. We passed the time of day with her, and as she seemed to be in a talking mood, I asked her how it was that there was no camping allowed on this side of the river, she said "This is a free country and you can camp where you please." So I told her about the notice on the other side of the river. [The woman said that] You ought to have throwed the notice into the river, which seemed to ease her a little. When we started back she hollowed after us and told us to come over and stay just as long as we wanted to. So we recrossed the Grand river and started over with our wagons.

They camped there that night and continued up the valley the next morning.[20]

I believe that Peterson is correct in maintaining that the incident reveals that even at that early date some settlers already objected to newcomers and were endeavoring to claim the land for their own. Who the woman was is not known, nor is it clear that her home was the old fort. Her welcoming attitude in contrast to the exclusionary

one expressed by the sign illustrate the contradictory attitudes that have characterized area residents ever since: those who want to keep the numbers of inhabitants of the area small and those others who are continually trying to swell the ranks of those upon the land.

In the spring of 1878 A. G. Wilson and his son Alfred came to the valley while they were scouting the general area for cattle range. They made a trade with "Frenchie" for his land; however, when Alfred and Ervin Wilson returned that fall with their cattle, they reportedly found that the Frenchman had also traded or sold the same land to Walter Moore and then left the area, traveling down the river to trap.[21] The remaining parties apparently concluded that there was land enough for both, as there is no record of any dispute between the two. Tanner reported that when the Wilson brothers arrived there were only three people at the fort, Granstaff, the Frenchman, and another, a man named White, who may have been a convict or felon, since he was taken away by two men from Ogden the next year. Others soon came: some to stay, some just drifting through the area. One claimed to have saved Granstaff's life from his old partner, who reportedly threatened the black before he left the area, claiming that it had become too populated.

Most of the early settlers of southeastern Utah (other than the specific Mormon colonization efforts in San Juan County) came from central Utah or western Colorado, and cattle ranching was their primary focus. Many learned of the area from others who had passed through the region. Mike Molen of Lehi, Utah, attempted to drive a herd of cattle to Ouray, Colorado, in June 1879. By the time he crossed the Green River many of his animals had died and others were severely weakened. He reportedly drove the herd to the La Sal Mountains where they were grazed to recover their strength before he continued to his market destination.[22]

Although it appears to be impossible to establish an accurate chronology of early events, as the examples above should indicate, the general pattern emerges that the land was gradually being settled by a variety of people—ranchers, farmers, prospectors, homesteaders, drifters—who, whatever their feelings for their neighbors, did gain a measure of security from those same new settlers in the area. Indian troubles are not mentioned until the early 1880s; whatever the

initial reaction of the Native Americans to the new settlement of the area, within a few months the strength of the white settlers was more than a match for that of the earlier inhabitants of the land, who seemed to have been pushed to the outskirts, looking there for opportunities to enrich themselves from the bounty of the new arrivals, who, though a definite threat, were also seen by the Native Americans as a rich resource for their own possible gain. The early days of Moab and the surrounding areas are recounted in more detail by Ms. Tanner in her two books, and these accounts are supplemented by the reminiscences and accounts included in *Grand Memories* and other publications of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Moab Chapter. The interested reader should be aware that the accounts may differ in particulars that have remained unexamined; however, the general history told helps give the reader an idea of the tenor of life in those times.

Most of the early settlers of the Moab and La Sal mountain area were interested in ranching; however, a few attempted to raise crops. Fred Powell, who took up a 160-acre homestead between Mill and Pack creeks, planted vineyards; Oscar W. Warner and Randolph Stewart were among those who planted fruit trees. An enumeration of the early settlers will not be attempted here—many of the early residents are remembered in the above-mentioned books—suffice it to say that in the early 1880s newcomers were arriving regularly. There were Mormons and non-Mormons mixed together right from the first, and though the Mormons likely were always the more numerous of the two groups, the Moab area was never exclusively dominated by them. Mormons never came to the area en masse as part of a formal settlement directive from church leaders as they did in most of the other towns of the territory, including newly established Bluff to the south. At first, most settlers must have taken up unclaimed land as it suited them, an arrangement that was regularized in the early 1880s as society became more organized and newly established Emery County began to take control of its territory.

It has been suggested that after the failure of the Elk Mountain mission and with the altered political conditions brought about by the so-called Utah War, the Mormons effectively abandoned southeastern Utah to the Indians. This neglect, however, allowed for the

infiltration of the area by cattlemen from Colorado, Texas, and New Mexico with their livestock herds. As Mormon church leaders began to realize this, they attempted to gain control of the land. At the 1875 conference of the Sanpete Stake of the LDS church, it was decided that the church should endeavor to open and settle eastern areas of the county, which at that time included land that was to later become Grand County. Orange Seely was put in charge of the effort. Not much happened until the 1880s, although the Mormon church did encourage its members to settle the general area and actually issued a settlement call to the heroic Hole-in-the-Rock company that settled Bluff in 1880. No such official call was made for areas of Grand County, but the church was determined to have a voice in the area. In this it was supported by territorial officials, both Mormon and gentile, who had economic reasons to settle the area—the out-of-state cattle companies were escaping taxation, something no government can tolerate. To help control the situation and manage the territory's growth, new counties were created early in 1880.

Emery County was created on 12 February 1880, essentially carved from Sanpete and Sevier counties, which had extended from the center of Utah east to the Colorado line. It was intended that Uintah County also be created at this time out of portions of Summit, Wasatch, and Sanpete counties, and that San Juan County be created in the southeastern corner of the territory. The latter county was to include most of what is today's Grand County east of the Green River and south of the summit (ridge) line of the Brown (today's Roan) Cliffs. However, on 13 February 1880, acting territorial governor Arthur Thomas vetoed the bill creating San Juan County, his reason being that the sparsely settled proposed county was too large to be properly administered or be convenient for its inhabitants, though it was intended to be defined and limited by the natural geographical boundaries of the great rivers and cliffs. Legislative adjustments were hurriedly made, and on 18 February 1880 the territory east of the Green River, north of parallel 38°31', and south of the ridge line of the Roan Cliffs was added to Emery County. Uintah County was established to the north, and a reduced San Juan County was established south of parallel 38°31'. Thus, although for five days

it was technically unaccounted for, the future Grand County became part of Emery County rather than San Juan County.

The selection of this abstract parallel as the county dividing line put much of Spanish Valley south of Moab in a different county, disregarding its natural link with Moab and Grand County. It was a situation that was not considered much of a problem in the sparsely settled area during the 1880s, but it has become more of a problem in succeeding years with the population growth of Moab and the surrounding area. The problems caused by abstract boundaries as they relate to more natural geographically defined areas are mainly political and economic—usually having to do with the collecting of taxes and the providing of services. Once they have been established, it seems that no amount of common sense or other rational considerations can avail to change the boundaries—entrenched interests are usually able to block readjustments. The situation is certainly not unique to Grand County. Fortunately, it rarely becomes too serious.

The settlement pattern followed in Moab/Spanish Valley was not the typical Mormon-village pattern of small town lots surrounded by farm and range lands, the whole enterprise supervised and directed by the local bishop. It is true that a basic grid system of city streets running north–south and east–west was established; but the main thoroughfare—called the Ouray Wagon Road— snaked sinuously through Spanish Valley unrelated to the residential street grid. Also, the homesteads that were granted and later patented in the town and valley ranged from 40 to 160 acres, and only as these large units of land were broken up by sale of parcels did the town begin to resemble the majority of the territory's settlements. In 1879 two ditches were dug from Mill Creek for general irrigation purposes; one was on the north, the other on the south side of the stream. The creek itself was named for an early flour mill. Nearby Pack Creek was first called Salt Creek, presumably from its proximity to salt deposits.

Many of the earliest settlers moved to the upper part of Spanish Valley (much of it technically outside the area that was later to become Grand County and that even in 1880 was part of little-populated San Juan County). In fact, it was these settlers who first successfully petitioned for a post office—a petition granted in November 1879 for a post office to be named Plainfield. Tanner mentions that

although she was told that C. M. Van Buren was the first postmaster, another source claims that it was Cornelius Maxwell, who lived farther south in Coyote (La Sal).[23]

A mail route served by rider and pack horses had been established in the spring of 1879—it ran from Salina, Utah, to Ouray, Colorado. The route included stops in Spanish Valley and La Sal, and it was considered one of the most dangerous in the country—some 700 miles round-trip through territory frequented by often hostile Indians. There was no regular schedule, winter storms could stop the rider for days, and it could take as much as six weeks for the mail to get through. On the positive side, there is no record of any loss of mail on the route. The coming of the railroad to the region in 1883 greatly improved postal service to the area and reduced much of the route; however, for many years to follow there still remained rough stretches of horseback mail service from Thompson through Moab to La Sal and then into western Colorado.

The majority of the area's settlers soon came to live in the lower part of Spanish Valley, and the post office was moved to accomodate the people of the rapidly forming town of the lower valley. The Plainfield area was first renamed Bueno and later Poverty Flat by the valley residents as it became rapidly depopulated with the growth of the town lower in the valley. The new post office was officially established on 23 March 1880; its postmaster was William A. Pierce. The name of the post office was Moab.

Much has been made of the name Moab and how it came to be given to the town. Faun M. Tanner treated the subject in detail in her books but was unable to arrive at a definitive answer. Briefly, one notion (which to me seems logical in essence if not in all details) is that the name was selected by a committee of some of the early settlers. William Pierce is said to have suggested the name, a familiar one from the Old Testament. Pierce fancied himself a student of the Bible, where the name Moab occurs frequently, generally referring to a rather dry and mountainous area east of the Dead Sea and southeast of Jerusalem. Thus far it would seem an appropriate name for this region in both its basic geography and in its general relation to Salt Lake City and that city's neighboring alkaline lake. Ms. Tanner claimed (from other references to the name in the books of Ruth and



Moab businessmen in front of Tet's Saloon about 1890. The group included Eck McCarty, Crispen Taylor, Tet Taylor, and Philander Maxwell. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

Jeremiah) that people of Bethlehem referred to Moab as the "Far Country"—which phrase not only pleased the early settlers of the area but also became the title of her history of the town.[24]

Moab in other ways would be an unusual choice among biblical names, however. The name first occurs in Genesis 19:37 as that given a son born to one of Lot's daughters after she seduced and lay with her drunken father after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Afterwards, the people of the land of Moab (named after the son born of the incestuous relationship) seemed in the pages of the Bible to be almost continually at war with the people of Israel, and the land and its inhabitants were usually written of with opprobrium.

However, there is also at least one positive association with Moab in the Bible. It was the homeland of Ruth, that heroine especially beloved by nineteenth-century readers. Like many tender tales of faith and fidelity, it has long appealed to certain sensibilities, and it could be that Moab as the homeland of Ruth who became part of the genealogical line leading to King David and Christ was either more familiar to a frontier student of the Good Book or else its merits in his mind outweighed its more numerous negative connotations.

Another (less accepted) theory for the name is that Moab was taken from a Paiute word for the area meaning "mosquito water." Those insects then as now flourished in the bottomlands near the Grand River where Mill and Pack creeks entered to form a marshy ground, and perhaps they were so bothersome that a practical and descriptive choice of a place name was felt to outweigh more romantic or favorable considerations—especially since such descriptive names for places were commonly used by Indian groups. However, there is no historical account of what the Indians actually called the location. As José Knighton has suggested in his *Coyote's History of Moab*, perhaps Pierce had heard such an Indian name for the area and that suggested the biblical name to him. The definitive answer will probably remain unknown—what is known is that both scriptural and Indian place names were commonly given to towns in Utah and throughout the West. One further item: Dimic B. Huntington, a brother of William and Oliver and an interpreter for twenty years, translated the word "mo-ap" in Ute dialect as meaning "spirit."[25]

Whatever its genesis and associated meanings or speculations, the word stuck as the name for the town, replacing earlier map designations of Grand Valley and Mormon Fort. Perhaps it remained only because government bureaucracies are loath to change things: Tanner reported that in about 1885 postmaster Henry G. Crouse tried unsuccessfully to have the town's name changed to Uvadalia.[26] Further, in 1890 a petition to change the name of the town to Vina failed for lack of signatures.[27] It can be supposed that faced with such possibilities, many town residents would cling to what they had regardless of how it might be interpreted. And certainly the inhabitants of the town hoped to make Moab a name of renown.

Civic order seems to have been first mentioned with the establishment of the post offices in the valley. Though the area was technically served by county officals from Emery County after 1880, the county seat of Castle Dale was far distant from Moab, forcing residents of Spanish Valley and its environs generally to regulate their own daily affairs. Growth was now occurring by means other than immigration: William Pierce, the postmaster, was also the father of the first white child born in the valley—Hugh Pierce, born 4 December 1879. Thomas Pritchett moved to the area in 1880 and

became the first local justice of the peace, performing the first marriage in the valley in the spring of 1881.

On 15 February 1881 the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organized the Mormons of Grand Valley into a ward of the Emery Stake. Randolph H. Stewart was called by church leaders as bishop of the ward and soon moved to the town. His counselors were A. G. Wilson and Orlando W. Warner. Church auxiliary organizations were created a short time later: Sunday school in August 1881, Women's Relief Society and young men's and women's Mutual Improvement Associations in February 1883. Though Mormons never exclusively dominated the town of Moab, a fact that made it distinct from most other Utah towns, they were determined to have an influence in the area. By April 1881 Pierce and Mormon bishop Randolph Stewart reported to the *Deseret News* that there were sixteen families residing in the town. They estimated that the town could support one hundred families—an open invitation to readers of the LDS paper to move to the area.[28] Other families and individuals were scattered throughout the general region, trying their hand at farming, ranching, or prospecting. A drought at the time in northern Utah became a further inducement for ranchers and others to look to the southeastern part of the territory.

In late October 1881 the settlement of Moab experienced a great gain both in population and civic energy with the arrival of Norman Taylor and his extended family. The group came from Juab County and numbered more than thirty men, women, and children; it also included fourteen wagons and assorted livestock. Norman Taylor had been one of the original pioneers to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 and was still an active and enterprising man. He built and operated the first ferry on the Grand River a year or two after arriving at Moab. One of his two wives, Laurana, was the first schoolteacher in the valley and his daughter Augusta also taught school for a time, following her mother. Early residents recalled that the school was first taught in various homes, then moved to a tent, before a log building for school and public functions was built through public donation in 1881–82 at the southwest corner of what was called Courthouse Block. This indicates that the town might have been platted by that time, although the name of the block and construction of the building could have anticipated the plat. This first public building was 24

by 30 feet, and Ms. Tanner tells the story of how the celebration at its completion turned from a dance into a drunken brawl.[29] The problem of controlling what seem to be propitious events or abundant resources is one that has continued to plague the area.

Moab's school was part of the Emery County School District One, which was created on 6 August 1883. J. Alma Holdaway was the first teacher to teach classes in the new school building, the lumber for which was hauled from Thompson by J. H. Johnson and Jens Nielsen, according to Johnson's recollections.[30] Holdaway was paid thirty dollars a month plus the provision that he could receive meals from the families of the schoolchildren attending classes. Other early teachers at the school were George McConkie and Hyrum Allen. Supplies were meager and the schoolroom consisted of only walls, a roof, and rough benches; but the citizens were rightly proud of their accomplishment. Within the decade, by 1887, there were more than eighty school-age children in the immediate area and the school board approved the construction of two new schoolhouses to replace the outgrown original building. The story is told that one of the lots for the new buildings was donated by a cowboy from Texas named Tom Trout who was in Moab at Christmas time in 1886 and won ten dollars betting on a horse race. He invested it in a town lot, which he later gave to the town for the school building. Trout later married and settled in Moab, his children making use of his contribution.[31]

The new Emery County (named after popular territorial governor Alfred E. Emery) was an area of rapid growth in the 1880s; it soon became much more populous than San Juan County to the south. Cattle ranching remained the main attraction of many settlers in the early 1880s. The northern ranges of Utah Territory were overstocked, prompting many to move their cattle south. The lure of Colorado beef prices also tempted many; and the lands of future Grand County not only provided for cattle on the trail but were seen to have merit in their own right as rangeland for cattle ranches. Many of the early ranchers had small operations, just a few head of cattle, but the profits to be made were being noticed by larger cattle operations, which rapidly began to move into southeastern Utah.

The isolated, small community of Moab and its environs continued to grow, the ferry operated by Norman Taylor the only aid—a



Grand River Ferry at Moab about 1900. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

rather primitive one, at that—to a difficult journey of more than 100 miles to Salina, Richfield, or Manti and then beyond to the other settlements in Utah. A difficult and dangerous route snaked over the foothills of the La Sals to Ouray and other Colorado towns to the east. The first ferryboat at Moab was a small, oar-powered, 28-foot-long craft; wagons had to be dismantled before they could be transported by the boat across the river. Soon Taylor built a larger boat with the aid of John Gordon; the new boat, thought to have been constructed in 1884, was more than twice the size of the previous ferryboat and was able to accomodate a wagon and its team of horses or oxen plus additional people or animals. It was attached to a cable and was much safer and more reliable than the first boat, although it was still vulnerable to mishaps and accidents.

The ferry was an important aid to transportation in the region of primitive roads and cattle trails. Drownings at both the Grand and Green rivers have been a frequent occurrence since the beginning of newspapers in the area—it is reasonable to assume that they also happened regularly before reporters noted them. In fact, it is said that when the Taylor family came to Moab they saw the corpses of two

men who had tried unsuccessfully to cross the river the day before—something which could well have prompted Taylor to consider establishing his ferry. It is not known how many travelers made use of Taylor's ferry; but it is possible that some chose to take their chances with the river due to the high prices charged by Taylor for the service. Mormon church leader F. A. Hammond of San Juan County recorded that Taylor charged him $4.00 for ferrying him, his wagon, and five horses across the river.[32] The river could generally be forded during times of low water; however, when the river was running high, most must have decided it would be prudent to pay whatever tariff was charged for the relative safety of the ferry. Taylor profitably leased the ferry operation to several individuals before the county finally took over the enterprise in 1897 and reduced the wagon rate from $2.50 to 50 cents for transport across the river.

Norman Taylor may well have determined to make the most of his move to Moab; a descendant later voiced the opinion that Taylor ceased being active in the Mormon church because he was tired of being asked to relocate to other settlements after having helped establish communities throughout the state.[33] Certainly he and his extended family soon became (and remained) influential and respected community leaders in Grand County. Two of his sons, Arthur and Loren (Buddy), managed extensive cattle operations in the region; another son, Hyrum, managed the first general store in town; and a daughter, Addie, became Moab's foremost businesswoman in the early days of the settlement. Other family members also made important contributions to the community.

Within a few years most of the land of the lower Moab portion of Spanish Valley had been claimed. The land was originally taken up in a variety of ways: mining claims, cash land entry (or purchase), desert land entry, and regular family homestead entry being the most common. The land laws of 1820 and 1841 allowed for what was termed cash entry—the cash purchase of otherwise unclaimed or unreserved public land, and the Homestead Act of 1862 provided for the acquisition of up to 160 acres of land, secured by one of two options: after living on and farming the land for six months, the homesteader could buy it at the price of $1.25 an acre, plus a filing fee; or he could get title to the land for just the price of the filing fee of fifteen dollars after hav-

ing lived continuously on the land in question for five years. The Desert Land Law of 1877 applied to lands which "will not, without irrigation, produce some agricultural crop." Until 1890 up to 640 acres of this land could be patented if the land was irrigated within three years of application; or a purchase price of $1.25 an acre could secure title to the land. There was no occupancy requirement. After 1890 the amount of land permitted to be obtained was limited to 320 acres. Only one such patent was allowed each individual, although more than one member of a family could become eligible to patent land.

The lower end of Moab Valley was first surveyed on 15 and 16 November 1878 by General Land Office (GLO) surveyor Ferdinand Dickert. This survey was limited to portions of four sections in the township range, and the survey map showed only a couple of cabins in the area as well as the old Mormon fort. A road—called the "Ouray Wagon Road"—was also shown extending the length of the valley and crossing the Grand River to the north. In late November 1880 Ernst Buettner did some additional surveying of the lower part of the valley, according to a GLO map. The upper part of the valley was surveyed from 11–13 September 1894 by Frank Baxter.

These General Land Office surveys made possible the application for title to the land. According to available records,[34] patented land secured through homestead provisions began to be issued in 1887 and cash entry patents date from 1883, indicating that settlers were making official application for the land of Moab Valley by the early 1880s. The earliest record of a patent application that I have been able to find in the BLM records is for a 160-acre homestead claim of Thomas Pritchett at the north end of the valley. The application was dated 1 October 1881 and the land was eventually patented on 2 August 1889. These dates are likely representative for most of the land patented in lower Moab Valley. It also appears from the existing records that Leonidas Crapo and perhaps some others were able to gain title to land through cash entry, then sell the land and go on to patent additional acreage under the homestead provision.[35]

Once patent applications were secured, many of the patent and subsequent title holders began to sell real estate to the ever increasing number of people moving into the valley. Substantial profits were made even in the early days of settlement for those fortunate enough

to have land in demand. Leonidas Crapo and his family had arrived in the valley in September 1880. They took up land in what was to become the center of Moab (from Main Street to Fourth East on both sides of Center Street)—160 acres of land, for which Crapo paid $200 on 21 May 1883. Less than a year later, in February 1884, that land was sold for $1,000 to Randolph Stewart and Orlando Warner, who immediately began selling it in smaller parcels.

The records of Crapo's transactions are found in Emery County records, which also list a few other land patents issued from 1884 to early 1888 (including patents for Charles Backerach, Alfred Wilson, and Nicolas Wilson). The earliest recorded patents in the Grand County Recorder's Office appear to be from 23 May 1888. Both seem to be Desert Land Certificates—one for 160 acres to Orlando Warner; another for 40 acres to Randolph Stewart. The first regular (cash entry?) certificate patents were deeded to Arthur A. Taylor (40 acres) and John Shafer (80 acres) on 26 February 1889. These deeds don't reveal when the land was actually taken up (or contracted for) nor the price paid if they were cash entry patents.

The earliest patent in Grand County records for land taken up under provisions of the 1862 Homestead Act seems to be 40 acres patented by William Pierce on 2 August 1889. This was recorded on a special certificate listing it as a homestead. Other land patents on similar certificates are recorded up to the mid-1920s, but the county patent records of the early period are incomplete and not listed in chronological (or any other apparent) order. A study of the abstract records enables one to trace the basic history of the transfer of property in the county, and this reveals that virtually all of the land in Moab/Spanish Valley had been claimed and patented by the 1890s.

Early homesteads were often primitive dugouts or log cabins. One survives at 68 South 100 East in Moab, and was thought to have built in 1881 by Randolph Stewart. It was later used by Howard Balsley, an important figure in early uranium mining in the region. Most of the other early buildings in Moab that still survive are from the 1890s and early twentieth century; however, there are at least two important buildings from the 1880s that remain. One is the first LDS church building, built in 1888 from local rock and adobe. It now serves the Daughters of Utah Pioneers as a museum. The second is

the oldest commercial building in Moab, the Hammond Store Building, which was constructed in 1887 to house a mercantile firm. This building also served for a time as a post office.[36]

According to information provided by the local museum, Moab town was platted in 1884, some nineteen years before the town was incorporated. The town plat featured wide streets and square blocks of the traditional Mormon town pattern though Moab didn't evolve from a traditional Mormon community structure. People improved their homesteads and living conditions as they were able, and over the years the town was graced with some substantial houses of quality, many of which remain today. A recent survey indicates that there are some twenty-five buildings over 100 years old and 135 buildings more than fifty years old in Moab and its environs.[37]

Charles Peterson has written about the "independent" communities of Vernal and Moab—communities which were not founded by Mormons and not established on the Mormon village pattern. Rather, they better fit the mold of the typical American frontier town of more haphazard, individualistic growth and unabashed boosterism and materialism. Of these two Utah towns in particular he wrote that Mormons and gentiles joined together to create "chest-thumping, outward-looking communities, which found their interests in an expansive economy and their heroes among those who became wealthy and among the cowboys and badmen in which the Colorado Plateau abounded."[38]

Prior to the completion of the railroad in 1883, most of Moab's supplies from the outside world were brought by wagons from Salina or Richfield, Utah, more than 100 miles to the west along the old Gunnison Route across the Wasatch Plateau. Some goods would also be brought into the town by those traveling to and from Salt Lake City, Denver, or other settlements to visit family or friends; however, the items brought back from such trips were usually personal or luxury items. Moab was a very isolated settlement, and the settlers of the area rapidly learned to be essentially self-reliant and self-sufficient. Home industry was the norm, from the raising of foods to the making of soap and medicines to the construction and repair of structures, clothing, and tools. In the first years of settlement those few retail establishments in the town featured little more than basic

necessities, re-stocked when the proprietors had the time and means to take a wagon to the settlements. Faun Tanner reported that wagon freighters made their trips in the fall, bringing in supplies necessary to last the winter. If early storms made travel impossible, people in Moab had to make do with what they had until supplies could be brought in. The completion of the railway some thirty miles to the north reduced the community's risk of being cut off from the rest of the world for any substantial length of time.

In the early 1880s John Teusher had a tent store in which he made available a few items as he was able to provide them, and an early settler known as Dutch Charlie was also said to have had goods for sale on occasion; but it wasn't until September 1882 that a regular mercantile store was established by A. G. Wilson, Hyrum Taylor, and Norman Taylor.[39] The men brought in a substantial amount of merchandise to begin activities, and kept the store as well stocked as their means would allow. Hyrum Taylor managed the store (known as Taylor Mercantile) and later bought out his partners.

Taylor's sister Addie has been mentioned as Moab's first businesswoman. She operated the first hotel in Moab, built in 1885 by her husband, Philander Maxwell. It was called the Maxwell House. Aunt Add, as Mrs. Maxwell was commonly called, also operated a millinery shop and a Navajo rug and curio shop in later years.

The Maxwell House soon had competition for the trade of visitors or passing travelers. In 1887 a hotel known as the Darrow House was built of adobe brick in the center of the growing town by Marcus Henry Darrow and his wife Mary Adeline Lee Darrow. This construction is noteworthy for at least a couple of reasons. First, it indicates that the area had grown and had a sufficient number of travelers pass through to the point that a second hotel could even be considered, let alone be successful. Although it is true that hotels of that era were not the elaborate multiroomed structures of later years, nevertheless, both of Moab's hotels were large houses, each with a number of rooms to let. A second point of interest involves the land on which the hotel was built. This was originally part of the land patented in 1883 by Leonidas Crapo and sold to Randolph Stewart and Orlando Warner. In 1885 they sold this portion of it to William Pierce; a year later he sold it to George W. Stowell. That same year, in

November, Stowell sold the land to the Darrows.[40] Thus, in less than four years the land had been held by five different groups of owners—an active real-estate scene to say the least, and one echoed at least twice in the coming century.

The two hotels were both successful establishments. It was said that "higher-class" clientele would stay at the Maxwell House, noted for its relative luxury, while the "lower" class, including outlaws traveling through the area, preferred the atmosphere and appointments of the Darrow House, which for a time with its eighteen-inch-thick walls was used as a jail. The Taylor Mercantile had competition from a store owned by Tom Farrar and operated by Randolph Stewart and William Pierce. Another early store, the La Sal Mercantile Company, is known from historical records to have operated in the town of Moab; however, most of Moab's earliest business establishments have been lost to the historical record. It can only be surmised that a growing town with two hotels and a couple of general stores would also have livery stables, blacksmith shops, restaurants, other assorted crafts and service businesses, and, of course, at least one or two saloons—there are many references to the availability and consumption of alcoholic beverages in the town.

Although Moab was known to some as a rough-and-tumble frontier cow town, and certainly did merit its reputation in many respects, there were some folks intent on making the place a respectable center of business and commerce. Cottonwoods and other trees soon graced the streets, homesteads, and yards of settlers, and, according to what one was looking for, the town offered both the promise of shade and rest or activity and enterprise in the midst of the rocky and wild plateau country. That the town was sufficiently large to generate competition for its basic services was a sure sign that it had passed the primitive stage of fighting for survival and that it was on the verge of becoming not only a commercial and social center but a political one, as well. In fact, Utah lawmakers were on the verge of creating a new county due to the rapid growth of the area.

ENDNOTES

1. Fred A. Conetah, *A History of the Northern Ute People*, p. 55.

2. Daniel W. Jones, *Forty Years Among the Indians* (1890), p. 192.

3. Floyd A. O'Neil, "A History of Ute Indians of Utah Until 1890" (1973), p. 75.

4. Conetah, *Northern Ute People,* p. 42.

5. O'Neil, "History of Ute Indians," p. 96.

6. Conetah, *Northern Ute People,* p. 89.

7. J. W. Powell and G. W. Ingalls, *Commission of Indian Affairs Annual Report—1873,* p. 415.

8. Floyd A. O'Neil, and Kathryn L. MacKay, *History of the Uintah-Ouray Ute Lands* (n.d.), p. 2.

9. Conetah, *Northern Ute People,* p. 89.

10. See Gary Topping, "History on the Rocks," *Beehive History* 15: 23–26; and Bruce D. Louthan, "Denis Julien Lecture," 7 May 1993 (typescript, BLM, Moab Office Library).

11. See F. A. Barnes, "Early Explorations of Utah," *Canyon Legacy* 9:2–9, for a detailed discussion of the Macomb Expedition.

12. See Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, *The Romance of the Colorado River* (1902), pp. 174–83. Dellenbaugh based much of his refutation on the published report of White's adventure by Doctor C. C. Parry, who recorded the story in 1868; it was published in William A Bell, *New Tracks in North America.* Some have claimed that White mistakenly noted the Grand River instead of the San Juan as the river on which his adventure began, but other scholars do not feel that this makes his story any more plausible.

13. Dellenbaugh, *The Romance of the Colorado River* (1902), pp. 174–83.

14. See Ferdinand V. Hayden, *Ninth Annual Report of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey* (1876); and Charles S. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* pp. 23–24 and 64–65.

15. See Wesley P. Larsen, "The 'Letter' or Were the Powell Men Really Killed by Indians?" *Canyon Legacy* 17:12–19.

16. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* p. 81.

17. Accounts and reminiscences of the early years are found in the major histories of the area. Other accounts may be included in diaries and journals cited in Davis Bitton, *Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1977).

18. In her *A History of Moab, Utah* Faun M. Tanner reports that some earlier settlers of the Moab area had different memories of the Frenchman's name, one recalling it as Lurkin, another as Felippe Duran (p. 28).

19. Unfortunately, all the available general histories of the area (*The Far Country; A History of Moab, Utah; Grand Memories,* and other accounts

published by the Moab Chapter of Daughters of Utah Pioneers, and *Look to the Mountains*) have inconsistent and differing accounts of the first settlers and their arrival in the area. The account presented here is my attempt to reconstruct the chronology, but the interested reader is referred to the above volumes (and their accompanying notes) for more information.

20. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains*, pp. 30–32.

21. Tanner, who reported the above story in her book *The Far Country* also reported a couple of pages later that Walter Moore didn't arrive in the valley until December 1878, so there is a distinct possibility that the story is apocryphal.

22. See Lloyd Pierson, *Cultural Resource Summary*, p. 153.

23. Tanner, *The Far Country*, p. 71.

24. Ibid., pp. 89–92.

25. See Gottfredson, *Indian Depredations in Utah*, supplement.

26. Tanner, *The Far Country*, p. 92.

27. *Grand Memories*, p. 50.

28. *Deseret News*, 17 April 1881. See also *The Far Country*, p. 95.

29. Tanner, *The Far Country*, pp. 98–100.

30. Ibid., p. 269.

31. Ibid., pp. 316–17.

32. Ibid., p. 101.

33. D. L. Taylor quoted in Todd Campbell, "The Taylors: Five Generations of Ranching in Grand County," *Canyon Legacy* 11:15.

34. Available patent records appear to be incomplete and are somewhat scattered as to their location between Emery and Grand counties as well as various federal and state collections including the Utah State Archives and the Bureau of Land Management.

35. See Emery County "Official Deeds and Records, 1881–90," and Emery County "Grantors Index, 1881– ," both in the Utah State Archives.

36. See articles by Jean Akens, B. J. Eardley, and Bette Stanton in *Canyon Legacy*, Number 21—an issue that has as its theme historic structures in Grand County and nearby environs.

37. See "Moab Area Historic Walking Tour," a pamphlet published by the Moab Information Center and the Dan O'Laurie Museum under the aegis of the Grand County Travel Council (1993). It features information collected by John F. Hoffman and edited by Lloyd Pierson.

38. Charles S. Peterson, *Utah*, p. 137.

39. Tanner, *The Far Country*, pp. 100, 103.

40. Ibid., p. 252.

7

THE EARLY YEARS TO 1890

Increased occupation of the region led inevitably to increased friction with the Native Americans who still claimed the land as their own. In August 1880 two of the sons of A. G. Wilson, Joe and Ervin, were attacked near the head of Pack Creek in the La Sals by Indians angered by a dispute over horses they had had earlier with other ranchers in the area. One of the boys, Joe Wilson, was shot in the face and foot and left for dead; his brother escaped and went for help. In the meantime, Joe had been found by friendly Indians who helped him home, where he recovered, though he thereafter walked with a limp and was blind in one eye.

Indians were commonly grouped into "good" and "bad," or "renegade," categories; troubles and conflicts were of course always ascribed to the "bad" roving bands of renegades and outcasts of various tribes. While some of this labeling may be partially correct, it unfortunately also reveals that the white settlers made little attempt to actually know who their Indian neighbors were or to concern themselves with the situation and welfare of the Native Americans. The general attitude and desire seemed to be to place all Indians on

reservations; however, it seems that those Native Americans who were tractable or stayed out of the way of the few officials of the territory and county could be tolerated.

Though major troubles with Indians were avoided in the first years of Grand County's renewed settlement, it was definitely a time of trouble and unrest in the general region. The so-called Meeker Massacre, in which an Indian agent and others in northwestern Colorado at the White River Reservation were killed in 1879, led to the removal of the Utes from that reservation to the Uintah Reservation in Utah, and there was a great outcry to confine all the Indians—friend or foe—to reservations. It was a traumatic time for Ute Indians, a time of uncertainty, confusion, and upheaval. The Uncompahgre Reservation was established by executive order of President Chester A. Arthur on 5 January 1882, directly north of what was to become Grand County, in the most desolate and dry region of the Tavaputs Plateau. It extended south and east from the southeastern corner of the Uintah Reservation to the county and state boundary lines. It was land that no one but a few ranchers had any use for; and it was generally so desolate that it could not possibly support the Utes transported by force to it. In fact, within four years most of the Indians there were transferred to the Uintah Reservation.

Another Indian incident spilled over into Grand County land in 1881. Called the Pinhook Battle, or Massacre, it resulted in the greatest loss of life in conflict in the county's recorded history. According to reports at the time, the troubles were caused by a group of "renegades"—some said they were the same Indians who had killed agent Meeker two years before in Colorado. They were now supposedly roaming the general area, causing trouble and bringing terror. It was claimed that these renegades—now a mixed group of Utes, Paiutes, and Navajos—killed two cowboys and stole their herd of horses near the Big Bend of the Dolores River in Colorado in May 1881. At least one posse—and perhaps two—of Colorado residents of the general area was formed and a chase ensued, the Indians having at least a couple of days—and perhaps a much longer—head start.

The historical record is very confused—versions and rumors abound concerning the incident, and the interested reader is referred to *The Far Country* for the recounting of many of them. It almost

seems that these mobile renegades were credited with every murder and theft of horses from Mancos, Colorado, to the Monticello area of Utah for a period of time from spring onwards. Charles Peterson presents a coherent account of the troubles in his book *Look to the Mountains,* where he comments on the "almost unbelievably bad" communications, the residents of Bluff not hearing about the troubles until two weeks after they had occurred. The offenders, who Peterson concludes were Paiutes, had passed through that town earlier with the horses and money they had stolen from the murdered cowboys. In the meantime, it appears that the fugitives had been joined by a band of Utes and had traveled west and then north to the west side of the La Sals. The posse or posses had meanwhile been assembled from Colorado miners and cowboys and were in pursuit. In Peterson's words: "The expedition was poorly handled from start to end, and the Indians displayed a clear superiority in terms of logistics and mobility, if not in leadership."[1]

Shots had occasionally been exchanged throughout the pursuit, and it seems that somehow the Indians being pursued had picked up Indian women as well as a herd of sheep and/or goats—hardly the usual outriders of a hardened group of murderous renegades, and suggesting instead that in the confusion and anger of the times, some whites may have used the opportunity to institute a pogrom of sorts, attacking and chasing any Indians they happened to encounter. An Indian woman was killed, and later, on 15 June, seven Indian men were killed on Boren Mesa. The Indians in turn were able to ambush their pursuers a few miles away when the posse finally caught up with the Indians at Pinhook Draw on the northwest side of the La Sals at the head of Castle Valley—an area now in Grand County. Eight men of the posse were killed, as were two Moab men—Alfred and Isadore Wilson—who it appears were camped in Castle Valley tending their cattle and went to investigate when they heard the sounds of the conflict.[2] After the two-day battle, the Indians were able to elude their demoralized pursuers and escape, some said back to their reservation. They were never apprehended. Depending on the account, the number of Indians said to have been killed in the battle ranges from two to eighteen or more. Though not much is certain about the Pinhook battle, it does serve to show how volatile conditions were on the fron-

tier and how fragmentary is our knowledge about the events of the time—even when they could involve the loss of a substantial number of lives. It seems that on the frontier stories had a tendency to grow with the retelling and "facts" became protean things.

What can be gained, it is hoped, is some sense of the time and place, some feeling for the "human" history of it all—an era when people were not so different in their emotions, hopes, fears, and reactions from what we are today, but a time when primitive living conditions, exacerbated by the isolation, sense of vulnerability, and even nature itself, presented difficult challenges and often called forth strong responses from those endeavoring to live upon the land. The site of the Pinhook battle is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and a monument was erected there in 1940 by Grand County in memory of the whites "massacred by Indians" at Pinhook. A battle it was; a massacre it surely was not. From the fact of the goats herded by the fleeing Indians and the killing of a woman in the party it seems to me that some innocent people were caught up in the affair, fleeing from feared indiscriminate wrath—an all-too-often justified fear of minority or oppressed peoples everywhere.

A member of another oft-persecuted minority group, African American William Granstaff, left the county for parts unknown after the Pinhook battle. He had been accused of selling whiskey to the Indians and judged it foolhardy to remain in the area. Years later he was seen in Colorado by Arthur Taylor and reported to Taylor that he had feared for his life from the white citizens of the area. Before he left, he reportedly told another man that "the men are gathering up guns to go on the mountain to hunt Indians, but I think I'm the Indian they are after."[3] At the time of his abrupt departure, Granstaff had been a resident of the area for the longest time among the non-Indians; Negro Bill Canyon, located between Spanish and Castle valleys, is named for him.

The Pinhook battle was definitely the most notorious of the conflicts between the region's whites and Native Americans; however, other limited but violent encounters occurred during the decade and into the years just prior to the changing of the centuries. The troubles were known to later historians as the "cowboy wars" of the 1880s, and most of the troubles were between ranchers and cowboys pro-

tecting their stock from roving bands of Indians. A few isolated settlers and miners were perhaps victims of opportunistic Indians, since we know from accounts of some southeastern Utah pioneers that the Native Americans would periodically make their rounds, begging foodstuffs and occasionally threatening homesteaders. Accounts of tragedies barely averted lead one to conclude that other tragedies did occur. Unfortunately, records are rare and events difficult if not impossible to reconstruct. One student estimates that upwards of thirty settlers were killed in conflicts with Indians; how many Indians lost their lives has never been estimated to my knowledge.[4]

Conflicts between Mormons and non-Mormons appear to have been minimal in the area during the 1880s, even though it was an era of great troubles for the LDS church as it came under increasing pressure from the federal government due to the church's doctrine of plural marriage, in which male members in good standing could marry more than one woman. This practice of polygamy was one of the major reasons for the delay in Utah attaining statehood; and after a series of laws prohibiting polygamy and cohabitation were enacted and court decisions upheld them, federal marshals began to seek and arrest polygamists, forcing many of them to flee and go into hiding—"on the underground," as church members called it.

Grand County appears never to have been a major haven for polygamous Mormons during the 1870s and 1880s as they came under increasing pressure from government authorities. There were polygamous Mormon families in Grand County (though they were certainly not as numerous there as in Mormon-dominated San Juan County)—for example, according to family history, Norman Taylor had five wives, two of whom lived in Grand County, and Randolph Stewart had three wives—Sarah Ann Taylor, Sarah J. Kennison, and Marietta Pierce—by whom he fathered twenty-three children. Though only a minority of Mormons—particularly church leaders—ever practiced polygamy, the principle was still accepted by all faithful Mormons. During the period, some Mormons migrated to Mexico and Canada to escape law officers, while others remained in the country trying to hide or keep on the move to safer havens or isolated areas, one step ahead of pursuing civil authorities.

Though the area of Grand County would certainly be considered

an isolated area difficult for law-enforcement authorities to manage (as outlaws were beginning to discover), the fact that Mormons did not dominate the local society of Moab, let alone the mining camps and railroad stations of the region, made it less likely that polygamous Mormons would be attracted to the area as a haven. There were plenty of other isolated areas for hiding out, and the harassed Mormon patriarchs probably felt safer in San Juan County and other areas where they were surrounded by their fellow church members.

No reports of feuds or troubles relating to polygamy in Grand County seem to have come down through the years to public knowledge; thus it is not known if the practice did create local friction. From all appearances, it did not; Mormons and non-Mormons appear to have lived peacefully together in that era as in subsequent ones. However, at least one prominent Moab resident was apprehended and arrested for polygamous cohabitation. Randolph H. Stewart, polygamous bishop of Moab for seventeen years after being called to the position in 1880, according to a family history, occasionally had to go into hiding from law officers. He usually hid out in upper Spanish Valley, but he was eventually caught, arrested, and prosecuted. He was eventually convicted on a charge of adultery and served time in the Utah State Penitentiary from 19 November 1888 to 16 May 1889, according to the account of Rudger Clawson, Mormon apostle and fellow prisoner.[5]

The second half of the nineteenth century was the great period of railroad construction in the United States; towns were born and died according to their proximity to the rails. Fortunes were made by contractors, railroad owners, and land speculators, who would secure land near the planned route of the rails. Fraud, collusion, and insider information was common with such huge amounts of money available; in the case of the transcontinental railroad, the federal government provided a further incentive by granting sections of land along the route to railroad developers. Even without that bounty, the railroad was probably the most desired of the "wish list" items of county and city governments and the majority of their citizens throughout the country. Cities, counties, and even states throughout the West fought, cajoled, pled, and perhaps bribed railroad route decision-makers to bring the tracks to their neighborhood. Immigration to

areas near the rails became easier, and transportation of produce and manufactured items to and from the area was facilitated, stimulating those activities as well as bringing additional communication benefits such as telegraph and (later) telephone lines and service roads. These utilities not only followed the path of the rails but were themselves augmented by the construction of a network of other roads and lines linking other areas to the depot towns. Little wonder that railroads were dreamed of and fought for—they could mean the difference between survival and oblivion to frontier towns.

That said, it could be considered a wonder that the railroad came unbidden to what was to be Grand County. Certainly it happened without any input, cajoling, or persuading from the residents of the area; the county was merely in this case a beneficiary of decisions made elsewhere—something that for good or ill has characterized the county ever since: it is often a pawn in someone else's game, its officials and residents hardly ever having much say in the decisions that would come to influence their lives and impact the county's lands.

The Denver and Rio Grande Western (D&RGW) Railroad was organized in July 1881 with the purpose of extending the Denver and Rio Grande (D&RG) Railroad line from Colorado to Salt Lake City. William Jackson Palmer of the D&RG was the driving force behind the new line; he was engaged in direct competition with owners of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad and decided upon the route through future Grand County after two years of exploring other possible routes. The new line also put him in direct competition with the transcontinental Union Pacific line to the north, and, in fact, it was greatly welcomed by many in Utah who were aggrieved by what they considered the Union Pacific's monopolistic tactics and practices.[6] The competition that the new line was expected to provide was welcome to many in central and northern Utah. Residents of what was then eastern Emery County had fewer long-term hopes at the time; instead, they were able to see immediate economic benefit in the actual construction of the line through the area.

The new line was a narrow-gauge track built simultaneously in both directions. It was laid in future Grand County solely because the area at the foot of the Book Cliffs was not only a natural railroad corridor but was the only such natural corridor for hundreds of miles to

the north and south. The route essentially followed the northern branch of the Old Spanish Trail, coming west out of Colorado into the broad Grand River Valley, and then on through the open, relatively flat expanses of the Cisco and Green River deserts at the foot of the Book Cliffs until it crossed the Green River at what was then called Gunnison Valley; it then soon veered north to cross the Wasatch Plateau near Soldier Summit.

Although the line was some thirty-five miles from Moab, its construction was a boon to the fledgling community, attracting newcomers to the area, furnishing direct construction work for Moab's men and boys and indirect employment for many others, and providing a market for Moab's agricultural produce. Railroad construction in the county began in 1881 and continued until the line was joined west of Green River in April 1883. The new line was open for business and trains were running between Denver, Colorado, and Ogden, Utah, by May 1883. At 720 miles in length, the line was said to be the longest narrow-gauge track in the world. Local crews along the route did much of the initial construction and rough grading; Mormon contractors worked cooperatively, bidding low on the project to keep out Colorado companies and then dividing the earnings among themselves. Moab residents Arthur Taylor and Orlando Warner each contracted to build sections of the grade and then hired local laborers to do the actual work. Some men had teams of oxen that they used in the transportation and grading work; others had teams of horses. Sena Taylor and Irene Luster did some cooking for the crews, and other Moabites including Warner, A. G. Wilson, and Felix Murphy hauled hay from Moab for the draft animals.[7] The local men basically did the rough grading of the roadbed by breaking and leveling the ground with plows and scrapers pulled by their draft animals, with a liberal amount of pick-and-shovel work supplementing the work of the animals. The railroad company imported some workers—especially for the tasks requiring more skilled labor, such as the actual laying of track. These workers included men of many nationalities—Chinese and Italian laborers primarily, but Greek, Japanese, and black American workers were also employed. Ethnic groups formed their own segregated enclaves in the construction camps and towns that sprang up with the additional influx of other people—



Early Dam on Mill Creek in late 1800s believed to have been built by O. W. Warner. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

from merchants and craftsmen to professionals and prostitutes—anxious to cater to the needs and wants of the workers.

Almost overnight, towns and railroad stations were built in the area that was to become Grand County. No longer was there just Moab and a few nearby pockets of settlers; now from Westwater on the east to Green River station on the west there were population centers, some of which (most notably Westwater) for a time actually claimed to have more residents than Moab and challenged Moab for county supremacy. The telegraph was connected at Thompson in 1884, linking Grand County in a worldwide communication network. An era of unabashed boosterism, growth, and experimentation began in which countless schemes and dreams were hatched as people tried to see just how the land could be used most profitably.

Although Moab had a head start in the race for prosperity and also had the natural advantages of its well-watered valley in close proximity to the natural Old Spanish Trail crossing of the Grand River, these factors did not seem to be as important once the town was isolated by some thirty-five rough miles from the new major transportation route and life-giving artery of the railroad. It was also the case that some advantages had associated disadvantages. For example, although the Grand River was seen at the time as a possible

transportation corridor to the region, it also could serve as a barrier, cutting off Moab from the settlements and railroad to the north. The Grand River flooded more than a mile from its banks at the lower end of Moab Valley in 1884, revealing how vulnerable and isolated Moab could be even with a ferry operation.

But Moab wasn't going to surrender its preeminence without a struggle; it was determined to use the coming of the railroad to its own advantage. The first line of attack was to persuade the railroad company to extend its line south to Moab—an endeavor that was periodically attempted for the next half century and more, but one that was always unsuccessful until the 1960s when a spur line for the potash mill south of Moab was finally built. However, even this does not pass through Moab, nor does it transport passengers or regular freight. But though civic leaders were often frustrated by their failure to attract the railroad to the town, they had other cards to play in the high-stakes game of county dominance. It even became a competition for the basic survival of the town—a game most of their competitors in the county eventually lost.

The next strategy of local leaders was to improve the transportation corridors between Moab and the railroad—an endeavor that occupied the citizenry for many decades—always with some, albeit varying, degree of success. During the first years after completion of the railroad the road from Thompson through Courthouse Wash to Moab was somewhat improved and developed as a freight and transportation link; however, even the one-way trip averaged eight hours, often spread over two days. A way station in Courthouse Wash was established for the convenience of travelers and was run for a number of years by an English couple whose names have escaped the historical record. At this stop travelers could get lodging and meals, although the meals became locally notorious for being almost always limited to a main fare of salt pork.

The fact that the road from Thompson to Moab was a dirt grade resulted in the fact that increased traffic and use, though helping better define it, at the same time degraded it with ruts and washboard surfaces. In addition, weather could wreak havoc upon the road: rains brought floods that roared through the washes, halting traffic, or they could leave sedimentary deposits of loose sand, making it difficult for

horses or oxen to pull a wagon through. The rains or melting snow could also turn the Mancos Shale areas of the desert in the northern part of the route to a slick, impassable morass known locally as "gumbo."[8] Still, the fact that travelers, freight, and mail could be brought by rail to within thirty-five miles of the town was a major benefit—no longer did Spanish Valley residents need to fear being cut off for weeks from the outside world on short rations and supplies by early or severe winter storms, something that had been known to happen in the past when they were dependent for goods upon wagon freighting from Manti, Salina, or Richfield.

The railroad especially facilitated the transportation of livestock, providing further incentive for ranchers to come to the area and for those already there to increase their herds—which in turn led to the more rapid depletion of native grasses and degradation of the range. Soon, cattle were being grazed wherever it was possible, and certainly in places where it would not remain possible for any extended period of time. The introduction of sheep a short time later added to the pressures on the rangeland. Some of the railroad camps and supply towns became stations along the route, often serving as transportation heads and shipping points for the livestock.

Railroad stations, camps, and towns along the narrow-gauge line in what was to be Grand County included (from east to west) Acheron, West Water, Cottonwood Station, Cisco, Whitehouse Station, Sagers Station, Thompson Springs, Crescent Station, Little Grande (Floy) Station, and Solitude (or Solitade) Station. It is also possible that there were other railroad construction camps along the line that have disappeared from both history and the landscape.

Almost nothing is known about Acheron except that it was located near the state line and had an artesian well drilled to a depth of 900 feet that furnished water; however, its quality was so poor that it could not be used for the railroad. The station ceased to exist when the standard-gauge track was laid in 1890 along a new grade alignment some miles south of the town.

Westwater had its start as part of the grazing land of the Bar X Cattle Company. West Water Camp was set up in the area along the narrow-gauge line and became the base camp for workers building the Ruby Tunnel in Colorado in 1884. Chinese, Italian, and Mexican

workers were among those stationed at the town, which had a school, two stores, and a restaurant among other less reputable businesses at the time a post office was established in 1887. The town (renamed Westwater) was a railroad station on the new standard-gauge line completed in 1890, and it continued to grow as a railroad, agricultural, and ranching center for a number of years afterward.

Cottonwood was located a few miles northeast of Cisco, according to an 1895 map of the area. Otherwise, virtually nothing is known about the station. The same is true of Sagers Station, located a few miles northwest of Cisco. George Thompson, however, does mention a "local legend" of a Japanese cook at Sagers who was murdered for a cache of money that he supposedly had hidden in the area. The money was never found and perhaps remains in the vicinity today, a magnet for treasure hunters. So, too, remains a cache rumored to have been hidden by robbers of a train near Grand Junction, Colorado. The outlaws supposedly hid their loot somewhere close to the tracks near the state line, according to Thompson.[9]

Cisco was one of the towns established in 1883 as a result of the railroad. It became an important shipping point for livestock whose winter range was the Cisco Desert area and summer range was the Book Cliffs region or the northern slopes of the La Sal Mountains. Water was pumped by means of a steam engine from the Colorado River to a reservior one mile southeast of the town. Cisco was the only railroad town in Utah (there was also one in Colorado) that had a pumping station for the railroad that extracted water from the Colorado River. When the standard-gauge tracks were laid some two miles from town, the entire town was relocated to the southeast to stay on the railroad line. John Martin, a surveyor for the railroad, speculated in the land and did much to promote the town, which became an important ranching and railroad center. Businesses sprang up and a post office was opened in 1887.

Whitehouse Station was located on both the narrow- and standard-gauge lines. Traces of a depot and other structures remain, and the camp was said to have housed a number of Chinese workers, but otherwise not much else is known about it.

Thompson Springs, soon shortened to Thompson in common reference, was named for a homesteader whose first name has not

come down through the historical record. He had settled in the area by 1883 at the site of a spring. The location was recognized as a favorable one at an early date, and the land was purchased by brothers Harry and Arthur P. Ballard. They laid out and promoted the town, which with its water and later-discovered coal supplies nearby became an important railroad stop—if not the most important, certainly one of the two or three most important in Grand County. The town was connected to the telegraph system in 1884; it was granted a post office on 27 May 1890. The first postmaster was Edward Bulpin; subsequent postmasters included Edward Rhay and Arthur Bulpin. According to the chronicler of *Grand Memories,* the job of postmaster went with ownership of a local store.[10]

Crescent Station was a railroad stop that is thought to have housed Italian construction crews. An early General Land Office map suggests that it may have had a water tank supplied by pipe running from Thompson Springs. Like that town, Crescent (now Crescent Junction) has continued to exist and will be discussed further in pages to follow. It seems to have been named for the fact that the Book Cliffs north of the town begin to noticeably arc northward at this point from the predominantly east-west orientation they had followed to the east.

Little Grande (Floy) Station was located west of Crescent at Floy Wash. Solitude (sometimes written Solitade) Station was located just east of the Green River.

Other settlements not associated with the railroad also developed during the 1880s. Some were mining camps and a few others were agricultural or ranching locales. Castleton was located on Castle Creek at the head of Castle Valley. It was first settled by a prospector named Doby Brown in the late 1870s or early 1880s. Others came to the valley and a post office was established there in 1882. A cattle ranch was then headquartered in the area by John E. Pace and his family, beginning in about 1888. When gold was discovered in Miner's Basin in 1888, the town of Castleton grew considerably, serving as a supply point and recreation center for miners in the mountains above the town. According to George Thompson, Miller's Hotel was an early establishment in the town along with Plug Hat Kelly's saloon.[11] It was an important town into the next century.

Dewey (originally Kingsferry) was the site of a ferry built and

operated by Samuel King on the Grand River northeast of Moab at the only natural crossing point of the river between Moab and Grand Junction, Colorado. The town was located on one of the variant routes of the Old Spanish Trail. King built the ferry in the 1880s to serve miners, farmers, and ranchers in the area northeast of Moab at the foot of the north slope of the La Sals and in the Grand River Valley and Cisco Desert areas. A small community soon developed near the ferry crossing and its development will be discussed in pages to come. The name Dewey is thought by some to have come from Dewey Smith, a prospector in the area in the 1880s, although others believe that the town was renamed around the turn of the century in honor of Admiral George Dewey, hero of the battle of Manila in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War.

The town of Green River was originally known as Blake. It began as a mail station operated by H. Elwyn Blake, Sr., on the west side of the Green River near the historic crossing point of the Old Spanish Trail. The town flourished with the coming of the railroad in 1883, and though it is in Emery County, it has had close ties with Grand County across the river. A community known as East Blake was shown on an 1883 survey map on the east side of the river. At that time, the main channel of the Green River also flowed about 0.7 miles west of its present channel (all that land between the historic channel and the present river being part of Grand County today). The town was renamed Green River by 1895, and the settlement on the east bank became known as Elgin in the 1890s, named, it is supposed, after an early resident and/or promoter of the area.

Miners Basin (also known as Basin) was high on the northwest slope of the La Sal Mountains and flourished for some twenty years after gold discoveries were initially made in the late 1880s.

Picture Gallery was the result of agricultural settlement along Grand River bottomlands north of the Dolores River in Utah. It was named for its picturesque setting and the scenic beauty of the general area.[12] The locale began to be settled in the 1880s, but it was some years until a post office and other facilities were established near the head of Coates Creek. The post office operated from 1913 to 1919, and a school functioned there for three years beginning in 1929. It and Dewey were the only two that ever flourished out of a number



Lower Courthouse Stage Station c. 1890. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

of small settlements started over the years in the area north of the La Sals and south of the Colorado (Grand) River.

Plainfield, as mentioned previously, was the site of early settlement in Spanish Valley. The area is intimately tied to Moab and Grand County, although it is technically in San Juan County. In the early 1880s Plainsfield declined, but new settlers arrived by the mid-1880s and a church and school were both built. The settlement subsequently became known for a time as Bueno and then even later as Poverty Flat. Towards the end of the century, uranium deposits were discovered in the area.

Richardson was named after Dr. Sylvester Richardson (the Professor), who settled at the mouth of Professor Creek in Professor Valley along the Colorado River northeast of Moab. The area included good agricultural land, and Dr. Richardson built a store which he supplied by boat and which served prospectors, farmers, and ranchers. A post office was established in 1886.

The railroad definitely stimulated settlement and economic activity in the area that was to become Grand County. Taxes paid and other revenues generated by the railroad eventually helped lead to the

creation of Grand County from Emery County when it was seen that the somewhat underpopulated area could still generate funds for governmental and social activities. This move to establish a separate county also would enable territorial authorities to establish better control over the remote area.

Cattle ranching remained the main attraction of the area through the 1880s, but mining and fruit growing were attracting additional settlers to the region; also, the railroad had created service industries and jobs that benefited locals while bringing outsiders to the county. Legally or otherwise, many would try to claim the scattered water sources in the generally arid region, which attempts, if successful, would enable them to control a great amount of the surrounding rangeland. The generally open range, along with the accessible streams and washes emanating from the La Sals and Book Cliffs (not to mention the rivers) all worked to mitigate against this type of control; but, needless to say, disputes could be serious in those instances where a person thought his stock was being unfairly denied access to water. Settlers naturally gravitated to the few well-watered areas, and violence was known to erupt periodically over disputes over water, although once the newspaper came to the area, most conflicts seemed to be called range disputes—over the quantity, condition, and control of the range—rather than simple disputes over water. Ranchers commonly ran anywhere from a few head of cattle to many thousands, the larger holdings becoming more common in the mid-1880s as large companies were formed or came to the country, buying or forcing out smaller outfits in the process.

The Denver and Rio Grande Western (D&RGW) Railroad was plagued by legal battles in its early years. It was a separate entity from the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, though the two had close ties. The relationship was strained between 1884 and 1886; in fact, in 1884 the president of the D&RG, Frederick Lovejoy, ordered the route severed at the Utah–Colorado border. Though it was the great era of railroads, it was also an era of schemes, fraud, and corruption dear to the hearts of lawyers. Companies were regularly restructuring, going into receivership, changing names, and entering into new combinations—some real, some merely paper schemes. It is dizzying and its detailed study is of little interest to the general reader. Suffice it to

say that the railroad in Grand County went through metamorphoses regarding its name and ownership, but the railroad, once established, continued in operation despite threats and problems.[13]

It was soon decided to upgrade the tracks from narrow-gauge to standard-gauge to meet the challenge of the Colorado Midland Railway, which had plans to bring a standard-gauge line into Utah from Colorado, something that would facilitate the transportation of goods and threaten the D&RGW. Palmer met the challenge by forming a new company—the Rio Grande Western—through which he was able to get the funds to secure rights-of-way and begin construction of his own standard-gauge line, working out an agreement with the Colorado Midland line in the process.[14]

New track for the standard-gauge line was generally laid within a few hundred yards of the old narrow-gauge; at the most it was only a few miles away—although that was sufficient to mean the demise of some of the towns on the line, and it forced the move of the entire town of Cisco some two miles to the new tracks in order that it not meet the same fate as the bypassed towns. Construction activity again benefited locals in the county and brought in a new influx of outsiders, providing increased ethnic diversity. The area was better prepared for this second round of railroad construction, and a few new towns were created along the line: Agate was a new station, Westwater and Cottonwood Station were moved south to the new line. Construction of the standard-gauge tracks was completed in the county in 1890—the same year that Grand County was officially created.

Ranchers, miners, prospectors, and farmers continued to move into the area throughout the 1880s, locating in places that never were officially designated settlements or named by their inhabitants (at least as far as those names have come down in the historical record). Little is known about individual prospectors in the early years—anonymous drifters and wanderers, they could be found throughout the West, searching for an elusive El Dorado. Only when their findings were sufficient to generate interest from others were their names and claims recorded. How many were victims of Indian attacks, foul play, disease, or accident will also forever be unknown. All that can be said with any certainty was that they were in the region—a supposition confirmed by occasional isolated records of deaths of some

loners in the plateau area. It is known that in the 1880s Cass Hite found fine gold deposits along the Colorado River south of Grand (at the time Emery) County. His findings brought many miners to the area scouting the land all throughout the river channels, but most moved on within a short time when the gold "flour" that was found proved to be too fine to recover profitably.

Indians still posed some threat to white settlers in the later years of the 1880s, but the danger was diminishing. Paiutes, Utes, and Navajo Indians in the region had their own intertribal conflicts and troubles. All were essentially subject to the will of the Anglos, and rumors of reservation relocation, closing, and creation were common throughout the era. In the mid-1880s Paiutes accused Ute Indians of decimating the deer herds of the La Sal Mountains—an area where the Paiutes expected to remain, while it was thought that the Utes would all soon be sent to reservations. That slaughter of animals in revenge or frustration did not help relations between the Indian tribes themselves or with the whites.

The General Allotment Act (also known as the Dawes Act) was passed by Congress in 1887 and came to have a profound impact on Indians confined on reservations. Through the act (and its various amendments in 1891, 1906, and 1910) the federal government was authorized to divide reservation lands into 40-, 80-, and 160-acre allotments to be given to individual tribal members. The Secretary of the Interior was then authorized to sell the "surplus" unallotted land and use the procedes to educate and "civilize" tribe members. By means of this act, Indian reservation land holdings in the nation were reduced by almost two-thirds—from 138 million acres to 48 million acres by 1934. This was a devastating development for Native Americans throughout the United States, and not until the 1930s would they begin to recover some of the land taken from them—a process that would eventually affect Grand County.

In the 1880s new threats were arising in the form of outlaws, cattle rustlers, and range troubles that occasionally grew to the point of being called range wars. Good land was becoming increasingly hard to find, and conflicts grew in direct proportion to that difficulty. Individual ranchers who ran a few head of cattle were being replaced by those with larger herds who generally had better prospects of con-



J. N. Corbin (center) at a mining camp in the La Sal Mountains, date unknown. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

trolling the good grazing land, often by extralegal means, as there was an open range policy for public lands of the West. Control of public range in the West was often effected by establishing control of the scarce water sources of the region. This was also true in Grand County land, but not to the extent elsewhere, it seems. General Land Office records from the early period collected by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) show that legal control of water sources was not commonly established in the land that was to become the county; instead, de facto but effective control of certain water sources led to the control of large tracts of land. The land itself was the key—the limited resources of the Green River and Cisco deserts for winter grazing were highly coveted, for example, and disputes periodically raged between Utah and Colorado cattlemen bringing their livestock either to winter or summer ranges in the other's territory.

In his study of the La Sal Mountains, Charles Peterson divided the region of southeastern Utah into six great cattle provinces. Though he confessed that it was somewhat of an oversimplification,

the division helps us understand how the range was dominated by a mere handful of powerful interests after 1883.[15] Most of the range was in San Juan County, but one great province encompassed the vast desert and Book Cliff range north of the Colorado River. The north slopes of the La Sals were also coveted by area cattlemen. The great northern province was dominated for a time by Preston Nutter, but others including the Webster City Cattle Company, the Taylor family, John Shafer, and the L. C. Cattle Company shared much of the range of what was later to be Grand County.

Although some of the largest cattle companies (including the Carlisle, Pittsburgh, and La Sal cattle companies) operated in San Juan County and in western Colorado, outside of the boundaries of what was to be Grand County, their influence was felt in Grand County. In addition, as Moab grew and along with Grand Junction, Colorado, became a dominant town of the area, many of the cowboys working for these outfits frequented the town when they weren't working and conducted business with Moab's merchants and tradesmen.

Preston Nutter was a Colorado rancher who established a ranch in 1886 near the railroad line between Thompson and Cisco, running his stock in that general area and north into the Book Cliffs near Hill Creek. Although, in contrast to most of the other area cattle barons, he had no corporate financial backing, he eventually was able through good fortune and ability to own and graze up to 20,000 head of cattle in the region. In 1888 he formed the Grand Cattle Company in partnership with Ed Sands and Tom Wheeler. He bought out his partners the next year and expanded his operations farther into the Book Cliffs region. He later sold these holdings to the Webster City Cattle Company, which was established in the 1880s by businessmen from the Iowa city of that name. Nutter sold out to them to avoid a conflict of interest when he joined with some New York businessmen in 1893 to form the Strawberry Cattle Company.[16]

The Big Springs Ranch and the Whitmore Cattle Company also ranged animals in the Book Cliffs area of the county during the early years of settlement. Other cattle ranchers of the 1880s included Henry and Arthur Ballard, who were instrumental in founding the town of Thompson and who established their ranch in that vicinity. The McPherson family also ranged cattle in that general area at an

early date, and the Bar X Ranch was established in 1889 around Westwater. In addition, several large Colorado cattle companies moved their stock into the Book Cliffs and desert areas; these companies included the Dolores Cattle Company and outfits operated by Al Nunn, Charles "Race Horse" Johnson, and the O'Donnel family.

The Taylor family of Grand County ran one of the largest cattle outfits in the area. Family members formed a partnership with John Henry Goodman, who had been a foreman for the L. C. Cattle Company of Texas and New Mexico, which moved into southeastern Utah about 1880. Sometime about 1882 Goodman began his own cattle operation, and by 1885 he was grazing his animals in both the Book Cliffs and the La Sal Mountains areas. John Shafer grazed about 3,000 head of cattle in the La Sals.

The large cattle companies were in control of most of the range of southeastern Utah by 1885, and Peterson reports that it was about at that time that the Mormons of San Juan County under the leadership of their stake president Francis A. Hammond began to compete aggressively with the large cattle companies by organizing their stock into cooperative pools and herds, the first and best known of which was called the Bluff Pool, formed by Hammond in January 1886. It was a time when Mormons felt that they could lose out entirely in their attempt to settle southeastern Utah, and so their policies were vigorous as they shifted their emphasis from farming to ranching and cooperatively shared their efforts to graze and protect the animals.

The non-Mormon cattle companies and their cowboys countered and tried to force the Mormons off the range by legal and illegal means, and stories were told of hundreds of animals being wantonly killed. In 1887 the Mormons began to aggressively claim land and springs (some previously claimed by other interests—often by the "rubber forty" method, by which deeds were acquired or claimed to small springs and other water sources which gave effective control to great tracts of rangeland in the immediate vicinity). This definitely affected life in Grand County; however, the Mormons of Grand County never organized their livestock holdings in the same way and only indirectly became part of the San Juan Mormons' effort.

The higher range areas of the La Sal Mountains, including those of Grand County, were very much involved in the success of the Bluff

Pool. This was land on which ranchers had been reluctant to graze cattle due to the informal claims of Paiute Indians to the area in the mid-1880s. However, according to Peterson, the Paiutes and Mormons came to an arrangement in which the Indians allowed the Mormons to use the upper ranges of the mountains. The Mormons had 2,000 head of cattle grazing there by late 1886—a fact that made other cattle companies envious and furious.[17] By such aggressive means the Mormons were able to hold their own and eventually prosper, although the late 1880s witnessed a definite range war in southeastern Utah between competing livestock interests.

The most serious conflicts and bitter confrontations were in San Juan County—south of what was to become Grand County. In particular, conflict was intense between the Mormons of the Bluff Pool and the Kansas and New Mexico Cattle Company, commonly called the Carlisle Company due to its ownership by two English brothers, Harold and Edmund Carlisle. This was a war eventually won by the Mormons, who gradually bought out and forced out the Carlisles and most of the other competing non-Mormon interests, basically completing the process by the mid-1890s. As Peterson concludes: "Over the long haul the cow outfits were overmatched by village settlements and the Mormon Pool. Not favored by homestead legislation, they lost key spots held only by customary use to homesteaders and forfeited water rights when 'dummies' or company entrymen defected and sold their filings to Mormons."[18]

The railroad made it easier to get the cattle to market and stimulated growth of the livestock industry—a growth out of all proportion to the ability of the land to recover and maintain itself. Chutes and loading corrals were constructed at stops along the railroad line to facilitate the loading of cattle, and it was estimated that there were many thousands of the animals in the 1880s grazing between Grand Junction and Green River. How many thousand will never be known—certainly by the late 1880s it would appear to be substantially more than the 20,000 head that Preston Nutter grazed in or near the county's boundaries. Peterson writes that during the relatively moist era of the late 1880s and early 1890s grazing range was relatively lush in the area and "provided feed for cattle estimated as high as 100,000 head" in the region. Great roundups employed as many as 100 cowboys before a

national financial panic in 1893 began to turn the good times bad and put a strain on cattle ranching in general as beef prices plummeted.[19]

Counts of cattle by ranchers were notoriously inaccurate, being educated guesses at best, and (unless the rancher was in his cups or given to boasting) usually low ones—especially when later a permit system was applied to the lands. In such cases, counts were probably regularly if not woefully underestimated; however, in defense of the ranchers, to some extent the conditions of the open range did make it difficult to count the animals on such range. The best estimate comes from the few shipping figures that are available. These, however, are difficult if not impossible to find for many of the ranching operations, and there is also the fact that some cattle were trailed to market rather than shipped by rail. Cattle in Grand County were generally grazed on summer range in the La Sals or the Book Cliffs areas and then wintered in the desert range south of the Book Cliffs near the railroad line. Cattle from the southern La Sals and San Juan County were trailed through Moab, across the Grand River, and on to Thompson, where they were loaded onto railroad cars for market—generally to the stockyards of Kansas City.[20]

The general situation and conflicts on the range were soon exacerbated by a new element—the introduction in the 1890s of sheep on the public rangelands of southeastern Utah—which will be discussed in a later chapter but which had a tremendous impact on the land and on the lives of those seeking to make a living from that land.

Even though the rangeland was fast filling up, if not already too full considering the limited recuperative powers of the land and its native plants, immigration to the area continued. This immigration was in part due to the incorrigible boosterism of area residents combined with the general American uprootedness and the rapid closing down of the frontier that encouraged certain individuals to take advantage of the diminishing opportunities. Though the large ranchers controlled most of the range, small cattle operations continued to exist—sometimes on the shady side of the law—and there were also many prospective farmers attracted to the area by the great rivers and equally great schemes to harness their waters to irrigate immense tracts of land. It was an era of unbridled capitalism with its grand schemes and dreams—from damming the great rivers to running a

railroad through the Grand Canyon, little seemed beyond the dreams of some intrepid developer; although, to the sorrow of many of those who invested their hard-earned funds in the projects, much seemed beyond the abilities of the developers to actually produce.

The most audacious of the early transportation schemes was that of Frank Brown, who attempted a survey of the Grand, Green, and Colorado rivers in 1889 as part of a plan to bring a railroad line down the river corridors and on through the great canyons, including the Grand Canyon itself. The railroad line was to be more than 1,200 miles long, running from Grand Junction, Colorado, to the mouth of the Colorado River at the Gulf of California, and it was thought that it could supply coal from Colorado mines to the growing communities of the Pacific Coast. According to the planners, a growing tourist industry would supplement the industrial uses of the railway, and in this they would probably have been correct had their brash plan ever had a chance of coming to fruition. It had no such chance.

In late March 1889 Brown and two others of his newly formed Denver, Colorado Canyon, and Pacific Railway Company left Grand Junction and began their survey down the Grand River. Although Brown soon left the party to make arrangements for descending the major canyons to the south, other boatmen were hired, and the group that reached Moab in mid-April was the first known party to navigate the Grand River in what was soon to be Grand County. The party averaged five to six river miles per day, portaging some of the distance around the rough waters of Westwater Canyon. Although that part of the journey was uneventful, the same cannot be said for the survey when it resumed from Green River, Utah, in late May. Labyrinth Canyon on the edge of the county presented no problem, nor did Stillwater Canyon below; however, provisions were lost and the party's frail boats damaged in Cataract Canyon. Starvation threatened the men, but all eventually made it out of the canyon. Some left the expedition at Hite; others proceeded to the head of the Grand Canyon, where fresh supplies were procured. The intrepid party led by Brown and Robert B. Stanton continued on, only to meet disaster in the Grand Canyon, where Brown drowned. Two others were also lost to the river a few days later, and the shaken survivors abandoned the voyage and hiked out. Although Stanton refused to let the dream

die easily, other investors were more easily dissuaded and the project soon died.[21] Ultimately, the party's major new contribution was its survey of the Grand River above the confluence, but it will always be remembered for the tragedy associated with its perhaps foolish and certainly unlucky but daring members.[22]

Roads to and within the area that was soon to become Grand County were generally primitive—in most cases no more than wagon tracks, and horse paths in the areas that wagons could not traverse. In the 1880s some small sawmills began to be established in the La Sals to serve the building needs of the county's growing number of residents, but lumber was difficult to come by, and even if it could be cut and sawn, there remained the difficulty of transporting it to Moab or other area towns.[23] It appears that most buildings of that period were crude dugouts or adobe structures, requiring the use of little timber. Until about 1890 some of the lumber used in Moab was brought from the Book Cliffs area to the north rather than from the closer but often less accessible La Sals.

Growth was still very much in evidence throughout the county—no area was unexplored or unconsidered for some use—however difficult it might be in practice to realize the homesteader's or entrepreneur's dream. By 1890 there were more than 500 people in what was to become Grand County, . . . and the "road" to that entity was one that was about to reach its destination.

ENDNOTES

1. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* pp. 66–67.

2. The account of the battle in *Grand Memories* claims that Joseph Burkholder and Walt Moore of Moab heard the sounds of battle and gathered sixteen men from the area—including the Wilsons—to come to the aid of the white posse (p. 39). This account has not received other corroboration, however, to my knowledge.

3. Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 111.

4. Todd Campbell, "The Taylors: Five Generations of Ranching in Grand County," *Canyon Legacy* 11: 15.

5. See *Grand County Pioneer Families,* Book 3; published by Moab Chapter, Daughters of Utah Pioneers., n.d.

6. Charles S. Peterson, *Utah,* p. 71.

7. *Grand Memories,* p. 25. See also Ann E. Vileisis, "Working on Desert

Rails: A Social and Environmental History" (M.A. thesis, Utah State University, 1992), for specific information on the railroad in Grand County, and see Robert G. Athearn, *Rebel of the Rockies: A History of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad* (1962), for general information on the D&RGW and other railroad companies at the time.

8. See B. W. Allred, "The Life of a Horse and Buggy Stage Line Operator," *Great Western Series,* Number 11 (1972), for a personal account of what life was like around the turn of the century on the Thompson to Moab route.

9. George A Thompson, *Some Dreams Die* (Salt Lake City: Dream Garden Press, 1982), p. 123.

10. *Grand Memories,* p. 117.

11. Thompson, *Some Dreams Die,* p. 122.

12. John W. Van Cott, *Utah Place Names,* p. 294.

13. See John Akens, "Utah Rails," in *Canyon Legacy* 8:4–9, for more detailed information on the D&RGW Railroad in Utah.

14. Ibid, p. 8.

15. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* p. 85.

16. Ibid., pp. 85–86.

17. Ibid., p. 96.

18. Charles S. Peterson, "San Juan: A Hundred Years of Cattle, Sheep, and Dry Farms," in Allan Kent Powell, ed., *San Juan County, Utah: People, Resources and History* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1983), p. 178.

19. Ibid., p. 180. In his book *Look to the Mountains,* Peterson reported that the Carlisle Company rounded up 10,000 head of cattle in 1885 from the Dry Valley area of San Juan County alone, and that a decade later, when it finally sold out after a great decline in the industry, was able to round up and sell more than 30,000 head of stock from its San Juan County rangeland (pp. 87–88).

20. A general study of ranching that mentions southeastern Utah is James H. Beckstead, *Cowboying: A Tough Job in a Hard Land* (1991); *Canyon Legacy* Number 11 entitled *Ranching and Cowboys* has a number of essays about topics specific to Grand and San Juan county ranching, and Frank Silvey, *History and Settlement of Northern San Juan County* (1990), includes valuable information about the early days of ranching throughout southeastern Utah.

21. See Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, *The Romance of the Colorado River,* for an entertaining look at the ill-fated Brown-Stanton expedition.

22. Roy Webb wrote to me that in his opinion Stanton was thoroughly professional but most unlucky; Webb also considers Stanton's major contribution to be a complete photographic record of the Green and Colorado rivers.

23. See Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* pp. 209–10.

8

Grand County: Creation and Early Years

Grand County was officially created by the Utah territorial legislature on 13 March 1890, the twenty-fifth of the state's present twenty-nine counties. The county was carved from Emery County, which as a result was essentially bisected at the Green River, all the land east of the center of the river channel becoming the new county. The county was named after the other great river that flowed through its heart, and Moab, the principal town, located on the banks of the Grand River, was appointed the county seat. The census for 1890 showed only 541 occupants of Grand County; Emery County, in contrast, had 5,076 inhabitants, even after losing part of its population to the new county. Although the population of Grand County was small, Moab was a thriving town and revenues and taxes generated by the railroad in the northern part of the county provided a much needed source of funds for administering the large new political unit.

At the time of Grand County's creation, the northern border of the county followed the "summit" line of the Brown (Roan) Cliffs of the Tavaputs Plateau as it undulated in a generally southwesterly direction from the Utah-Colorado state line to its intersection with

the Green River. On 27 February 1892 the territorial legislature adjusted the boundary line, extending the northern boundary to the abstract map line of the "3rd standard parallel south," a latitudinal east–west line that theoretically simplified and regularized the boundary. It also greatly enlarged Grand County with land in the Tavaputs Plateau that had previously been part of Uintah County.

For some unknown reason, however, the legislature did not extend this new abstract northern boundary all the way east to the state line. The summit of the Brown Cliffs reaches north of the third standard parallel in the extreme northeast corner of Grand County, and, instead of completely regularizing the boundary and giving this land to Uintah County, the legislature allowed it to remain part of Grand County. This has also been the source of a lengthy dispute that subsequently developed between Uintah and Grand counties as to the exact location of this loosely defined boundary.

Accurately defining Grand County's boundaries can be a surprisingly complex task. Briefly summarized, the legal county boundary description involves the intersection of the "summit of the Brown Cliffs" with the abstract survey line of the "3rd standard parallel." It appears that surveyors attempting to follow this line east from the Green River established a boundary almost half a mile north of the line surveyed west along the supposed same parallel. Not only do human beings make mistakes but also the equipment of early surveyors could well have been imperfect, leading to the sort of discrepancies commonly found on maps when state line boundaries surveyed from opposite directions fail to meet. This results in the angled adjustments that have often perplexed and intrigued close observers of maps. (On the state's boundaries such adjustments are found in the Utah–Colorado line south of Grand County and in the extreme northwestern corner of the state at the Utah–Idaho line.)

Additional problems arose in the case of Grand County, since it was necessary to determine just what and where was the "summit" of the Brown Cliffs—a human judgment that seemed to result in different answers in such difficult and forbidding terrain. Following what was considered to be the summit of of said cliffs east from near the Green River resulted in a different boundary from the summit of the same cliffs as it was determined near the Colorado border. This

is a discrepancy independent of the half-mile strip of land in dispute, and it results in the differing extent on various maps of the irregular section of land in the northeastern corner of the county.

No one seemed to care much about the boundary discrepancies until the mid-twentieth century when the potential oil or mineral deposits in the land began to attract attention. Cartographers and surveyors had established a half-section township line to account for the discrepancy, and in the 1960s and 1970s Grand and Uintah counties argued for the inclusion of that land in their respective counties—an argument that Grand County eventually discontinued in 1977, effectively (though not officially) recognizing Uintah County's claim.[1] This also helps explain and account for the fact that the northern boundaries of Grand and Emery County do not quite align, though both were ostensibly established along the same latitudinal line.

One boundary line that would seem to be undisputed (as is also the state line to the county's east) is the southern boundary of parallel 38°30' that first separated Emery and San Juan counties, with Grand County then assuming that border when it was created from Emery County. And, in fact, that line is undisputed; however, at an early date in history, Grand County officials conducted their affairs on the assumption that a township section line—the south line of Township 26 South—was the border, leading to a dispute in the mid-twentieth century with San Juan County. That county filed suit in 1958, and the dispute was resolved by the courts in 1962 in favor of San Juan County, awarding the southern county the disputed strip of approximately a half-mile in width across the southern border of Grand County—land that was actually south of the 38°30' parallel line.

Although Grand County lost both above-mentioned boundary disputes, the county includes land on the west side of the Green River near the heart of the town of that name—land that almost all people would believe is in Emery County. In this case nothing has been added or subtracted from the original county boundary description; the surprising disparity has resulted from the Green River changing its channel after the establishment of Grand County in 1890. The "center of the main channel of the Green River" is the official boundary description, and in 1890 that main channel was determined to be the west channel of the river, which at the time had at least two chan-

nels at the site of the town of Green River. Though it would seem to most observers that the intent of the law was to divide the counties at the center of the river, that does not seem to be the way the law works or was worded. The boundary is a fixed line where the center of the main channel of the river was on the date of 13 March 1890. This official boundary is now (in 1996) on dry land and is more than one-half mile west of the present channel of the river—resulting in the surprising fact that all of the businesses of Green River City along the old highway road U.S. 6/50 less than 0.7 miles west of the river are actually within Grand County, as are homes and lands for more than a mile above the highway and a few hundred yards below it.

I do not know when, how, or why the Green River changed its channel. The causes could have been natural or man-made—people were continually endeavoring during the period to divert water from the river for their crops and for other development projects and schemes. I have read the available back issues of the *Grand Valley Times* to find mention of the event, but it does not appear to have been mentioned, if it even occurred after the newspaper began operations—it is certainly possible that the channel change occurred sometime between 1890 and 1896, before the newspaper was established. An 1893 plat plan for the town of Elgin does not show an east channel of the river, but a 1905 map of the town shows an east channel of the river cutting through Block D of the town, forcing Grand County officials to alter the legal descriptions of the affected lots that were now submerged or partially inundated by the water.[2]

That the river changed channels during this period is evident; but if the news item was recorded in print it appears that it was only mentioned briefly. At that date a change of channel would have had minimal impact on the little-developed area. (The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad bridge crossing of the river was downstream from the area in question and was not affected by the change of channel of the river above). In subsequent years, as the town of Green River began to grow and the highway river bridge was constructed in the vicinity of the channel change, the affected area increased in importance; however, by that time, making boundary changes was so difficult as to be virtually impossible, requiring a majority of voters of each affected county in favor of any boundary

change in order for the legislature to approve such a change and the governor to authorize it. In fact, at numerous times in succeeding years residents of the town of Green River, far from resenting the inclusion of part of the town in Grand County, have endeavored to make the entire town a part of Grand County—an area to which many feel they are more closely tied than they are to other areas of Emery County. All such endeavors have thus far come to naught, however, having been opposed by the majority of other residents of Emery County, who are reluctant to lose the tax base, revenues, and increased political clout that is theirs by retaining the affected area. Similarly, in both the nineteenth century and in recent years efforts by Grand County officials as well as by various residents of Spanish Valley south of the county line have met resistance from the other residents of Spanish Valley and San Juan County when they have tried to make that area part of Grand County.

In 1890 it is safe to assume that no one was greatly concerned with details of the county's boundaries; the important thing to the area residents was that they now had a new county they could call their own, and that through this they would be more able to directly manage their own affairs. The act creating the county also called for the temporary appointment of various county officials who were to serve until a general election could be held later in the year.[3] Minutes of the first county meeting held in May confirm that the officers were deemed qualified for the positions named by the legislature and that they then assumed their respective duties. The business of county management was begun.[4]

The appointed county officers included three selectmen (the name for what today would be called commissioners), John H. Shafer, Nathan J. Turner, and Sylvester Richardson; a prosecuting attorney, R. C. Camp; a sheriff, R. D. Westwood; a county clerk and recorder, George H. Wade; and an assessor, F. A. Manville; there was also a road supervisor, a coroner, and three school board trustees. In the general election three months later, only one of those appointed—John H. Shafer, a selectman—was elected to his appointed post, although a few appointed to one task were elected to serve in other capacities. The newly elected officials then appointed others to various positions.

The steady growth of the area population continued. The county population in 1890 was only 541 people, but perceived opportunities in the area continued to attract people of diverse interests. Moab, now with the added distinction and boost of being a county seat, remained the major commercial center—its population at the time is not known, however. Isolated farms, ranches, and mining camps could be found throughout the county. The population centers were limited to railroad towns and agricultural centers near the railroad and, in the later part of the decade, developing mining camps and supply centers such as Miner's Basin and Castleton.

It was shortly after Grand County was established that a group of citizens petitioned the county court to change the name of the county seat from Moab to Vina. Their reasons for rejecting the name "Moab" was that it was "so unfavorably commemorative of an incestuous and idolatrous community existing 1897 years before the Christian era." The petitioners felt that the name of the county seat should be one "more appropriate, significant, or expressive of moral decency and manly dignity and in harmony with the progressive civilization of the present age."[5] The choice of the name "Vina" presumably reflected the area horticulture—grapes in particular had been first planted in 1880 by George F. Powell, and it was later boasted that varieties of grapes grew to more than three inches in circumference in Moab's fertile valley. However more appropriate the proposed name seemed to the fifty-nine citizens who petitioned the court on 14 May 1890, a majority of area residents seemed satisfied with the name Moab. In June the court rejected the petition for lack of a sufficient number of signatures.

Moab's new prestige did not alter the fact that it was still in many respects a rough-and-tumble frontier cowtown. There was no doctor and few professionals and civic leaders among a mixed assortment of merchants and businesspeople. Though the county could now boast of its own sheriff, who could keep a tighter rein on local conditions, it also had to contend with a wide assortment of outlaws, mischief makers, rowdys, toughs, and intoxicated cowboys out on the town. One prospector from Colorado wrote home in 1891 that Moab was known as "the toughest town in Utah," and others complained that its "moral standards were below our worst imaginings."[6] Yet, if any-

thing, the county's other settlements were probably even rougher than was the county seat, their only saving grace being that there were not as many people to get in trouble, nor attractions to tempt them to that trouble.

This was in fact the great era of outlawry in the area. In the 1880s and early 1890s cattle rustlers of both the authentic-wild-outlaw and respectable-citizen-veneer varieties were numerous. It seemed that anyone with a branding iron could ride the open range and appropriate a few (or a great many) animals. In addition, intimidation and robbery of miners, freighters, and merchants were becoming more common. Banks were beginning to be established in some of the larger towns of the region (though not as yet in Grand County), and the railroad furnished additional possibilities for the more adventurous outlaw types such as the Wild Bunch of Butch Cassidy, who were known to frequent a general area that included Grand County.

Geography favored outlawry in the area—natural hangouts and hideaways abounded both within the Book Cliffs and mountains of the county and in even more favored locales to the north and west at Browns Park and Robbers Roost. The county was remote from the more settled areas of Utah and Colorado while at the same time being a natural thoroughfare through the region. Cattle were ranged throughout the plateau area, and many were stolen by organized gangs of cowboys who would drive the stolen animals to a market—usually in Colorado. Other cowboys would use a branding iron to brand yearlings and strays or even to over-brand another's mark. It was claimed that many who were later considered to be respectable citizens began their own ranching careers this way—claims not proven, for if they were, the new rancher could end up in jail or face down in some ditch or canyon draw. It is certain that the opportunities for such theft were abundant and the possibilities of being apprehended minimal. Suspicions and arguments abounded, however, and many aggrieved parties took the law into their own hands, with measures ranging from threats and intimidation to gunfire and murder.

From the early 1880s cattle rustlers plied their trade in the region. The towns of Thompson Springs and Green River were notorious outlaw hangouts, and forest ranger John Riis also awarded such laurels to Moab, calling it in the early days "just another stopping-off

place on the Sandrock trail used by the train robbers and other fugitives from the scant laws of the West. The country was almost inaccessible and it was a bold sheriff who would follow the sandrock trail in search of his man. So Moab became the *rendezvous* for gunmen and robbers."[7]

Riis also recounted a couple of stories (both possibly apocryphal) about the Moab jail in the early (but unspecified) days—most likely between 1892 and 1903 when the small jailhouse (that still stands in downtown Moab) was used to house criminals. This particular building appears to have been a very uncomfortable place, what with the blistering heat of summer and the chills of winters—the comfort of prisoners not being a high priority with the respectable citizenry. One criminal, after being held for two weeks, offered to plead guilty to charges of murder if the authorities would send him to the penitentiary rather than keep him in the Moab jail. The other story tells of a vagrant who agreed to fight a much larger opponent in a boxing match which was to be part of the local Pioneer Day celebration. His reward for victory over his opponent, the local butcher, who was an experienced pugilist, would be to escape further confinement in the Moab jail. The fight was an epic: "For four rounds he rushed the butcher off his feet and when the village champion was a broken idol with his face turned up to the sun the hobo leaped from the ring, grabbed his shirt and coat and hurried down the road to the ferry, fearful lest the crowd change its mind and send him back to jail."[8]

The Darrow House, as mentioned, had served at one time as a jail before the new jailhouse was constructed. The place of confinement had its share of tenants, but there were ways other than organized fisticuffs to escape its walls. The *Grand Valley Times* of 27 November 1896 reported a jailbreak, and headlines were made a couple of years later (24 February 1899) by the escape of Leander Anderson, a local malefactor. Incarceration procedures and practices were far different from the strict policies of this day and age. Prisoners often were not thoroughly searched, and weapons and tools could be readily slipped to them by visitors either within the jail or outside its cell window. The jail was often left unattended, particularly overnight, allowing for much escape-related activity. Prisoners who had the means often cooked their own meals within the cell.

County officials had much more pressing claims for tax dollars than providing for the improved care and keeping of prisoners. However, this policy (or lack of one) did result in the frequent escape of criminals, much to the chagrin of local officials. Fortunately tragedy was averted during this era; the greatest local law enforcement tragedy—the killing of deputy sheriff R. D. Westwood in a jailbreak—occurred much later, on 5 September 1929, at other jail facilities.

Some outlaws achieved a measure of regional notoriety; a few—most notably Butch Cassidy and Harry Longabaugh, the Sundance Kid—achieved fame, mainly posthumously, as a patina supplied by time and Hollywood came to varnish their exploits. Faun McConkie Tanner named some of the outlaws known to have frequented the area, and she also relates a few interesting stories in *The Far Country* that will entertain those who enjoy such fare. Only a couple of them will be mentioned here—not because this history is more sober but in order that it be less redundant. Many of the outlaw chronicles either are of marginal importance or questionable veracity, and there is no pressing need here to recount such stories unless additional information can be added to supplement them.

Tanner attributes much of the early less premeditated lawlessness to the fact that liquor flowed liberally and inexpensively (if not quite freely) in those days. Whiskey was one of the few items always in plentiful supply, it seems, and it sold at 95 cents per gallon to enterprising saloonkeepers and anyone else who had the cash and wanted to temporarily open a private "saloon." Many local miscreants were doubtless influenced in their errant actions by the beverage they had imbibed. Others, however, such as Tom and Bill McCarty of nearby La Sal in San Juan County, were known cattle rustlers who began to develop their talents through other forms of robbery. Another regionally famous outlaw in his early years was Matt Warner, who later in life found it easier to ride on the other side of the fence, finishing his career as a law officer in Carbon County. Like Warner, Robert Leroy Parker, better known by his adopted name Butch Cassidy, came from a small Utah town—Circleville—and had Mormon parents. Cassidy and others of his gang known as the Wild Bunch ranged over a wide geographical area in which they robbed trains, banks, and merchants besides their presumed horse-stealing

and cattle-rustling activities. Legend and fancy seem to accrue around Butch, who even during his outlaw career was considered somewhat of a Robin Hood figure. How much time he spent in Grand County is not known, but it is believed that in addition to presumed longer sojourns he fled through the county after holding up the Telluride, Colorado, bank on 24 June 1889, crossing the Grand River via the Moab ferry. Tom McCarty and Matt Warner were two of his three accomplices, and the four made good their escape to the Robber's Roost country of the San Rafael Swell to the west.

The outlaw perhaps even more than the cowboy has become a figure of myth and legend in America. Exploits are romanticized and colored, making something exciting and grand of what was generally dull, dirty, and mundane. Posses were usually not hot on one's trail, all parties shooting at each other while they rode hell-bent for leather through the countryside. Sometimes posses weren't even formed or, if formed, got lost, or spent days and even weeks fruitlessly searching for offenders. Yet there definitely was both crime and outlaws in Grand County. In one shootout in 1899 in the Book Cliffs region involving county sheriff Jesse Tyler, he and the rest of his posse had to retreat from the battle scene because they had run precariously low on ammunition. Needless to say, the outlaws got away, in a scene that would have been scorned until recently by Hollywood movie makers. The real thing was rarely romantic or glorious. Still, the fact that outlawry though basically ugly still had its raw life and death aspects (however falsely glorified and embellished they have been rendered) caught the attention of all. Justice often was swift, retribution even quicker. An outlaw did risk his life for his crimes even if his fate was more often met by being shot while sleeping or sitting around a campfire than by being gunned down in a showdown with a sheriff at high noon. Those inclined toward a Robin Hood nature or aspect of western outlawry may be advised to consider an old joke in which it was related that when Robin Hood was asked why he only robbed from the rich, he replied, "Because the poor have nothing worth taking."

In May 1900 Grand County sheriff Jesse Tyler was killed along with deputy Sam Jenkins while searching the Book Cliffs area north of Thompson for a cowboy turned cattle rustler named Tom Dilly. While searching for Dilly some weeks earlier, Tyler and the sheriff of

Uintah County had killed another man who they believed was their culprit, only to find instead that the victim was Flat Nose George Curry, a notorious member of the Hole-in-the-Wall gang wanted for train robbery. Tyler and his deputy were generally said to have been killed by Harvey Logan (known as "Kid Curry"), who was anxious to avenge the death of the friend whose name he had adopted; however, not all students of the subject believe Kid Curry killed them. The two men were shot as they approached what they thought was either a camp of cowboys or of Indians, depending on the account. Those around the campfire were outlaws. The law officers were shot in the back as they turned to flee when they realized their precarious situation after they had identified themselves. The killers fled, and though a posse was formed under Deputy R. D. Westwood (the same man who was killed many years later in the jailbreak mentioned above) and searched the region for weeks, the murderers were never apprehended. The posse traveled as far north as Rawlins, Wyoming, in their fruitless search. Although it has been suggested that Sheriff Tyler was somewhat arrogant and self-aggrandizing, taking credit for things perhaps unearned or undeserved—including the killing of George Curry—and thus bringing upon himself the vengeance of Harvey Logan, still, then as now, people reacted with shock and outrage at the death in the line of duty of a law-enforcement officer.[10]

Mistaken identities, ill-formed posses, and unsuccessful manhunts are hardly the stuff of epics, but they are the material of real life, especially life in an isolated section of Utah Territory. That there was a need for law enforcement is underscored by the claim that as late as 1901 more than 2,000 cattle were stolen in the area.[11] Many were tempted to take the law into their own hands to avenge real or imagined crimes. The 1901 murder of county resident Louis Lockhart at his cabin near the Dolores River is thought to have been motivated by the suspicion that Lockhart was rustling cattle. The foreman of the nearby S Cross Cattle Company, Charlie Sieber, was thought by many to have hired a gunman to kill Lockhart, though the charges of murder were never proved.[12]

According to the memoirs of J. T. Farrer, an early-day resident of Green River, local citizens then as now were often frustrated by the fact that criminals were not apprehended or were soon released or

acquitted by what they perceived to be lenient courts. Many were willing to form vigilante groups to mete out just desserts to rustlers and other miscreants: "They would steal bunches of cattle, . . . Should we prosecute them through the courts, it was seldom we secured a conviction. If we did, they were always only a short time in jail and soon out again. They killed several sheriffs in both our counties and states. There was only one thing to resort to, which was, when caught in the act to hold court and jury there. That really was the only way to stop it. And they got several lessons."[13] How often such means were resorted to is of course not known: then as now laws prohibiting such activity were in effect, making vigilante justice, however its indignant perpetrators might justify it, a criminal offense, generally not taken lightly by more law-abiding citizens and government officials.

It appears that there are differing versions of almost all the early settlement and outlaw stories, leaving the historian and modern reader a choice of who to believe. Such a situation does have some value, helping the reader understand that any story represents one among many possible points of view. With the coming of the newspaper to the county in 1896, local events were reported much more frequently and, it is hoped, more accurately; however, omissions, errors, and reporter's biases that have been found in some of the reports serve to caution the later reader that all may not have been exactly as it was described in print. Nonetheless, the *Grand Valley Times* (later *Times-Independent*) represents in many cases the major source of early county history and has been of tremendous importance to the town of Moab and the regional community since its founding in 1896 by a transplanted Coloradan, Justus N. Corbin.

Corbin had arrived in Moab only three weeks before he published the inaugural issue of the *Grand Valley Times* on 30 May 1896. An enterprising and energetic man, he also was one of two practicing attorneys in Moab prior to the turn of the century, later serving as county attorney, and he was instrumental in bringing telephone service to Moab, among his many other community services. His greatest contribution, however, was the newspaper. Originally a small four-page paper published weekly, the newspaper expanded in length to eight pages within a year and soon increased its page size as well. It has continued uninterrupted weekly publication for almost a century

at the time of this writing and has been a major bonding force within the town of Moab and the greater southeastern Utah region, helping foster a sense of community identity while rallying citizens together on behalf of numerous projects and causes. The paper has had remarkable continuity, with only a handful of editors during its existence—three of whom, Justus Corbin, Loren Taylor, and Samuel Taylor, have been especially noteworthy as community leaders. In the pages to follow, the *Grand Valley Times / Times-Independent* will be examined closely, as it is in many ways the most important source of information about Grand County.

In the paper's inaugural issue, editor Corbin called for cooperation among local citizens to make of "this naturally beautiful valley an Eden," and for at least the next two decades the editorial theme and tone of the paper as well as the slant of its reporting would be unabashed boosterism. Community growth and its attendent greater economic prosperity were considered to be unquestioned benefits; anything that might promote that growth was fostered and extolled, whether it be climate, mineral resources, agricultural fact or potential, roadways, railways, and riverways. Corbin's Eden was certainly viewed as a bustling center of activity. Civic pride was encouraged and a call for self-sufficiency proclaimed: Moab should provide all the services of a progressive metropolitan center. A midsummer carnival was planned which would include voting for a queen of Grand County. The frontier cowtown of Moab was going to be transformed if Justus N. Corbin was to have any say in the matter—and as local newspaper publisher he had the loudest voice around.

In the paper's second issue a week later, Corbin proclaimed: "It is our purpose to make the real Grand Valley known to the people of the world," and he went on to ask for local support since the paper "is working for the interests of the people of the Grand Valley of Utah and its surrounding territory." The editor extolled the fruit production of the area but called for a pipeline to be installed to supply culinary water to Moab; better roads were also needed to attract people and businesses to the area. The residents had much of which to be proud as industrious citizens of the nation's newest state—Utah had been admitted to the Union as the forty-fifth state on 4 January 1896

to great rejoicing in Grand County as elsewhere in the state—and the future looked bright to Corbin.

The next week he placed an advertisement issuing a call for a local physician—a necessity for any town worthy of the name—the week after that there was a call for the community to field a baseball team. Independence Day was celebrated and the editor advised his readers to develop the Green and Grand river waterways as natural transportation corridors. The new state constitution mandated a change in the form of county government; the old system of a presiding judge and three selectmen was replaced by a county commission, with three commissioners empowered to manage county government. The change was more in name than fact; things continued to be managed along the same lines as before. Along with the majority of residents of Utah and other western states, for the 1896 presidential race editor Corbin endorsed William Jennings Bryan and his Democratic party platform favoring silver—a righteous crusade of the little man against the nefarious eastern capitalists. Though the capitalists won the election, it still remained a great country; in fact, one in which the little man himself could potentially become a great (though of course not a nefarious) capitalist.

The *Times* reported Moab's population in 1896 to be 750 people—and though the figure was likely a misprint that represented the entire county's population, the town on the Grand River was still a thriving community in which 80 percent of the eligible school population was enrolled in the local schools. The numbers seemed to be more important to the editor than the quality of the educational experience being offered, unfortunately; but the paper naturally extolled the merit of the local schools. Few funds were appropriated for schools, however, and though many local teachers were dedicated to the education of their students and performed superior service with minimal resources, the education provided county students was better in the reporting than in the facts.[14] An atmosphere of advertising hyperbole and boosterism is something that Moab and its newspaper established in the early days and have seldom ceased cultivating. Few things lived up to their glorification (or were as bleak as their damnation); but there was always some potential resource or community problem upon which to report.

Gold was reported in the La Sal Mountains that summer, and the timber of the range was seen as a great resource. All was not perfect, however. In August the paper complained of watermelon stealing and house-breaking activities, and the next month floods ripped through the area. In November the Moab post office was robbed. Westwater with its railroad station advertised itself in the Moab paper and claimed that its population would soon outstrip that of Moab. The year ended on a promising note: in December Doctor J. W. Williams answered Grand County's call for a local physician, moving from Ordway, Colorado, to Moab, a place where he would remain for more than half a century till his death at 103 years of age in 1956. The doctor's annual salary was guaranteed at $150 a year by the county, and his arrival was front-page news (that page usually reserved for editorial comment and advertising).[15] The newspaper included many works of fiction and informative features to educate and edify its readers—thus taking pressure off the limited reporting staff and the lack of newsworthy local items—it also had its "Temperance Corner" and "Religious Corner" national features, and when information was forthcoming from the other towns of the area it told of those events in its "Westwater Items," "Richardson Notes," "Green River Waves," and "Cisco Chips" entries.

Among the businesses in 1896 in the thriving little town of Moab were the general merchandise stores and hotels previously mentioned; a dentist, Dr. George Davis; a barber, William Sperry; at least two painters, L. J. Hinckley and G. F. Strong; contractors and builders, the Wilson brothers; the Southeastern Stage Line run by Mons Peterson; Addie Maxwell's millinery shop, and the Pioneer Saloon, run by Tet Taylor.[16] Lumber for building was now more plentiful, and brick and stone began to replace adobe in some of the finer homes and buildings that now began to be constructed in Moab. The Woodmen of the World building housed the social club of that name and also served for community functions. Among the houses of the period still surviving in somewhat their original form are the Philander Maxwell house, built of brick in 1890; the Neals Olson house, built of sandstone in 1896; and the D. M. Cooper house, built in 1894 in what has been called the "Victorian Eclectic" style.[17]

In January 1897 there was printed one of the first verses of a century-long litany calling on the state legislature to better provide for

the county—particularly better transportation facilities. Transportation improvements took up the greatest part of the county's budget, and better links with the outside world were crucial to the isolated region if it was going to blossom according to Corbin's desires. In February Corbin called for a bridge over the Grand River at Moab. On 21 May the newspaper reported that a dam on a side channel of the Green River had broken, perhaps initiating the major channel change affecting the county boundaries, for the next year (6 May 1898) it was reported that a waterwheel was being built on the *east* channel of Fox Island at the town. Work was done on the river road above Moab in 1897 and a ferry at Castle Valley was reported to be completed. There was still crime: on 27 November a jailbreak at the Moab jail was reported. There was also much activity: the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad advertised that four trains left Thompson station each day—two traveling east, two westbound.

Communication links with the rest of the world soon were improved as well. The year 1898 was only two weeks old when it was reported that telephone lines were to be run from Thompson to Moab. In March, editor Corbin extolled the benefits of saloons, which helped keep the peace by diminishing the unregulated manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages. On 22 March it was reported that Elgin, a new agricultural town on the east bank of the Green River, had a post office. In May it was rumored in print that Butch Cassidy had been killed seventy miles north of Thompson; in August one cattleman definitely killed another in a dispute in the Book Cliffs. In September Corbin proclaimed that the La Sals were "another Leadville," alluding to the great mining strikes at that Colorado town. In Corbin's mind, mining boosterism seemed to be the most promising avenue of area growth. In November he praised all the county's major towns—Westwater, Cisco, Elgin, and of course Moab—as abounding in natural resources. His scorn, wrath, satire, and mockery were reserved for political foes.

A group of Moab women got together on 9 March 1898 and formed a study group that they named the Busy Women's Club. The organization became a member of the Utah Federation of Women's Clubs on 7 June of that year and also joined the national federation of such clubs. The group expanded its interests beyond self improve-

ment to community betterment and began to promote many civic affairs and projects, including the later incorporation of Moab as a town. On 28 October 1914, the name of the organization was changed to the Women's Literary Club, and the organization has continued up to the present day to be active in the community.[18]

A major issue of 1899 was whether Moab should incorporate as a town—something that was put off for the time being because of the additional restrictions and taxes such a designation would entail. The jail was still susceptible to break-outs, which were regularly reported in the newspaper; however, on a more positive note, the Central School was completed in March at a cost of $8,000. The community was rightfully proud of this accomplishment. Plank sidewalks were a feature of the new building completed on Main Street for L. C. May by contractor William Small, and editor Corbin noted that the sidewalk was "an innovation to the town."[19]

Shock greeted the deaths of Sheriff Tyler and his deputy Sam Jenkins, reported in the 1 June 1900 issue of the newspaper, which also featured an advertisement by Dr. J. W. Williams in which he notified readers that he was doctor, druggist, and dealer in books, stationery, Navajo blankets, and Indian trinkets. It appears that then as since it has been necessary for some area residents to undertake a number of activities in order to earn a good living. It was Dr. Williams, however, who spoke of what he called "Moab Fever"—a condition afflicting many area residents. Its chief symptom was laziness, and it was prevalent locally because it was so easy to survive in Moab but so difficult to get wealthy there. Merchants were numerous, and the town also boasted a photographer, a butcher, and a tonsorial artist (barber), who all advertised in the local paper.

The newspaper was filled with all types of general human interest articles about exotic lands, cities, politicians, historical figures, and criminals—basically filling a place that magazines would shortly claim. Advertisements were plentiful, but while some were easily recognizable, others could be confused with news items, since they were typeset and printed in the same form as little news snippets. For example, was the item, "Pickles and sausages at Hammonds" an advertisement or a news announcement? Accidents and violence were commonplace; whether the news merited a front-page headline or

merely brief notice on the last page seemed to be directly proportional to the status of the individual. A sheepherder could be shot and killed with little more than passing notice—even his name being unimportant to the editor—while a more prominent local citizen could—and did—receive headline news if he broke a leg in a fall.

Whatever its shortcomings, the *Grand Valley Times* was a force in the community, helping it achieve an identity and a sense of purpose, while calling it to action or to task for its failings. In Justus N. Corbin Moab and Grand County had found an energetic and zealous advocate, one determined to bring economic prosperity to an area which he celebrated more for its natural resources than for its beauty. His was not an uncommon attitude; in fact, it fit a common optimistic American celebration of expansion and material prosperity as citizens looked to the bright future of a new century.

Corbin was wise enough not to attempt to unduly polarize the people of the region; the paper never stressed religious issues or entered religious controversies—its clarion calls were to mobilize the citizenry to action to improve conditions, be they transportation corridors, water supplies, or general civic cleanliness, in order to attract others to the area and so increase prosperity all around. The paper's foes and villians were generally distant politicians or shortsighted businesspeople who obstructed or failed to see the economic potential of Moab and, in fact, the entire area of southeastern Utah, for which the *Times* had become the champion, broadcasting its praises of the region's virtues and potential to all who would read.

Local controversies and political differences could at times be intense, but as far as the historical record is concerned these problems were either of short duration or did not involve a large number of local citizens. At the very least, private disputes did not become posterity's public knowledge through the medium of the newspaper unless they exploded into violence—an occasional occurrence in the early years. Non-violent crimes and economic disputes and problems were much more common. The community could always be counted upon to band together in the face of some outside challenge, threat, or perceived opportunity. A hoped-for economic prosperity seemed to be a priority of all, and there were certainly ample challenges for all in merely maintaining a place in the isolated and often harsh land.

New towns and settlements created or rapidly expanding in the 1890s were generally either mining towns or agricultural developments. Additionally, a couple of towns or railroad stations not shown on earlier maps were marked on later maps of the period—they were most likely begun as railroad loading locations for livestock producers, primarily the burgeoning sheep industry of the Cisco and Green River desert areas. Agate was the name of one such stop; it was located on the railroad line near Cisco according to an 1895 map. Cottonwood was another, located a few miles northeast of Cisco.

Daly was shown on an 1895 map about 3.5 miles east of Green River, and Solitude (or Solitade) was some four miles south of Daly. Both could well have been agricultural communities, as was Elgin, directly across the river on the Grand County side of the river; however, almost no definitive information survives about these and many of the other tiny communities occasionally mentioned or shown on early maps of the first half-century of Grand County settlement.

Although it has never been large—its peak population being 176 people in 1910—Elgin was for decades one of the major towns of Grand County. It was founded in the mid-1890s on suitable agricultural land on the east bank of the Green River, directly across the river from the town of Green River. It was surveyed and platted by George W. Durrant in 1895. The location, in a warm, bright area right next to the railroad tracks and a major river, was considered ideal for fruit growing, especially peaches. Fruit trees were planted, and within a short time they were producing delicious fruit. A post office was established in 1898. The town for a time also boasted a school and a store as well as a railroad depot. Steam-powered waterwheels and pumps brought water from the river to the orchards and fields. Pumping was expensive, however, and frosts often killed the fruit blossoms, making for small boom-and-bust cycles and substantial population fluctuations into the next century.

Mesa, Pinhook, and Polar were mining camps in the La Sal Mountains. Mesa was located on Wilson Mesa and was first settled in 1891 by Joseph Burkholder and Herbert Day. John and Charles Shafer came to the area soon thereafter, followed by others—enough that a school was established there for a short time after 1900. A post office served the community from 1907 to 1913. Another post

office—with the name Wilson—was established in 1915; it continued in operation until 1923. Pinhook was a camp of one log house and about twenty-five tents inhabited by miners working in the Miner's Basin area. At one time it had a tent school and also featured a saloon run by Charles and Dud Wilson.

Miner's Basin was the principal mining camp in the county. It flourished from the late 1880s to 1907, at which time the mines were closed due to the repercussions of a national financial panic. During the 1890s a stamp mill was constructed by Bob Thompson at Miner's Basin, and a 125-ton cyanide mill was later installed east of the camp by the Interstate Mining Company. Gold, silver, and copper all were mined in limited quantities in the area over the years, and at its peak the town supported a hotel, a store, two restaurants, two saloons, and various other businesses, including blacksmith and shoemaker shops and a livery stable.

The Miner's Basin Mining District was organized on 27 May 1898 by George Hepburn and other area miners, ten years after the first claims were staked in the area. The district was advertised as a "bonanza field," and land agent G. R. Propper tried to entice miners to the area rather than participate in the Alaska gold rush then occurring. He advertised: "Why go chasing rainbows in the frozen north when Miner's Basin is a bonanza field?" Though the area did produce gold, it never merited the "bonanza" appelation, and after the boom went bust in 1907 only a few determined individuals tried to eke out a living there—most notable was Gordon Fowler, who lived in the area and maintained the old camp buildings until his death in 1966.[20]

Westwater had its start as part of the grazing land of the Bar X Cattle Company. It then was a railroad camp (named West Water) for the narrow-gauge railroad line and was subsequently a station on the standard-gauge tracks completed in 1890. It received a boost in the early 1890s when land speculators George and Frank Darrow began to purchase local land and promote the area as prime agricultural land. Others were attracted and numerous land entry homestead patents were applied for as a modest land rush occurred. Land disputes arose, and it was reported that at least one person was killed as a result. A nine-mile-long ditch from the Grand River was dug by the Darrow brothers to irrigate their thousands of acres of land. In the

21 August 1896 issue of the *Grand Valley Times* Westwater boosters claimed that their town would soon eclipse Moab in population. It is not known how many people lived in Westwater at the time, but one student of the town's history mentions "hundreds."[21] According to the 24 July edition of the *Times* that year, Moab had a population of 750 people; but the figure seems to be in error, as already noted. Five years later, the official census listed the population of Moab as 376; it is doubtful that Westwater had more than 200 people.[22] Though for a time it may have had more people than Moab when it was a railroad camp, Westwater as a town never did overtake Moab in population; but it was not for lack of effort. Beginning in November 1897 the Moab paper periodically featured a large front-page advertisement proclaiming that Westwater was "The Rising Town of Eastern Utah." The town was sufficiently bustling that a column, "Westwater Items," was a standard feature in the newspaper during that era.

In the *Grand Valley Times* of 14 May 1897 Justus Corbin had written that citizens needed to consider irrigating the Green River and Cisco desert areas with water from the Grand River. With that liquid the desert would become a thing of the past and the rich soil would produce crops that would more than pay the expense of the project. In essence, Corbin was calling for Utah's own version of California's Imperial Valley. However, pumping water from the river was too expensive for local pocketbooks, and nothing came of the idea. Over the years, others periodically dreamed of getting water to the desert areas of the region. Plans were rumored to be in the works around the year 1900 to bring a canal from Grand Junction, Colorado, into Utah to irrigate half a million acres of Grand County land. As might be expected in this era when grandiose schemes seemed to bear little relation to real conditions, again nothing came of this. The Westwater Land and Mining Company did come to Westwater that year, however, and bought much of the Darrows's land, which the company intended to further develop. Subsequent developments will be discussed in a later chapter; however, a couple of earlier developments in that area should be mentioned here.

As early as 1894 gold miners worked the banks of the Grand River near Westwater for placer gold. The Hattie E. Gold Mining Company was formed in 1897 and within three months had found

$2,150 worth of gold. However, as Michael Milligan reports, the company's expenses always seemed to outweigh the results. That seemed to be the case with all such mining activities. Yet that didn't stop the miners: "Although production costs consistently outweighed profits, whenever new methods were developed, miners returned to search for the elusive metal."[25] The riverbank area never produced enough metal to pay for the expense of securing it.

Also in 1894 health seekers from the east were reported to be in the vicinity of Westwater. The mild climate of the region was touted as beneficial to those suffering from tuberculosis. A sanatorium reportedly was built at Bitter Creek near Westwater for these health seekers; however, virtually nothing is known about it, its ownership, or years of operation.

Webster City was not a city, nor was it really even a town; it was actually the headquarters ranch of the Webster City Cattle Company and was located some twenty miles north of Thompson, high in the Tavaputs Plateau north of the Book Cliffs. The company became one of the largest in the county and was owned by a group of investors from Webster City, Iowa, who perhaps had links with English investors, since some reports have mentioned English ownership of the company. The headquarters/town was comprised of boarding houses for the company's employees and ranch hands and their families, but it also included a school, a community dining room, a store/commissary, and the mandatory saloon, as well as a fancy boarding house known as the Webster City Hotel. The company's cattle range included part of what was known as the Outlaw, or Owlhoot, Trail—a network of paths often used by those fleeing the law through the inhospitable Book Cliffs range to the even less hospitable (to lawmen) outlaw sanctuaries of Browns Park to the north and Robber's Roost in the San Rafael Swell area to the west.

Outlaws including Butch Cassidy, Elza Lay, and Harry Longabaugh (the Sundance Kid) were said to have worked for the company and lived for a time at Webster City. The area is known for a certainty to have been used by some outlaws, for at least three—Joe Walker, John Herring, and Flat Nose George Curry—were killed there by law enforcement officers. Also, as noted, Kid Curry (Harvey Logan) was said to have shot and killed Sheriff Jesse Tyler and

Deputy Sam Jenkins in 1900 in the region. The company seems to have begun to sell its holdings in the late 1890s and disappeared form history by 1912, its "city" gradually crumbling into decay, only occasionally used by cowboys or prospectors. The area is now part of the Hill Creek extension of the Uintah-Ouray Indian Reservation.[24]

Ranching still dominated the economy of the county, but by the mid-1890s sheep had been introduced to many of the area ranges, leading to bitter competition and occasional violent confrontation between the new interests and the established cattle companies. By the mid-1880s New Mexico sheepmen began to bring their herds into the general region, although it is doubtful that any came as far north as Grand County. Navajo Indians also had some sheep herds south of the county in the San Juan area. This was something that definitely polarized those involved, even though J. N. Corbin did his best to extoll the value of both for the county's economy and hope that there was room enough in the region for all. Though there might have been enough physical space, there was not sufficient good grazing to long support either cattle or sheep, let alone both, considering the ways in which the land was being exploited and overgrazed.

According to Faun Tanner, Arthur A. Taylor told her in an interview in 1936 that he, his brother Loren (Buddy), and Nels Yorgensen brought the first sheep into the area sometime around 1882, if his memory served him correctly. Either his memory didn't serve well or there was a typographical error in the book, for most accounts put the date at least ten years later for the introduction of sheep to the county. *Grand Memories*, the history compiled by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, lists 1895 as the date Taylor brought the sheep to the region.[25] Whatever the date sheep first arrived, it was the mid-1890s before they were a major economic and social issue in the county. The national financial crisis that began with the Panic of 1893 contributed to the decline in beef prices, and the cattle industry in the West was in a state of "near panic" by 1895, helping to prompt many of the stockmen to switch to the sheep industry.[26]

Though it might seem surprising that the Taylors, who were among the prominent cattle ranchers in the county, would bring into the area the hated "four-footed plague of locusts," as nineteenth-century naturalist John Muir called sheep, it seemed to be an economic

move. Competition was intense for grazing land and water, and though sheep are generally considered to be more destructive of rangeland than cattle since they crop grasses closer to the roots, the fact that they can produce a renewable crop (wool) besides their use as meat, coupled with their ability to survive better (at least for a year or two) than cattle on damaged rangeland, made them attractive—at least in the short run—to stockmen facing the damaged and deteriorating condition of Grand County rangeland. Exploitation unfortunately seemed to be the order of the day; whether it was done in ignorance or in full knowledge may be debated, but it is obvious that the prime concern of early stockmen was immediate economic gain, not some future prosperity down the road.

John Riis blasted the lack of environmental concern of early stockmen in his memoirs of time spent as a forest ranger in southeastern Utah and elsewhere in the West. His greatest condemnation was of the "cattle kings" who seized the best lands, fencing them where they could and overgrazing the remainder in order to keep out the homesteader trying to get a start with a few head of cattle. He believed that these defeated homesteading ranchers often became cowboys riding the range for the big cattle companies. Riis also expressed one idea of how sheep came to the range: "Sheep were anathema to the cattle man until he realized their worth and that he could fight sheep with sheep. If some choice grass lands and water holes were yet unfenced they were just as effectively guarded by the cordon of sheep the big cattlemen often threw around them to keep out the intruder." Or the small sheepherder would find his sheep mixed time and time again with the larger herds of another, exhausting his time and patience to sort them out if he ventured to place his herd on the public lands that the cattle king effectively controlled and claimed as his own. Those were the peaceful methods. Riis also wrote that "echoes of the range wars still sounded in the hills when I rode the range in Utah. Sometimes they fought it out with smoking gun barrels as the cattlemen had done between themselves in earlier years. More often in the dark of the night the cowmen would descend suddenly on a lonely sheep camp, scatter and maim the sheep with dynamite and kill or beat up the lone herder."[27]

Though such things likely happened in Grand County, little was

reported, even after the establishment of the newspaper in 1896. Some of the hostility between sheepmen and cattlemen was meliorated in the county due to the fact that most of the large cattle companies in the region soon emulated the Taylors and also began to run sheep. Though small-time stockmen were probably intimidated off the range according to one of the scenarios described by Riis, in Grand County the competition was most intense between the traditional interests, who just happened to have changed the weapons from cattle to sheep. Charles Peterson reports that by 1897 even the most resistant big cattle ranchers had sheep herds—the sheep industry was now big business.[28] The Denver & Rio Grande Western recognized this and began to cater to sheepmen. Loading corrals and holding yards were provided at stations along the line, including Thompson and Cisco. Warehouses were also built for holding the wool. The railroad company advertised in the 31 July 1896 edition of the *Grand Valley Times,* alerting sheepmen to the grazing range near the tracks, and J. N. Corbin in turn touted sheep as another of the economic boons and enterprises of the bustling county.

In the 1890s Mormon cooperative groups in southeastern Utah—most notably in San Juan County but to some extent also in Grand—after first introducing sheep onto the range, began to purchase the large gentile cattle companies. The introduction of sheep was facilitated by the fact that they had long been herded by Navajos to the south of Grand County. Navajo wool blankets had been highly prized in the days of the Old Spanish Trail and they were traded for by Elk Mountain missionaries. It was also reported that a Navajo by the name of Kigalia had herded sheep in the La Sal Mountains before white cattle ranchers made use of the area.[29] Though most of this activity was south of Grand County's boundaries, it certainly influenced stockmen in the county.

Despite the meliorating factors, there was some recorded hostility accompanying the change. Occasional and implied commentary scattered in early issues of the *Grand Valley Times* and the Durango, Colorado, *Daily Southwest* mention deaths of sheepherders, though details were usually scarce or unreported. It must also be remembered that it was an era often prone to violence—all kinds of problems could erupt into bloodshed, as many frustrated and overworked

people were willing to go to extremes to protect or enhance their economic prospects. Sheep were less subject to rustling than were cattle, which was another reason exasperated ranchers switched over to the former. Even here, however, animals could be lost: the *Times* reported on 7 June 1901 that 2,500 sheep belonging to a winter resident of Moab Valley, Alex Reed, were taken near Gunnison, Colorado, by a band of masked men.

If the newspaper didn't noticeably discriminate between sheep and cattle factions, it did take more notice of ranchers than it did their employees. Hispanic and Basque sheepherders began to enter the region in the employ of sheepmen in northern Arizona, New Mexico, and San Juan County prior to the end of the century, and it is possible that their presence prompted resentment from bigoted or threatened Anglos, adding to some of the range problems. This must remain conjecture, however, due to lack of evidence. But it is known that there were Hispanics and Basques in Grand County, where other racial and ethnic troubles were later known, and it seems a good possibility that many of the newcomers were not welcomed with open arms. The *Times* reported the shooting death of an anonymous sheepherder on the last page of the paper of 5 April 1901; the killing of one cattleman, Ed F. Greaves, by another, S. D. Went, had been a front-page news item in the 26 August 1898 issue of the paper.

Violence was a fact of life, and that some victims were sheepherders could have been incidental to the fate that befell them; still, the suspicion must be entertained that range troubles were the primary cause. Perceived trespassing—even though it was often on what was ostensibly the public domain—was met with severe measures. General sympathies seemed to be with cattlemen, though the distinctions could be overplayed, as could also the violence. Charles Peterson wrote that "Unexplained poisonings and fires at sheep ranches often begot rumors of foul play and arson, but evidence substantiating the rumors was lacking and continues to be lacking. The transition to sheep was accomplished with a minimum of bloodshed."[30]

Utah was soon one of the great wool-producing states and Grand County was contributing its share. More than a quarter-million pounds of wool was shipped by the Goslin brothers of Cisco in 1906. It was called the "largest individual wool clip ever made in Utah" up

to that time.[31] With the increasing numbers of sheepmen and growth of the industry came an increasing dependence on and vulnerability to national market forces, similar to what had occurred with cattle ranching. Prices for wool and mutton could fluctuate widely, and sheepmen soon learned that their wooly livestock were no more immune than were cattle to the great national economic forces. Also, the deterioration of the range was soon becoming evident to all but the most willfully blind stockmen. Charles Peterson has written that the cattle ranchers had creamed the easy money from the grazing country in the 1880s, and that more difficult conditions had helped prompt the change to sheep in the 1890s. This in turn helped lead to some reinstatement of cattle in the succeeding years, as stockmen learned not to depend on any one species; but the deteriorating range conditions did nothing to ameliorate the competition for the range. Violence and confrontation were the result; yet finally there began to be an increased realization that changes were necessary and that some kind of increased regulation of the public range was in order. The new century brought power to the emerging forces of conservation in the persons of Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, and sweeping changes, first evident in the form of forest reserves, would soon be felt even in isolated Grand County, Utah.

Although this history focuses on the area that is Grand County, that entity cannot be considered in isolation—as much as and perhaps even more than most other places, events elsewhere have often directed the course of events within the county's boundaries. This was evident in the early 1890s when controversy heated up regarding designating San Juan County—or at least a major part of it—as a reservation for the region's Indian population. Although that county had been created ten years before Grand County, it was sparsely settled and had no town rivaling Moab in size; Monticello and Bluff were the population centers of the large and sprawling county.

In Uintah County to the north the Uncompahgre Reservation had been created in 1882 and then partially taken away from the Indians and opened to non-Indian mining in 1897. It was then further opened to settlement by whites in 1898 after the discovery of gilsonite on the land, which had previously been considered of little or no value when it was first given to the Indians as a reservation.

Through the General Allotment (Dawes) Act and its periodic revisions, additional reservation land was being taken from the northern Ute Indians as the agencies that administered the Indians' affairs betrayed their trust, facilitating the transfer of lands from the Indians or allowing the encroachment and illegal use of Indian land by white ranchers or mining developers. Throughout the 1880s and early 1890s plans had been considered to make all of San Juan County Indian reservation land—plans that were vehemently opposed by Utahns though often encouraged by whites in Colorado and New Mexico; but with the county's limited population and huge area yet little-coveted land, powerful out-of-state interests (particularly in Colorado) who wanted this solution to the region's "Indian problem" finally appeared likely to get their way.

From the time the Southern Ute Reservation was created in southwestern Colorado in 1880, powerful interests had been at work to eliminate it. Plans were suggested to move the Utes north to the Uintah Reservation or to provide for individual Indian ownership of the reservation land (an idea known as severality) in the hopes that whites could then purchase the desirable portions of the reservation. A third plan was to remove the Utes to San Juan County—an area that was already occasionally used by many Indians for grazing and hunting. This plan, put forward by the commission studying the problem, was favored by many Indians, including Utah's Paiutes, who were to be included in the new reservation. In December 1888 a plan was put forward that would basically exchange the Southern Ute Reservation in Colorado for a new reservation that would include most of Utah's San Juan County. Though some opponents attacked the plan and delayed its implementation, many of the residents of San Juan County began to believe that the land would soon be made an Indian reservation and fixed values on their land in order to gain compensation for it from the government.[32]

Things then changed drastically after a totally unexpected move—Ute Indians from the Southern Ute Reservation in southwestern Colorado began to migrate to southeastern Utah. The Ignacio, Colorado, Indian agent, David F. Day, told the Utes in southern Colorado to move to Utah in the winter of 1894 even though there was no territory as yet established for them in Utah. The entire

tribe—some 1,000 people—moved. Utahns were amazed and incensed. The resultant outcry from Utahns—most vehemently from those in Grand County—persuaded the government to force the Indians to move back to their reservation in Colorado. The confusion and anger of the Indians must have been immense, and much suffering caused by such upheaval in the middle of winter was of course attendent upon the moves. Charles Peterson credits some of the violent protest from Grand County residents to the fact that they did not have many Indians living in the county with them and so they could afford the bravado that safety can provide: "Two reasons suggest themselves: first, the Indians were not walking the streets of Moab as they were in Monticello, permitting greater luxury of expression there; second, the character of the Moab community was a little more given to activist solutions than was the society of San Juan County."[33] Grand County was always affected by Indian relations in the general region, even though at the time there was no reservation land in the county itself.

The cowboys of the region were even more belligerent than the Moabites; by character and temperament they seemed inclined toward aggressive measures against the Indians. Troubles in 1881 and 1884 in the region had become known as the "cowboy wars," the Pinhook battle being the most notable engagement. According to Peterson, in 1894 cowboys and area stockmen planned to provoke a fight with the Indians in order to draw U.S. Army or National Guard troops into the situation, and there were fears of a general outbreak of violence. Five cases of rifles and 7,000 rounds of ammunition were sent by government authorities to San Juan and Grand county residents, and Utah territorial governor Caleb West was prepared to send in the National Guard. By mid-December agent Day helped persuade the Indians to leave the area, and they began their mid-winter trek back to their reservation in Colorado. They left in anger but had no other choice, being told that troops would forcibly remove them if they did not leave on their own. Though major troubles were avoided then and later in the region, in the words of Charles Peterson: "few regions have a history of more persistent friction between Indians and whites than does southeastern Utah. Conflict began with the first effort to colonize and extended into the 1920s."[34]

One result of what came to be known in later years as the "Ute Invasion of 1894" was a marked decrease in the number of cattle on the range in southeastern Utah. The displaced Indians had made the most of the opportunity to supplement their diets with local beef, resulting in the loss of a great number of cattle belonging to white ranchers of the region. Another development that lasted well into the twentieth century was the passing through the Moab area of Ute trading caravans traveling between the established reservations to the north and south of the county. Many local residents have recorded that among their most vivid youthful memories is that of the long lines of Native Americans slowly passing through the town on their annual treks. Though the practice has long since been discontinued, some Native Americans continued to live within the boundaries of the county, and later in the century they would again be able to claim a portion of Grand County as their own.

The geography that makes Grand County both spectacular and intimidating also makes transportation corridors both tremendously important and difficult to find and maintain. Until about the turn of the century, existing trails had been utilized where possible, being gradually improved, or at least better defined, in the process. The major route through Moab—known on survey maps as the Ouray Wagon Road—was basically part of the Old Spanish Trail. It snaked along Spanish Valley, exiting the county to the south as it meandered towards La Sal. To the north it crossed the Grand River, then went north and west to the historic Green River crossing.

The other major thoroughfare in the county was the northern branch of the Spanish Trail, now used by the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad as its transportation corridor through the county. This facilitated the creation and growth of most of Grand County's other settlements; however, it was more than thirty rugged miles from the population center of Moab. Improving the connection between the town and the railroad became a top priority.

Other roads were built as more people moved into the area. Most began as trails that developed as people passed between locales, some of the trails then becoming enlarged to wagon roads, which followed the early road-making procedure of going over or around natural obstacles rather than the more modern practice of



Celebration at dedication of Courthouse Wash bridge in March 1915. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

cutting and filling made possible by modern earth-moving equipment. In the earlier times, individual or cooperative effort was entailed to make a road passable for wagons over some difficult stretches. Whether this was actually accomplished depended upon how many people would benefit by the improvement and whether their numbers (and labor) were sufficient to engineer a solution. If not, the wagon road reverted to a pack trail at that point.

The *Grand Valley Times* became a prime mover in the effort to secure better roads for the area. Justus Corbin attempted to rally local citizens and large government agencies to the cause. A road to Castle Valley was a case in point. By the mid-1890s Castleton was growing rapidly, and that growth boomed with the discovery of gold at Miner's Basin in 1898. In fact, in 1903 Castleton made an unsuccessful attempt to be named the county seat. The existing routes to Castle Valley from Moab were difficult and inconvenient: one, called the Nigger Bill Trail, went up Spanish Valley, across the Sand Flats and the rugged country at the head of Negro Bill Canyon and Jimmy Keen Flat, and then descended down Pinhook Draw into Castle Valley. Elevations of 8,000 feet characterized part of the route, which

could only be used in summer. Even then it took more than a day to reach the destination. The other route was shorter—traveling up the Grand River to a crossing of Mat Martin Point—but it was even more severe, with a more than 1000-foot-steep descent on the other side of what was called the Heavenly Stairway. After trying this route, Corbin was more than ever inclined to push for construction of a road along the Grand River up to Castle Valley and then beyond to the Dewey crossing of the river and eventual connection with the railroad at Cisco.[35] This construction was begun in 1897 but extended well into the next century before it was completed; connecting Grand County with the outside world was not an easy task.

ENDNOTES

1. See files on the boundary dispute in Grand County Surveyor's Office records for copies of letters and other documents on this lengthy issue.

2. See maps on file in Grand County Recorder's Office.

3. *Laws, Memorials, and Resolutions of the Territory of Utah, 1890,* pp. 92–94.

4. Minutes of the first county meetings are found in the Grand County Recorder's Office files.

5. *Grand Memories,* p. 50.

6. Quoted in John F. Hoffman, *Arches National Park,* p. 89.

7. John Riis, *Ranger Trails,* p. 84

8. Ibid., p. 87.

9. See Tanner, *The Far Country,* chap. 10, for more information (both factual and fanciful) about Cassidy and other local outlaws.

10. See B. J. Eardley, The Death of a Sheriff," *Canyon Legacy* 15:4–5, for one account of the death of Tyler; the same issue of the journal has an article entitled "Life in the Middle West," which includes excerpts from the reminiscences of J. T. Farrar, who believed that Tyler was killed by another man. A letter sent to the *Canyon Legacy* offices by Michael Milligan and printed in volume 17 on page 32 claims that Tyler was killed by Logan because he took credit for Curry's death, even though that outlaw actually was killed by Sheriff William Preece of Uintah County. The *Grand Valley Times* headlined the death of Tyler in its 1 June 1900 issue and covered the activities of the pursuing posse in the weeks that followed.

11. Jean Akens, "Of Cattle Rustling, Murder and Shoot-outs: The Story of Louis B. Lockhart," *Canyon Legacy* 11:28.

12. Ibid., pp. 27–30.

13. J. T. Farrer, "Life in the Middle West," *Canyon Legacy* 15:16.

14. See *Grand Memories* and *The Far Country,* in particular, for reminiscences of early settlers about their educational experiences in the county.

15. *Grand Valley Times,* 4 December 1896.

16. *Grand Memories,* p. 71. See also, for example, advertisements in early editions of the *Grand Valley Times,* such as 4 December 1896.

17. See "Moab Area Historic Walking Tour," a pamphlet printed in 1993 by the Grand County Travel Council, for a listing of some of the surviving examples of historic architecture in the town of Moab. See also volume 21 of *Canyon Legacy,* an issue devoted to historic buildings of the area.

18. See Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 268.

19. "Moab Area Historic Walking Tour" pamphlet.

20. George A. Thompson, *Some Dreams Die* , pp. 122–23.

21. See Michael D. Milligan, "Westwater," in *Canyon Legacy* 12: 25–27.

22. This estimate is based on census figures for the year 1900, which counted 1149 citizens in the county; Moab that year had 376 residents.

23. Milligan, p. 26.

24. See James H. Beckstead, *Cowboying: A Tough Job in a Hard Land,* for general information about the era and some notes about ranches in the Book Cliffs region.

25. Another publication of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Moab Chapter, entitled *Grand County Pioneer Families,* vol. 2, includes an article based on an interview given in 1937 by former Moab mayor Winford Bunce, who remembered the year that the Taylors brought the sheep into the county as being 1893.

26. Charles Peterson, "San Juan: A Hundred Years of Cattle, Sheep, and Dry Farms," in *San Juan County, Utah,* ed. Allan Kent Powell, p. 180.

27. John Riis, *Ranger Trails,* pp. 23–24.

28. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* pp. 100–103.

29. Ibid., p. 101.

30. Ibid., p. 103.

31. *Grand Valley Times,* 27 April 1906.

32. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* p. 72–74.

33. Ibid., p. 75.

34. Ibid., p. 55.

35. Keith Montgomery, "Grand River Toll Road," *Canyon Legacy* 8: 26.

9

Grand County Enters the Twentieth Century

The new century found Grand County on the verge of entering the modern world. Its oldest settlement had been inhabited less than twenty-five years and was connected to the outside world by only a couple of rough wagon roads. But Moab and the county's other towns had a bouyant optimism and shared in full measure that typically American desire to gain material wealth. As one historian has written: "In the twenty-five years just past, the West . . . had passed progressively from unclaimed cow pasture, to cattle empire, to Mormon country, to a no-man's-land of the cattle-sheep competition, to part of a state, and by 1906 was well on its way to integration into the broad fabric of the United States."[1] The pressing concern was to link with the rest of the world, and first and foremost this meant that roads needed to be built.

Road construction and maintenance were mainly done at the local level in the early years. Local residents and officials assessed needs and appropriated energies and funds to try to fill them. The creation of Grand County in 1890 did allow for increased attention to the problems, and statehood for Utah in 1896 helped create and free



Moab Central School (built in 1896) with outhouses at rear, date of photo unknown. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

up mechanisms for outside assistance, which began to trickle in after the turn of the century. Private interests were encouraged to invest in transportation facilities; and Norman Taylor had proved with his ferryboat operation that enterprising citizens could reap benefits by supplying a public transportation need. Various means of construction were employed depending on how many people desired the road and how much effort they were willing to expend to get it. The major roads were built and maintained by the county, and, in the words of Charles Peterson, these "were undoubtedly the most important public obligations in the earliest pioneer times." Most of the county budgets went to these tasks, at the expense of other services such as education.

The state also appropriated some money for roads—funds that the counties considered vital. On 2 April 1897 Justus Corbin lamented in the newpaper the fact that the road funds appropriated by the legislature were not yet forthcoming, since there were local men and teams with both the time for and necessity of road-building employment. State funds never seemed to go far and, to com-



Green River bridge under construction, 1910. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

pound matters, often seemed to be wasted when the fragile dirt roads were washed out or damaged by periodic floods.

Some federal money was available for construction and maintenance of routes that were designated as "post roads"—used in transporting the U.S. mail. This is more easily ascertained after the passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1916, but the fact that Samuel King planned to make holders of federal mail contracts exempt from the tolls on his proposed river road suggests that some federal assistance or benefits were possible at that early date to induce him to make such a consideration. Whatever funds could be obtained were eagerly snatched up, but there were never enough funds to ensure good and well-maintained roads in the isolated region with such great distances and difficult terrain between its towns and settlements.

County supervisors and commissioners had the task of determining which roads were public and how they should best be built and maintained. Individuals often were appointed and paid to care

for particular roads; also, individual users of the road sometimes were requested to provide labor to help keep the roads in good repair.[2] Top priorities were the Moab–Thompson Springs road connecting the county seat with the railroad and its southern extension connecting Moab to points south and east.

Although the Thompson road was vital since it was Moab's link with the railroad, it was not looked upon with much favor by many area residents, including editor Corbin. In the 6 August 1897 issue of the paper he wrote that many residents opposed a proposed bond to build both a county courthouse and county roads, because the road money might be used on the Thompson road. Corbin sympathized with this argument, writing that money spent on the Thompson road was a waste, since the road was too regularly being washed out. He campaigned for a river road up to Castle Valley and on to Dewey where it would cross the Grand (Colorado) River and then continue to a junction with the railroad at Cisco—the whole supposedly only five miles longer than the Thompson road, though his mathematical calculations seem to be suspect. Corbin was also unhappy that the courthouse issue was tied to the road appropriation, for he felt that roads were a "necessity" for the county while a courthouse was something that the citizens could get along for the time being without. The linking of the two could cause voters to reject the bond.

Voters did reject the $10,000 debt—by a 74 to 6 count—and Corbin's 13 August headline sarcastically screamed, "The County Saved!" The accompanying article went on to see the defeat as "a practical lesson taught those who are dissatisfied with existing conditions." The next month, however, those favoring a river road were enthusiastic when Samuel King proposed organizing a stock company to build a toll road up the river connecting Moab with Castle Valley and on to Cisco. Earlier, Corbin had called for a ferry at Castle Valley to serve the growing mining activity coming through Castleton and to transport ore across the river at that point. King announced in the 24 September issue of the newspaper that he also planned to build and operate such a ferry at Castle Valley. His stock company was to be open to the public, who could gain interest either by putting up capital or contributing labor, in return receiving stock or company scrip redeemable for the resulting tolls on the road.

Though the *Times* would have preferred that the road be a county project, it supported the private venture if it meant that the important route would thus be realized. Corbin probably felt a grim sort of satisfaction the next month—rains in the area in October washed out stretches of the Thompson road again. He wrote that "many hundred dollars worth of work done under the state appropriation has been washed away. Such can be expected at any time. To build and maintain a road to Thompson would require the whole of the state treasury. It is not the proper route."[3]

Unfortunately for Corbin, the "proper" route was not going to be realized easily, and by the time it was finished, it was no longer touted as a panacea. The Thompson road continued to be the major route to Moab; it remained the access route to the railroad, and it was the route served by the Southeastern Utah Stage Line, Mons Peterson, proprietor, and the later commercial routes of the Moab-Thompson Stage Line, the Allred Brothers, and other transportation and freight companies. In fact, it is surprising that Corbin initially favored the river road so vocally (though a clue might be found in the fact that he lived for a time in Castleton)—the Colorado River, though not subject to the same kind of sudden, violent flooding as were the small washes of the area, is still certainly capable of flooding and creating even greater washouts.

Samuel N. King was an area farmer who had earlier built a ferry at Dewey. He got right to work: in October 1897 the *Times* reported that work on the river road was begun, and in its 3 December issue reported that a ferry at Castle Valley was completed and operational. But the work soon slowed down. One year later, the river road was still under construction, and an improved road to the bustling camp of Miner's Basin had now also become a priority.

That fall, "Roads are a necessity" was a plank of the platform of the Grand County Democratic party, of which Justus N. Corbin was a leading member. Six months later, on 5 May 1899, work was still continuing on the river road and the river itself was now touted by editor Corbin as a navigable route of which area residents should take advantage. King hoped that wagons could pass over the route in sixty more days; but five months later the road builder was experiencing financial problems and had also run afoul of Corbin, county com-

missioners, and area residents by attempting to charge a toll from those using the Cisco to Castle Valley portion of the road—an existing route that King was supposed to enlarge and improve in order to charge tolls but which he had as yet done nothing to improve. The county road supervisor was instructed by commissioners to stop King from collecting tolls while they reviewed the situation and the fact that he was in violation of the agreed-upon timetable.[4]

The new century was almost three weeks old when Corbin wrote a column answering a Grand Junction newspaper editor who had the temerity to criticize Grand County officials for stopping King's work. The Colorado paper had pointed out that the road would benefit the entire region; Corbin agreed but begged to differ on almost all other points, maintaining that the county had bent over backwards to accomodate King and, in fact, was still attempting to cooperate with him. That cooperation seemed to be necessary: not until that December did King announce the formation in Provo of the Grand River Toll Road Company with Mormon church apostle and future U.S. Senator Reed Smoot as company president and with King as general manager and road engineer. The paper applauded the fact that the project now seemed to be on a good business footing, and King stated that the road could be completed in three months.

The county commissioners gave King one year to finish the road up the south side of the river to Dewey. Work recommenced early in 1901 but rains and spring runoff washed out portions of the road, delaying its opening well beyond June, a revised date that King had set for finishing the project. In August Reed Smoot came to Moab to expedite repair work and smooth things over with the county commissioners. Mail contractors were exempted from the tolls, and the road was finally opened in early 1902; but it had only limited service as a toll road, being soon taken over by the county. A boulder near Richardson Amphitheatre is inscribed "Kings Toll Road 1901"; however, a map drawn a few years later makes no mention of the road as a toll road—it is merely called a wagon road to Castle Valley.[5]

Although the Colorado River road was undoubtedly important in the region and continues to be so today, it is emphasized in these pages as an illustration of the general tenor of the era—its hopes, dreams, efforts, and plans—and the realities of geography, funding,

and other difficulties encountered by the citizens of the isolated area. How isolated they were is difficult to appreciate today by those of us with the benefits of paved highways throughout the region and vehicles able to travel in a matter of a few hours what then would have taken days—if it could be done at all. A Utah highway map of 1910 showed distinct regions (including southeastern Utah) that were developing highways, but at that time those roads were not interconnected. A road ran from Thompson to slightly beyond Bluff, for example, but was not connected at either end to other highways. Of course there were usually wagon roads or other trails connecting cities and towns—and perhaps in many cases they were little inferior to the developing "highways" of the era—but that only underscores the difficulty of access to, and travel within, the Grand County area until well into the third decade of the twentieth century.

Led by Justus N. Corbin and his *Grand Valley Times* newspaper, Grand County was touted as an area of immense promise; even the most windswept and barren patch of ground had some potential—and usually a vast one at that—in a region that must have seemed to uncritical readers of the paper to have been blessed above all others. In one sense—or maybe even in two—Corbin was correct: a certain sensibility can see beauty in landscapes others take as bleak, and Edward Abbey's famous opening of *Desert Solitaire,* "This is the most beautiful place on earth," in spirit encompassed even the desolate regions of the Cisco Desert and other stretches of land not normally celebrated for their beauty. Also, of course, mineral developers regularly find that land considered worthless by one generation can be of fabulous value to another. In fact, there is a sort of unofficial mining axiom that holds that the more worthless an area appears, the more commercial value it probably has. Portions of Grand County provide as good an example of that as can be found, I suspect.

Those familiar with turn-of-the-century newspaper rhetoric will realize that Corbin's pronouncements were not that unusual—in fact, they were echoed and even amplified by editors of almost all newpapers of the American West. If nineteenth-century American newspaper editors could have been present at the biblical scene of the banishment of Adam and Eve, it is doubtful that the event would

have been reported as much of a Fall—other Edens were everywhere . . . if you could believe newspaper rhetoric.

Americans have long had two distinct versions of Paradise, however: one a celebration of the land and call for preservation of its pristine natural beauties and resources; the other a shaping and cultivation of those natural beauties into a garden or preserve managed by humans who consider nature's bounties to be at their disposal, to be developed as they see fit. The lines of battle have never been firmly fixed—one generation's heroes can be villians to the next. And although it is true that the one constant is that wilderness is constantly diminishing, those who love the wilderness can take some comfort in those steps that have been taken to preserve some of our natural wildlands. Many of these measures have been promoted and supported by people who oppose those whom they call "environmental extremists" but who nonetheless do not want to see the land too radically transformed or exploited.

There are few who have not considered the basic nineteenth-century response to the American land—especially in the semiarid West—to have been at least somewhat destructive, however much they may endeavor to excuse the pioneers for putting basic concerns of survival over their concern to preserve the natural beauties and resources of the land. That basic attitude towards the land could not long go unchecked, however; among other reasons because the land itself was rapidly filling up, with the choicest portions almost all claimed and even marginal sites for farming or ranching being siezed and fought over. By the turn of the century, the great American frontier was virtually closed down—there was little more land to expand on to. Increased numbers of people not only put more pressure on the land but even called forth some responses from others to develop or claim acreage that put the land in even more jeopardy, though these responses were often seen as examples of American inventiveness and free enterprise. It was a time of great dreams and plans to make of the "wasteland" a productive garden, while incidentally making the developers a nice fortune—capitalism at its best.

In Grand County, massive reclamation and development programs were regularly being promoted or considered—they often involved dams or other massive irrigation projects to bring water

from the great rivers to the dry land. Valley City was one major development in the county; there also were others at Elgin and Westwater that progressed beyond the planning or dreaming stage. Dams on the Green and Grand rivers have also been a common topic of discussion since the beginning of the century.

The turn of the century stands as a convenient and appropriate mark for the passing of the frontier stage of life in southeastern Utah. As one historian expressed it, the economy of the region had begun to stabilize, experiments had been sorted out, and balance and diversity began to be the hallmarks of the region, with a variety of livestock interests, fruit growing, small farming, mining, and home and small industries all being featured. Neither sheep nor cattle monopolized the range, and a number of small entrepreneurs in the area now pursued the American capitalistic dream.[6]

One barometer of the changing times was the increase in governmental activity in the area—something that has always been met with mixed feelings by the populace. The increased government presence brought greater law, order, and stability to the region; but, at the same time, it also brought restrictions, laws, and ordinances that curtailed some of the activities of otherwise predominantly law-abiding citizens. This was particularly true with regard to the livestock industry when the federal government began to regulate the rapidly vanishing and deteriorating public forest lands.

There had been laws in Utah from early settlement times regarding brands and stray cattle on the range, but during the 1890s Grand County passed other ordinances regarding fences, herd fees and licenses, and livestock rustling. The increasingly effective county government needed increased revenues. Livestock herds in the county were counted much more accurately than they had been previously in order that the county not lose any tax money—funds needed for road building and education, among other things.

Charles Peterson points out that state laws also became more stringent and better enforced. A law passed in 1900 helped adjust taxes and fees for the many mobile livestock herds of the region that were moved through more than one county (and often more than one state as well) in the course of a year. Health laws were passed regarding sheep, including a 1905 law requiring dipping to control

scab. Both state and federal inspectors could be found throughout the state enforcing compliance. Peterson studied the creation of the La Sal National Forest in the area and summarized the situation before the government came to take this major step and harbinger of things to come. He wrote:

> Obviously times had changed. The frontier of the late 1870s had been supplanted. Cattle had been crowded from the range. Sheep were in turn yielding to diversified livestock culture. The Mormon-gentile confrontation had become more a matter of rhetoric than reality. Government was setting in motion what has proved to be an ever-expanding wheel of regulation. By 1905 the frontier had passed. The next turn of government's regulating wheel brought the Forest Service to southeastern Utah and the modern period began.[7]

The turn of the wheel Peterson alludes to was vital to maintaining timber resources in the La Sal Mountains: conservation practices were mandated by the government; they took the form of a reclassification of and restriction of access to some portions of the public domain. In Grand and San Juan counties this took shape on 25 January 1906 when President Theodore Roosevelt signed a proclamation designating most of the La Sal Mountains—some 150,000 acres—as a forest reserve, strictly limiting public utilization of the natural resources on that land.

Conservation had not been a topic of much concern in Grand County, but the idea did have a bit more national support. Individuals and groups began to advocate the preservation and conservation of forest resources at least as early as the mid-1870s; and in 1877 the Secretary of the Interior, Carl Schurz, gave certain conservation measures official government support. In 1891 Congress authorized the president to create forest reserves, and these parcels of land—33 million acres by 1897—were later placed under the control of the General Land Office within the Department of the Interior. The Department of Agriculture simultaneously had a Division of Forestry, headed in 1900 by Gifford Pinchot, the leading conservationist of the era. In 1905, the forest reserves were transferred to the

jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture, and the whole was to be administered by the newly created United States Forest Service.[8]

In Utah, beginning in 1897, some 4 million acres of forest reserves were set aside before the creation of the La Sal Reserve. The state was vitally concerned about its water resources, and state officials were coming to understand the connection between timber watersheds and the quality of water. They also wanted the federal government to begin to protect its public lands. At the same time, however, they feared an increasing federal presence and control over land in the state. Utah's first state governor, Heber M. Wells, wanted some federal control but objected to the 4 million acres of forest reserves being withdrawn from public use.[9] He thus was caught on the horns of a dilemma that, to a greater or lesser extent, has impaled each of his successors. Federal assistance and money are fervently desired, but accompanying regulations, restrictions, or controls are all too often bitterly decried as an unwarranted "intrusion" upon individual enterprise or state's rights freedom.

From the modest beginning of the creation of the forest reserve and other range controls, Grand County increasingly has come to rely upon the federal government for financial assistance, while at the same time it has come to ardently decry many attendant federal controls and regulations. In the early days, only a few grumbled; even that bastion of free enterprise, the *Grand Valley Times,* favored the creation of the La Sal Forest Reserve. On 2 February 1906 editor Justus Corbin wrote: "This will be of great benefit in the long run, though it may immediately affect a few adversely. The water supply depends on maintaining the forests. The matter of cutting timber will then come entirely under inspection of a government officer as well as the amount of stock that may be ranged thereon."

It is well that Corbin supported the measure, for it was obvious to unbiased observers that something had to be done: not only was the forest rapidly disappearing but also, of more immediate consequence, the deforestation was beginning to result in a series of very damaging floods in Moab. Matters were thus striking the citizenry exactly where it hurt the most—in their homes and pocketbooks.

Floods are natural occurrences in an elevated region like the Colorado Plateau where the great waterways have cut their courses

far below the surface of the surrounding tablelands. Vegetation is sparse in most areas of the plateau, and after violent summer thunderstorms (a common occurrence) or rapid spring snowmelt in the region's mountains great amounts of water can literally pour off the edges of cliffs and flood the normally dry washes. Oliver Huntington left the first written description of such an event in his journal entry for 12 June 1855 while at the Elk Mountain Mission in Moab: "I looked out of the wagon and saw a wonderful sight. More than 20 creeks running, leaping and pouring off the mountain precipices all around from one to 300 feet high. The mountains all arround [*sic*] us are barren soft and red sand rocks carved and molded into every shape and now all the molded water courses are streaming with the creeks and rivers rilling tumbling and pouring down the mountain sides. This is a great blessing . . ." Frederick Dellenbaugh, a member of John Wesley Powell's second river expedition in 1871, also wrote of a rainstorm in the canyons that continued "till cascades came leaping and plunging from everywhere into the canyon. Two of these opposite our camp were exceedingly beautiful."[10]

That "blessing" of "beautiful" water pouring down the mountainsides can quickly turn to ugly disaster in the rocky semiarid country as tremendous floods can come roaring down the region's washes and gullies. The floods not only tear away at the banks and cause further great gashes but they also can endanger anything in their path, including livestock and human beings. Though such floods are expected occurrences in the canyon country, settlers in Moab were becoming aware of the greater frequency and increased ferocity of area floods about the same time that conservationists and rangeland managers were coming to see and inform the public of the intimate connection among vegetation, erosion, and water runoff.

In its first year of publication, on 25 September 1896, the *Grand Valley Times* reported floods in Moab Valley, comparing them to earlier but less severe flooding in 1884: "Grand Valley has experienced a washing this week that has never been equaled before as to the amount of damage done. . . . Just before noon Wednesday the bridge near the Darrow house went out, and the channel there was soon twice the former width. For several hours all attention was directed

to save the Darrow house, as the banks were fast cutting toward that building. . . . The river [rose] about ten feet in 24 hours."

In the valley, the channels of both Mill and Pack creeks were becoming increasingly wide. Old-timers could remember when the two creeks could be easily jumped, and the increased width of both was not only disturbing but threatening. The very next year a flood in Mill Creek killed a man. More floods were reported in 1901. Three boys narrowly escaped with their lives from a flood in Mill Creek in 1904. Property damage from the floods also was mounting. In 1905 the *Times* reported that fences, corrals, crops, and bridges were destroyed, houses were damaged, and land extensively cut up by new channels in the floods that year.

For another thirty years floods would periodically wreak havoc in the valley and surrounding area until reclamation projects undertaken by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s helped to reduce the danger and the damage from those floods that still happened. Before that, however, the first response was to look to the mountains with the intention of better caring for the timber resources there in the hope that this would in turn improve the overall watershed and thus curtail some of the runoff and subsequent flooding. For this reason, the newspaper and presumably most of its readers were supportive of the creation of the La Sal Forest Reserve in 1906—in the minds of the majority the welfare of the town and most of its inhabitants outweighed the untrammeled liberties of a few ranchers who would be limited in the number of animals they could henceforth graze in the forest areas.

According to Charles Peterson, prior to the creation of the forest reserve, overgrazing was the main problem in the La Sals—mining and lumbering had not seriously damaged the overall resources—but no activity was being conducted wisely with an eye to the future. Floods and erosion were seriously changing the landscape in the mountains as well as in the valleys. The introduction of sheep to the already fragile and largely overgrazed land had resulted in some damaged rangeland, much of it unlikely to recover without an outright ban or at least severe restriction on the numbers of grazing animals.[11]

The competition between cattlemen and sheepherders, as well as that within their own ranks, led to an overstocking of the range—

both in the forests and in the winter range of the desert valleys. This situation led in turn to even greater degradation of the range as stockholders tried to get whatever they could from the land with no thought for its future productivity. Added to this was periodic drought in the region which directly led to the failure of the overworked land and many of the livestock interests using it. The order of the day seemed to be basic survival—the devil take the hindmost and the morrow. The rangeland was further damaged by the fact that exotic and less nutritious but hardier species of grasses and weeds (including Russian thistle, Indian tobacco, and larkspur) began to supplant the native bunch and grama grasses and shrubs. Not only were the new plants less nutritious, some were poisonous.[12]

Grazing permits were generally granted to those who had previously run cattle or sheep on the forest rangelands in proportion to the number of animals that they had grazed on that land. Thus, "prior use" was a determining factor in the permit allocation system along with the possession of legitimate ranch property holdings in the area in order to prevent transient cowboys and herders from making use of the land at the expense of the tax-paying, property-holding county residents. The availability of other supplemental feed sources, such as privately owned land, was also considered in the allotment of the forest range permits.[13] If possible, preference was to be given to small livestock holders and individual homesteaders rather than to large corporate ranching interests.

Timber management was another function of the forest reserve officers. Here again, individuals were favored over corporations or businesses, as they were allowed to remove timber and rocks from the forest reserve lands for private use without paying a fee. It has been estimated that there were as many as forty sawmills operating in the La Sal Forest during its first few decades, but most were small operations. (Much of the activity was in the portions of the forest south of Grand County; and in this as in all other aspects of its record-keeping, forest reserve officers did not keep separate statistics for land in different counties—thus, statistical information quoted in these pages applies to the La Sal Forest as a whole, not to the portion of it in Grand County.) Sawmills close to Moab were among county businesses from early times—Branson and Company advertised its ser-

vices in issues of the *Grand Valley Times* in 1896—but one of their problems was the transportation of the logs or lumber due to the lack of good roads in the region. T. W. Branson and Harry Grimm each floated rafts of logs down the Grand River from Castle Valley before the turn of the century, after hauling them there from the north La Sals. The rafts contained 6,000 to 10,000 feet of lumber and generally worked well, influencing *Times* editors to periodically extoll the waterways as potential great avenues of transportation.[14]

Road and trail construction was the greatest expense item after personnel costs in La Sal Forest budgets in the years to 1930. The costs of county or state roads that traveled through portions of the forest were often cooperative ventures between the forest reserve and the particular government agency.

Mining—particularly for precious metals—suffered a definite decline during this period, with the gold camp of Miner's Basin and other smaller camps in the La Sals effectively shut down by the national financial economic downturn of 1907. Yet on 31 May 1907 the *Grand Valley Times* editor greeted his readers with the headline, "10,240 Acres of Gold," referring to Wilson Mesa east of Moab. Where he got his figures is unknown; what is known is that few miners ever seemed to get much of that gold, as the reports turned out to be not much more than rumor and wishful thinking built upon some small deposits of gold and silver that kept miners in the area hopeful and active into the next decade. Courthouse Camp near Arches and Mesa on Wilson Mesa sprang up in this period; Mesa even boasted a post office from April 1917 to August 1918, when some of that 10,000 acres of gold was actually found by miners.

The most successful mining activity of the era involved the newly discovered element uranium and other elements associated with it. Uranium deposits had been found in the plateau area as early as 1879 but remained unidentified until the 1890s. Most deposits in the region were found in southwestern Colorado and in San Juan County, but a few deposits were found in Grand County, most notably at Yellow Cat, northeast of present-day Arches National Park, and near Professor Valley, upstream on the Colorado River from Moab. The development of uranium mining will be examined in a

later chapter, but the mineral did attract miners to the area around the turn of the century, hoping to find new riches in the land.

Miners in the La Sal Mountains were concerned about the encroachment by stockmen on mining district lands, and they protested the conditions in a meeting in 1900, according to the 7 September issue of the *Grand Valley Times.* But miners were also contributing to the depletion of timber resources through their use of lumber for mining camps. Extensive underground mining uses a tremendous amount of lumber, and although such mining had not occurred to a great extent in the La Sals, what did occur took its toll on the limited timber resources of the area. In addition, if there ever was a major mineral strike, the potential was there for a vast denudation of the forest. Timber resources were also used to make charcoal for mining smelters, and the growth of Moab and consequent use of lumber was an added pressure on the forests of the region. All of these elements combined to create concern in farsighted citizens and government leaders.

Those not as farsighted often were influenced by their senses of taste and smell. A concern for safe culinary water was becoming widespread as the water quality became increasingly questionable. The Utah legislature enacted a law in 1892 prohibiting sheep with watersheds seven miles from a city in an attempt to keep water supplies safe; but violations of the law were frequent, and other concerns remained. Increasingly petitions were made to the federal government for assistance in insuring clean water; this helped influence the federal response of withdrawing watershed lands into the forest reserves.[15]

On 5 June 1896, J. N. Corbin had written in the Moab *Times* encouraging the construction of a culinary water system of pine-log pipelines; however, the plan was not implemented and subsequently the paper periodically issued calls to improve the town's water supply and general sanitary conditions. On 13 September 1901 Corbin called for improved sanitary facilities and practices in Moab to combat the "annual summer stench" in the town; but such improvements were slow in coming: the following years featured regular town clean-up campaigns, but the securing of adequate water and sewer systems was an elusive goal and frustrating endeavor. As soon as improvements were made, the growth of the town or deterioration of other parts of the system soon made the improvements inadequate, or else

they were destroyed or damaged by natural forces. Viewed from a slightly different perspective, however, such trials and troubles could be seen as natural growing pains of an expanding frontier town. In fact, with its energetic newpaper editors leading the charge for civic improvements, Moab could well have accomplished more than other towns of similar size and circumstances.

Corbin called for Moab street improvements early in 1905 (13 January) and then headed off a movement to disincorporate Moab in July of that year. Although incorporation as a town entailed expenses, he argued that they were a good investment if they would help ensure the growth and improvement of the town. On 6 February 1906, he argued that town officials were paid too much, since there was little budget money left over for civic improvements. Later that summer, the newspaper announced an agreement between the town and Wilson Mesa Placer Company, which had agreed to construct a water system for the city. In return, the company would be allowed use of the water to develop its mining claims on Wilson Mesa. Town officials should have been more sceptical of the plan: by 29 March 1907 the paper reported problems with the system and the need for a bond from the public to pay for fixing the problems. In August 1908 a suit was filed by the town's Moab Irrigation Company against the Wilson Mesa Company, which was taking more water than had been expected or agreed upon. Things seemed to settle down after that for a few years, and it must be assumed that a working water system functioned in Moab, though it would be found inadequate in later decades.

The 158,462 acres of the La Sal Forest Reserve created on 25 January 1906 were combined in July 1908 with the 315,000-plus acres of the Monticello Forest Reserve (created in 1907) as one national forest, called the LaSalle National Forest—named in honor of the great sixteenth-century French explorer Robert Cavelier, Sieur de LaSalle, through a misunderstanding of the significance of "La Sal" by non-local National Forest Service officers. The mistake was corrected on 16 March 1909 when the name was changed to La Sal National Forest. The first officer of the new forest unit was a Utahn, Orrin C. Snow, who moved to Moab in October 1906 and established his office downtown on Main Street above Dr. J. W. Williams's drug store.[16]

John Riis was appointed a forest ranger in February 1907 and

became supervisor of the La Sal Forest in 1908 when Snow was transferred to Panguitch. Riis was an easterner, the son of Jacob Riis the historian and early advocate of conservation. He was first stationed at Monticello and then moved to Moab when he assumed the supervisory position. He wrote down his impressions of both towns and some of the social aspects of life at the time—accounts that have proved valuable to later historians.

Riis recounted a meeting that he had with an angry rancher named Parley Butt from San Juan County who expressed a common attitude about the coming of the federal government into the picture, administering resources that had previously been free for the taking. It is an attitude that has continued be expressed with minor variations, and is quoted here at some length to represent all similar protests over the years against government agencies and programs. The "regulation protest," as Riis termed it, went something like this:

> "We cowmen came into this country before Uncle Sam even thought it worth lookin' at. When God finished makin' the world he had a lot of rocks left over an' he threw them down here in a pile in Utah. But we took this country and settled it. We killed off the Indians and the rattlesnakes and built roads and bridges to get in here. We've put up with all hell and damnation to make our homes here and never a bit of help did we get from Uncle Sam while we were doing it.
>
> "Now, when we get the country halfway fit to live in, you come in here and tell us how much grass we can have and that we got to pay for it and we can put cows on this here mountain for so long and no longer, by God! . . . We will like hell! . . . I guess, by heck, we can fight Uncle Sam!"
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> I laughed a little. It was a shot below the waterline and took them by surprise. . . . "What would that get you? . . . in the end Uncle Sam would have his way. Of course, the range belongs to you and to your neighbors and to your children and their children. But you have to have some sort of system if the grass that is growing this year is to grow again next summer and the summer after next. The range can only stand so much and you cowmen are getting too thick on it. You know what the range was when you first came in here? Look at it now. Do you want your cows to starve to death? I'm here to help you and not to rob you and the little

money you pay for grazing fees goes back again into improvements that will mean better trails and roads and bridges." The tension was relaxed.[17]

Although Riis felt that he had made his point, many residents of the area have echoed the rancher's protests in the succeeding years, perhaps oblivious to what the range was like before its deterioration, or perhaps not caring and only looking for as much profit and little expense as possible—an attitude generally shared by the majority of their fellow Americans of whatever political persuasion. The notion that the public land was "owned" by those who had first secured privileges upon it was legitimized in their eyes by the labor they had expended and the difficulties they had experienced in earning a livelihood from the land. That this effort somehow secured for them title to the land was almost an ingrained notion.

The attitude of those who have challenged government intervention is generally met with the answer offered by ranger John Riis that whatever may have gone before—whether open range, homestead, or anything else—is subject to alteration, revocation, or adjustment. Conditions do not remain the same for all time; sometimes rules need to be altered for the ultimate benefit of the majority of citizens. No matter which side of an issue one stands upon, all people have felt imposed upon by such an answer; yet it remains basically true that adaptation is necessary as conditions change—one cannot draw the line on change at just the point it is most personally beneficial, although almost all people endeavor to do just that.

According to Charles Peterson, the character of the early forest rangers and supervisors was crucial to gaining public acceptance and cooperation with the governmental institutions they represented and the increasing number of such government agencies to come in the future. Early rangers in the La Sal Forest included farmers, cowboys, haberdashers, dentists, immigrants, and others. "Forest officers represented a cross-section of American attitudes. They were themselves barely a first generation of organization men in whom strong ambivalences existed. What may be termed a spirit of professionalism struggled to dominate a spirit of frontier individualism."[18]

The new government entity that was the La Sal Forest Reserve

got off to a slow start that was intended, one suspects, to help ameliorate the fears and antagonism of area stockmen. Those who had regularly used the area would be allowed to graze stock without permits for the year 1906. Then, for 1907, some 6,100 cattle and horses at twenty cents and 21,000 sheep at eight cents a head were authorized to graze in the La Sal Mountains. Charles Peterson writes that although the protection of the watershed was the basic concern of the Forest Service, all its activities—from managing or planning roads to mining or timber regulation—revolved around livestock: "the livestock industry was the main business of people in southeastern Utah . . . and livestock became the main business of the La Sal Forest."[19]

Despite the efforts of the Forest Service to cater to the livestock interests, the new regulations were not met with anything resembling joy, and cooperation and compliance were at best grudging and partial. Grand and San Juan counties did not fit the typical mold of Utah livestock holdings. In most Utah counties, a large number of stockmen owned and grazed a relatively small number of animals on the public domain. In the southeastern region of the state, however, there were relatively few ranchers, who ran a much greater than average number of animals. Ranchers in the La Sal Forest between 1910 and 1940 grazed almost five times the number of cattle per owner, and twice the number of sheep, of the state average.[20]

The Forest Service tried to encourage individuals with small numbers of livestock by increasing the number of permits allowed them while decreasing those of the larger stock outfits, but, despite this, southeastern Utah remained an area of relatively few stockmen controlling large herds of sheep and cattle. This was in part due to the nature of the land, which tended to restrict the number of livestock holders with its necessity for summer grazing in the mountains as well as for large areas of desert land holdings for winter grazing. History also conspired against the small livestock holder: large outfits generally had claimed the land, and Grand County also was outside the typical Mormon settlement pattern that encouraged small livestock holdings by individuals. This also meant that there was not the same general pattern of breaking up land holdings among the children of deceased settlers that was common in other areas of Utah.

It was common for livestock owners to graze more than their

permitted number of animals by securing additional permits for their kin even though the herds were not separately managed. Charles Peterson documents the abuse of the system by area ranchers, and the details need not be repeated here. He does defend some against the charges leveled by John Riis, but he concedes that "there is no doubt that certain individuals who regarded themselves as scrupulously honest found no inconsistency in fictitious arrangements which had the effect of negating the essence of permit regulation."[21]

The number of animals on the range consistently exceeded the number of permits issued. Some of this, especially in Grand County, was justified by stockmen who attempted to graze as many cattle in the forest areas of the mountains as they wintered on the desert ranges to the north, which, nothwithstanding the fact that it was considered desert, was able to support more animals than could the mountain range. This put additional pressure on the forest range, a pressure exacerbated by those who miscounted and trespassed on the range with unpermitted animals.

Counts were notoriously difficult to make, for ranchers as well as for forest service personnel, but tax records and sales of animals furnish evidence that some ran many more animals than they were permitted—up to 500 percent more, it was claimed, in one extreme case.[22] Stockmen felt that they were the best judges of the situation and, moreover, that the land was their stewardship—an argument that has not changed in the succeeding century—though the public domain continued to deteriorate. Ranchers, however, though conceding that fact, tended to blame it on drought rather than overgrazing. They did not agree, however, on when the droughts occurred.[23]

Soon after the La Sal Forest Reserve was created in 1906, the Southeastern Utah Stockmen's Association was founded in Moab. It reported that 2,000 cattle without permits grazed in the north division of the forest reserve (primarily Grand County) in 1909, but it attempted to excuse the area ranchers by maintaining that strays drifted in and that no one knew how many cattle they had: "No general count of the cattle has been made for years and the stockmen cannot without a count estimate within 20% of the actual number of range cattle that they have."[24] There was most likely much truth in all this; but the stockmen never seemed to *over-estimate*—there were

always *more* cattle or sheep on the range than permitted, not *fewer,* no matter how much the stockmen complained of tough times.

Though the initial steps might have been small ones, and the compliance of ranchers grudging at best, down-right opposed at worst, changes in the way the land was managed were necessary—a fact becoming increasingly obvious to the majority of area citizens. The range was being destroyed when the government began to step in and attempted what private citizens could not or would not do on their own. Officials then had to put up with the scorn, recalcitrance, and outright fraud of those whom the new regulations pinched. At the same time, they were also attacked by others who felt that their agencies basically coddled to entrenched private interests, making it possible for them to reap private gain at public expense while still claiming how self-reliant they were. This conflict of interests over the land and its management has been central to the history of Grand County in particular and of Utah and the West in general.

In its first decade, the La Sal Forest Reserve in Grand County witnessed only limited success. According to Charles Peterson: "While its accomplishments were substantial, it had neither been effective in winning the respect of its public nor in dealing effectively with problems inherent in the control of grazing. Cuts in the number of stock had been made, and adjustments between cattlemen and sheepmen had been effected, but the real authority of the Forest in controlling numbers, regulating use of allotments, and the length of the season had not been established."[25]

Although stock raising and ranching remained the dominant economic activities in the county, agricultural produce—especially fruit—were the first things to attract national attention to the area. Fruit growing had been introduced at an early stage of Moab's settlement. Local LDS bishop Randolph Stewart raised peaches, and the Stewart peach was named after him. Another early settler, George Powell, was among the first to plant grape vines in the Moab area. In the second edition of the *Grand Valley Times,* editor Justus N. Corbin touted the area as a fruit-producing region, and though most of the great irrigation schemes proposed in the following years would have benefited all types of agricultural production, fruit orchards and vineyards were always prominently mentioned as beneficiaries of the



Fruit packers at Peterson's Orchard in Moab in 1908. The fruit was boxed and then carted to the railroad at Thompson Springs. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

proposals. In the 14 May 1897 edition of the paper the call was made to develop plans to irrigate the great Green River Desert area. On 21 December 1900 two different irrigation schemes were mentioned: one was for a canal originating on the Grand River near Grand Junction, Colorado, which would be cut and routed into Grand County, where it would irrigate more than 500,000 acres in the Cisco Desert and Westwater regions; the other was for a canal cut in the east bank of the Green River to irrigate Grand County land nearby.

Although neither of these schemes was brought to fruition, some of the ideas were developed on a limited scale at Elgin and in the Westwater area. The proximity of the railroad was an important factor in the hopes of the region's fruit producers. Without this means of rapid transport, the produce could not be exported beyond the local growing area, and the farmers and fruit growers of Grand County were no doubt happy that the tracks had come unbidden so close to their fields and orchards. The local roads were still primitive

and sometimes impassable, however, and Moab residents continually agitated to have a spur line built to Moab and Spanish Valley. But in this endeavor they remained unsuccessful. Faun M. Tanner reported in her book that J. P. Miller, Orlando Warner, and Myron Lance were prominent area fruit growers in the early days and that they shipped railroad carloads of apples and pears to distant markets—even as far as England, where the fruit was favorably received.[26]

Orlando Warner shipped 300 crates of peaches to Colorado in July 1896, and in September pears from his orchard weighing a pound each were displayed in Moab along with grapes as large as 3.5 inches in circumference. Tanner also reported that during the heyday of the Moab fruit-growing industry, locals boasted that 14-ounce peaches and 25-ounce apples were commonly grown in the local orchards and gardens.[27]

Awards and prizes for local fruit were numerous in that era in which fairs, expositions, and agricultural congresses were popular. These awards brought valuable recognition to the county. In *The Far Country,* Faun Tanner cited an undated publicity pamphlet from about 1910 put out by the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad that indicates some of the national attention Moab was receiving:

> Moab . . . has been famous for a quarter of a century for the apples that have sent out from the orchards of Mr. Warner and others to a market that absorbs them ravenously and then cries out for more. The apples of Moab are without doubt the juiciest and the most delicious in the world. . . . They raise grapes, too, that have won prizes in California and peaches that have held first place in every national irrigation congress where they have been exhibited. Elsewhere mention has been made of several carloads of pears that were shipped from Moab to England. . . . Strawberries bear in Moab twice a year.[28]

On 25 September 1903 the *Times* reported that Moab peaches had won the gold medal at the Eleventh National Irrigation Congress, held at Ogden, Utah. In September 1906 a fruit-growers association was formed in Grand County to promote local produce. An award for the best fruit display at a Boise, Idaho, fair in 1905 was followed by another prize for best grapes in a Sacramento exposition in 1907,

and a third grand prize for fruit at Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1908. On 6 August 1909 the *Times* was enthusiastic about a favorable article on Moab agriculture in a national publication. Individual farmers also won numerous awards, and for a time some were able to support themselves and their families nicely; but the golden era of Moab (and Grand County) agriculture was short-lived. Although the area had many natural advantages with its fertile soil and generally long growing season featuring warm and sunny weather coupled with relatively cool nighttime temperatures, there were also disadvantages and problems. Even if a climate is generally favorable, a rare frost, if it occurs at a crucial time in the maturation of blossom or bud, can destroy an entire crop. Such devastating freezes occurred all too frequently in the first years of the century, crippling the local fruit-growing industry and making the pumping of irrigation water from the region's great rivers prohibitivly expensive for most growers. Floods also took their toll, most dramatically at Valley City in 1910, dooming the entire settlement project; but they also affected other growers at various locales over the years. The combination of factors effectively stopped the county from becoming a major agricultural economic power, although a few individuals have had success making a livelihood from farming or fruit growing, and gardens for home and local consumption are common in the county, producing fruit and vegetables of high quality.

Agricultural production figures are difficult to find broken down by counties in the early days, but those that are available from about 1910 on show that Grand County was not a major farming region, so it is safe to assume that it never was—even though in the earliest days people experimented with growing various crops and were dependent upon their home gardens more than in subsequent years. Statistics do show that many different crops were planted—though seldom if ever in large plots—but that substandard yields soon discouraged further planting of many of them. This is the case with potatoes, barley, wheat, oats, rye, and sugar beets, among others.[28] Corn and some fruits were the notable exceptions. However, even with these crops, as mentioned, other factors prevented the county from ever being a major agricultural region.

Life in the county at the turn of the century as reflected in the

pages of the *Grand Valley Times* was characterized by a multitude of concerns and variety of activities as the frontier began to give way. The paper continued to feature excerpted and serialized novels as well as feature articles of international travel, wonders, and other exotic features. Advertisements of both national products and local businesses were plentiful and give a feeling for the pace and tenor of life in the county as it began to enter the "modern" world. Grand County citizens certainly felt that their county was the dominant political force in southeastern Utah, and shortly after the new century began county residents made an attempt to annex San Juan County. This effort took the form of a petition, but it was rejected by a majority of the residents of San Juan County, who obviously preferred their political autonomy to whatever benefits would supposedly accrue from joining the more populous county to the north.[30]

Although the general region was somewhat more populated, in many respects conditions had not changed greatly from what they were in 1880 when acting territorial governor Arthur Thomas had vetoed the entity that at the time would have been called San Juan County but which would have included most of the area that with the proposed annexation would now constitute the proposed enlarged Grand County. There is perhaps good reason to suppose that even had San Juan County residents agreed to annexation, state officials may have attempted to block the move or make later adjustments, since the huge county thus created would have been difficult to manage and maintain in that era of poor roads and primitive communication facilities. In addition, San Juan County was much more a homogenous, Mormon-dominated society than was Grand County—a fact that doubtless influenced the residents of the southern county to retain their political autonomy.

Moab was becoming a developed town, much to Justus Corbin's satisfaction. He wrote on 21 June 1901 that "bicycles are becoming common on Moab streets " (anticipating the situation again in the latter years of the century—though he would doubtless be amazed at the numbers of such vehicles today). Although the town could not yet boast many of the amenities and technological marvels of the new age, it was working towards such accomplishments. Local blacksmith Henry Grimm is credited with bringing electricity to a small portion



Grand County Courthouse in Moab in 1906. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

of the town when in 1901 he constructed an electrical generator powered by an eight-horsepower steam engine that provided electrical lighting to his shop and a small nearby area.[31]

Justus Corbin, however, felt that urbanization was proceding at too slow a pace for his liking and his dreams for the community. He chided his Moab readers on 6 December 1901: "A town and a farm cannot well occupy the same place. Moab has been trying for years to be both, and the result is it is neither a farm or a town." He led the fight for incorporation of the town, and after that effort was successful in January 1903 he emblazoned the fact with huge headlines on the front page of the *Times*. He then vigorously and successfully fought back the attempts of disgruntled and cost-conscious residents to have the town disincorporated.[32]

Corbin now felt that the county could afford an official building, and the newspaper had good words on 16 October 1903 for the breaking of ground for the new county courthouse. Among its entertainments offered was horse racing. But Moab was not alone among the county's settlements in its efforts to grow and improve its situation and image. On 2 December 1904 the *Times* reported on a gala party

held in Castleton and at which more than 100 people were in attendance. Four months earlier—on 8 August— the paper reported that the authorities in the town of Green River had fined two men ten dollars for bathing in the Green River without "proper" bathing suits—a sure sign that the freedom of the frontier was rapidly passing.

The editor of the *Grand Valley Times* was interested in the growth of the entire region and in a burst of enthusiasm proclaimed in a headline on 19 January 1906 that there was a "bright future" for Green River and Elgin, which were then compared in their potential with the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. Cisco was doing well and growing in population. It listed 172 residents in 1900, and that figure increased to 323 by the year 1910. On 13 January 1905 Corbin wrote that Cisco was getting to be "quite a lively little town." It was an era that witnessed unlimited dreams (and newspaper rhetoric); harsh facts never seemed to deter projects—at least at the planning stages. Though he had turned over the management of the *Grand Valley Times* in July 1906 to Edgar L. Beard of Colorado, Corbin and other area residents were undoubtedly cheered when the town of Green River was incorporated in September 1906. A steel mill that was rumored to be built in the area never materialized, but at least the Elgin Power and Water Company was incorporated, according to reports in the *Times* for 21 September 1906.

All was not idyllic in the county—headlines frequently announced another murder in the region, and a clean water system as well as a sewer system was badly needed in Moab. Also, though the railroad brought many benefits to the county, it also brought hobos and tramps—undesirables that the *Times* inveighed against on 6 February 1906, since these free spirits and unfortunates were becoming a public nuisance according to merchants and other respectable folks. Yet, on the whole, things were progressing nicely.

C. A. Robertson, who took over editorship of the paper from Beard on 22 March 1907, seemed to breathe the same heady ether as did Justus Corbin. He wrote an editorial on 3 May of that year claiming that Moab had the "best schools" in the country. Unfortunately, if that were true, it would not at all have been good news for the nation. Moab's schools were getting better, however; and the county's inhabitants had a real desire to provide the best for their children. In 1901,

classes in Moab's Central School were more adequately divided into grades and different curriculums for students of various ages and expertise; and in 1902 B. H. Jacobsen was hired to teach high-school-level classes and a high school was formally organized. By the fall of 1904, a two-room high school building was built and in use.[33] This building was later expanded and remodeled, serving the community until a new building was finished in 1934.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints remained the major denomination in the county in terms of its number of members; but on 21 March 1905 the First Baptist Church was organized in Moab. A few months later, pastor J. P. Berkley was appointed. A chapel was built and dedicated in ceremonies on 28 August 1910, with approximately forty people in attendance.[34] There undoubtedly were members of other religious denominations in the area during these years, but records of any organized activities are lacking, if indeed they ever existed or there ever were any specific denominational activities to record. In later years, an increasing number of denominations would come to be formally represented in Grand County; but during the period before World War II it appears that church-attending non-Mormons would gather under the umbrella of the Baptist church if religious association was important to them.

For their part, in 1906 members of the LDS church built Star Hall, which opened in May. The building featured local quarried rock on the exterior and it was used for recreational and social functions by both local Mormons and by other residents of the area, although many secular functions and events were held in the Woodmen of the World building during the first years of the century. Dances, plays, and other entertainments were featured at Star Hall throughout the decades to come. The building later was purchased by the Grand County School District; it was remodeled in 1966 and since that time has continued its useful life of service to the community.

Many of Moab's fine old homes and buildings were constructed in the first two decades of the century. Building materials, including a variety of lumber and some locally made brick, were now more readily available, and there were a number of contractors in the area. Though none of the houses was excessively fancy, many were well built and tastefully furnished; houses and buildings that are still pre-



Star Hall, Moab, in 1909. The building was constructed in 1906 by the LDS church, and was sold in 1925 to the local school district. In the 1960s it was remodeled for civic uses. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

served from the era include the Cooper-Martin Building, the L. C. May Building, and the houses of Dr. J. W. Williams, Hyrum Allen, V. P. Cooper, Loren L. Taylor, and Albert Beach, among others.[35]

At Westwater, the Westwater Land and Mining Company began at about the turn of the century to subdivide the land while planting orchards and advertising the area in eastern papers. Some 4,500 apple and 800 cherry trees were planted by the project manager, F. B. Johnson. According to the *Times* of 15 September 1905, many people from Michigan bought property in the area—generally in plots of five to twenty acres. The company changed its name to the Grand Valley Fruit Company in 1906 before selling its holdings in 1909 for $70,000 to Theodore C. Henry of Montrose, Colorado. Henry planned to grow alfalfa on the land and persuaded area residents to vote a $100,000 bond to construct a new gravity irrigation ditch. Unfortunately, Henry was better at persuasion than at producing alfalfa or other cash crops. The debt was too much for the town, which languished under the burden until 1916, at which time Henry's property was purchased by a Californian, William P. Martin.

Valley City is perhaps the best known and had the promise to be among the most successful of the speculative agricultural ventures in

the county. It was sponsored by the Grand Valley Land and Mineral Company of Indianapolis, Indiana, and its genesis can likely be credited to the fact that Moab fruit had gained some national recognition and agricultural prizes—a fact which brought outside attention and interest to the area. It was also a great era of aggressive capitalism and colonization—no place was too far away, nothing was too exotic that it could fail to attract the attention of some to its perceived (or imagined) potential. The company sold land and encouraged immigration to the site of the town, some five miles south of Crescent in the drainage of Thompson Wash and numerous other small washes coming out of the Book Cliffs, which were intended to supply water to the community and its crops. The location seemed good: the soil was rich and the railroad was near; a constant source of water was the one important thing lacking. An earthen dam along the wash was begun in December 1905, and fruit orchards and other crops were planted in the desert land by the families moving to the area from the Midwest, the crops watered by irrigation from the reservior.

Things were progressing nicely for the development, with houses inhabited and under construction, when disaster struck—a flash flood breached and broke the dam on 19 June 1910 after a two-day storm in the area. Though the company talked of rebuilding, the effort soon collapsed, presumably for lack of funds, as investors were unwilling to risk more on the undertaking. In fact, there had been some earlier accusations by Nellie Balsley, among others, of mismanagement of funds by company officials. At the time of the project's collapse, a number of houses had been built, including a large, two-story structure which survived until it was destroyed by fire in the late 1940s. One of the investors who bought land at Valley City was Howard Balsley, who came to the area in 1908 from Indiana. He moved to Moab after the collapses of the dam and the enterprise, and he went on to become a leading figure in southeastern Utah, working as a forest ranger, a county clerk, and a uranium miner, among other things. He became especially famous for the last activity, becoming known as the "Father of Utah's Uranium Industry."[30]

The rivers of the region were part of the cause of the difficulties of access to the area—their deep canyons effectively barring travel for much of their length; in those few places where the canyon walls dis-

appeared to provide relatively easy access to the banks of the rivers, the water presented a formidable challenge. Ferries to assist the crossing at such points became valuable transportation links. One was operated at Green River as early as 1881.[37] Norman Taylor's first ferry near Moab—built about 1885—has been mentioned, and Samuel King operated at least two: one at the Grand River near Dewey, the other at Castle Valley. It is not known how long the latter ferry operated; most likely only briefly, as the mining camps did not produce the great quantities of ore envisioned. Even if they had, there was no improved road across the river in what is now Arches National Park that would equal the Thompson or Cisco roads—no matter how much both were complained of by Corbin and others.

The Moab ferry had been taken over by the county in 1897 with the accompanying great reduction of rates noted, and these rates were also established by county authorities for the Castle Valley ferry during the time it was in operation. King had attempted to float the ferryboat from Colorado but was stopped by Westwater Canyon rapids. It was then decided to construct it at the site. On 3 December 1897 the *Times* reported that it was operating, although editor Corbin also had to report that some old "curs" who lived north of Moab were talking of filing an injunction to stop construction of the river road and "progress"—just one of the problems he and other progressive members of the community had to contend with in their efforts to tame the land and bring to its hoped-for multitude of inhabitants the blessings of material prosperity.

Richard D. Westwood—longtime law-enforcement officer—was contracted by the county to construct a new ferry at Dewey in 1903 as well as improve and maintain the Cisco road after the problems that had developed with Samuel King. Westwood operated the Dewey ferry until it was rendered unnecessary by the bridge constructed across the river in 1916.

Before bridges finally spanned the rivers in the years from 1910 to 1916, the rivers were periodically extolled as natural transportation corridors by those who could be seen either as farsighted or blinded by optimism, depending upon the point of view. Although the Brown-Stanton party had met disaster in the rough water below the county, with the exception of Westwater Canyon near the

Colorado border, the Green and Grand rivers were quite tame as they flowed through the county to their confluence a few miles below the county line. This, however, did not mean that they were easy to navigate, as early river pioneers soon discovered.

Any observant individual who has traveled on the great rivers of the region more than a couple of times has noticed the constantly changing nature of the rivers in their channels. Though the broad features may seem stable—the Colorado is always rough in Westwater Canyon, always smooth near the bridge at Moab, for example—it is the smaller, ever-changing details that can bring riverboat captains to grief. Boulders and rocks are constantly being rolled along the river bottoms, and water flows can fluctuate widely, submerging or exposing obstacles according to the water level. And, if that were not enough, the sediment continually being freighted to the sea by the rivers is deposited in ever-changing sandbars—making would-be riverboat pilots constantly on the alert if they are to save their cargoes, their crafts, and even themselves. Still, history records that there have always been some who would take on the challenges.

Corbin boosted the waterways as natural transportation corridors from the time of his newspaper's beginning. Even before that, in the summer of 1891, the first steamboat in the area was launched at Green River, Utah, by a Wyoming entrepreneur, B. S. Ross, who had dreams of establishing a successful tourist industry with his riverboat excursions and the luxury hotel/spa he planned to build along the Green River at Spanish Bottom, near the confluence and just above the fearsome rapids of Cataract Canyon. His boat, named the *Major Powell* in honor of the great river explorer, was a 35-foot, round-bottomed steamer from Illinois, not exactly designed for travel on the rivers of the Colorado Plateau—something the one-armed Powell would have warned them about had he been asked. On its maiden voyage it tore off its propellers on boulders some twenty-three miles below the town of Green River. There were no spare propellers on board, and the boat was abandoned on the riverbank until the next April, at which time Ross had it repaired and reinforced.

The new launch on 15 April 1892 went well, and the crew traveled to just above the first rapid of Cataract Canyon. The high water of the spring runoff proved formidable for the underpowered craft



The Steamboat *Undine* on the Colorado River in 1902. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

on the return trip, however, and the fuel coal was used up before the party made it back to town. The boat was tied up and the party had to return to Green River on horseback, but Ross said that he was pleased with the general results and talked of full-scale tourism plans for the next year. Yet when 1893 rolled around, there was no such activity. The *Major Powell* had been leased by William H. Edwards, who converted it to burn wood rather than coal. He launched it in March 1893 and conceived a plan to haul supplies and freight on the river. The craft was underpowered for such work, however, although it did complete one round-trip of some 200 miles in two weeks. Edwards was unsuccessful in his attempt to find financial backing for a larger boat. He abandoned his efforts; the *Major Powell* was subsequently purchased and dismantled for parts in 1894.[38]

Corbin's calls of the late 1890s were answered in 1901 when the 60-foot-long steamboat *Undine* was launched at Green River by F. H. Summerhil of Denver. The craft featured a 20-horsepower engine driving a paddle wheel mounted on the stern. Yet, though the boat drew only a foot of water, it kept getting stuck on sandbars due to the low water levels of late November when it was launched. It slowly made its way past the confluence to Spanish Bottom where

Summerhil scouted the area for a resort site. The party then traveled upriver on the Grand to Moab, finding it easier going than the down-river trip from Green River. The crew arrived at Moab on 9 December, and the editor of the *Times* proclaimed the arrival with headlines and much fanfare in the 13 December edition.

Summerhil informed Corbin that he planned a regular service between Green River and Moab and that he would have two boats running regularly by the next spring. Corbin was elated; but the plans came to nothing. Summerhil wrecked his boat in the river above Moab in May 1902, overturning it when it swung broadside on one of his trips testing the boat and the channel. Tragedy was narrowly averted: Summerhil was thrown into the river but made it to shore some two miles downstream; his two crew members hung on the drifting craft until they were rescued by men in rowboats. Summerhil's young son had just been put ashore prior to the mishap. As it was, the boat was lost. Summerhil salvaged the engine and vowed to return; but, once again, nothing ever came of the talk.[39]

Other ventures soon followed, however. A small sternwheeler, the *Wilmont*, was launched at Green River in 1903 by Edwin T. Wolverton. The 27-foot craft was underpowered with a four-horse-power gasoline engine, but it performed much better with a 7.5-horsepower engine and side-wheel mount when it was modified the next year. It traveled extensively on the Green and made a couple of trips between Green River and Moab. Wolverton then increased the engine size to 14 horsepower and successfully ferried supplies and tourists on the river, even transporting some ore. The *Wilmont* was damaged in the winter of 1908 and salvaged for parts, the engine going to a boat named the *Navajo,* which also performed successfully until 1912 when Wolverton left the river-transport business. Before quitting, he built a 33-foot boat for Tom Wimmer, an area rancher. Wimmer used the *Marguerite,* as it was called, for a number of years, mainly hauling supplies to his ranch. He also hauled goods with it after 1914 for the U.S. Reclamation Service. Wimmer remained active on the rivers until at least 1925.[40]

It was thus shown that small flat-bottomed boats could be used on the rivers to transport goods—and tourists, if they weren't too fussy. Corbin and other grand dreamers had bigger hopes, however.

In early 1904 the editor proclaimed that Moab "by all means should have an opera house," and on 15 April of that year wrote proudly that Moab was "rapidly becoming a town of lodges and clubs." It was also by then an incorporated town, with Harry Green as the first mayor. Such a burgeoning metropolis needed grand services, and Corbin was pleased to leak the news on 21 October that a steamboat was coming to town. In the 10 March 1905 paper that steamboat was given a name: the *City of Moab.* It was a 55-foot-long twin-propeller craft, each propeller driven by a 30-horsepower gasoline engine. The craft, complete with luxurious staterooms and other fittings, was built in Grand Junction and transported by rail to Green River where it was to be put in service by the Green-Grand River and Moab Navigation Company owned by John Lumsden.

The *City of Moab* was launched at Green River in early May 1905 with great fanfare, only to get hung up on the railroad bridge. Two days passed before the vessel was freed. The somewhat unwieldy craft reached the confluence and found the Grand River was running high. The craft struggled upriver but soon ran out of gas, the boat then hurtling downriver until it crashed against the riverbank, throwing the captain into the river and the passengers onto the shore. Happily, the boat was able to be repaired and then labored up the Green to home, again running out of gas seven miles below the town, where it was tied up and left until the next year.

In the meantime, anxiety was increasing in Moab. On 19 May a worried editor Justus Corbin reported that the vessel had been launched a week before and wondered publicly about its fate. He was discouraged but relieved to report the next week that the vessel had safely returned to Green River. The next month, on 9 June, the *Grand Valley Times* headline article called upon the state and federal governments to improve navigation on the Green and Grand rivers. There was little reason for the federal government to get involved, however, since there was no interstate commerce planned. Also, Utah legislators were unwilling to commit funds to an isolated area of the state for a project that had had scant success for private investors.

Perhaps Corbin also realized that, although there could be some limited freighting and travel on the two rivers, it would never be extensive due to the variable nature of the waterways and their chan-

nels. After 1906 the newspaper never extolled the glories of river transport, only occasionally mentioning industrial projects—the most successful of which occurred in the 1920s with the Moab Garage Company. In any event, Corbin was not there to boost the waterways; he sold the paper and moved to Colorado.

The *City of Moab* was completely rebuilt by Lumsden and Charles Anderson and converted to a ten-foot-longer sternwheel paddleboat with most of the luxurious staterooms and fixtures removed. It also boasted a new name, the *Cliff Dweller.* That didn't seem to help. The launch was publicized on 6 August 1906, but the craft kept getting stuck on sandbars and the proprietors gave up on the attempt, selling the boat, which was remodeled and used as an excursion boat on the Great Salt Lake.

Others continued to try—and one must admire their persistence. They seemed to sense that there was a multi-million-dollar activity connected with the waterways and that tourists rather than freighting could be the true gold mine. But when that industry developed after World War II it was with an entirely different type of craft—rubber rafts—and tourists who often sought those rapids and stretches of the rivers that the earlier riverboat captains had dreaded.

In 1907, Harry Yokey, who had been chief engineer on the *City of Moab,* built a propeller-driven boat, the *Black Eagle,* and launched it from Green River in June. The boiler tubes became clogged with silt and mud, however, and the engine exploded. The crew survived, but Yokey had had enough of riverboating. In 1909, Henry Blake built a 25-foot boat and took some Salt Lake City investors on the Green River to convince them of the feasibility of a tourist service line on the rivers. His boat, *Utah,* had engine troubles and the engine had to be partially built in transit by the inventive captain; however, the investors left clutching their wallets and with the stench of 1,000 pounds of rotting peaches destined for Moab in their nostrils.

The only successful craft were smaller industrial freighters, built along the lines of the *Wilmont.* These boats included the *Marguerite,* the *Paddy Ross,* the *Ida B.,* and the *Colorado.*[11] Attempts by area residents to get federal assistance did result in a visit by Lt. Charles T. Leeds of the Army Corps of Engineers in April 1909 to inspect the rivers from Moab to the confluence and on to Green River, using

rowboats and the *Paddy Ross*. Leeds thought the rivers were navigable but recommended another study at low water. This was done in November of the same year by D. E. Hughes, who was not satisfied and counseled against the expenditure of federal funds to improve the channels. Area citizens were most unhappy, filing petitions and writing letters to editors and officials, proclaiming the mecca that could be opened up in the region with just a little assistance. But the government remained unconvinced, and no improvements of the river channels were forthcoming.[42] This was a blow to Grand County but assuredly a benefit to the nation's taxpayers. Costs for such a project could have been enormous, and the work would almost have to be continual due to the constant changing of the channels and their sandbars. This time, at least, the government said in effect that if it was such a great benefit then the citizens could prove it by paying for it themselves. There were no takers.

The county as a whole experienced substantial population gain in the decade from 1900 to 1910, and though Moab also increased in population during those years, more of the growth was in other settlements. In the year 1900 Grand County had 1,149 residents; this increased in the next decade by some 40 percent to 1,595. Moab gained slightly more than 200 people in the century's first decade—increasing from 376 in 1900 to 586 in 1910—but, while that was a substantial gain, it meant that 236 new residents had moved to other areas of the county. After this time, almost all population growth of the county has been accounted for by the growth of Moab; in fact, after 1950, census figures show a steady decline of county population outside of Moab, resulting in the fact that in the mid-1990s Moab is the only town in the county with more than a few dozen people.

The dreams and efforts to build luxury resorts in the area after the turn of the century reveal that Americans were still on the move, though now the emphasis was on vacations and tourism more than homesteading and settlement. Although it would be a few years before the automobile-based tourist boom would explode across the country, the railroads were beginning to promote the scenic attractions of the nation, and great resort hotels were being built in and near the newly created national parks and other scenic spots throughout the West. The unparalleled scenery of Grand County had

a few ardent admirers and new voices were being added every day. The famed Utah artist H. L. A. Culmer was among those who began to write regional and national articles extolling the beauties of southern Utah, and his praises were joined to a chorus of others that began to awaken greater general interest in this isolated section of Utah.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* pp. 136–37
2. Ibid., pp. 219–20.
3. *Grand Valley Times,* 8 October 1897.
4. Ibid., 27 October 1898.
5. See Keith Montgomery, "Grand River Toll Road," *Canyon Legacy* 8: 26–27.
6. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* p. 104.
7. Ibid., p. 106.
8. Ibid., p. 110.
9. Ibid., p. 111.
10. Frederick Dellenbaugh, *The Romance of the Colorado River,* p. 286.
11. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* pp. 116–18.
12. See *Look to the Mountains,* p. 118.
13. See N. Keith Roberts and B. Delworth Gardner, "Livestock on Public Lands," in *Utah Historical Quarterly* 32 (3): 285–300.
14. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* pp. 223–25.
15. Ibid., pp. 122–23.
16. Ibid., pp. 125–26.
17. John Riis, *Ranger Trails,* pp. 51–52.
18. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* p. 137.
19. Ibid, p. 169.
20. Ibid., pp. 173–75.
21. Ibid., p. 177.
22. Ibid., pp. 177–78.
23. See ibid., pp. 179–80, for various rancher's opinions on the matter and cause of rangeland deterioration.
24. Quoted in *Grand Valley Times,* 28 January 1910.
25. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* p. 142.
26. Faun M. Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 191.
27. Ibid., p. 192.

28. Quoted in ibid., p. 193

29. See, for example, statistics for 1909 from the *Agricultural Report* of the Bureau of the Census.

30. *Grand Valley Times,* 7 June 1901.

31. *Grand Memories,* p. 106.

32. See, for example, the *Grand Valley Times,* 7 July 1905.

33. Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 262. See also B. H. Eardley, "Moab Scrapbook," in *Times-Independent,* 22 August 1991.

34. See Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 259, and *Grand Memories,* p. 160.

35. See "Moab Area Historic Walking Tour," pamphlet published by the Grand County Travel Council, printed in 1993. See also *Canyon Legacy* 21, an issue devoted to the historic architecture of the area.

36. See Jacki Montgomery and Jean Akens, "Valley City," in *Canyon Legacy* 12:19–22.

37. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* p. 221.

38. Roy Webb, "A Foolhardy Undertaking, Utah's Pioneer Steamboaters," *Canyon Legacy* 5:15–16.

39. Ibid., p. 16.

40. Ibid., p. 17.

41. McConkie, *The Far Country,* p. 232.

42. Webb, "Utah's Pioneer Steamboaters," pp. 19–20.

10

World War I Era to the Start of the Great Depression

In 1910, Grand County had the smallest population of any county in the state: 1,595 people—less than Wayne, Rich, Piute, and even San Juan counties (which counties the population of Grand has exceeded in recent years). Although ten years before, Grand County had listed 126 more inhabitants than had San Juan, the latter experienced a population boom, more than doubling its 1,023 inhabitants at the turn of the century. Grand County also experienced substantial gain—up from 1,149 residents in 1900; but this was not enough to keep it from being the least populated of Utah's counties (although this is the only recorded census in which this has been the case). However, the county had almost double the assessed valuation of its neighbor: while San Juan County's valuation was $2,729,181, Grand County had a valuation of $5,299,543. The difference was the railroad; though San Juan's livestock was valued at more than $1.6 million, compared to Grand's $1.3 million, the railroad in Grand County had a value of $2.3 million.[1] Without the railroad, the county could easily be considered a poor one. The railroad was Grand County's link to the world; the challenge facing the county was to link up bet-

ter with the railroad and then to further link with the developing state and national network of roads and highways.

Grand County can be considered to have become physically linked with the modern world as the twentieth century progressed into its second decade—the period of time in which bridges were built spanning the great rivers of the county. These bridges provided a permanent link and uninterrupted thoroughfare with the rest of the state and, ultimately, the nation. The Green River was the first to be spanned. News that money for a bridge had been appropriated by the state legislature was welcomed in Moab, although if that welcome could have had a color, it would have been green, from the envy Moabites felt. News reports throughout the year 1910 kept area residents informed about construction of the $27,000 steel structure at Green River. The completion and dedication of the bridge merited headlines in the 16 December 1910 issue of the *Grand Valley Times.*

Local efforts were now concentrated on getting a bridge built across the Grand River at Moab. After all, the town was larger than was Green River town, and it considered itself to be the gateway to all of southeastern Utah and beyond. Since at least 26 February 1897 the *Grand Valley Times* had issued a call for such a bridge. To Moab's good fortune, a new voice was soon heard—one that would help direct and focus the attention and energy of area cititzens for decades to come: Loren L. "Bish" Taylor took over as editor of the newpaper with its 13 January 1911 edition. Only eighteen years old, Taylor was already an experienced newspaper man, having worked at the paper. More importantly, he had drive, energy, and a vision for the region. He spearheaded efforts to get the bridge.

On 14 July 1911 the paper reported that the Moab Transportation Company had brought two automobiles to Moab to transport passengers locally. The first automobile to visit the town had been brought in on 21 September 1909 by two cross-country travelers from Nebraska—W. E. and C. C. Cameron, a father and his son who had one of their cars break down while traveling along the roadway near the railroad tracks close to Thompson. While waiting for parts to be shipped in, the pair took the other car down the wagon road to Moab—a 3.5-hour trip. They were then ferried across the river and

enjoyed the local hospitality and scenery while offering rides to curious residents of the town.[2]

It is possible that the weather and other events aided the effort to get bridges for the area; certainly, if nothing else, these things underscored the need for bridges. The year 1909 saw both the Green and Grand rivers at their highest levels in more than twenty years. To compound matters, the newspaper reported on 18 June that the cable broke on the Moab ferry. The fact that it was not the first time such an accident had happened emphasized the need for more safe and reliable passage in the region—especially in an era when railroads were promoting tourism and western states were trying to open up roadways to scenic attractions to capitalize on the new source of wealth and notoriety. Rains in 1910 brought the tragic flood to Valley City. This may have hardened the resolve of area residents not to be as subject to nature's fury: bridges built above the floods were a type of declaration of independence from certain natural events.

A bill asking for money to build a bridge at Moab was introduced in January 1911 in the Utah State Legislature by local state representative J. P. Miller. Huge headlines in the *Grand Valley Times* on 10 March and again on 17 March celebrated passage of the bill in the Utah House and Senate, where the bill was championed by area state senator G. A. Iverson. Both men touted the bridge as a boon not only for Grand County but for San Juan County (with its extensive livestock industry) to the south. Though Miller and Iverson asked for $45,000, the final appropriation was for $38,500. Grand County residents approved a bond for $8,500 by a 142 to 1 vote to more than make up the difference. Some locals also volunteered labor to prepare the approaches to the bridge. Contracts were awarded and work was begun in September. The bridge—a 620-foot-long steel structure of three spans, built by the Midland Bridge Company of St. Louis, Missouri, at a cost of $43,000—was completed in late January 1912.[3] No longer did Moab have the dubious claim to be the only town in Utah where one had to pay an entrance (or exit) fee.

The county commission board voted the bridge satisfactory in February, and on 8 April 1912 an estimated 1,300 people gathered for a grand cookout celebration and program at the dedication of the bridge. The 12 April edition of the *Times*, reporting the event, head-

lined the celebration as the "Grandest in the History of Moab." Dignitaries gave speeches, including one that counseled Moabites that if they would now use their efforts to make the town more beautiful it would soon be a major tourist destination. A poem was even written celebrating the grand accomplishment. On 31 May the paper headline read "Bridge is Perpect"—the purported sentiments of its builder, G. M. Olliver. The bridge, if not perfect, was certainly superior to the newspaper headline with its typesetter's error.

In 1916 the bridge needed to be reinforced and money was appropriated for the task. Four years later, in 1920, in anticipation of high runoff due to heavy winter snows in the region, the roadbed deck of the bridge was raised four feet. The cost was $7,000, but no one complained, because that May the river peaked at a level heretofore unknown and was barely topped by the recently elevated structure. Also in 1916, a simple steel truss bridge 16 by 101 feet was built at Courthouse Wash near the Colorado River. This further facilitated access to Moab and served the area until the structure was replaced in 1934 by a wider concrete bridge.[4]

Improvements in transportation and communication were among the most important developments in Grand County in the years prior to the Great Depression. America's love affair with the automobile was in its infancy but receiving a major boost from Henry Ford and other car makers who began mass-producing vehicles. Advertisers and travel bureaus tried to convince consumers that the new mode of transportation was a necessity. In 1914 a wagon trail that went through the county was completed between Price and Grand Junction; it soon was used by early intrepid motorists and became the forerunner of the later Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean highway plan of the 1920s and still later U. S. Highway 6/50 of the 1930s. Grand County leaders realized that good roads were crucial if they were to benefit from the new social and economic force of automobile transportation. Efforts continually were made locally to improve and upgrade existing roads while leaders endeavored to persuade state and federal leaders to appropriate additional funds for road construction and improvement.

The Allred Transportation Company, run by brothers Birten and Wilson Allred, was among the companies providing transportation in the area just before the introduction of automobiles. In 1910 the



Automobile stuck on Moab-Thompson road, date unknown. Howard Balsley was a passenger in the car and took the photo. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

company was awarded the mail contract between Thompson and Moab, and an account written years later by a son of Birten provides a revealing glimpse of what conditions were like in those days.[5] The company operated from 1910 to 1916 and used both freight and passenger wagons—the latter able to travel four times as fast as the former. The Allreds received about $4,000 per year for carrying the mail and earned additional revenues from carrying freight and passengers. The teams of horses pulled a maximum of 1,500 pounds, and up to eight passsengers—each allowed forty pounds of baggage—could squeeze into the buggies, but five passengers was the norm. Salesmen, lawyers, and stage performers were among the regular customers. A one-way trip from Moab to Monticello cost about five dollars, with two or three dollars added for a round-trip ticket.

The roads were rough and sometimes impassable in the washes—a condition that continued well into the automobile era. At

the rest stop at Court House Springs, B. W. Allred writes, contrary to other reports, that the food was not always bad and in fact could be delicious. It could be noted here that hunger is always the best sauce, however. By 1912 a few people were experimenting with automobiles in the area, and by 1916 the new form of transportation had effectively taken over the commercial transportation industry, though horse-drawn vehicles continued to be used for farm work and private transport. In 1916 the Allred Transportation Company was discontinued when an automobile company was awarded the mail contract.

The use of automobiles and trucks for commercial transportation and freighting was attempted by a number of individuals and companies in the years from 1910 to 1920. Among the early entrepreneurs was Fred Prewar, who held the mail contract for a time, and who in 1916 purchased two Buick trucks that were each capable of carrying six passengers. He established service between Monticello and the railroad station at Thompson, with stops at Moab in between. Dr. J. W. Williams was the agent in Moab for the company. Clarence and Dennis Baldwin moved to the area from Ohio in 1909 and saw the need for transportation in the large, sparsely settled region. Dennis Baldwin originally formed a partnership with Dale Parriott, who sold his interest to Clarence Baldwin in August 1916. The Baldwin Brothers Company (which was to become the Moab Garage Company) hauled gasoline and associated automotive products to Moab from the railroad at Thompson and was prominent in servicing and fueling the growing number of automobiles in Moab. In fact, the brothers also began to sell Ford cars as early as 1916 and in later years sold General Motors automobiles as well as Ford tractors and farm equipment.[6]

The Utah State Road Commission was established in 1909, and it divided the state into various districts, recommending the appropriation and disbursement of funds for the care and maintainance of roads. Additionally, federal funds were made available through the Federal Highways Act of 1916 to improve post roads, those routes on which the U.S. mail was transported. Such funds were used in 1919 to improve the post road between Thompson and Moab and to grade and improve the road between Moab and La Sal in 1924. In 1916 a road had been built from Paradox, Colorado, to La Sal, south of

Moab, and in conjunction with that construction the rough road from Moab to La Sal was greatly improved—to the extent, in fact, that the *Times* on 26 May 1916 called it a "fine new road."

The improvements of the post road from Thompson to Moab were in part made by convict labor: twenty-five prisoners from the Utah State Penitentiary, under the supervision (and guns) of two guards, blasted rock and removed it in Moab Canyon. More than 12,000 pounds of blasting powder was used in the difficult job. The route attempted to avoid the washes and gulches through which the road had previously traveled and which periodically damaged the road when they flooded. One convict reportedly tried to use the opportunity to escape further confinement and fled up the Colorado River road. Like other would-be escapees, he found that it was easier to get out of confinement than it was to leave the sparsely settled and rugged plateau country, which became a very effective prison. This particular convict was apprehended by waiting law-enforcement officers when he attempted to cross the Dewey Bridge.[7]

The county as a whole seemed a bustling center of activity as it was reflected in the pages of the local paper. Elgin and Dewey were both frequently mentioned in the Moab paper, and though the La Sal Mountains mining camps had generally faded rapidly after the 1907 shutdown of the mines at Miner's Basin, a few, including Mesa, continued into the second decade of the century. Cisco was important not only for its stock raising and sheep shearing but also for a vanadium discovery, reported in the *Times* on 23 February 1912.

Another town coming into prominence was Ballard, near Thompson, site of a coal mine discovered in 1908 by Henry Ballard. In the following years, as the mine was developed, the coal played an important part in the county's economy. In 1912 the mining town was still known as Ballard, but the name was soon changed to Neslen, after Richard Neslen, general manager of the American Fuel Company, which had purchased the mine from Ballard. The coal was prized by the D&RGW railroad for its steam engines. To facilitate transportation of the coal from the mine to the tracks at Thompson, a 5.5-mile standard-gauge spur line was built down the canyon. Named the Ballard & Thompson Railroad, it was incorporated on 22 July 1911 by B. F. Bauer. Though the line was owned by the coal min-

ing company, the tracks were used by D&RGW locomotives and crews, and in 1913 it became a subsidiary of the railroad company.[8] In its tortuous route down the canyon, the bridges and trestles of the spur line had to cross the wash numerous times and were periodically damaged over the years by flash floods. This eventually helped lead to the demise of the enterprise; however, for almost forty years, the spur line was used to transport coal from the mines.

The town of Neslen is remembered among other things for its segregation of races. Though it was never large, the town had separate housing sections for its various ethnic workers—blacks, Italians, Japanese, and Greeks, among others. Three larger houses reserved for the mine superintendent, school teacher, and company doctor were in their own section, as well. Such race and class discrimination would not be tolerated today; what finally was not tolerated in that era was the company store and the irregular payment of wages. The mining company tried to force workers to buy goods there through a combination of scrip wages (redeemable only at the store) and threats of job firings if the miners shopped at Thompson, where prices were reported to be half those at Neslen. The mine workers went on strike in April and May 1915, primarily to collect up to five month's worth of back pay. Even the company doctor had quit as management dangled promises and partial pay before the disgruntled miners in attempts to keep them working. Group discontent—even including the burning of a cross—led to the relaxation of some of the company's policies. The American Fuel Company was never strong financially, and even after workers returned to the job it remained in arrears with many of them. In October 1915 it instituted a pay reduction of from 12 to 20 percent which the workers were forced to accept due to lack of other employment options in the region. As one historian expressed it: "The response of the coal miners at Neslen to the financial difficulties of the American Fuel Company, although marked by complaints and short-term walkouts, indicated a remarkable degree of tolerance and long-suffering, a response that would not be characteristic of a later day."[9]

The name of the town was changed to Sego in 1918 when the Chesterfield Coal Company bought out the American Fuel Company's interests. The new name was reportedly suggested by the

new mine superintendent's wife after she saw cans of the condensed milk with that name on the company store's shelves. Since the name is also that of the state flower, it was readily adopted for the town.[10] It was with the name of Sego that the town enjoyed its greatest prosperity; and for a period in the 1920s and 1930s Sego was one of the major towns of the county. Its population was not listed until the 1920 census; but at that date there were 198 people in the town, with an additional 84 people living nearby at Thompson.

Cisco also flourished during this period, and wild parties that lasted all night long were remembered from the times of sheep shearing. But the heyday of the town was already over. From a population of 172 in the year 1900, the town jumped to 323 people in 1910, only to precipitously decline to 95 in 1920. Such population fluctuation was typical of the towns of Grand County. Though there was usually a core group who were able to remain, the population of most towns rose or declined depending upon the condition of the particular industry upon which the town's economy was based. Beyond a basic providing of services to travelers, most of the county's settlements did not have a diversified economic base—almost all commerce revolved around one or two industries. Only with Moab was there some exception to the general pattern. Cisco in that era reflected the fortunes of the stock-raising industry. As the range deteriorated and as sheep-shearing in particular declined, the population shrunk. Agriculture in the area was marginal at best; most of the many homestead applications in the first years of the century had failed by the third decade. Nearby short-lived farming communities such as Marrs and Danish Flat furnish a microcosmic picture of the whole.

Marrs has virtually disappeared from history—its exact location is not even known. It was in the Cisco Desert near Westwater. The book *Grand Memories* records that a post office operated there between 1910 and 1913. Danish Flat was a small community of farming people—mainly Scandinavian immigrants, as the name implies—who settled near Cottonwood Wash in the area of the old narrow-gauge tracks north of Cisco. It is believed that the community was active between about 1908 to the early 1920s, the land being taken up through Desert Land Patent entries and cash-sale patents. It is believed that dry farming was tried in the area (and in a few

other areas of the county), which had higher than normal precipitation during some years early in the century. But with the return of normal, drier conditions, most dry-farming attempts throughout the county were doomed to eventual failure by the end of the 1920s. The Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, which provided for 320-acre tracts, encouraged some to try dry farming, but the choicest land had long been claimed, and although many filed homestead claims in the period, Bureau of Land Management records indicate that only a small percentage ever received patents. The decline in farming homesteads may have been related to the fall in wheat prices throughout the 1920s; but, as Grand County never proved suitable to wheat farming, this was probably a factor for only a few.

Melons were grown in Danish Flat as was also hay and some grain; horses and cattle were raised by some in the area. A public schoolhouse was built which also served as a social center.[11] It always must have been difficult to make a living from agriculture in the area; it finally became too difficult—the inhabitants of the area all left, and virtually nothing is now known of the town or its inhabitants and their activities, hopes, and dreams. The area around the Dolores River in the county also saw agricultural activity and some small hamlets in the years after the turn of the century, but all faded by the 1930s, leaving only a few scattered farms and ranches in that area.

The weather of the county is generally mild; but the land is still high desert in even the lowest areas of the county, and it is subject to freezing periods long after temperatures have generally warmed up. In the first two decades of the century, as hopes began to turn from ranching to farming as the economic base of the county, killing frosts effectively shattered such hopes. At best, farming would only be of marginal economic importance to the county. The numbers reflect this: in 1910 there were 172 farms in the county, with 62,089 acres of land cultivated; in 1920 there were only 114 farms, comprising 42,656 acres; and the numbers continued to decline.

The town of Elgin during these years seems to typify the situation. Founded in the mid-1890s as a fruit-growing settlement, the town recorded a population of sixty in the census of 1900. A post office had been established in 1898, and a flurry of tree planting (primarily peach) and irrigation activity made for a bustling town of

176 by census time ten year later. Steam-driven pumps brought water to the orchards; however, the expense to drive the pumps, coupled with a couple of successive years of killing frosts, forced many to abandon the area. The population had dropped to 82 by 1920 and some reports indicate that the town was abandoned by the mid-1920s.[12] It is unlikely that the town was ever or long completely abandoned, however; with the town of Green River just across the river, the site must always have attracted at least a handful of people.

Dewey was another of the noted towns of the county in the first two decades of the twentieth century—in great part due to its location at one of the two most favorable natural crossing points of the Grand (Colorado) River in Grand County. The move to connect the state's cities and towns through a system of roads and highways was manifested with the county's third major bridge project: a steel cable suspension bridge on the road between Moab and Cisco. After the bridge at Moab was built in 1912, Bish Taylor and other county leaders began to campaign for a bridge to replace the old ferry at Dewey. Their efforts were rewarded when construction of a 502-foot-long structure was announced in 1913. The bridge was completed by May 1916 at a cost of $25,000 and was celebrated in the 2 June issue of the *Times.* It was the second-longest suspension bridge west of the Mississippi River; however, it was only eight feet wide and had a load limit of 21,600 pounds. The bridge still stands today (limited to foot traffic and bicycle use); a nearby concrete bridge built in the 1980s serves the needs of present-day travelers and truckers. The Colorado River road was improved in 1913 when plans were being made for the bridge at Dewey. The road later became the basis for State Road 128, so designated in 1921 under provisions of the Federal Highways Act. The roadbed was periodically damaged and washed out by floods, and in the 1920s it was rerouted above the high-water mark and improved to accomodate motor-vehicle traffic. Nate Knight of Moab supervised this work. It was paved a few years later.[13]

Dewey was never a commercial center despite its location at a crossing point of the river; therefore, the bridge did not really provide much of an economic stimulus to the town. The area was settled by a few farmers and ranchers, and it was an active sheep-shearing locale in the first years of the century. A local school operated from

1902 to 1914. An accurate count of area residents seems never to have been made—at its height the town was merely the focal point for a few area families. Though one suspects that at least a few stores or businesses were established at Dewey, they have not been chronicled, and only a detailed study of the *Times* would perhaps offer information. A "Dewey Dots" section of the paper was occasionally featured in the first decade of the century, and Dewey was much in the news until the bridge was completed. It then dropped from all but occasional mention. Grazing restrictions of the 1930s forced some residents from the area, gradually leading to its status today with only a few large scattered farms and ranches.

Westwater was struggling early in the period with its indebtedness—$100,000 in bonds optimistically contracted after Theodore Henry bought property in the area in 1909 with the intention of growing alfalfa. In 1916, Henry sold his property to William Martin, who planted sugar beets on the land. Martin achieved a measure of success, reportedly shipping forty carloads of beets in the first year, as well as an additional four rail carloads of tomatoes. Martin bought up all the town's bonds, releasing local residents from the debt, before he sold the property in 1919 to farmers from Provo, Utah: Herman Tweedy and W. B. Allen. They also grew sugar beets and in turn sold the property in 1921 to Robert Davies of Grand Junction, who continued to grow sugar beets for the next few years.

A major sheep-shearing plant that could handle 2,500 sheep a day was built at Westwater by Grand Junction sheep magnate R. A. Tawney in 1919; but shearing gradually declined in the 1920s. By the late 1920s and early 1930s both sugar beet production and sheep-shearing were in sharp decline due to a number of factors, including increased competition elsewhere and fluctuating economic conditions. The only large cattle-ranching operation in the area in the 1920s was the Pace-Fuller Ranch. Westwater was solely dependent on the railroad because no improved road had ever been developed to the town. When the railroad company petitioned to close Westwater Station in 1931, the town effectively was doomed to extinction. The threat became a reality within a short time after the closing of the station on 5 May 1931.[14] The area was still used for grazing—particu-

larly by sheepmen—a use that continues to the present; but the town was soon only a memory.

The site of Valley City was taken over by Moses L. Burdick, who moved to the area from Carbon County in 1919 to set up a cattle operation. The dam was somewhat repaired and a windmill, a barn, and other structures built, including a home for his son's family in 1927. Burdick and his family lived in the large house until he retired; the remainder of his extended family left the place in 1936. Although the area attracted others and houses were built and a school even established from 1928 to 1935, there were never more than a few dozen people in the town. Drought and floods seemed to alternate (a flood in 1927 again damaged the dam) and led to further decline. The last rancher left the site in 1944. What water the remains of the reservoir still held was used by passing cowboys and ranchers for the livestock they trailed through the area.[15]

The creation of new laws and tighter regulations regarding the use of public lands were among the most important developments affecting Grand County in the years preceding the Great Depression, although the major changes brought by the Taylor Grazing Act (1934) and the creation of the Bureau of Land Management (1946) did not happen until later. The Forest Service was still the main government agency in regard to restrictions and regulations applied to county land. The General Land Office had the responsibility to administer and qualify land patents on public land outside the forest reserves. In Grand County as elsewhere in the West, land continued to be applied for under various homestead provisions, but only a small percentage of such land was patented due to its marginal ability to support a viable agricultural enterprise.

Forest Service rangers and officials were active in the La Sal Forest, primarily endeavoring to regulate grazing permits. Although their mandate was to preserve the watershed, most tried to work with area stockmen rather than take a heavy-handed approach that would put the two camps at loggerheads. There were still some livestock grazers, however, who considered *any* regulation or restriction to be a heavy-handed approach. Yet most stockmen at least acknowledged that the range needed some form of management, though somehow

the number of animals estimated by rangers to be on the rangeland continually seemed to exceed the number of permits granted.

Henry Bergh became supervisor of the La Sal Forest Reserve on 1 January 1910. He worked to improve the ditches, fences, pastures, and roads in the district. He also tried to inform the public of Forest Service activities and regulations through regular reports in the *Grand Valley Times.* Howard Balsley worked as his clerk, helping to produce a small quarterly publication in 1911–12 known as the *Cliff Dwellers Echo.* Bergh failed to enforce game laws, however; a fact which probably made him more popular in the area but was an embarassment to the Forest Service. When his successor, J. W. Humphrey, attempted to enforce the rules in 1914, his efforts were met with derision and hostility by area residents and rangers alike.[16]

Ranchers felt that many of the forest rangers were lazy, and the assignment to work in the La Sal Forest was considered the most undesirable in the district. Things began to improve when Humphrey became forest supervisor in November 1913. Although he was transferred to another assignment in June 1915, his administration was itself a watershed for the La Sal Forest, and several improvements were made in the way the forest was managed. Since cattlemen were ignoring or violating the permit system, claiming that they could not count or regulate the number of animals in the forest, Humphrey removed cattle permit regulations and charged cattlemen to honorably report the number of animals they grazed on the land. They seemed to respond honorably: collected grazing revenues actually went up after the new policy was instituted.

Logging operations became more prominent as the century progressed and roads in the forest areas were constructed and improved; but they were still not large or overly threatening to the forest reserve. It has been estimated that a half-million board feet of lumber was cut annually in the La Sal Forest in the years prior to World War I.[17] After that war, forest regulations and management kept logging within reasonable bounds, and in the northern (Grand County) portion of the forest logging has never been a prominent industry. Much of the timber cut in the county was used for local building.

Boundary adjustments were a major activity of forest supervisors until 1923, as rangers attempted to accomodate Native American

claims as well as various individual homestead and other forest land patent entries. After the passage of the Forest Homestead Act of 11 June 1906, dozens of claims were filed on La Sal Forest land. Some were legitimate, but others were fraudulent on behalf of larger livestock, timber, or mining interests. The Forest Service, like most other government agencies, was prejudiced in favor of the "little man," the homesteader, trying to realize some small share of the American Dream. Rangers tried to help these individuals against the big corporations, but they had to be constantly aware of the possibility that the "homestead" applicant was a "front" for a larger commercial interest trying to gain control of an area of the forest.[18]

In time, some forest officials came to believe that their favoritism of small forest users was detrimental to the conservation of the range, since many people had permits to graze a few animals on the forest land but did so only as a supplement to their regular means of livelihood. The result was that these "extra" animals put added pressure on the land, yet their owners had no crucial interest in the land and would view its subsequent degradation without the concern of one who was dependent upon livestock for his or her living. However, the La Sal Forest was spared much of this type of abuse, due to its relatively small number of permit holders who generally grazed large numbers of animals on the land. In Utah between 1910 and 1940, permits for forest users averaged 24 cattle and 500 sheep, while in the La Sal Forest they never dropped below 110 cattle and 1,000 sheep, and ran as high as 260 cattle and 2,650 sheep.[19]

In his detailed study of the La Sal Forest, Charles Peterson concluded that the forest broke the pattern because of its unique natural and historic situation: a generally harsh terrain that lent itself to large-scale operations and a history that featured only a few major operators. Unfortunately this did not translate to good grazing conditions in the La Sal Forest, which was severely overgrazed. Forest officials brought a few trespass charges over the years against a few stockmen who ran more than their permitted numbers—and John Riis blasted trespassers in a news account in the *Times* of 21 January 1910—but it was not a primary weapon in their defense of the forest, as evidenced by the fact that the greatest violators were never prosecuted and only their permit numbers were internally adjusted.[20]



Moab Central School Band in 1919. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

The major thrust of forest range management was the gradual reduction of animals permitted to graze on the reserve.

Initially the number of cattle permitted to graze in the forest increased from 16,000 head in 1910 to more than 28,000 in 1916. This was in part due to a policy that allowed and encouraged stockmen to exchange sheep permits for cattle. Although sheep had increased dramatically on the ranges of Grand County (and throughout southeastern Utah) after being introduced in the 1890s, stockmen began to diversify and increase their cattle holdings after the first years of the century when it was seen that the market for mutton and wool was subject to the same drastic declines that had earlier affected the cattle market. Old attitudes and hostilities resurfaced regarding sheep as the more destructive animal on the range. Forest officers shared this opinion and made a marked effort to decrease sheep on the forest lands, even if it meant a temporary increase in cattle numbers. The number of sheep permitted in the forest reserve dropped from 84,000 in 1907 to 40,000 by 1914. The general decline continued till it reached a low of about 24,000 animals in 1925. The numbers then rebounded to the 40,000 range by the early 1930s. During that same period, after peaking in 1916, the number of cattle permit-

ted on the La Sal range dropped almost steadily—to some 22,000 in 1920, to 17,000 in 1925, and to about 13,000 by 1930.[21]

Many stockmen, of course, objected to the permit reductions, but since the range remained dominated by only a few with large holdings, they seemed able to adjust to changing conditions. Livestock grazing continued to be the dominant concern and activity in the forest reserve, and though the range was somewhat stabilized—that is, if not improved, at least halted in its precipitous decline—the conflict between government regulators and forest users was only it its early rounds. The battle has continued to be fought in subsequent years.

More immediately, the transition from open to controlled range was being implemented and, however reluctantly, accepted. The government would now be a major force in the livestock economy of the region. Stockmen had diversified and now commonly ran both sheep and cattle, but the renewed prejudice against sheep led to some conflict during the period. Perhaps it is only that the Moab newspaper better reported the news in later years, but the fact remains that the paper reported more serious problems between sheepmen and cattlemen after 1908 than it had done previously. In April 1909 the *Times* reported that 14,000 sheep had been sheared at Dewey and 30,000 at Westwater; the next month, on 28 May, it reported the killing of 1,500 sheep in what was called "cattle and sheep wars." A fist fight between sheepmen and cattlemen at the county courthouse was reported in the paper on 12 March 1910 and was called the "first range war" in the county. Wolves were branded a "menace" to all stockmen in the 8 December 1911 issue of the *Times*, and for a while potential conflicts only simmered in the news.

A huge new wool warehouse at Thompson was celebrated in March 1918, and Grand County was ranked fifth in number and value of sheep raised among the counties of the state; but on 20 December 1920 the Moab paper reported that area sheepmen were on trial for violating quarantine and dipping regulations. Range troubles soon were front-page news. On 24 February 1921 Charlie Glass, the popular black foreman of the Lazy Y Cross Ranch, shot and killed a Basque sheepherder, Felix Jesui, in a dispute over grazing territory in the Westwater area. On 3 March the newpaper reported that Glass

was on trial for murder. Initially convicted, public outrage was such that Glass was retried and acquitted. The *Times* reported the acquittal on 1 December 1921; according to Lewis "Dude" Larsen, this was because no jury of the period thought it worth taking a man's life just because he had killed a sheepherder.[22]

On 21 September 1922 the paper reported an attack on another sheepherder; the next month (9 October), it reported that Grand County commissioners had called for government supervision of the public rangelands to help end disputes among stockmen. A few months before—on 18 May 1922—editor Taylor had written an editorial calling for the conservation and protection of the forests, indicating that a greater public good beyond the more immediate but limited economic interests of stockmen was beginning to be stressed.

Stockmen seemed to be willing to fight for every blade of grass in the county—something that did not bode well for the region's wildlife. In fact, there was not much wildlife to compete with domestic animals for the grazing range. According to early reports, when whites first came to the area in the mid-1870s game animals were abundant, but within ten years the numbers of deer were greatly reduced, and by 1900 there were very few left in the La Sal Mountains due to overhunting by whites and by Ute Indians in the mid-1880s.[23]

Many felt that the Forest Service had a responsibility to enforce game laws and regulations since Grand County had no game warden in the first years of the century; but the regulations were not effectively enforced during the administration of forest supervisor Henry Bergh, and only with the appointment of J. W. Humphrey in 1913 was there much possibility of improvement in the situation for wildlife in the mountains. By 1915, forest rangers were authorized to serve as game wardens. It has been estimated that there were only about 200–300 deer in the entire La Sal Forest until about 1925, when the numbers began to increase due to conservation efforts.

Commercially valuable animals such as beaver were almost hunted and trapped to extinction in the early years of the county. Predators were hunted with fervor well into the mid-twentieth century, stockmen claiming defense of their animals as sufficient justification. Wolves were hunted to local extinction by about 1920, and numbers of bear and mountain lion were greatly reduced in the area.

Bounties were offered on predators by the state as well as by private groups and individual ranchers. Only coyotes seemed able to withstand the onslaught, although their numbers too were doubtless reduced. There seemed to be no local conception of ecosystems and ideas of natural balance until after half the century had passed. If there was, it was subordinated to the desires of ranchers to appropriate the land for their own gain. Few seemed to be aware that eliminating their natural predators would enable area rodent populations to grow, causing other problems for stockmen, who then used poisons and other measures (often with state aid) to reduce the number of rodents on the rangeland.

During the first decades of the century few game fish were planted in the La Sals, but this was in great part a logistical problem that was eliminated when roads and technology for transporting fish from distant hatcheries improved. Area fishermen were offered new sport opportunities in April 1911 when channel catfish were introduced into the Grand River.

There was some trouble between whites and Native Americans in San Juan County to the south in 1915 and again in 1923. Both involved the Paiute chief Posey, who was finally killed in what became known as the Posey War of 1923, trumpeted by the press as the last major Indian war in the United States. The skirmishes could hardly be called a war. Although both incidents only had a marginal influence on residents of Grand County, they did cause some concern and served to illustrate that all was not settled in the region.

Despite the increased regulation, the livestock industry remained a dominant economic force in Grand County. Area woolgrowers applauded government policies such as protective tariffs on wool sponsored by Utah Republican senator Reed Smoot, among others. The 24 April 1930 issue of the *Times-Independent* reported that 234,000 sheep had been sheared that season in southeastern Utah. Among the Grand County numbers were 55,000 sheep sheared at Thompson; 75,000 at Cisco; 30,000 at Cottonwood; 14,000 at Dewey; and 8,000 at Moab. Although the federal government had begun to make its presence felt in the county, what had been effected was just a prelude to what was to come in the 1930s.

Life in the county was reflected in the pages of Moab's newspa-



Moab High School football team, c. 1920. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

per; and it was becoming progressively more modern: the first silent movies were shown in 1912 in the Woodmen of the World Hall by Robert and Elberta Clark.[24] Civic improvements were numerous. In September 1912, voters in the county approved a library, and three years later it finally became a reality. More than 400 books were donated on 16 January 1915 in a book drive headed by C. A. Robertson and Howard Balsley. Many of the books came from members of the Women's Literary Club, and others came from auxiliaries of the LDS church. Edna Bankhead was appointed librarian, and the library, housed in a corner of the courthouse, opened to the public on 17 February 1915. Like many other communities throughout the nation, Moab looked for assistance to finance a library building from the Carnegie philanthropic trust fund; but the town's petitions of 1915 and 1921 were turned down.[25] The community perservered on its own, however, continuing to support its library, which became the basis of the excellent county library in Moab today.

Bigger news than the library was the coming of regular electrical service to Moab. Although small generators had provided limited service before, in December 1914 Moab Light and Power Company was granted a civic franchise to use Mill Creek to generate electric power

for the community. On 12 February 1915 the paper proudly announced that Moab had electric lights. Advertisements in the paper's pages for light bulbs and other electrical appliances became ever more prominent in the years to come as more citizens took advantage of the new technology. Still, compared to today, electrical use was sparing, and the technology and service primitive. Floods or other problems regularly seemed to damage or knock out power in Moab—often for periods of several days. In 1919 there were repeated problems with floods damaging the electric plant, and a new concrete dam was built on Mill Creek that year to help ensure more reliable service. This helped the situation, but disruptions of power continued to be a recurrent feature of subsequent years.

Telephone lines between Moab and Thompson had been announced in the 14 January 1898 edition of the *Times* and were built soon after. J. N. Corbin was one of the prime movers in the enterprise and became one of the officers of the La Sal Mountain Telephone and Electric Company, organized in June 1903. Lines were gradually built and connected between Moab and Castle Valley and then south to Monticello. They were generally constructed by Corbin with the help of an assistant. When Corbin moved to Colorado in 1908, he sold his interest in the company. Some years later, in 1915, he organized and incorporated the Midland Telephone Company in Colorado to connect Fruita, Colorado, with Price, Utah. When the company's lines reached Cisco, Corbin was asked and agreed to take over operation of the La Sal Mountain Telephone Company. After a ten-year lease expired, the La Sal interests were purchased by the Midland Telephone Company, which continued to provide telephone service to county residents. Management of the company was taken over by J. W. (Jack) Corbin after the death of his father in July 1923.

Moab finally got a bank of its own—the Moab State Bank—chartered and capitalized at $25,000 in July 1915, months after it was first announced. In March 1916 it was announced that another bank would be chartered as a national bank; and on 16 December 1916 the newpaper proudly announced that the First National Bank of Moab was officially chartered with a capitalization of $50,000. The town definitely was growing. Thompson also was flourishing as seen in the pages of the paper; Westwater and Cisco received occasional men-

tion; but Elgin was dropping out of the news. The Moab paper served Green River residents in Emery County and also ran regular stories about happenings in Monticello and Blanding in San Juan County.

Moab had the only banks in southeastern Utah during the period, and, as a result, merchants in San Juan County used to ship their cash and other receipts by way of the mail carrier to the bank in Moab. Albert Beach was the driver of the mail route during the 1920s when the contract was carried by the Moab Garage Company, and it is reported that in all the years of his banking courier service no funds were ever lost. The day after bringing in the cash to the bank, he would return on his route with change and receipts for the San Juan merchants.[26]

One of the important enterprises of the era was a canning factory built in 1911 by John Peterson, a local fruit grower who, in his own words, was "appalled at the tremendous waste" associated with agricultural products. At its peak, the factory employed about twenty people and had the capacity to can 5,000 containers of produce a day before it shut down in the Depression years.[27] It was mentioned as a noteworthy feature of Moab in Noble Warrum's 1919 book *History of Utah Since Statehood.*

No longer did the *Times* feature ads on its front page—large political cartoons about national topics began to be featured on the front page in 1908; but the paper included a wide mix of national and local news, with a number of other general-interest features in the other pages. Local items predominated; in fact, the entry of the United States into World War I was a page-three item in the 20 April 1917 issue of the paper. The visit to Moab by recently elected Utah governor Simon Bamberger in October of that year, however, was preceded by front-page headlines regarding the upcoming event.[28]

Actually, at that time there were two competing newspapers in Moab—a somewhat startling fact for a town of its size even in a period of great newspaper readership and relatively inexpensive business start-up expenses. The rival to the *Grand Valley Times* was called the Moab *Independent,* and, though copies of the paper are rare (with only a few copies known to me), it seems that it was begun sometime in 1917. According to Faun Tanner, its first editor was Howard Cherry, who was succeeded three months later by Fred Strong.[29]

Though the *Independent* maintained its independence for less than three years before it was purchased by Loren Taylor, while it lasted Grand County citizens were treated to the kind of vituperative newspaper editorials that have characterized rival papers since colonial times. The *Independent* editor called the *Times* the "mouthpiece" of the First National Bank, and on 6 March 1919 wrote that "the editorial, if it should be dignified by the name, published in the Times last week" was "piffling drivel." It continued: "The disgusting bit of coarseness which appeared in the Times last week, masquerading as an editorial, aside from being absolutely irrelevant, was so trifling and so indicative of paucity of ability to meet us in an open question, that it does not in the least merit any further comment or attention."[30]

For its part, the *Times* hardly deigned to notice its rival's existence, until editor Taylor announced on 5 September 1919 that the papers were being consolidated, with a total of 1,000 subscribers. The next year, the census counted 1,808 people in the county, so one must conclude that the newspaper was successful in attracting subscribers, even if it is allowed that many subscribers lived outside Grand County's boundaries. On 6 January 1921 the *Times-Independent* reported that Grand County had the highest per capita wealth valuation in the state at $2,899.49 per person, as contrasted with the state average of $1,583.25. Unfortunately, however, the average county citizen would probably have been most happy to be at the state average—the large numbers were caused by the combination of sparse population coupled with a few large stockmen's holdings and the substantial railroad properties in the northern part of the county. Still, the news looked good in headlines.

The war did begin to have an impact on the county's residents; in September 1918 the paper listed the army draft inductees from the county: Moab and Sego youths were numerous, with a few others from Cisco, Thompson, Castleton, Westwater, and Elgin. That same month, the paper reported a fifteen-year prison sentence handed down to a draft deserter named Ramon Archuletto, who shot and killed La Sal Forest Ranger Rudolph Mellenthin on 23 August 1918 after the ranger had tracked him in the mountains. Archuletto was wounded in the fray and later confessed to killing Mellenthin; he and a companion were convicted and imprisoned.[31]

A number of Grand County men did make the ultimate sacrifice for their country in World War I. Four soldiers—James Foy, Lee March, Levi Taylor, and Lynn Taylor—from the county were killed in the conflict, and a local American Legion post created in 1922 was named Lee March Post in honor of the first local soldier to die.[32]

The end of the war was met with joy but no major local newspaper headlines. Much more prominent was the influenza epidemic that hit the country and state beginning in 1918. In November that year headlines in the *Times* announced that the epidemic was a serious concern in the county. A number of county residents died during the epidemic; at its height, a doctor was sent to Moab from Spanish Fork, and the county courthouse and schools were used as temporary hospital facilities.[33] This helped prompt concerns to establish a hospital in Moab, and plans were discussed in the 17 November 1918 edition of the *Times*. Headlines announced the opening of a hospital in Moab in October 1919.

In 1919 Dr. J. W. Williams officially retired, but he continued a somewhat informal practice while remaining active in other community affairs and promoting the natural beauty of the area. In 1920 a new doctor, I. W. Allen, arrived at Moab. He helped develop the hospital facilities in town over the years and began a long career of service to county residents. He retired in 1962; the present hospital in Moab is named in his honor.

The newspaper with its unabashed boosterism that continued under Bish Taylor's editorship tended to foster immense hopes in some things that were actually of only questionable value, creating a type of boom mentality that remained a carry-over from frontier times. In many respects, however, Grand County still was frontier, or about as close to it as one could get. The Grand River was in the process of being renamed the Colorado due to agitation from citizens of the more powerful state to the east. Grand County and Utah state leaders railed against the change but were unable to stop Congress from making it official on 25 July 1921. The Grand River was no more; it would continue to exist only in memory and historical records. Grand County would have to make its name ring true by other means.

Mining has historically been the major local bonanza-type eco-

nomic activity, and miners had never ceased exploring the nooks and crannies of the county. Since the demise of Miner's Basin activity in 1907, there were no major precious-metal strikes of note, although there was a flurry of activity on Wilson Mesa in the succeeding decade, and the paper continually talked up what was found and even more highly extolled the untold wealth that was imagined to exist. There was some limited placer gold mining along the Colorado and Dolores rivers near Westwater and Dewey until about 1930. In 1924 Billy Hayes found some gold near Mill Creek, and another small gold discovery was reported in 1929 near Floy Wash. None of the strikes did more than provide meager subsistence to a few for a short period of time. In the 1920s copper mining was tried north of Arches in the Copper Ridge area by Silas Knowles and his son Donald, but they were able only to mine small amounts of the metal.[34] Copper briefly may have been mined near Onion Creek and Fisher Valley, but nothing of great note was found within the county's boundaries.

In the 23 February 1912 issue of the *Times* a vanadium discovery near Cisco was mentioned, and two years later (24 April 1914) an article celebrated uranium; but little was known about the two elements. Vanadium was often found in conjunction with uranium in what was known as carnotite ore, and it had just been recognized as a valuable additive to steel, hardening the metal in the refining process. Increased local vanadium mining was soon halted, however, when the discovery of large deposits of the mineral in South America in 1921 made domestic mining no longer profitable.

Uranium mining had a similar but more turbulent history in the county up to 1930. When the element was first discovered in nearby Colorado in 1879, no one knew what it was; and it was not until the 1890s that it was properly identified as a unique element. Often found in distinctive yellow-colored deposits, uranium ore was often called carnotite in the early years. As mentioned, vanadium was often present in the carnotite deposits—a few of which were found in Grand County in the late nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth. Uranium deposits were found at Richardson in 1898 and were mined by the Welsh-Loftus Uranium and Rare Metals Company.[35] The carnotite ore was generally found in the Morrison Formation geologic stratum, and most of the early discoveries were

outside the county boundaries, though some in upper Pack Creek and upper Spanish Valley and in the Kane Springs area were near Moab, which was the center of regional uranium mining activity.

The discovery and isolation of radium from uranium ore by Pierre and Marie Curie in France provided the major impetus for uranium mining. Radium was considered a major medical wonder drug, touted as a cure for many ailments and included in the ingredients of medications of many sorts—most of which would appall present-day medical practitioners. The *Times* reported on 25 September 1903 that radium had been found in Grand County; and on 9 December of that year featured a headline article on the "virtues of radium"—which had "cured diseases when all else has failed." By 1912, and for the next few years, mining was profitable in the area and claims were developed.[36]

In November 1917 the paper reported that demand for uranium was increasing. On 22 August 1919 the *Times* notified miners that radium ore was wanted; and, according to Lloyd Pierson, the uranium mines in the southeastern Utah area had produced up to $2.5 million in uranium in 1920.[37] However, the market soon collapsed when a major uranium discovery was made in the Belgium Congo in 1922, making American mining prohibitively expensive.

Two other forms of mining had some financial importance in this period. One was potash mining, which was done to a limited extent in the World War I years but was more extensively developed after major discoveries of the element were made west of Thompson in late 1925. Headlines in the *Times-Independent* of 7 January 1926 proclaimed: "World's Richest Potash Bed Discovered in Grand County." Potash is used in fertilizers, and Bureau of Land Management records indicate that permits for potash and potassium exploration were issued after 1926 for areas that are now part of Arches National Park; however, major development of the county's potash resources did not occur until after World War II.

Manganese mining was also conducted with some success in the county prior to World War I. Manganese is important in steel manufacturing, helping to make the steel more malleable. In a 1978 interview, John L. Shafer recalled that as many as 200 manganese miners worked in the Ten Mile Canyon and Dubinky Wash areas east of the



Shafer No. 1 oil well at Cane Creek Anticline near Colorado River, about 1926. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

Green River.[38] The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company of Pueblo operated a large manganese mill and mining camp at Floy Station on the D&RGW railroad line. Ore was hauled by wagon to this facility and was then shipped out by rail.

Coal was by far the most important material mined in the county during the period. Extensive deposits in the Book Cliffs were discovered near the turn of the century, and a coal mine ten miles west of Crescent in Coal Canyon had been worked by 1908. Another mine—the Crescent Coal Mine—was located north of that railroad station. Other permits were issued for the Book Cliffs area in the 1920s but

information on any claims or mines is lacking. The major county coal-mining area was at Sego, north of Thompson, as has been mentioned earlier. Both the American Fuel Company and the Utah Grand Coal Company operated coal mines at Sego, and in 1928 the town was reported by the Moab newspaper (albeit mistakenly) to be the busiest coal-mining center in the state, with 150 miners able to produce 1,500 tons of coal a day.[39] Sego was thriving, with numerous stores and services. In August 1928, Utah Power and Light Company announced that it was extending its power lines to Sego, replacing the company generator that had provided electricity to the town before that time. Sego even fielded its own baseball team, which was able to defeat the Moab nine, according to the paper for 20 May 1926.

Sports—both to observe and to participate in—were becoming more important to area residents. The paper began to feature sports stories of national interest late in the first decade of the century, and rivalries began to develop between the football and baseball teams fielded by the various towns dotting the region. Loren Taylor agitated in the pages of the *Times-Independent* on 22 June 1922 for a baseball field for Moab "like other towns have." Society news was also important to some town residents: another regular feature of the paper in those days was a published guest list of prominent people staying at each of Moab's four hotels. Moab's downtown area began to boast regular sidewalks in the 1920s.

The economic prospect that seemed to garner the major headlines in the era reflected the transportation revolution of the new century: oil, to run the ever-increasing number of automobiles and other industrial engines. The first oil well in Utah had actually been drilled in Grand County near Elgin in 1891. That effort was financed by Simon Bamberger, who would later become governor of the state, but no oil was found. Some drilling was done at locations scattered throughout the county in the next twenty-five years, but with no substantial results. That didn't stop the *Times* from hoping. Back on 28 June 1901 J. N. Corbin had written that oil was the "new center of attention" for county economic activity. There was little mention of oil for the next twenty years, but it began to be talked about in the pages of the paper in 1919 and 1920. There was enough drilling activ-

ity in the Moab area that on 22 January 1920 the paper proclaimed: "Oil is King in Moab Valley."

Salt Lake City newspapers expressed their scepticism about the above claim, and for the next few weeks Taylor and other citizens of southeastern Utah expressed their resentment at the northerners' attitude. Results justified the scepticism, however. The next year, the 2 June issue of the paper proudly reported that oil had been struck west of the Grand River near the county seat, and the next week modestly proclaimed that the "world's attention" was focused on Moab. Unfortunately that attention didn't help matters—there was too much sand and water mixed with the oil and the well could not be cleaned up; drilling efforts were abandoned.

An oil strike near Crescent in June 1923 revived the newspaper's interest. On 4 September 1924 the *Times-Independent* announced that the Crescent Well could be Utah's "biggest producer," with an estimated flow of 1,000 barrels a day. The Crescent-Eagle Oil Company endeavored to develop the well, but news of it soon slipped from the front page of the paper. According to Faun Tanner, none of the early drilling activity for oil in the 1920s resulted in commercially producing oil wells.[40] Excitement was also generated by wells dug near Moab by the Big Six Oil Company—one was drilled to a depth of 2,450 feet—but none of them became productive.

A huge headline—"Big Oil Gusher Blows In"—stretched across the top of the 10 December 1925 edition of the Moab newspaper. It was a true gusher—Utah's first—some 200 to 300 feet high, and Bish Taylor's words that it was the "Greatest Oil Strike in State's History" did not seem to be hyperbole. The well—known as the Frank Shafer No. 1 well—was located on the Kane Creek anticline near present-day Potash. Headlines for the remainder of 1925 and well into the next year chronicled attempts to bring the oil flow under control. The flow soon caught fire, destroying the rigging equipment, and for three or four months the paper's pages were filled with reports and speculation about the well and its worth—estimated by some to be in the billions of dollars. There was no restraint when it came to estimates, but there also were no headlines to announce the failure of the prospect, just a slow disillusionment as a string of discouraging news items sapped Taylor's, the public's, and the oil company's enthusiasm. After

the fire was extinguished, the oil flow had to be stopped and new rigging built, taking many months. Then water continually seeped into the well from upper strata; the water flow could not be stopped despite repeated efforts. This finally resulted in the abandonment of the well though it had been drilled to a depth of some 5,000 feet. Attempts to drill nearby were heralded in the news but were unsuccessful. Interest continued to the end of the decade, but the year 1930 did not find Grand County to be an oil-producing section of the state.

Despite this failure, the oil boom activity provided a definite stimulus to Moab's and Grand County's economies. Workers were hired to construct facilities and drill test wells, and those workers needed to be fed, housed, clothed, and entertained. Even though much of the heavy construction material was shipped in from elsewhere, dollars flowed through the area's economic network. As automobiles came to be more common in the region, the whole range of ancillary industries supplying the needs of the new machines also became a major factor in the county's economy. In one form or another, the oil industry was in Grand County to stay.

Natural gas is often found in conjunction with oil, and one "success story" of the 1920s is associated with a gas field discovered some ten to fifteen miles northwest of Cisco. The Utah Oil Refining Company was drilling an oil well when it encountered the natural gas in a pocket almost 2,000 feet below the surface. The gas flow erupted on 11 October 1924 and was ignited by lightning two days later, lighting the sky for miles around. The fire was brought under control and the gas flow estimated at 150,000 cubic feet per day. The property was acquired by the Crystal Carbon Oil Company of Charleston, West Virginia, which constructed a factory and several houses for workers in the area in 1926. The resulting town was known as Crystal Carbon. The company collected the soot from burning natural gas to manufacture carbon black, used in carbon paper and as a coloring agent in the manufacture of paints, dyes, tires, and other rubber products. Production began in February 1927. Though it was reported that some of the gas was used for heating the factory and nearby buildings, that heating technology was not highly developed at the time. Thus, when competition in Texas weakened the market, Crystal Carbon soon folded, leaving almost no trace on the historical record

or on the landscape.[41] Once again, though the *Times-Independent* chronicled the plans for the operation's beginning on 24 June 1926, if it reported the demise, I was unable to find it.

Harley Dome was a small community located in the Cisco Desert near the geographical area of that name. The town (and area) was named after Harley Basker, who drilled for natural gas and oil in the area during this general period, although the exact dates of his activity are unknown. He established a gas well there and others moved into the area. Basker sold the property to a Colorado rancher, Emit Elizondo, who ran a gas station there until at least the mid-1970s and also grazed sheep on winter range in the vicinity.[42]

The Moab newspaper had begun to actively celebrate the scenic wonders of the county as early as 1910, and in 1912 many articles were printed that celebrated various features of the regional landscape. After victory was won in World War I, with the country at peace and anticipating the "roaring" of the decade of the 1920s, editor Bish Taylor in 1919 called on the state legislature to improve the area's roads. On 24 June 1920 the paper reported that, by a count of 126 to 39, Grand County voters had approved a bond indebtedness of $78,500 to improve area roads—including improving the Colorado River road and adding a gravel surface to the Thompson–Moab road.

The river road from Moab, across the Dewey Bridge, and on to Cisco was designated a state highway after it was improved in 1920, making it the official east–west route through the county, since the railroad route road between Cisco and Thompson was often rendered impassable by water on the Mancos Shale surfaces—making the muddy "gumbo" that those who have experienced it never forget. Paving of the county's roads was still in the future; at best, throughout the 1920s, the "improved" roads and highways of the county were graded dirt or gravel roads.

A chamber of commerce was organized in Moab in August 1921, and in September of that year Taylor blasted government officials in Salt Lake City for standing in the way of Grand County's progress. An editorial on 25 May 1922 lamented that, "as usual," Grand County was forgotten when it came time to appropriate funds. (In this case, health-care funds were the focus, but usually it was roads or education that the county leaders and residents felt were neglected.)

The Moab Garage Company, which had established the only really successful river transport service, was also a leader in land freighting. The company was founded in 1917 and soon established branch offices in Monticello, Thompson, and Green River, in addition to expanded freight service that reached from Price, Utah, to Grand Junction, Colorado, and south into San Juan County. Its principals included brothers Clarence, Dennis, and Virgil Baldwin, in addition to Robert C. Clark, Ralph J. Fletcher, Don Taylor, and Cecil S. Thompson in later years.[43] The company periodically held the mail contract for the area and also provided passenger transportation.

On the whole, things were progressing slowly but steadily in the area of transportation when the new decade of the 1930s began with the news on 27 March 1930 that U.S. Highway 6/50 was going to be built in Grand County near the railroad line across the county. This was a major boost to the county, opening a major link to the east, improving access to the entire region and linking the Grand County with the developing interstate highway system. The county had just been awarded a national monument of its own—Arches National Monument—established on some 5,000 acres northwest of Moab in April 1929, just a few months before the stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression.

However, such depressing things were far from people's minds even a week before the collapse of the stock market on Black Thursday, 24 October 1929. Not that there were not other things to be depressed about. Though it most likely mainly only depressed those who were oppressed, the common racism evident during that time has since served as material for sober reflection. With the exception of Native Americans, most non-whites who resided in the county worked at the coal mines of Sego or for the railroad or at railroad station towns and camps. Though there were few non-whites in the county, segregation was common, and even whites of recognizable ethnic background, such as some Greeks, Italians, and Scandinavians, often were segregated in regard to their living quarters. A few, especially of Hispanic or Basque ancestry, worked as cowboys and sheepherders. Many perhaps were appreciated and liked by whites; it is known that Charlie Glass, the black ranch foreman, was highly thought of—a fact which probably led to his acquittal for

killing a Basque sheepherder. But most non-whites experienced both subtle and blatant forms of discrimination in the county akin to that experienced by their fellows throughout the country.

Another black with connections to the area was not as fortunate as Charlie Glass. Robert Marshall, a victim of one of Utah's few known lynchings, was killed by an angry mob in Price (Carbon County) in 1925 after he had shot a law-enforcement officer there. In its edition of 18 June, the *Times-Independent* reported that Marshall had earlier worked at Sego and was known there for an altercation in which he had been involved. Racism was evident in an editorial in the paper on 12 April 1928, in which Bish Taylor talked about the "threat" to American culture posed by Mexican immigrants. However, on the whole, race problems were not prominent—perhaps mainly because those few non-whites who lived in the county kept mainly to themselves and did not bring unwanted attention upon themselves or their activities.

Illegal activity was not uncommon when it came to breaking the law of the land known as Prohibition—the 18th Amendment of the Constitution, prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. The law went into effect early in 1919, when the thrity-sixth state ratified it. Subsequent laws enacted by Congress, such as the Volstead Act, further defined just what activities and beverages were illegal while prescribing punishments for the violation of the laws. In Grand County, the *Times-Independent* would occasionally mention liquor raids on stills or drinking parlors (as, for example, on 28 April 1926), but editor Taylor was not a crusader against hard liquor, it appears, and most likely neither were most local law enforcement officers. This is not to say that there were not efforts to enforce the laws; rather, in a situation somewhat analagous to contemporary America's war on illegal drug use, law-enforcement officers concentrated their attention on suppliers more than on private users, interspersing this activity with occasional high-profile raids of illegal public drinking establishments. In February 1923 three different drinking parlors at Sego were raided by officers, with other raids following at Thompson and Moab. On 17 May of that year, the *Times-Independent* reported that 400 gallons of mash for whiskey intended for Utah were seized at Grand Junction, Colorado. In the 2 December

1926 paper it was reported that two stills and other brewing apparatus had been found near the river ten miles from Cisco but that surveillance had failed to detect the owners of the equipment.

Utahns did have some legal access to alcoholic beverages if they could persuade a doctor to prescribe the potables for medicinal purposes; but regulations endeavored to keep this recourse from being greatly abused. The *Times* informed its readers on 10 January 1919 that although whiskey could be prescribed for influenza, among other things, the prescription maximum was for one-half pint every ten days. In April 1922 the paper reported that doctors were prohibited from issuing more than one hundred such prescriptions every three months.[44] How much Grand County residents availed themselves of legal and illegal means to drink alcohol is unknown, but it seems reasonable to assume that as the moral fervor receded after the first few years of trying the great social experiment and the difficulties of enforcing the laws were recognized, county residents began to shed their compunctions about violating these laws. When Utah joined the majority of other states in repealing the amendment in 1933, the majority of Moab citizens voted to repeal Prohibition.[45]

Other criminal and anti-social behavior also could be found during the period. Vandalism, theft, and shoplifting were common problems, but more violent crimes periodically were committed. Murders occasionally garnered headlines, such as on 8 October 1909 when Joe Harris of Westwater was murdered. Area residents were shocked to read on 24 November 1911 that county commissioner John E. Brown had shot and killed his daughter and her husband. The killing of ranger Rudolph Mellenthin and the killing by Charlie Glass received headlines the years they occurred, but the community was especially stunned in 1929 when Deputy (and former sheriff) R. D. Westwood was shot and killed on 5 September in a break-out of two convicts from the Grand County jail. The two had somehow smuggled a gun into their cell and shot Westwood when he was alone with them. The newspaper reported the story on 12 September and devoted a great amount of space afterward to the recapture, trial, and conviction of the two convicts, R. H. Elliot and Robert Pfoutz.[46]

The armed robbery of the First National Bank of Moab was less traumatic (except perhaps to the bank's bookkeeper, who was gagged

and bound by the three criminals who committed the deed), but it provided some excitement and concern to readers of the newspaper for 3 May 1923. After looting the bank's safe of $6,900, the trio fled but were later apprehended. This was not the only bank trouble during the period: in January 1921 there were banking scares at the Green River and the two Moab banks, and on 28 April 1921 the *Times-Independent* reported that the Moab State Bank was going into liquidation. Depositors were assured that they would receive "100 cents on the dollar" for their deposits; but this left the Moab First National Bank as the only bank in the county.

Membership of the LDS church in Moab continued to grow with the community, and a new red brick chapel was constructed and then dedicated on 5 December 1926. Although Mormonism continued to be the predominant faith, local Mormons on the whole were not inclined to moral crusades, preferring to more quietly practice their faith without undue fanfare. Harmony and cooperation generally existed between them and the Baptists, who remained the other major organized religious group in Moab. The First Baptist church was growing to the point that its members constructed a new church building, which was dedicated on 24 February 1918.

Agricultural produce was already in decline as a major economic force in the county during this period—only a few years after Moab fruit had helped bring the area some national renown. One exception was corn: during the second decade of the new century Grand County was a statewide leader in corn production, and Faun Tanner reported that local farmer J. P. Larsen raised the largest number of bushels per acre in the state in 1913 and in 1915 won a bronze medal at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in recognition of his top production for Utah of 156 bushels per acre. More awards for local farmers were garnered in other expositions, including four out of five possible awards at the 1925 International Hay and Grain Show in Chicago.[47] Most of the corn was consumed locally.

In the pages of his newspaper Loren Taylor encouraged all forms of farming and agricultural production—for example, on 28 April 1926 he wrote that Moab's vineyards were producing well—but there was only so much that he could do, certainly not enough to make the region a top producer of agricultural produce. Many different agri-

cultural enterprises were attempted—some with more success than others—to serve the needs of county residents and provide a growth industry for export outside the county, if possible. In the 1920s poultry raising—particularly turkeys—became a moderately successful enterprise. A number of county residents raised the large birds, shipping some outside the county. Although the *Times-Independent* commented on the promise of the industry on 14 December 1927, the Depression helped clip its wings locally and it never became the success in Grand County that it did in some other Utah counties.

There had been 129 farms in the county—the second-lowest total among the state's counties—according to the 1925 agricultural census figures, and the 1.3 percent of county land devoted to agriculture (some 30,560 acres) was the lowest percentage in the state. This was down from 42,656 acres in 1920 and 62,089 acres of farmland in 1910, when there were 172 farms in the county. The farms' assessed value of $626,700 in 1925 was second lowest in the state, and was only about half of what it was in 1920, which, in turn, at $1,284,045, was almost what it had been in 1910. Livestock value in 1925 was about twelfth in the state; more specifically, Grand County's sheep ranked fifth. Livestock was about $1.2 million in value—down slightly from what it was in 1919. Fruit production was moderate—apples and peaches leading the way. Only 603 tons of sugar beets were produced from fewer than 100 acres under cultivation.[48]

The average valuation of Grand County's property remained at about $5 million a year throughout the decade of the 1920s—a decade in which even the population only varied by about 0.3 percent between the 1920 and 1930 figures. The railroad assets made the country seem wealthy, but in actual fact it was a rather poor, rural, primarily ranching county which also featured some mining activity. It certainly was not prime farming country. Figures from 1924 to 1929 reveal that no wheat was grown in the county (making it the only county in Utah that didn't grow any wheat); there also was no rye grown; and the average production of barley was 1,933 bushels, and of oats 3,597 bushels—both figures also the lowest in the state. So too with potato production. In fact, with the exception of corn and some fruits, Grand County was at the bottom of most agricultural production categories—and these figures were reflective of pro-

duction figures both before and after the period in question. Even with corn, only slightly more than 1,000 acres were planted, and although the average yield of 47.4 bushels per acre was the highest in the state and the total of almost 50,000 bushels was a state high, the totals were still meager. In 1930 the county's farmland had shrunk to 33,000 acres out of some 2,363,000 acres of county land.[49]

Manufacturing also was not a strong sector of the economy in Grand County. The population was small and the labor base for most industries was untrained. Only near the railroad tracks was it feasible to establish any heavy industrial enterprise, and those desert areas were not generally conducive in other respects for such enterprises. Nor were raw materials for such endeavors especially abundant. The talk of such enterprises as steel mills had never progressed past the planning or talking stages. The few industrial plants such as the Crystal Carbon lamp black factory that actually were established in the county almost all faded within a few years in the face of outside competition or national economic trends. Manufacturing statistics in 1919 from the U.S. Census Bureau, for example, do not even list individual numbers for Grand County—it was lumped in the "All other counties" category with Daggett, Kane, and Uintah counties.[50]

On a brighter note, the "clean-up" campaigns for Moab had become basically an annual event, prodded on by editor L. L. Taylor of the *Times-Independent*. In 1922, the largest high-school graduating class in county history—fifteen students—was congratulated, and later that year, on 13 and 14 October, the first annual Grand County Fair was held at Moab. Taylor was a major voice in the community: on 18 May 1922 he wrote an editorial calling for better conservation and protection of the region's forests; on 17 July 1924 he counseled his readers to buy Moab goods to keep the local economy from becoming stagnant. He applauded plans to make the Arches area a national monument, and he promoted a better water and sewer system for Moab. The old system, which had been provided years before by the Moab Irrigation Company in conjunction with the Wilson Mesa Mining Company, was now outdated and overworked. Taylor also led the drive to convince taxpayers to vote to convert the local hospital to a county hospital—an effort that was accomplished and then reported on in the 5 February 1925 edition of the newspaper.



Moab Main Street about 1917. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

Taylor was a dynamic cheerleader for the community, doing all in his power to tout the area's resources and potential. Prospects and plans received headlines; failures were generally relegated to back-page news snippets. He chided and agitated for better electrical service and other community developments. When the first chamber of commerce collapsed, he renewed his call for an active chamber and reported on 20 June 1929 that Moab was to get a new chamber of commerce. Earlier that year on 25 February, in announcing the creation of Arches National Monument, he wrote that "the creation of the new national monument will prove a big boost in exploiting the scenic resources of southeastern Utah."

Photographs of the period show that Moab was a quiet town with wide streets shaded by large cottonwood trees—a relatively attractive town in the midst of a gorgeous red rock landscape. Prospects appeared bright, and though unseen storm clouds were just over the horizon, after they were to pass, the sun would shine again. Also, though it is doubtful that Bish Taylor thought about it, the touting of the region's scenic wonders was later to receive a boost from a new phenomenon he celebrated on 1 August 1929: "talkies"—motion pictures with sound—had come to Moab. Advertisements for the new form of entertainment began to enliven the pages of the *Times-*



Horse-drawn freight wagon between Thompson and Moab in 1920. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

Independent, and curious (and sophisticated) Moabites and other Grand County residents flocked to the Ides Theatre at the old Woodmen of the World Hall to see the new marvels.

ENDNOTES

1. Noble Warrum, *History of Utah Since Statehood* 1:494.

2. Jean Akens, "Roads, Bridges and Freighting, " *Canyon Legacy* 8:17.

3. Sam Taylor, "In 1912, the first bridge . . . ," article in Moab *Times-Independent,* 28 April 1994.

4. Akens, "Roads, Bridges, and Freighting," p. 18.

5. B. W. Allred, *The Life of a Horse and Buggy Stage Line Operator* (Washington, D.C.: The Westerners, 1972).

6. See Akens, "Roads, Bridges, and Freighting," pp. 14–21, for more information on the early transportation industry in Grand County.

7. Akens, "Roads, Bridges, and Freighting," pp. 15–16.

8. John Akens, "Utah Rails," *Canyon Legacy* 8:10.

9. Allan Kent Powell, *The Next Time We Strike: Labor in Utah's Coal Fields, 1900–1933* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1985), p. 104.

10. Jean Akens, "Thompson, Sego and Westwater," *Canyon Legacy* 8:13.

11. *Grand Memories,* pp. 116 and 150.

12. Ibid., pp. 157–58; see also Stephen L. Carr, *The Historical Guide to Utah Ghost Towns.*

13. See Keith Montgomery, "Grand River Toll Road," *Canyon Legacy* 8: 26–27.

14. Michael D. Milligan, "Westwater," *Canyon Legacy* 12:27.

15. See Jacki Montgomery and Jean Akens, "Valley City," in *Canyon Legacy* 12: 19–22.

16. Charles Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* pp. 138–39.

17. Lloyd M. Pierson, *Cultural Resource Summary of the . . . Moab District 1980,* p. 95.

18. See Charles Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* chap. 8, for a more detailed study and analysis of the Forest Service.

19. Ibid., pp. 170–73.

20. Ibid., p. 183.

21. Ibid., pp. 186–88.

22. In Jean Akens, "Cowboyin': The Way It Was: Remembrances of Lewis H. 'Dude' Larsen," *Canyon Legacy* 11:8.

23. See Peterson, *Look to the Mountains,* pp. 193–205.

24. *Grand Memories,* p. 104.

25. Ibid., pp. 168–69.

26. Akens, "Roads, Bridges, and Freighting," p. 21.

27. *Grand Memories,* p. 106.

28. In the 1916 gubernatorial election, 291 Grand County voters had favored the Jewish-German immigrant Bamberger over his Republican opponent, Nephi Morris, who received 233 county votes. County voters were generally divided evenly between Democrats and Republicans during the period, neither party consistently dominating at the ballot box. In 1916, the Socialist party candidate for governor of Utah polled 19 votes in the county, indicating a more radical presence in the county, as well.

29. Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 242. Tanner wrote that the *Independent* lasted about 1.5 years, but if its numbering system was normal, the fact that the 6 March 1919, issue was volume 2, number 45 would place volume 1, number 1 near the beginning of May 1917.

30. Two copies of the *Independent* can be found in the Marriott Library, University of Utah, which also has an almost complete collection of the *Grand Valley Times* and subsequent *Times-Independent.*

31. Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 199.

32. See *Grand Memories,* pp. 164–65, which also lists county veterans of earlier wars, including the Mexican War, the Black Hawk War, and the Spanish-American War.

33. *Grand Memories,* p. 113.

34. See "A Family Affair," *Canyon Legacy* 10:19.

35. See Gary Shumway, "The Development of the Uranium Industry in San Juan County, Utah," M.A. thesis, BYU, for information on the early history of southeastern Utah's uranium mining activity.

36. Howard Balsley, "Early Days of Uranium," *Canyon Legacy* 10:2–7.

37. Pierson, *Cultural Resource Summary,* p. 93.

38. John L. Shafer, interview by Steven A. Wing and David C. Minor at Moab, Utah, in June 1978. Transcript on file at Bureau of Land Management, Moab District Office.

39. *Moab Times-Independent,* 31 May 1928.

40. Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 224.

41. The exact location of the plant is even unknown at the present time. See *Grand Memories,* p. 151, for a bit of information about the town.

42. *Grand Memories,* p. 150.

43. Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 240.

44. See Jody Shumway Bailey and Bob McPherson, "Practically Free From the Taint of the Bootlegger: A Closer Look at Prohibition in Southeastern Utah," in *Blue Mountain Shadows* II, 1: 74–82.

45. See *Times-Independent,* 9 November 1933.

46. See B. J. Eardley, "The Last Day: The Murder of Dick Westwood," in *Canyon Legacy* 15:6–8. To Moab's great shock and embarassment, the two men actually escaped again from the jail in November while being held for trial for the murder. They were again recaptured after thirty-six hours of freedom, and were subsequently closely guarded until they were convicted and sent to the Utah State Penitentiary.

47. Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 193.

48. See tables published in various years (1910, 1920, 1925) of the *Census of Agriculture,* U.S. Government Bureau of the Census. See also *Utah Resources and Activities* (Salt Lake City: Department of Public Instruction, 1933), p. 242.

49. *Utah Resources and Activities,* pp. 247, 279, and 290; and see also the 1925 Census of Agriculture.

50. Department of Commerce, *Manufactures, 1919* (Bureau of the Census), p. 1487.

11

The Great Depression and World War II Years: 1930–1945

A reader of back issues of the *Times-Independent* covering the period of the 1930s would not readily be aware that the country and Grand County were suffering the most severe economic depression in the nation's history. It was a situation that caused heartache, deprivation, and misery to many Americans and prompted government to take a new approach to governing, taking an active part in generating work for the millions of unemployed Americans, estimated nationwide to be up to 25 percent of the nation's workforce. But the Moab newspaper did not concentrate on all the gloom; it was filled with human-interest features and prominently featured national sporting events and an enlarged comics section never seen before (or since). The Ides Theatre gained its own permanent building in the 1930s, and movies were prominently advertised in the paper. If there was good news to report, Loren Taylor endeavored to feature it in the paper. Although there was not a great deal of important good news, there were always stories of human interest and local items of cheer. Also, it should be emphasized that the Great Depression—despite the precipitous crash of the stock market in October 1929—was a gradually developing and deepening

phenomenon in its first years; it did not spring up full grown overnight, nor did it affect all sections of the nation with equal severity.

In the first few months of the new decade of the 1930s, many viewed the deepening economic slump as just another of the periodic economic slowdowns that have seemed to go hand-in-hand with a free-enterprise economic system since the start of the American republic. Although Republican president Herbert Hoover began to take hitherto unprecedented steps to involve the federal government in recovery efforts, he and many other leading politicians—particularly of the Republican party—maintained that the Depression was only temporary, merely an adjustment within the system.

The collapse of the stock market was not a front-page item in the *Times-Independent.* In fact, the first major reference to it was some two months later on 2 January 1930 when editor Bish Taylor called for a strong national industrial base to combat weak stock market prices. Two things are noteworthy here: first, it appears that the stock market decline did not overly concern or yet affect many residents of southeastern Utah; and, second, it seems that the *Times-Independent* was not the major source of national news for area residents. It is likely that Grand County readers had good access to larger metropolitan newspapers, such as Salt Lake City's *Tribune* and *Deseret News,* as well as to national magazines and the new, rapidly growing medium of radio broadcasts which supplemented the national news presented in the local newspaper. This focus on local rather than national events continued in the decades that followed.

In November and December 1929 the lead articles in the Moab paper were concerned with the murder trial and escapes of the killers of popular deputy sheriff Richard Westwood. The exploits of the Moab "Red Devils" high school football team also regularly occupied front-page space. The district court calendar was filled with range trespass cases, according to the 15 August 1929 edition of the *Times-Independent,* and, as mentioned earlier, the spring of 1930 saw more than 234,000 sheep sheared in southeastern Utah.

The year 1930 seemed to present little outward change in the life of the county as events were reported in the newspaper. Economic hopes for the area seemed to be tied to the oil industry, but the livestock industry remained the major economic base, with a large assist

from the railroad. On 15 May 1930 the *Times-Independent* published preliminary census data, and the attentive reader could find there material of concern. The figures revealed that for the first time, Grand County had actually lost population from what it was listed as having ten years before: 1,713 residents, down from slightly more than 1,800 in 1920. Although these preliminary figures were later revised and official tallies put the county's population at 1,813, a gain of five people from the previous decade's number, both sets of figures reveal that the hitherto unabated growth of the county had stopped. The *Times-Independent* figures did show Moab with 1,058 people—a substantial gain—but these figures were drastically reduced in the official count down to 863, which was a population increase of only seven people from the number in 1920.

Though the preliminary data printed by the newspaper had some unusual discrepancies with the official figures published later—for example, Cisco was said to have 105 rather than the official count of 193 people—with the exception of Cisco and Moab most elements of the two sets of figures were in basic agreement: Thompson was holding steady at about 90 people; Elgin had 128; Sego slightly more than 200. Westwater was in decline with only 44 residents; and Castleton had virtually disappeared by 1930—the count showed only six residents in the town that thirty years before had vied with Moab to be county seat. It appeared that in-migration to the county had essentially ceased and that, considering the existing resources and technologies, the county was supporting close to its natural limit of inhabitants. The era of great development schemes was in the past, and though new mineral discoveries might bring on boom conditions, without such a spur to growth, Grand County had pretty much found its natural level of activity.

Aside from the hoped-for oil gusher or other major economic stimulus, there was one thing that farsighted boosters began to promote as a growth industry—tourism. The area's scenic attractions were unparalleled, and in the decades just past they had begun to be more appreciated by Grand County residents and others in the world outside the county's boundaries. The economic potential of the fact that the Windows area northwest of Moab had just been officially designated Arches National Monument was not lost on community leaders, and moves were already being made both to attract visitors

to the area and to increase the size of the monument. Moab's newly formed Lion's Club was instrumental in both efforts. The club was organized in July 1930 and aggressively campaigned to bring increased tourism to the region while it lobbied for an enlargement of the new attraction and better access to the area.

The *Times-Independent* was already a force in those efforts. The newspaper had periodically mentioned the scenic attractions of the region in years past, but there is the suspicion that sometimes these articles also served as convenient "filler" material for the overworked editor. Many in the area were inclined to ignore its natural beauty and unusual scenic wonders in their concern to wrest a livelihood from the land. It is reported that when local rancher Marvin Turnbow led Michigan geologist Lawrence Gould to the Windows area of Arches, his response to Gould's enthusiasm was, "I didn't know there was anything unusual about it."[1] In a sense, the rancher was right: in a region of surpassing wonder, that area was not too unusual; yet, as José Knighton has exclaimed, "Only a stunted soul could be so dulled to glory." Loren Taylor had a greater appreciation of some of the area's natural wonders. On 9 March 1917, long before it was given its current name, Delicate Arch was featured on the front page of the local newspaper, where it was called a "gigantic window" and headlined as a "Scenic Wonder Near Moab."

The prime mover in the establishment of Arches as a national preserve was Alexander Ringhoffer, an immigrant who was born in Hungary in 1869. He came to the United States as a young man and moved to southeastern Utah about the year 1917 to try his luck at mining and prospecting. He traveled throughout the region and was especially impressed by the beauty of the Klondike Bluffs area of what is now Arches National Park when he first saw it in late 1922. He called the area Devil's Garden and was so enthusiastic about it that he was able to convince D&RGW railroad officials to look the area over. Tourism was big business to the nation's railroad companies, and they were on the lookout for areas near their routes that they could promote in the hope of attracting tourists to travel to the locale. One railroad officer, Frank Wadleigh, was also impressed—so much so that he wrote to National Park Service (NPS) director Stephen Mather to suggest that it be made a national monument.[2]

A survey was made for the Park Service from 12 to 14 July 1924; but the surveyor was misdirected by Heber Christensen of Moab, and so the survey was made of what is now known as the Windows area instead of the Klondike Bluffs area. Wadleigh saw the report in the *Times-Independent* of 17 July 1924 and noticed the discrepancy. He wrote Mather, and a new survey was conducted in June 1925.

Doctor J. W. Williams had often traveled on horseback through the Arches country to avoid difficult Hell Canyon on his rounds north of Moab, and he came to love the area passionately. After his retirement in 1919, he more actively began to promote the region. Dr. Lawrence Gould, a geologist from the University of Michigan, came to southeastern Utah in 1921 to study the La Sal Mountains. He was introduced by Williams to the Arches area and returned in 1924. That winter he wrote to Utah senator Reed Smoot urging that the Windows area be made a national monument. Smoot, in turn, began to pressure Stephen Mather of the Park Service, which had already conducted its preliminary investigation.[3]

Although in 1924 the Moab newspaper had proclaimed upon the strength of the survey that the area was to become a national monument, and despite the fact that the creation of the monument had the support of NPS officials, D&RGW officials, Smoot, Gould, and others, the political climate in Washington for such a move was not favorable. The Secretary of the Interior, Herbert Work, had expressed opposition to more national monuments and was even considering down-sizing or eliminating some that were already in existence. Park Service officials countered by going to the *New York Times Magazine,* trying to drum up public support, which began to materialize when a feature article on Arches was published on 9 May 1926.

When Herbert Hoover was elected president in 1928, the new Secretary of the Interior, Ray L. Wilbur, was favorably disposed toward Arches. President Hoover signed an executive order on 12 April 1929 creating Arches National Monument. The new monument consisted of two separate sections—the Windows and Devils Garden—yet comprised only 4,520 acres. Ironically, Klondike Bluffs, which had so inspired Ringhoffer, was not included in the monument at the time of its creation. The Devil's Garden name he used for the Klondike Bluffs area was applied to the area so named in the present park. The name



Grandchildren of John Wolfe at his cabin in present-day Arches National Park in 1910. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

for the monument was given by Frank Pinkley, superintendent of the Southwestern National Monuments division. Pinkley was appointed first superintendent of the monument, serving until his death in 1940.

An official expedition was sent to Arches in 1933–34 to prepare a map of the area from a more accurate survey and to also conduct an archaeological investigation of the new monument. The expedition's leader was Frank Beckwith, a newspaper editor from Delta, Utah. Beckwith was a good choice for the task. His group of about fifteen trained scientists and assistants completed their work by the end of March 1934 at a cost of less than $10,000. They named many of the landforms—including Landscape Arch and Delicate Arch (which previously had had a variety of names, including the Schoolmarm's Bloomers and the Chaps)—and discovered dinosaur bones near Wolfe Ranch (a homestead established in 1898 by Civil War veteran John Wesley Wolfe and his son Fred which was sold by the Wolfe family in 1910). Beckwith published an official report and also wrote several articles publicizing the area. Maps and a geologic survey were also published as a result of the expedition. J. Marvin Turnbow, who

bought the 150-acre Wolfe Ranch (not then a part of the national monument), was a member of the expedition and was named first custodian of the monument.

Though the monument had been created, much to the delight of it supporters, there was opposition to the general movement to withdraw lands from potential private entry and use. Grand County had its share of such opponents who resented the creation of the monument and who, in the years that followed, opposed attempts to enlarge it and to reclassify it as a national park (for example, such an attempt was reported in the 29 May 1934 issue of the *Times-Independent*). With the support provided by Taylor and his newspaper, boosters of an enlarged monument had a powerful ally.

Much of Arches National Park is located on a partially collapsed salt anticline called Salt Valley, approximately two miles wide and eighteen miles long. Though it was only a few miles from Moab, access to the monument in its first years was difficult and was generally from the northwest, crossing Courthouse Wash, or from the north along Salt Valley or Courthouse Wash. Improving roads to and within the monument was one of the primary goals of Taylor and other park boosters who reasoned that the attraction needed to be easily accessible to large numbers of tourists. In May 1931 a gravel road was completed with federal assistance between Moab and Grand Junction, Colorado. Highway 6/50 was built in 1934, providing a reliable east-west route near the railroad line in the northern part of the county. The Moab–Thompson road, present-day federal Highway 191 (formerly Highway 160), was first paved in the late 1930s, greatly facilitating access to the monument and to Moab itself.

The first recorded automobile trip to the new monument was by Harry Goulding, who drove to the Windows area on 15 June 1936. Others followed, but many were intimidated by the difficulty. In September 1937 Harry Reed, the monument's custodian, reported a decline in visitation, which he attributed to the poor quality of the area roads. His successor, Henry G. Schmidt, endeavored to repair roads in the monument, but floods regularly caused damage, particularly where the entrance road from the west crossed Courthouse Wash.[4] The main entrance route to the monument, used until 1958,

left Highway 191 along Willow Springs Road, traveled to Balanced Rock, and then continued into the Windows area.

Plans periodically were made to improve access to the area; however, with the country in the midst of the Depression, money was tight. During the 1930s the government focused its attention on more limited projects within the monument. Still, the decade would have to be considered a most successful one by supporters of the monument, who were rewarded on 25 November 1938 for their efforts to promote the area. On that day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt enlarged the monument from 4,520 acres to 33,680 acres—a tremendous gain that included Courthouse Towers and Delicate Arch, which were made part of Beckwith's survey at the urging of J. W. Williams. The enlargement received surprisingly little negative commentary in the local paper, as most area residents came to favor the idea after the *Times-Independent* publicized the area with a series of articles by Beckwith and others. Advocates of unbridled free enterprise and no government interference were in a definite minority at the time in the county as in the country. The president wrote Dr. Williams on 15 December 1938 thanking him for his support and ardent campaigning on behalf of the enlarged monument.[1]

Although the policies of Roosevelt had brought him tremendous popularity by 1938, his election in 1932 and the start of his administration were surrounded by many question marks. As indicated, in 1930 the developing Depression was by no means viewed universally as of momentous impact, and in the election that year Grand County voters were essentially evenly split between Democrats and Republicans. However, conditions continued to deteriorate, and their impact was becoming increasingly felt in Grand County. On 30 March 1931 an advertisement placed by the Cooper-Martin general mercantile store informed readers that from that point on only cash would be accepted—the management felt that too much credit had been extended to customers. A month later—on 28 May—the *Times-Independent* informed its readers that county property valuation had fallen by a million dollars. Though the paper's general features and news stories did not stress the darkening times or mood, the year 1931 was not likely a favorite of many.

One notable event that year was a Supreme Court decision in a

case between the U.S. government and the state of Utah that ruled that the Colorado River was a navigable stream. Though area promoters years before had tried and failed to get government aid in dredging the area waterways to promote their tourist riverboat enterprises by making similar claims, this decision had a greater impact, one that continues to be felt. It basically gave Utah control of the river's banks and bed within the state and the right to develop them, and it was a decision that has been tremendously important to Utah and Grand County. The decision was favorably received by most county residents at the time as well as subsequently.

In 1932 even nature got into the act: in August, floods ripped through Grand County.[6] That November a majority of citizens across the nation cast their votes for Franklin Roosevelt; Grand County was no exception to the trend—the normal even division between Republicans and Democrats was gone, the latter party had double the Republican's count. All but one local office went to the Democrats, and residents echoed the statewide trend which by large majorities sent Democrats to the governorship, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the United States Senate in the heaviest county vote in history.[7] The American people were promised a "new deal" by the new president, who promised an unprecedented outlay of federal monies and programs to help put the nation's unemployed millions back to work and restore public confidence; but even though Congress began to enact such legislation almost immediately, it was some time before it began to have much local impact.

In the meantime, Grand County citizens carried on with their business as best they could. Often it was not enough. On 12 January 1933 the *Times-Independent* reported that 75 percent of the county's farms were delinquent on their taxes. That same issue carried an article about the Green River Taxpayer's Protective League, which sought to connect the town to Grand County to better consolidate necessary civic services. In March, local stockmen actually petitioned for the establishment of a federally administered grazing district to protect the winter ranges in the county, and April brought the welcome news that the federal government was going to establish water, forest, and range projects in Grand County through the newly created Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

On 25 May 1933 the Moab newspaper with large headlines informed its readers that a CCC camp was going to be established at Warner Lake in the La Sal Mountains. The article also reported that thirty local men were going to be hired for the project as LEMs (local experienced men) to work alongside of and help supervise and instruct the more than one hundered young men being sent to the camp from areas all around the country. The camp, designated Camp F-20, operated from April to October 1933, and its primary objective was to construct a road along Brumley Ridge toward Geyser Pass. That August a huge party celebrating the camp was held, and hundreds of local residents attended the festivities. The camp was transferred to Moab (Camp PE-214) in October and worked the next season on erosion projects on Mill Creek.

A hopeful attitude combined with a community awareness of pressing problems, for in October 1933 the voters of Moab by a count of 149 to 11 approved a bond to improve the water and sewer systems. The willingness of the citizens to commit to increased debt at such a time is commendable, but it is also more easily understood when it is seen as a necessary step to convince the federal government that such repairs were needed, thus helping gain federal assistance for the project. The county was successful in this regard: on 4 January 1934 the *Times-Independent* reported that the Moab water/sewer project had been approved for aid in Washington, D.C.

That success, coupled with the economic boost that the transferred CCC camp was providing the county, encouraged local citizens to look for more assistance: in March 1934 county residents sought federal aid to open the major rivers of the area to navigation for tourist enterprises. The federal government was not as receptive in this matter—no funds were forthcoming—and the effort wasn't helped by Mother Nature: that July the Colorado River was at its lowest rate of flow in history through Grand County—at barely more than 3,000 cubic feet per second. The county was more successful with the CCC—according to the Moab paper of 18 October 1934, a winter camp of more than 200 men from Idaho was to be transferred to Moab due to the area's warm weather. Camp 953 worked throughout the six-month period on reclamation and flood-control work, particularly on Mill Creek. Another development in 1934 was the for-



Grand County Courthouse, July 1937. (Utah State Historical Society)

mation of the Moab chapter of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. The group has provided valuable services through the years, collecting and publishing county histories and helping preserve historical artifacts. Their book *Grand Memories* is especially valuable.

Grand County had been successful in obtaining a Works Progress Administration (WPA) grant to help finance the construction of a new school building. As early as 25 May 1933 the *Times-Independent* linked the school and water/sewer system as planned goals, and both were realized. The new school building—used for both Moab elementary and Grand County high schools—cost more than $135,000 and was dedicated on 21 December 1934.[8] A month later, the grazing district petitioned for by area stockmen was created: on 24 January 1935 the paper reported that Grazing District #6, consisting of San Juan and Grand counties, had been created in Utah.

The most important development of 1934 for the county and the West in general was the enactment by Congress in June of the Taylor Grazing Act. The act mandated a major change in the management of western public grazing lands. Under its terms, almost 175 million acres of the nation's public domain lands were withdrawn from unrestrained public entry and placed under the control and administra-

tion of the Department of the Interior through its Grazing Service department. Although there was much discussion and debate during the period as to whether it was a privilege or a right to graze livestock on public land (a debate some still enter into today), somewhat surprisingly, Utah stockmen, including those from southeastern Utah, had expressed themselves in favor of increased federal control of public rangelands. As early as 1929 the La Sal Forest supervisor, A. C. Folster, had reported that locals in Moab and other towns of southeastern Utah had no real desire to manage their own watersheds and, in fact, expressed "a keen desire that all public lands be placed under federal control, preferably the Forest Service."[9]

Although most stockmen in other western states opposed federal management of grazing lands, a number of Utah ranchers, including many from Grand County, wanted control extended to the desert and lower-elevation winter ranges outside the national forest reserves. According to Charles Peterson, Utah stockmen generally "did not take a strong position favoring cession of public lands to the states or outright management by private interests." The Utah Woolgrower's Association came out in favor of the Taylor Bill though similar organizations in Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico opposed it.[10] Grand County stockmen had been battling for years to control winter ranges within the county, endeavoring to keep out-of-state and other transient herds from moving into what they considered their rangeland. In 1930 they began to organize to keep others off the range (as reported in the *Times-Independent* of 27 March 1930), and, as mentioned, by 1933 they were actually petitioning the government to create grazing districts under federal management.

After the Taylor Grazing Act was passed, a local advisory board was formed with Bish Taylor as chair. Taylor, in fact, had helped create the legislation; he was an important consultant of congressional leaders including Utah Congressman Don Colton, who helped draft the legislation prior to his defeat in the Democratic landslide of 1932.[11] On 25 July 1935 a large headline in the *Times-Independent* informed readers that local rangemen had elected their advisory board. The board helped set up the new permits required for the public land and worked to establish policies with grazing district officials. Stockmen were issued permits to graze a specified number of

sheep or cattle on specific areas of the public range, based on traditional use patterns. This encouraged an attitude of responsibility and stewardship of the land, for a rancher's livestock would obviously fare better if that rancher took better care of the land.

The Taylor Act was an immense reform measure that fostered the conservation of the area's natural resources. On 14 June 1934 the Moab paper commented favorably on the bill's passage, even though it brought more restrictions to the public rangelands and regulated the use of public land in ways that a only a few years before might have generated widespread anger and protest. However, the combined factors of economic depression, range degradation, and intense competition resulted in most area ranchers favoring the regulations. Ranchers had plenty of troubles, including depressed prices and even cattle rustling. For instance, rustling was alleged in the Moab newspaper on 31 August 1933 when sixty head of cattle were missing in the La Sals. Local stockmen seemed to realize that their best hopes lay in good management of the available range and in cooperation among themselves. This was further evident in the 5 December 1935 issue of the newspaper; headlines that day proclaimed that cattlemen and sheepmen had come to an amicable agreement regarding the range and Taylor Grazing Act provisions.

After the Taylor Act provisions took effect, many small and marginal ranching outfits either quit or were forced off the land after they failed to secure permits for grazing land. One rancher estimated that 75 percent of the sheep in Grand County were forced to be sold on the market in 1935.[12] With definite parcels of land under their individual care and management, ranchers began to better take care of the land, including fencing it off—a practice that began in the area in the 1940s. The industry as old-timers knew it was irrevocably changed. The measures also helped control illegal rustling, including what some ranchers called "an old Mormon habit" of killing another's steer when a rancher wanted beef. No doubt, Mormon ranchers considered it an "old gentile habit."

Trail drives of cattle on their way to the railhead at Thompson Springs from rangeland south of Moab had disrupted the town since the nineteenth century, but as the population grew so did the resulting inconvenience of blocked traffic and fouled streets. In 1939 the

Grazing Service and Soil Conservation Service purchased easements east of Moab as a stock driveway to help ease the problem, but the bridge crossing at the Colorado River remained a major difficulty until the mid-1950s when all cattle were trucked to the railhead.

Stories of the range before it was fenced abound in the area and have been retold—and often dressed-up with an extra coat of varnish—over the years by locals. Some of the best involve Amasa Larsen, a sometimes hard-drinking rancher who walked with a limp, talked with a lisp, and ran cattle in Fisher Valley and other locations in the county. Beloved by many area residents, the illiterate Larsen, who claimed to have attended school only two days—one of which was rained out, the other being a time when the teacher was absent—seemed to be the protagonist in many of the region's best tales. How many were true is not ascertainable. The fact that Amasa can typify the spirit and humor of area folks seems more important. One story in particular is in the finest vein of American folk humor, and its inclusion in *The Far Country* with other stories makes that book even more valuable.[13] In the event that the reader has no access to *The Far Country*—and to brighten this effort—I will quote the story: "One day he dropped into his favorite barber shop. The barber [Krug Walker] slapped a hot towel on his face. Amasa reared up in the chair and bellowed, 'Jethuth Chritht, Krug! When thith dod-damned towel getth cool enough tho you can thtand to take hold of it, would you pleathe take the dod-damned thing off my faith!'"

The Reorganization Act (Wheeler-Howard Act) of 1934 was another government action that was to have profound importance to the region. It directly affected Native Americans throughout the country in its attempt to repair some of the damage caused by the earlier 1887 Allotment Act, through which the region's Ute Indians had lost some 90 percent of their reservation land—from 4,000,000 acres down to 360,000 acres. Provisions of this act allowed for more tribal self-government, loan programs, and appropriations to purchase additional land. The act also fostered and stressed the conservation and reclamation of existing tribal lands.[14]

As part of the creation of forest reserves in Utah, in 1905 President Theodore Roosevelt had withdrawn 1.1 million acres from the Uintah Reservation to create the Uintah National Forest Reserve

north of Grand County. The Taylor Grazing Act resulted in the withdrawal of another 429,000 acres of the Uncompahgre Reservation and placed it in the public domain, government officials claiming that the Indians had not properly filed for the land. Indian leaders and friends of Native Americans began to be more vocal about such treatment and agitated for a return of reservation land they felt had been wrongfully taken from them. Though the reservation lands that had been taken from the Indians were north of Grand County, as discussions progressed, federal land in the county began to be looked at as possible replacement lands. In 1933 Congress did allot $1,100 to each member of the Northern Ute Tribe in compensation for lands added to the national forest reserve in 1905.

Many Native Americans still considered some of the old Uncompahgre Reservation lands to be theirs for grazing, and there were many controversies and trespass claims filed in the 1930s and early 1940s. Some Indians wanted a former portion of the reservation to be given back to them as a permanent grazing reserve under provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act, and they were supported in this by certain whites who wanted to claim those lands not assigned to the Utes. Other federal officials talked of restoring all of the former Uncompahgre Reservation lands to the Indians. Much of that land had been entered into the public domain in 1929, but it was withdrawn as the Uncompahgre Grazing Reserve in 1933 by new Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes at the urging of Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier.[15]

In 1935 a bill was introduced in Congress that would restore approximately one-third of the former reservation—some 726,000 acres, including the Hill Creek and Willow Creek drainages—to the Utes, but it was stalled in Congress. In 1938 the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) began administering the Uncompahgre Grazing Reserve land, collecting grazing fees for the Ute Tribe from white ranchers using the land. Many ranchers deliberately trespassed in order to bring matters to a head in the courts. Throughout the remainder of the 1930s and into the 1940s negotiations and preparations for various land transfers continued, generally tedious legal and surveying measures. In September 1941 the Secretary of the Interior restored about 217,000 acres of Uintah County land to the Ute Tribe, and the tribe was able to purchase some additional acreage

over the years—approximately 31,000 acres by 1942.[16] The war interrupted matters, which were proceeding slowly on many fronts—through the courts, Congress, and various commissions—coming to a resolution after World War II that greatly affected Grand County.

Agriculture in Grand County continued to be of limited economic importance. Export of produce to outside markets remained in most categories among the lowest of all Utah counties. During the Depression, the dependence was unusually great on what local residents could grow in their home gardens. The society could be termed generally cash poor—stories abound from those years of how families had to do without many previously standard items that were now luxuries. Few were exempt from belt-tightening measures; but one benefit of all this to the community was a frequent forging of bonds as people cooperated, commisserated, and shared with each other, making do as best they could. Barter of goods for services or for other goods was a common practice of the period. Even utility bills were sometimes paid with goods rather than cash, if they were paid at all.[17]

Maxine Newell has written of a most unusual development in Grand and San Juan counties during the Depression years: an experiment with a type of socialized medical care. Medical contracts were sold for twenty-five dollars a family, which fee was matched by the counties and guaranteed necessary medical care for all members of the participating family for a year. Newell reports that the system worked well. If there was a downside, it was that the doctors were overworked. The experiment, however, was discontinued with the start of World War II and increase in prosperity.[18] Allen and his dedicated nurses ran the county hospital through the Depression years, performing heroic service on behalf of the county's residents.

The fact that the local paper did not dwell on the hard times is revealing. Editor Taylor seemed to endeavor to present a "business as usual" face to the world, perhaps helping inspire a type of confidence, or at least perseverance, in his readers—perhaps similar to that which the president was providing the nation. In his rather quiet but determined manner, Taylor served his readers and the county well, helping provide some feeling of "normalcy" in abnormal times.

Grand County residents were weathering the Depression about as well as could be hoped with the help of government grants and

work projects. On 22 August 1935 the paper reported that of all Utah counties Grand had the second-lowest percentage of inhabitants on relief rolls—17.4 percent of county residents. In comparison, Garfield County had almost 55 percent of its citizens on relief, while Morgan County was the low with 11.3 percent. Grand County residents were futher cheered with the announcement that year on 24 October that a new CCC camp of 200 men was to be established at Dalton Wells in the county, fourteen miles north of Moab. The Dalton Wells Camp (DG-32) became the major CCC camp in the area in the years to come, until it was finally disbanded in September 1941.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was not officially so designated until 1937 but had its beginnings in 1933. (The Grand County camp at Warner Lake was among the first of the nation's CCC camps.) CCC camps were generally comprised of some 200 young men who enlisted for six-month terms, with the option for reenlistment. The camps were meant to be temporary—established for six-month periods—and were built by the corpsmen, usually along the lines of military barracks. Camp life and discipline were also modelled on military lines. Work crews were supervised by federal agency staffers and older men—local experienced men (LEMs)—from the area in which the camps were established. Pay for recruits was minimal at thirty dollars per month, and twenty-five dollars of that was required to be sent home to the families of the young corpsmen. Even with only five dollars per month spending money, however, recruits felt fortunate, and towns—including Moab—where they spent the money found it to be a major economic boost. Although the work was generally hard physical labor, most corpsmen were happy—according to available reminiscenses—abundant food and strong clothing were supplied and camaraderie was fostered among young people from many different parts of the country.[19]

The work was predominantly conservation- or reclamation-oriented. After constructing their camps and associated roads, the crews would work on local projects deemed important: these could involve planting trees, constructing firebreaks and trails, reclaiming damaged land, or repairing watercourses and working on flood-control measures. Fire-fighting was a major responsibility, but crews also worked on rangeland improvements, including road and trail construction,

fencing, weed eradication and pest control, and development of wells, springs, and other water sources. As one historian writes: "In the end almost every type of project imaginable was done, leaving a lasting legacy especially in the arid West."[20]

Grand County was extraordinarily successful in obtaining CCC camp authorizations: from the first establishment in May 1933 the county was never without a camp until the program was discontinued in early 1942. At one time, three different camps were operating within a fifteen-mile radius of Moab. The town was host to four camps, and since it was also the preferred recreation or "liberty" town for another camp in San Juan County, Moab merchants benefited from five camps in all. Bruce Louthan has written that this was certainly an incredible accomplishment for a small, predominantly Republican town in the sparsely settled West, but he maintains that a closer examination of factors enables one to gain an understanding of why it occurred. The most important reason was the "compelling natural resource problems of the area and the consequent human distress." Almost 80 percent of Grand County's area was federally managed public land—much of which was in fragile and deteriorating condition. It was important to stem the degradation of the range by developing other water sources to stop overconcentration of animals in certain areas. Destruction of timber resources needed to be halted; good timber management would in turn inhibit flooding potential. In addition, immediate flood-control projects were initiated on the watercourses themselves—particularly Mill Creek. All of these were major problems entailing prolonged work.

Utah officials also were adept at lobbying for the camps and for other federal grants and programs. Democratic governor Henry H. Blood effectively campaigned on behalf of the state, and Utah's congressional delegation aided the effort. In fact, they worked so tirelessly that federal officials finally pointed out that Utah was receiving more than 200 percent of what would be its proportional share of the federal pie. The mild climate of the Moab area was a third reason for the successful establishment of camps in Grand County, allowing, as has been mentioned, winter camps in the area for CCC crews stationed elsewhere in the summer months. Finally, according to Louthan, "the ace up Moab's sleeve was its people." Area residents



Dalton Wells CCC Camp, December 1937. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

enthusiastically welcomed the young corpsmen into the community, which helped foster good relations and rapport with officials. [21]

The four county CCC camps were designated F-20, NP-7, DG-32, and PE-214 SCS-6 (this last being termed a Private Erosion and then a Soil Conservation Service camp). Camp F-20, the Warner Lake Camp, was run by the Forest Service. Its major objective was road construction and some reclamation work. Camp PE-214 SCS-6 was also run by the Forest Service but included reclamation and soil conservation work on private land (hence the "PE" designation). Camp enlistees worked on flood control projects on Mill Creek and other areas in Spanish Valley. It operated from October 1933 to March 1934 and again from October 1940 to March 1941.

Camp DG-32 was the Dalton Wells camp, the longest lasting of the Grand County CCC camps, from 1935 to 1941. Its corpsmen were involved in a wide range of projects—primarily rangeland improvements—throughout much of the county, developing roads, springs, reservoirs, and fences. The DG prefix signified that the camp was under the supervision of the Division of Grazing of the General Land Office (GLO). The fourth Grand County CCC camp—NP-7—was a National Park Service camp that was stationed in Moab near the (later) Atlas mill site. This crew worked in Arches National Monument constructing trails, roads, and erosion-control projects. The camp operated from April 1940 to March 1942, and began a new

entry road to the monument, but the work was interrupted by the start of World War II and the dismantling of the CCC camps.

In some camps, including Dalton Wells, spike camps were periodically established for small tasks outside the parameters and boundaries of the regular camp. Often of only a few days duration, employing a few men, the spike camps allowed for a greater variety of work assignments and locales while providing valuable services for widely scattered areas throughout the county. The Dalton Wells camp established spike camps in the La Sal Mountains, for example, and such camps certainly must have provided some relief from the baking summer sun in the desert range areas of the county where camp crews generally worked. Another spike camp was established for a few weeks in the area around Cisco.

Living conditions at the camps were spartan, with few frills. The recruits in Grand County camps were generally from eastern and midwestern states and lived in large, military-type, uninsulated, one-room barracks while dining in large communal mess halls. The buildings were poorly heated in winter and hot in summer—especially those like DG-32, located in the desert rangeland. Recreational facilities—such as ping-pong tables, basketball hoops, and playing fields—were provided, as also were educational activities, including vocational classes and high school equivalency courses. Work often involved such hard manual-labor activities as shoveling, digging, cutting, and hauling material; but the work was limited to eight hours a day, allowing for much leisure and study time. Saturdays were normally days off, and recruits often headed to nearby towns—generally Moab for all the recruits in southeastern Utah—where they might spend any money they had on movie tickets, goods, or other entertainments, much to the delight of local merchants. They also fraternized with the locals, and although there were instances of trouble, these were few in number. A few Grand County CCC enrollees fell in love with either the landscape or one of the local young women, in fact, and remained in the county or returned there to live after returning home at the completion of their period of duty.[22]

Some projects were selected by local residents or groups, including the Stockmen's Advisory Board, chaired by editor Loren L. Taylor. This naturally found favor with local stockmen, particularly since projects were spread around so that, if possible, none would be left out. The

whole area received both direct and indirect economic boosts—during one six-month period at Dalton Wells thirty-four projects involving 12,500 man days were completed. This had a value of almost $9,000—an enormous sum in those days. Camp superintendent J. Pratt Allred reported: "All of this is highly appreciated and full praise, for the work that is being done, is offered by all of the stockmen of the district."[23]

Additional praise was offered in the pages of the newspaper, both for the work accomplished and for the behavior of the CCC recruits. The years that followed did not bring any altered reassessment: this was perhaps the most successful federal program ever undertaken in the county, receiving high praise from almost all people, including those of the most radically differing political persuasions. Liberals and conservatives alike continue to hold the CCC in high esteem. As Bruce Louthan writes: "The CCC is one of the few federal programs ever viewed so universally in a positive way in this fiercely independent and isolated western community; it is perhaps the only federal program that fulfilled its promise."[24]

National parks and monuments are also commonly loved and welcomed by a majority of citizens, but they have also often met fierce resistance, particularly from those who have not wanted the affected lands to be withdrawn from other uses, such as mining and grazing privileges. There were plenty of these people in Grand County and the region in general; it is therefore not surprising that another federal plan met fierce opposition: the proposed creation of a huge new national park or monument (known provisionally as Escalante National Monument) in southern Utah.

Efforts by area promoters to publicize the natural beauty of the Colorado Plateau had won some ardent converts—perhaps more ardent than most residents of the plateau had expected. As a result, a huge area of more than 4.5 million acres of the plateau was proposed as a national monument in the 1930s. Though this was the heart of the plateau country that was often proclaimed "worthless" by locals, when the government proposed to protect it for its scenic beauty, many of those same locals found surprising worth in its grazing potential and even more in its possibilities of undiscovered mineral wealth. Of course, portions of the land had some value for both these uses; in fact, however, most of the land in question was not prime

grazing land and its mineral wealth was almost completely unknown at the time—which made the idea of protecting the land as a park seem among its better potential uses to supporters of the idea.

Although little if any of the proposed monument would have been in Grand County, most of it being land to the west and south, the fact that the *Times-Independent* was the major newspaper for all of southeastern Utah resulted in the controversy over the monument becoming a major item in the pages of the paper. On 11 June 1936 the paper fired a major salvo, expressing opposition to the creation of the proposed monument.

Arches National Monument had generated surprisingly little opposition at its creation, but this was most likely because it was only some 4,500 acres—one-tenth of one percent the size of the proposed Escalante National Monument. Cries of federal meddling and high-handedness were soon heard, but Secretary of the Interior Ickes was in favor of the new monument and pushed plans forward. As a result, opposition mounted, conservative mining and ranching interests in the forefront. They found allies in developers and reclamation engineers concerned with the region's great rivers. Boulder Dam had recently been built on the lower Colorado River below the Grand Canyon and developers and electric-power utility companies looked eagerly at other potential damsite locations on the rivers. Their rallying cry was for growth, progress, and development—and it seemed foolhardy to them to lock up such a huge area as the proposed Escalante monument without further study.

Like most of their counterparts throughout the country, Grand County residents both blessed and damned the federal government: they welcomed the dollars it spent in the county while still maintaining that resources on public lands should be exploited by private developers. (Thus it was, for example, that the reservation by the government of certain helium-containing lands in the county announced by the paper on 27 July 1933 met some opposition even while county residents were gratefully accepting CCC projects.)

Water, always precious in the region, was at the heart of the Escalante monument controversy. The Colorado River Compact, apportioning the waters of the Colorado River between the western states through which it or its tributaries flowed, had been first formed

in 1922. At that time, it was not treated with much passion by the *Times-Independent,* since no state—and certainly not Utah—was taking full advantage of its allotment. By the 1930s the time was foreseen when this share would be claimed, and the state of Utah (and Grand County) wanted to ensure that it had the means to impound the water, if necessary. The proposed monument therefore had more supporters outside the state and region than within.

Perhaps it was because of the opposition to Escalante National Monument that Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harold Ickes decided that they would at least enlarge Arches National Monument—a move that some opponents of Escalante (including Bish Taylor of the *Times-Independent*) might support. If so, their assessment was accurate: the Moab paper reported favorably on the enlargement of Arches to 33,680 acres on 1 December 1938. Whether it was coincidence or not, just two weeks later the paper reported that Ickes had postponed the creation of Escalante National Monument because of pressure to study proposed developments relating to the Colorado River. Though proponents claimed it was merely a delay, the project languished and whenever talk of it revived, opponents—including many in Grand County—sprang up to attack it again.

The Moab Lions Club had actively campaigned to enlarge Arches and even to have it upgraded in status to a national park. Early in 1939 (on 12 January) the newspaper reported that the club favored creation of the proposed Escalante National Monument, believing that the influx of tourist dollars would offset any revenues gained from mining and grazing uses of the land. But visitation to national parks at the time was still small—especially during the Depression years—and it was not until after World War II that Americans began to flock in increasing numbers to parks and other recreation spots. By that time, uranium mining interests were a powerful voice opposing the withdrawal of public lands for more national parks.

Meanwhile, back in the 1930s, Grand County residents had a multitude of things to be concerned about. Thompson was an active town with its railroad station, seasonal sheep shearing, and coal mining at nearby Sego. Tragedy struck in November 1934 when the Thompson Garage and a hotel in town burned.[25] A cold-water geyser near Elgin that periodically spouted water up to 150 feet high was



Colorado River Bridge at Moab, date unknown. (Utah State Historical Society)

reported on 1 October 1936 by the newspaper. The geyser—an extremely rare geologic phenomenon—was a result of oil-drilling activity and became a tourist attraction for a number of years until it was damaged by vandals. Unfortunately, it was about the only success reported by oil drillers during the decade. The paper's headlines throughout those years included news of mining and drilling activities, but no producing oil wells were developed before World War II.

The projected budget for Grand County for 1935 was reported in the paper on 3 January of that year to be about $40,000. The county, with fewer than 2,000 residents, was not a center of political power; however, Grand County officials were becoming adept at working the New Deal system, and citizens were quick to follow their lead. On 13 August 1936 the *Times-Independent* reported that voters had approved bonds for a new county courthouse; four months later, in December, the county received a government grant to help finance construction of the building in Moab. It appears that residents had

learned that if they would make a commitment to a needed civic project, chances were good that the federal government would then be persuaded of their seriousness and share the obligation to pay for it. On 24 June 1937 the paper reported that the brand new Grand County Courthouse was finished at a cost of $60,000; $27,000 of this total had come from a Public Works Administration (PWA) grant, and the remaining $33,000 from the bond sales and other local fund-raising efforts. The handsome building was dedicated on 2 July 1937 and, with subsequent additions and renovations, continues to serve the needs of county residents to the present.

After the relative stagnation of the county's population during the 1920s, growth began to occur again in the 1930s—growth that was mainly accounted for by Moab. It is estimated that the town had a few more than 900 people in 1936 when a move was made in September to make it a city of the third class (a category relating to size, obligations, and services provided). Three months later, on 17 December 1936, the newspaper reported that Moab had indeed been proclaimed a third-class city by Governor Henry Blood. In the meantime, in the elections of November that year, Democrats had swept to power in the nation, the state, and the county. The New Deal was working in the opinion of the majority of citizens. Certainly the New Deal was good to Utah. During the course of the Depression, Utah received seven dollars in federal assistance for every dollar that Utahns paid in taxes.[26] Grand County received a good share.

Moab had most of the accoutrements of a bustling town or small city, including automobile dealerships and even a new building for the Ides Theatre. A weekly list of radio programs was published in the paper, which also featured an extensive comics section; electrical appliances were being advertised for the modern consumer fortunate enough to be able to afford them. Utah Power and Light Company was advertising the advantages of electricity on the farm, in conjunction with the government's national rural electrification program. Problems with electrical service continued to plague Moab, however, prompting periodic complaints from Bish Taylor. The editor and community leader continued to promote clean-up campaigns each spring for the new city; unfortunately, floods periodically washed the area—such as one reported on 31 August 1939—adding more mess

than they removed, while causing heartache and property damage. However, the work of the CCC on Mill Creek and Pack Creek drainages was helping to improve the situation.

Mining and oil-drilling in the county were slowed by the Depression, since capital for large-scale undertakings was not generally readily available. The Depression brought most oil-drilling activity in the county to a halt. When it resumed after World War II, Grand County was finally able to boast some producing oil wells. However, with millions unemployed and many of them uprooted by the economic catastrophe, it is likely that individual prospectors continually wandered throughout the county during the Depression years, seeking to find their fortune. Their numbers and names have not entered the historical record, however. It is known that many others squatted on vacant lands or attempted to homestead areas during the period. Little land was ultimately patented, however. Still, marginal land that could support a garden and a rude shelter was undoubtedly welcome to unfortunate people in Grand County as elsewhere throughout the country.

Abundant foreign supplies had cut the demand in the period for both uranium and vanadium, and most of the mining of those materials that was done in the area was in Colorado or in San Juan County. One exception to the general sluggish market was the growth in the region of the Vitro Manufacturing Company of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. County resident Howard Balsley supplied uranium ore to the company, and Vitro marketed mineral pigments for the manufacture of ceramics, glass, and pottery. The company had a worldwide customer base and made twenty-six shades of red, greens, browns, and yellows from the uranium ore. Balsley supplied uranium ore to the company from 1934 until the mid-1940s. He was the only ore buyer working in the region and collected ore from more than 300 small mining operations, grading and assaying it as to its content. Vanadium-rich ore (which was more in demand) was separated from the ore with a greater concentration of uranium. Balsley had storage facilities throughout the Colorado Plateau region, including Moab, Cisco, and Thompson in Grand County.

From 1942 to 1944 the government contracted to buy vanadium, resulting in a small mining boom in the area; but the market collapsed in 1944 when the government concluded that it had stockpiled

sufficient supplies. Government restrictions regarding uranium brought its use as a coloring agent to an end by 1945.[27] With the supersecret Manhattan Project developing the atomic bomb, however, the uranium industry was on the verge of its own explosion.

Cattle and sheep permitted in the La Sal Forest generally declined in the 1930s, although the reduction was not nearly that of previous years—especially for cattle. Cattle permits had dropped from a high of 226 in 1914 to 61 in 1930—remaining fewer than 100 through the decade. Charles Peterson reports that the turnover in cattle permits was large. A study conducted in 1935 reported that 576 permits had been issued to that time and that 516 (89 percent) permit holders had lost or sold their grazing permits in the interim. "Interestingly," Peterson writes, "large users had been the most stable element with the greatest incidence of dropout occurring among the smallest owners."[28] Stockmen were unhappy about further permit reductions and voiced their concerns periodically in the pages of the *Times-Independent*. The number of sheep permitted in the La Sal National Forest was reduced from about 40,000 at the start of the decade to 30,000 in 1939; the number of cattle permitted was some 13,000 in 1930 and barely more than 10,000 by 1939. Ranchers were equally if not more unhappy about the periodic raising of permit fees.

By the early 1930s wildlife conservation efforts were beginning to show some results: there were more than 1,000 deer but few if any elk in what were once called the Elk Mountains. Poaching remained common in the 1930s; in fact, according to Peterson, it was common well into the 1950s, when uranium miners took a heavy toll on area wildlife.[29] An attitude of respect for conservation laws and preservation of wildlife has been slow coming to many in southeastern Utah.

A separate grazing district for Grand County was created in September 1939, but world events were beginning to shift the attention of area residents to other concerns. The county entered the new decade of the 1940s with a 21 percent gain in population, according to the *Times-Independent* of 16 May 1940—up to 2,063 residents from 1,713 in 1930. Moab gained 27 percent, from 853 to 1,081. By that October, more than 250 Grand County men had registered for the military draft. Travel was up in Arches to almost 200 people in March 1941—almost double the figure from the year before. Sad

news came from the national monument on 20 March 1941 when the Moab paper reported the suicide of the Arches CCC camp commander—apparently due to personal problems.

As war began to seem more likely, the county's mineral resources took on increasing importance. The *Times-Independent* for 6 March 1941 reported increased activity in area carnotite mines which were shipping vanadium, an important additive used to harden steel. Six months later, on 4 September, the county's magnesium deposits were touted as "enough to supply the world for 3000 years." One month later (2 October 1941), plans were announced in the paper for a magnesium plant to be built near Crescent Junction by the Utah Magnesium Corporation. A month after Pearl Harbor was attacked, the county's vanadium reserves were celebrated in the Moab newspaper; but magnesium began to drop from the news between April and July 1942 as the drilling of a test well in the county met with difficulties and less success than anticipated.

Highway 6/50 was built in 1934, approximating the route of the railroad across the northern part of the county. In the paper of 3 August 1939 plans were announced to pave Highway 160 (present-day Highway 191) from Thompson south to Moab and into San Juan County by the end of 1940. In March 1941 plans were reported for a north–south highway through the Book Cliffs to Vernal; then, on 29 May 1941, a road from Ouray to Thompson was said to be "soon to start." Neither road was built. Plans for a $30 million dam on the Colorado River near Dewey were announced in the *Times-Independent* on 16 October 1941; but this project also met opposition and war delay which eventually killed it.

After 1942, war-related events more frequently affected Grand County. The *Times-Independent* on the last day of 1942 brought the news that a Japanese relocation camp was going to be established at the old CCC camp at Dalton Wells north of Moab. The forced removal of Japanese-Americans from their west coast homes and into guarded concentration camps in the first months of World War II is one of the most shameful government acts in American history. Wartime paranoia is presented as the defense, but it was made possible by that other common moral evil of racism, at a time when institutionalized racism was still sanctioned and commonly practiced

throughout the country. Relocation camps, as they were euphemistically called, were scattered throughout the West and included a large camp at Topaz in the western part of Utah. The camp at Dalton Wells is little known; but from 11 January to 27 April 1943 the old CCC camp buildings were used to hold about four dozen Americans of Japanese ancestry who had had the temerity to protest the treatment they and others of their race were receiving.

The camp was called the Moab Isolation Center and was used for those the government termed "trouble makers" because of their protests over the abrogation of their civil rights as American citizens. Many were college graduates, others had served in the U.S. Army; however, their questioning of the relocation, coupled with their anger and demands for better treatment, caused authorities to segregate them from their fellow internees. Dalton Wells in Grand County was selected as a place to put some of them; it was far from other camps and from media scrutiny. Sixteen men from the Manzanar, California, camp were the first to arrive—on 11 January 1943—and were later joined by some forty others, sent in small groups from various camps. In the words of Bruce Louthan and Lloyd Pierson:

> Here without due process, these American citizens were stripped of their remaining civil rights and kept under military guard, without trial, warrants, or right of defense; their mail was censored and visits of loved ones denied. At one point they were restricted from visiting each others' barracks without prior permission and an armed guard. Transfer to the remote and hostile environment of the Moab camp had resulted, in reality, because they previously asked why they had been relocated in the first place and their citizenship abrogated.[30]

Unconfirmed reports indicate that a fence may have been erected around the complex, but even without one the isolated, harsh setting in the heart of the desert served as an effective barrier, and prisoners were confined in separate buildings under armed military guard. The prisoners did not relax their protests upon being transferred to the Dalton Wells camp. They protested their treatment at the new camp, and some reportedly even asked if they could renounce their American citizenship and be transferred to a prisoner-of-war camp.

Eight of the protesters were confined for a time in the Grand County jail in Moab, and when the group was moved to an old Indian school at Leupp, Arizona, on 27 April 1943, five men were transported the 350 miles in a box with only one air-hole that was placed in the bed of a pickup truck.[31] Fortunately, things there seemed to improve for the men, many of whom were returned to regular relocation camps. The Dalton Wells camp never received much publicity—there were a handful of brief articles in the *Times-Independent* that related to the camp—and to this day is little known both locally and to the nation at large; but it serves as a grim reminder of the fragility of our constitutional guarantees in the face of fear and bigotry.

The year 1943 began with news on 4 January of plans to develop county magnesium and potash reserves near Crescent Junction. One week later, the paper published the sad news that an Elgin man—Marine Pfc. Lawrence P. Harris—had been killed in action. By the end of the war in 1945, eight men from Grand County had lost their lives in the terrible conflict. County residents took pride in supporting the war effort, continually meeting or exceeding their quotas in war-bond-purchase drives. On 7 October 1943, for example, the *Times-Independent* noted that county residents had purchased $130,000 worth of war bonds; and the county was lauded for its contributions to the war effort in the 5 July 1945 issue of the paper.

Plans were made to organize a fire department in Moab in May 1943, but that did not stop the worst fire in county history late that December when the Moab Co-op store burned, with a loss estimated at $50,000. County residents led by L. L. Taylor were themselves incensed in August 1943 when the Secretary of the Interior withdrew from public use nearly 3 million acres of land in Grand and San Juan counties for various government purposes. The Moab editor on 26 August called the move "dictatorial" and led the campaign against it. Victory was achieved when the lands were returned to public entry in 1945. This likely turned many county residents against the Democratic administration. In the election of 1944, the majority of Grand County voters voted Republican, although the state and nation still went with the Democratic party.

The Depression had been effectively defeated, and the United States seemed to be on the verge of victory in the war against the Axis

powers. Attention began to turn to other matters. Throughout 1944 the Moab Lions Club began to campaign actively for development projects to promote recreation and tourism in the area—including the building and paving of roads within Arches National Monument and its upgrading to national park status. Promoting the region's rivers was also discussed, but other interests also had plans for the waterways—plans and talk resurfaced in May 1945 for a dam to be built on the Colorado River above Moab. On 12 July an old litany was resumed: Taylor editorialized in the paper about the neglect of southeastern Utah by state legislators and fund appropriators. One major boost to the county was a new 44,000-volt power line extended from Price to Moab in 1945 by Utah Power and Light Company.

The 1945 U.S. Census of Agriculture revealed that little had changed in agriculture from earlier years. The trend towards fewer farms reestablished itself after it had been somewhat reversed during the Depression when folks tried to eke out a subsistence living from the land. There were 91 farms in Grand County in 1945—the second lowest in the state—down from 155 farms in 1940. Although the county ranked among the largest corn producers, overall figures were still small. So too with fruit production: amounts of peaches, apples, and cherries placed the county at about the mid-point among the state's counties; but overall Grand was third lowest of the twenty-nine counties in the value of its agricultural produce. Grand County, despite its ranching tradition, was also second lowest among Utah's counties in the value of all livestock and livestock products sold—$414,171 out of a state total of more than $68 million.[32] The figures told the story that area ranchers already knew: the great days of sheep raising and wool production were past, and cattle also were becoming of marginal economic importance.

In August, war news exploded back to public attention: the explosion of two atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, stunned the nation and the world. Japan surrendered in a matter of days and the great conflict was over, much to the joy of residents of Grand County, as elsewhere. As information began to filter in about the new weapons, the residents of Grand County learned from the Moab paper of 16 September 1945 that uranium was at the heart of the top-secret technology. Almost before locals could exclaim that the region was known for the material, however, President Harry S.

Truman issued government orders on 20 September 1945 prohibiting the sale of all known uranium-containing lands.

This freeze on land sales was just one in an ever-increasing series of government-imposed regulations—restrictions that became increasingly strict as the developing Cold War rapidly deepened between the former wartime allies of the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective allies and satellites. Although it had been little noticed at the time, in 1943 the U. S. government had prohibited the further sale of uranium ore for private industrial purposes. At about the same time, in 1942, the government had encouraged mining for vanadium, the steel-hardening element, purchasing all processed ores until 1944, at which time it deemed that it had sufficient supplies. Uranium ore for the secret Manhattan Project, which produced the first atomic bombs, was mined from old vanadium tailings, according to historian Raye Ringholz.[33]

Although it was little understood in 1945, in succeeding years county residents began to realize that the detonation of the first atomic bomb had effectively created a social and economic explosion in Grand County—an upheaval that in a few years dwarfed all other booms previously experienced. Grand County, Utah, was about to become a center of attention of the world.

ENDNOTES

1. Reported in Faun M. Tanner, *The Far Country,* p. 287, and in José Knighton, *Coyote's History of Moab,* p. 22.

2. See John F. Hoffman, *Arches National Park: An Illustrated Guide and History,* for a more detailed account of the park's creation and development. The basic account presented here relies on Hoffman's fine book.

3. B. J. Eardley, "Papa's Dream," *Canyon Legacy* 12: 2–3.

4. Hoffman, *Arches National Park,* pp. 67–72.

5. Ibid., p. 65.

6. Moab *Times-Independent,* 1 September 1932.

7. According to results published in the *Times-Independent* of 10 November 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt defeated incumbent Herbert Hoover in Grand County by a 506 to 278 count. Longtime Republican senator Reed Smoot also went down to defeat to Elbert Thomas 493 to 278. Popular representative Don Colton also lost in the county to Democrat Abe Murdock by 439 to 332 votes.

8. Tanner, *The Far Country*, p. 262.

9. A. C. Folster, "Report on Municipal Watershed," 7 March 1929, Watershed folder, La Sal National Forest Records.

10. Charles Peterson, *Look to the Mountains*, p. 236.

11. Although Colton had been defeated in the landslide of 1932, his work was generally popular with Grand County voters, who favored him over his Democratic opponent in 1930 by a wide margin. Even in 1932 Colton did better in the county than other Republican politicians.

12. Jean Akens, "Bridging the Time Gap with Bill and Lillian Boulden," *Canyon Legacy* 11: 22.

13. See Tanner, *The Far Country*, p. 321.

14. Fred A. Conetah, *History of the Northern Ute People*, pp. 135–36.

15. Ibid., pp. 140–44.

16. Craig W. Fuller, "Ute Indians," Ph.D. diss., BYU, 1990.

17. Tanner, *The Far Country*, p. 246.

18. Maxine Newell, "The Scrapbook," *Canyon Legacy* 14:19.

19. See articles by Lloyd Pierson and others in volume 19 of *Canyon Legacy*.

20. Bruce D. Louthan, "Genesis of the Civilian Conservation Corps," *Canyon Legacy* 19: 3.

21. Ibid., pp. 3–4.

22. Bruce D. Louthan, "Dalton Wells CCC Camp," *Canyon Legacy* 19: 5–14.

23. Ibid., p. 9.

24. Louthan, "Genesis of the Civilian Conservation Corps," p. 4.

25. Moab *Times-Independent*, 15 November 1934.

26. See Richard Poll ed., *Utah's History*, p. 487.

27. Howard W. Balsley, "Early Days of Uranium," *Canyon Legacy* 10:4–6.

28. Peterson, *Look to the Mountains*, pp. 184–86.

29. Ibid., pp. 197–99.

30. Bruce D. Louthan and Lloyd M. Pierson, "Moab Japanese-American Isolation Center," *Canyon Legacy* 19: 28.

31. Ibid., pp. 29–30.

32. 1945 United States Census of Agriculture, Part 31, Department of Commerce.

33. Raye C. Ringholz, *Uranium Frenzy: Boom and Bust on the Colorado Plateau*, p. 27.

12

The Uranium Boom Years to 1960

Like other Americans, most Grand County residents approached the 1950s with hope and anticipation: hope that national troubles were finally behind them, anticipation that they could begin to enjoy a life of peace and prosperity. After the struggles of the Depression and World War II, most Americans felt that if anyone had earned the right to prosperity, they had, and they believed that government should facilitate this endeavor if it was to be involved in their affairs at all. Certainly, it should not hinder individual initiative or compromise the fruits of hard work or just plain good luck. However, the deepening Cold War soon shattered hopes that national political troubles were over. In Grand County events soon transformed the post-war era into the most turbulent in the county's history, greatly changing the social, economic, and physical landscapes as the county became a bustling hive of activity, crucially involved in matters of national defense and the economy.

The first reaction of many area residents—including editor Bish Taylor of the *Times-Independent*—to the government's freezing of sales of uranium-bearing lands was a tirade against the government

for once again tying up and restricting use of lands in the public domain. Many people were still actively campaigning against the proposed (but repeatedly postponed) creation of the huge Escalante National Monument. Others were embroiled in the proposed withdrawal of hundreds of thousands of acres in the Book Cliffs and Tavaputs Plateau lands of the northwestern corner of the county. This land was projected to become part of the Uintah-Ouray Ute Indian Reservation and was part of an attempted reparation for previous injustices, including the opening of the old Uncompahgre Reservation to white settlement.

In 1948 the Hill Creek Extension of the Uintah-Ouray Indian Reservation was officially established by Congress. It comprised some 429,636 acres of a total of approximately 726,000 acres of land that were added to the reservation, including more than 201,182 acres of federal land in Grand County—approximately 8.5 percent of the county's area—land that had previously never been part of the reservation.[1] For the first time in its political history Grand County now included official Indian reservation land, although headquarters of the reservation remained in Uintah County. No permanent Indian settlements have been established on the reservation land in Grand County to the present time, making it a virtually forgotten area of the county when it comes to news items.

Although the whole process of establishing the extension lasted almost two decades and kept dozens of lawyers, aides, and commissioners busy establishing the actual boundaries of the extension, there was surprisingly little mention of the process in the *Times-Independent*. It was never the subject of front-page headlines, including even the official establishment of the extension, passing virtually unnoticed by the majority of county residents who were not directly affected by the changes. Almost all the land in question was already federal land after trades were made with the state for its portions of the affected topographic sections. The border was convoluted in order to avoid private land and state mineral lands. A few private holdings of deeded land remained within the reservation extension boundaries, and a few ranchers lost grazing privileges in the withdrawal of the land from public entry; but, on the whole, it was a major development accomplished with little public controversy.

Another development that occurred shortly after the war would greatly affect county residents in the years to follow. This was the creation in July 1946 of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the new government agency designated to manage the federal public domain lands—lands that made up over 70 percent of Grand County's area. The BLM was essentially a merger of the Grazing Service and the General Land Office. It was hoped that the new entity would thus have increased power and effectiveness in managing the land. The change came about, however, just at the time citizens with many different interests were making unprecedented demands and claims upon the land in the post-war rush to prosperity. Though the agency's birth was relatively uneventful, from that point on the BLM would engender controversy and much opposition in Grand County—especially as county voters began to express even more conservative voting patterns than they had previously. Republicans in the county continued their gains of 1944 in the 1946 elections.

Americans were ready to celebrate and enjoy life after the bleak years of the Depression and the often tragic years of the war. Community leaders tried to position the county to attract automobile tourists, and the paper cheered on 9 May 1946 when it learned that *National Geographic* magazine was going to publish a major feature on Arches National Monument, just one of an increasing number of articles on southeastern Utah in local, regional, and national publications.[2] Readers of the *Times-Independent* were surprised to learn on 1 August 1946 that the Green River bridge had collapsed under the weight of a large tractor-trailer, effectively cutting off Grand County for a time from much of the rest of the state. This setback and inconvenience was not of long duration—a transportation link was reestablished within a few days in the form of a military-style, one-lane bridge. Early the next year the paper was regularly featuring a "Know Your Grand County" column, as it began to actively promote the entire area and its history.

On 8 May 1947 the Moab newspaper informed readers that the county had purchased a site for an airport in Spanish Valley south of Moab. A few adventurous types had begun flying airplanes in the region in the 1930s, and, in fact, in the 1920s two Moab natives had made national aviation news. One, Ida Larsen, was passenger in the



Main Street, Moab, 1948. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

first commercial flight in Utah history—flying in 1927 in an open cockpit Western Airlines biplane piloted by Jimmy James between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles, California. The other local aviator, army lieutenant J. J. Williams of Moab, was leader of the "Three Musketeers of the Air,"a nationally known stunt-flying army group in the 1920s. He was killed in an air crash in 1928.[3]

World War II helped make aviation popular in the nation. There were now thousands of trained pilots in the country, improved technology, a nation once again on the move, and, in Grand County with the beginning of the uranium-mining boom era, a perceived need for airplanes to scout the country, where wings seem to be the best way to travel from one place to another. Fred Frazer leased the airport after he came to town in 1947, and soon pilots were regularly using the Moab airport for prospecting flights, supplying mining and ranching camps, and basic transportation.

Grand County sponsored a celebration of the 1847 arrival of Mormon pioneers to the Salt Lake Valley at its county fair in September 1947. That same month also saw record visitation at Arches National Monument—1,079 visitors—and a new yearly record of 4,702 people.[4] One event of interest but seemingly small significance was a river trip down the Colorado by Harry Aleson and

Georgie White in a rubber raft, reported in the Moab paper of 30 October. With the improvement of rubber in the war years, and its subsequent manufacture into inflatable rafts, area rivers had finally met the craft that could readily challenge them. From isolated small beginnings, such trips became increasingly popular, and within a short period of time adventurous entrepreneurs were taking other adventurous souls down the rivers for a fee, opening an industry that has continued to grow in popularity and economic impact.

The development, improvement, and increased use of highways and roads after World War II led to the establishment of modern-day Crescent Junction. Located at the intersection of U.S. Highway 6/50 and U.S. Highway 191, some twenty miles east of Green River, the area had previously been a stop on the railroad line and had a brief flurry of coal-mining activity in the first years of the twentieth century as well as some limited mining for personal use in the 1940s. Some manganese mining was later undertaken in the vicinity, about ten miles southwest of Crescent. In 1947 county residents Charles and Erma Wimmer realized that the junction of highways was a desirable place for an automobile service station. Charles was familiar with the area; in the early years of the century, his father, Thomas G. Wimmer, had established a 600-acre farm, known as the Ruby Ranch, about twenty-five miles south of Elgin. Two homesteads of 160 acres each, patented before 1920 by daughters of Thomas Wimmer, formed the basis of the service station complex that Charles and Erma developed.

The couple established their service station at the junction, and the operation was run by their daughter Bette and her husband, Al Lange. Although some living conditions were primitive in the early years of its operation, the station at Crescent Junction flourished and a cafe soon was added to the complex. Major expansion took place in 1955, and in succeeding years the business has grown and a small community developed around it. The third generation of the family now operates the complex. At the present time (1994), nine individuals reside at Crescent—down from a peak of thirteen in the late 1950s. They have further ambitious plans for expansion at its location, which has remained a choice one now that Interstate 70 brings thousands of motorists weekly past the station and cafe while addi-

tional tourists and county residents take the turnoff to Highway 191 for Arches, Moab, and points south.[5]

On 4 December 1947 the Moab newspaper announced that employees at Sego had purchased the local coal mine from the Utah Grand Coal Company, which had closed the mine earlier in the year, after its major customer, the D&RGW Railroad, had converted its steam engines to diesel power. The mine was reopened by the new worker-owned company, but bad luck and misfortune plagued the company. Major fires in 1949 and 1950 damaged equipment and disrupted production; that, coupled with a weak market and increased competition from Carbon County and other regional coal-producing areas, forced the permanent closing of the Sego mine in 1950. The town was soon abandoned. In 1955 the town was purchased by Ivan Johnson and Leslie Ryan of Moab in partnership with Roy Seaburg and H. G. Seaburg of Texas. According to the *Times-Independent* of 17 March 1955, they planned to lease the coal land and build a hunting lodge; but these plans came to naught. They did move many of the houses to Moab, however, taking advantage of the shortage of available housing there during that boom period.[6] Only a few structures remained at Sego, gradually decaying as the town settled into its current status as a haven for ghosts of the past.

Though coal mining was dying as an industry in the county, another new source of county wealth and notoriety was entering the picture; or perhaps it could more accurately be said that Grand County was entering motion pictures. The movie industry had captivated Americans, continuing to grow even through the Depression as it began to carve its own channel into the American psyche. By the 1940s some Hollywood directors were looking beyond the studio sets, sound lots, and neighboring region of Southern California in their attempt to find both greater authenticity of setting and lower production costs. Director John Ford was impressed with the area around Moab as a setting for his westerns. On 3 November 1949 the *Times-Independent* editorial informed readers that Ford's production crew was coming to the area to film *The Wagonmaster.* Bish Taylor hailed it as a "new enterprise" for Moab and called on citizens to make it a positive experience for the film-makers.

Taylor earlier had introduced John Ford to area resident George



Movie Set fort for *Rio Grande*, filmed on George White's ranch fifteen miles upriver from Moab, 1950. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

White, who had a ranch near Castle Valley that Ford found suitable for the movie and its many different settings. The making of the movie provided a welcome economic stimulus to Moab merchants but was challenging from a logistical standpoint of providing services—particularly lodging—for the actors and film crews. With the help of tents and other temporary makeshift arrangements, production was completed, apparently to Ford's satisfaction, as the director was back in the area the next year filming a new movie, *Rio Grande*, starring John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara.[7]

The movies also brought temporary employment as extras to many Moab and other county residents besides providing them the emotional pride and satisfaction of being in motion pictures. George White, Bish Taylor, and other community leaders realized the economic benefits and publicity that could come to the region by being a regular shooting location for movies, but they also knew that in

order for that to happen, it would be necessary to coordinate local efforts and improve the facilities of the small rural city and county. Not only would food and lodging problems have to be planned for in advance but also it would be desirable to secure permissions to use private lands (permits for public land use were not required in those days). Public officials also would need to be informed and courted to secure their cooperation. George White helped form an informal committee in 1949 to help coordinate activities and solve problems connected with attracting film-makers to the area.

The Moab Film Commission marks its beginnings with George White's citizen committee of 1949 and is the longest-lived continuously operating film commission in the world, helping set an example for dozens of other like-minded organizations throughout the nation and elsewhere. The early committee's activities involved educating the local populace about film-making, including trying to convince local residents that the inconvenience and disruption such activities brought to the peaceful area were worth it from an economic standpoint. The film committee soon realized that promotion of the area to potential film-makers was necessary to acquaint them with Grand County's benefits. George White was sent by the committee to Hollywood, where he helped secure another western, *Battle of Apache Pass,* which was filmed in the area in 1952.

Bette Stanton, longtime Moab Film Commission director and historian, has written that local film promotion efforts were aided by the fact that Hollywood directors were filming many westerns and other epics at the time—emphasizing sweeping landscapes (where the beauty of Grand County was an advantage)—as they sought to hold their own against the up-and-coming television industry. Although Moab had definite liabilities with its few telephone circuits (the city had just switched to a dial system in December 1949) and limited lodging facilities, it had the advantages of its natural beauty and its generally enthusiastic film committee and populace. The fact that wages and service costs were less in Grand County than they would have been in Hollywood also didn't hurt local promotion efforts.[8] Local residents were generally happy with the situation, and the newspaper prominently mentioned the film activities.

The film committee solicited funds and other assistance from

local businesses and individuals, assuring that it would stay vital throughout the 1950s promoting Moab and the general region to Hollywood's film-makers and studio heads. The effort was quite successful—ten major Hollywood films were made in Moab during the decade, and though a few were potboilers of marginal quality and box-office appeal, many featured notable actors and actresses. One, *Son of Cochise,* was to be in the new technicolor and 3-D format, a fact which helped it gain large headlines in the *Times-Independent* for 25 June 1953. All of the films were westerns or action adventures, taking advantage of the area's scenic beauty.[9] Directors and set-builders were kept busy trying to make good use of the natural advantages and sometimes fickle weather conditions. One producer, Howard Christie, waited three years for local water runoff conditions to be right for his movie *Smoke Signal,* filmed in 1954.

Film production would likely have been even more successful had not the local situation been complicated by the uranium boom beginning in the early 1950s. Moab's population soared as a result, stretching local facilities and services to their breaking point. Also, mining and prospecting activity interfered with some potential movie locations. The resulting prosperity brought about by uranium induced some locals to deemphasize movie making, believing it to be no longer necessary for regional economic vitality. The later decline of the uranium-mining industry and resulting economic depression in the area showed how important it was for the local economy to have more than a one-industry economic base, and film-making promotion was aggressively returned to with a hope born of desperation. Fortunately, some residents had continued to promote the movie industry, and the area's beauty had attracted some directors even during the boom times when lodging and communication facilities were almost nonexistent. Although film-production in the area has had its peaks and valleys, every decade has seen rather extensive filming in the area, and the 1960s especially witnessed the filming of some major Hollywood features, including *The Comancheros* (1961), *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1963), and *Cheyenne Autumn* (1963), among others. To facilitate movie promotion, the Moab Movie Committee, as it was called in those days, began to work closely with the Moab Chamber of Commerce.[10]

The chamber of commerce for Grand County had been reorganized at Moab in 1949 and was announced in the *Times-Independent* of 13 October that year. The year before saw a new visitation record at Arches—1,515 in the month of August alone. This increase in tourism was facilitated by a new bridge over the Green River that was completed in May 1948, improving access to the county.

Besides the ethical responsibility that whites had for helping preserve surviving elements of the Native American heritage, county residents were becoming increasingly aware of the economic value of preserving the area's archaeological treasures. On 17 March 1949 the Moab paper lamented the "vandalizing" of the famous "mastodon petroglyph" near Moab; and though this was later found to be natural damage, the paper's response did indicate an increasing awareness and vigilance on behalf of the area's treasures, be they natural or human-made. It also illustrates the frustration and disgust felt by the majority for the vandalism practiced by a few. Little could be done at the time to stop the depredation. The Federal Antiquities Law of 1906 made it illegal to remove or deface artifacts on federal land, and private landowners could file trespass or other charges against offenders if they could catch the culprits in the act; however, that *if* was a large one, and it would be decades before laws would be strengthened (with the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979) and more aggressive countermeasures taken against thieves and vandals of the area's archaeological and natural treasures.

Vandalism had been a concern of area communities since at least the inception of the paper in 1896 with its lament about watermelon stealing and other juvenile pranks and crimes. Such laments occurred often in succeeding years, perhaps revealing that area youths were bored and lacked more constructive outlets for their energies. Much of it, however, can probably be ascribed to more natural youthful rebelliousness and high spirits, and perhaps its coverage in the newspaper is due in great part to the lack of other news and the increased awareness in a small town of minor incidents. Certainly Moab was no longer the "toughest town" in Utah.

Moab was getting to be among the busiest towns in Utah, however. The uranium boom had begun. The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was created in 1946, after World War II ushered in the

atomic age. It was a civilian body, charged with controlling and managing U.S. uranium production, among other things. In 1947 the *Times-Independent* reported on 17 April that AEC officials had met with locals interested in uranium production to explain their policies and licensing procedures. The agency tried to keep prices low initially—paying from 35 cents a pound for 0.2-percent ore up to $1.10 for 2-percent ore—working in conjunction with large suppliers, leading to unhappiness from small uranium-ore producers. Within two weeks, local uranium producers (who had the unrealistic dream of $5.00 a pound for top-grade ore) had organized to seek higher prices, according to an article in the paper on 1 May. This had little immediate effect, although early in 1948 the AEC publicly announced its revised plans to purchase uranium ores.[11] Prices and policies were somewhat better—$1.50 a pound for average grade ore—but miners throughout the Colorado Plateau region were not happy with the up-and-down policies and unstable conditions.[12]

In November 1948 the majority of county voters went with the Republican party in national as well as most state and local races, signalling that the New Deal was a thing of the past in the county as a bright future seemed to be looming on the horizon. Later that year, on 2 December, the newspaper informed readers that a University of Utah study forecasted future prosperity for southeastern Utah because of the area's natural resources. Census figures for 1950 showed that Moab had 1,272 residents—up from 1,084 in 1940; but that rate of growth would soon seem less than modest: Moab's population would quadruple in less than five years.

Uranium prospecting and mining activity were staples of local newspaper reporting from 1948 on, as significant activity was taking place throughout the plateau region—particularly in southwestern Colorado and in San Juan County, Utah. As Grand County entered the new decade, however, uranium mining did not dominate its news. Locals were cheered when the Grand County High School boys football team—the Red Devils—advanced to the Class-B state championship game; however, the Moab team lost the title game to Millard High School. The 23 November edition of the newspaper that reported that unpleasant fact also included an article about local stockmen being unhappy with BLM grazing regulations—there were



Moab in 1955 at the height of the uranium boom. This photo shows that geiger counters were being sold at a former hamburger stand in the rapidly changing town. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

too many sheep on the range. Improvements were made to Moab's sewer and water system in 1951; but the timing was not the best—the tremendous influx of people to the town in the next few years almost immediately made the improved system inadequate.

Area oil-production activity began to revive after the war, and on 25 January 1951 the paper reported that oil had been struck at Cane Creek, seven miles southwest of Moab. The newspaper itself underwent a change in 1952, altering its format and design. It also increased its subscription rate—from $2.50 to $3.00 per year. The county's longtime sheriff, John Skewes, died of a heart attack in February 1952, and three months later, on 8 May, high runoff put the Moab–Castle Valley road temporarily under water. Fatal automobile accidents were

becoming more common in the county, state, and nation, beginning to prompt increased attention to the problem. Republicans swept to victory in November that year as free-enterprise and anti-communism talk was common in Grand County, as elsewhere.

On 1 March 1951 the *Times-Independent* reported that the Atomic Energy Commission had raised the prices it would pay for uranium discoveries to $3.50 a pound for 0.2 percent ore, and that it would buy all that could be produced for at least eight years. In addition, a discovery bonus for new deposits of up to $35,000 was also offered to prospectors. This policy was spurred by national insecurity caused by the developing Cold War with the Soviet Union and the hot war then being conducted in Korea against communist foes. This was the bonanza locals had been longing for, spurring greatly increased exploration and mining activity in the area. Area ore production almost doubled in 1951 alone—jumping to 630 tons, and it continued to grow in the following years.[13]

Nothing seems to equal a mining boom in its power to attract fortune hunters, and uranium prospecting was no exception. As word spread of successful claims in the region, hundreds and soon thousands flocked to the plateau with the hope of striking it rich. Some were trained geologists, others didn't even know what they were looking for. Business people would leave their desk jobs and scour the countryside on weekends and vacations. An article in the Moab paper on 24 July 1952 reported the distress of hundreds of miners when the federal government announced that mining claims on federal oil-lease reserve lands might be invalid, casting a cloud over hundreds of mining claims. This was just one of the regulations, restrictions, and policy shifts that came to characterize and confuse the industry.

With the government the only buyer of a material that was not only valuable but fundamentally dangerous—an item of national security—those involved in the industry soon found themselves in a situation more complex than traditional mining activity. Yet, paradoxically, in its urgency to secure uranium for military purposes, the government urged and enticed individual citizens to go out in a most unregulated way to find uranium deposits—setting up a potential fundamental clash between the ideal of the self-reliant individual

working on his or her own and the bureaucratic regulatory machinery of a huge government system.

Little was done in the early years of the boom to inform miners and the general public of the health hazards of prolonged or intense radiation exposure, as health officials and investigators were only themselves becoming better aware of the problem. The majority of uranium workers and the local public did not want to hear information that might negatively affect the booming economy. They joined with uranium company executives in downplaying information of health concern and in resisting attempts to gain health data and impose safety regulations on the industry. The prevailing attitude seemed to be to enjoy the prosperity brought by the boom times, leaving problems—whether they be environmental or health-related—to be addressed later.

The government itself had not stressed health concerns in the early part of the boom. A pamphlet published in 1953, and presumably made available by the government, entitled "What the Uranium Prospector Should Know About Radiation," by Robert J. Wright, a geologist for the AEC, explained different types of radiation and radioactive elements, and one would expect a word of caution in this little work designed to "make you and your geiger counter a more effective exploration team." However, danger is a word never used or even implied—the only possible health-related item is the "effect" of radon gas in deep mine workings, and this effect is never explained.[14] The government, like the industry, seemed only interested in uranium production in the early 1950s—the real or potential dangers and long-risk health problems did not enter fully into its military and economic equations.

Howard Balsley related some interesting stories about the confused situation in the industry during the first years after World War II, when government officials were trying to formulate national policies for this top-secret element about which few of them had the faintest knowledge. For example, Balsley wrote that although in 1945 the government had taken over the operation of all plants in the nation that had anything to do with uranium, including Vitro Chemical for which he gathered ore, as late as January 1947 government officials still had not established a program for handling the

uranium-bearing ores being mined in Grand County and other areas of the West. Balsley was told at the time by both influential politicians and military personnel that they did not know the first thing about this new element they had been directed to protect and develop.[15] Compounded by Cold War tension and anti-communist paranoia exemplified by the congressional hearings of U.S. senator Joseph McCarthy, the era was an exciting but confusing one.

The great discovery of uranium pitchblende ore that helped turn mining activity into a frenzy was made by an unemployed geologist from Texas, Charlie Steen, who was living with his family in the Cisco area of Grand County, after having spent the winter of 1950–51 in the Yellow Cat Flat area north of Arches National Monument. Steen had been staking claims in the area since 1950, but was on the verge of having to discontinue his mining activity when he made his great strike at his "Mi Vida" claim in the Big Indian Mining District, south of La Sal in San Juan County, on 6 July 1952. The article in the *Times-Independent* of 4 September 1952 reported the find, and though the news was of sufficient interest to gain six inches of column space in the newspaper, it was published two months after the strike. Had Bish Taylor known the impact it would have, an appropriate news headline could have filled the front page.

The story of Steen's uranium discovery is dramatic and has been retold (and perhaps exaggerated) in a number of publications and need not be repeated in detail here. The tale of a down-on-his-luck prospector who could not even afford regular uranium detection equipment has a broad appeal. The story's appeal grows when it is related that the samples that revealed the strike were the last Steen was able to get before his makeshift drilling equipment broke down. It may well have inspired other tales, for historian Raye Ringholz reports that many fantastic uranium discovery stories were concocted in the early days of the boom.[16] The government's incentives and purchasing policies spurred the efforts of hundred of individual prospectors and even more "weekend recreational miners" who scattered over the countryside looking for their own "Mi Vida" mine. Within a short time, the hitherto bustling area was even more radically transformed into an almost unbelievable hive of activity, with thousands of claims being registered. Moab, as the largest town in the area,

became the center of activity for area uranium mining, and it is no understatement to say that the growth of the town was explosive. Its population began to grow rapidly in 1953 and quadrupled within three years, radically changing forever the quiet town.

Charlie Steen moved to Moab in 1953 and set up his UTEX mining company's headquarters there with four major partners, including his mother, Rose Shumway, who had sold her house to help finance his activities, and the man who had grubstaked him in the lean years, William McCormick. All became wealthy. Steen soon began to boost uranium in the area on television and in print, and he became a media darling. His rags-to-riches story was a good one, and a number of historians have studied Steen as well as the industry.[17] Steen had a knack for publicity. Within a few months, he threw a lavish party for townsfolk that was reported in the 4 June 1953 issue of the *Times-Independent.* By December he had bought out two of his partners in UTEX, Dan O'Laurie and R. M. Barrett, paying them more than $3 million for their original investment a few months before of about $19,000. Steen and O'Laurie had disagreed on expansion plans for a uranium mill; in addition, Steen seemed to need full control of any enterprise in which he was involved. Steen constructed a lavish, modern mansion complete with swimming pool on a hillside ridge north of town and began to freely spend some of the fabulous wealth that was coming his way from his mining claims and investments. The Mi Vida mine itself was estimated to contain more than a million tons of uranium ore.

Unproven wildcat claims were soon selling for as much as $10,000, as people clamored to get a piece of the action. Many would-be investors had little or no knowledge of what they were doing, but a means was soon found to involve thousands of fortune-seekers in the boom. The uranium penny stock market was born in the early 1950s and soon became a major phenomenon in itelf. Aggressive brokers, financiers, and developers began to take advantage of Utah's lax securities' laws and regulations, forming public-stock corporations ostensibly to mine and develop uranium-containing property on the Colorado Plateau. Though some companies were well managed and had legitimate mining prospects, others were less sound, and some were fraudulent.

The scramble for wealth created by the boom was coupled with the low price of stock shares—often a penny a share, hence the name of the market—and the inexperience of many stock dealers and brokers to create a most unstable marketplace. This in turn helped attract and shield experienced con men and others intent only on defrauding a gullible and greedy public. Stock-offering companies were formed overnight, often with assets that amounted to barely more than the paper the stock certificates were printed on. Rumors ran rampant in Salt Lake City (the market center) and in Moab, as those seeking "inside" information rushed to invest—although it was actually more like a form of gambling to many. Investors often would invest small sums of money on hunches as a type of recreation. Stock trading was done at coffee-shop counters, among other unlikely locations, in an atmosphere of activity that continued to create its own momentum regardless of the actual worth of the stocks. In a special editon published in 1954, the *Times-Independent* warned potential local investors that "if a prospector or mining company sells stocks on the market it is a pretty sure bet that the company is not yet producing ore." The advice was sound, but it was often disregarded in the rush for riches.

May 1954 marked the peak of penny-stock activity at the Salt Lake Stock Exchange: more than 7 million shares were traded on 27 May alone. The stock market went crazy during what have come to be called the "five days in May." In the words of Raye Ringholz: "The public became infatuated with the seductive penny market and started playing it like a crap game. Brisk trading increased stocks six, eight, and sometimes twenty times the opening price. Mines that had been engaged in exploratory drilling began to tap into uranium. Companies that had started on a shoestring found major financing."[18] Many people periodically invested $50 or $100 on a hot tip, with virtually no information (or concern) about the company in which they were investing. Ringholz wrote that only a handful of companies had "even a whiff of ore," but that fact didn't stop stock promoters from selling their stock. The market was not only volatile but often inaccurate due to poor bookkeeping practices and also to wild price fluctuations as a result of major sales or purchases of stock.[19]

An indication of the stock market boom is seen in the fact that

in 1952 there were twenty Salt Lake brokerage firms, which employed about 100 people; by mid-1955 there were more than eighty firms, with more than 450 salespeople. Many were tiny and poorly run by inexperienced managers. Some not only misled investors but were themselves misled in their own enthusiasm and by their haphazard business practices. There were no regulations in Utah for non-felons to get a security broker's license—only a $25 fee was necessary—leading to a situation where, as Ringholz writes, "just about anyone who wasn't currently in prison could sell over-the-counter stock."[20]

Some companies and dealers operated out of Nevada where regulations were even more lax than in Utah. Fraud was common, but business was booming—at times the daily volume of uranium shares in Salt Lake City was more than that of the New York Stock Exchange. By the beginning of 1955 almost 850 million shares and $20 million worth of uranium stock had been sold. The greed and gullibility of the public seemed to have no limits, prompting the Moab *Times-Independent* to periodically warn investors of the risks. Investors made (and lost) large amounts of money throughout the boom period of the market. Much of the profit and loss, however, was only on paper: Ringholz reported that one investor lamented he had lost $3,000 in a short period of time; but only $18 of this sum represented actual cash. Others made real money, however. Gary Shumway reported that stock offerings of Federal Uranium jumped from a penny to twenty cents a share in less than five months. Another company with claims near Steen's Mi Vida opened at twenty cents; a month later its stock was at $2.25 per share.[21]

After May 1954 the market began to calm somewhat, but it remained active until federal regulators and other authorities began to crack down on fraudulent schemes and mismanaged companies, both mining and brokerage firms. In June federal agents of the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) began to investigate the Utah securities market, as did also the National Association of Securities Dealers. Tighter regulations were soon put in force, and the SEC also began to indict certain stock dealers, although most of the gross profiteers remained unpunished. This helped bring the uranium penny stock boom to a standstill by early 1956. Stock prices began to tum-

ble, and thousands of investors were left with nothing to show but a stack of stock certificates, many with only aesthetic value.

The situation of buyer ignorance was compounded by the fact that government national security regulations prohibited legitimate uranium mining companies from making known detailed information about the ore reserves and quality of the uranium being mined. Moabites should perhaps have been better informed about many of the mining companies due to their proximity to the arena of activity, but the situation was so volatile and complex, with mergers and other corporate restructuring complicating the picture, that locals were victimized by others and by their own greed. On 21 April 1954 the *Salt Lake Tribune* published an article under the heading "Moab Becoming a Lawyer's Paradise," alluding to the myriad local problems developing over mining companies, stock certificates, and land sales and leases in the scramble for wealth that accompanied the boom.

The combination of tightened regulations, financial losses, and saturation of legitimate prospecting activity in the plateau helped bring the market and prospecting boom to a slowdown by the beginning of 1956. Until that happened, however, the uranium penny stock market had a tremendous impact in Utah, and certainly in Grand County. Although no major uranium discoveries were made in Grand County, thousands of mining claims were recorded within the county, and there were a few producing strikes. The major discoveries were made to the south and east, but Moab was at the heart of the action and was likely the most transformed of any town in the area. In fact, a national article by Elizabeth Pope in *McCall's* magazine of December 1956 called it "the richest town in the U.S.A."[22]

Loren Taylor suffered a stroke in 1953 and was forced to relinquish editorial duties at the *Times-Independent.* Taylor retained ownership of the newspaper, but his active involvement in civic affairs was sorely missed—especially in the turmoil of the coming uranium boom years. He had served as city clerk for many years, and also was a member for more than a decade on the county commission; he also chaired the grazing district advisory board and was superintendent of the local hospital, among other civic contributions—many without any monetary remuneration. He had investments in oil and other companies besides the newspaper. He has been called the "Father of

Grand County" for his many civic contributions and leadership during crucial years of county development, and it would be hard to think of another person as important to the county as Taylor.

Beverly Spencer leased the management of the paper for two years from Taylor and took over as newspaper editor in July 1953; but the explosive growth of the town soon led to Spencer's sharing editorial duties with his wife, Juanita. Large headlines in the paper on 30 July 1953 celebrated the upcoming one-hundredth birthday of Dr. J. W. Williams on 3 August. When asked to what he attributed his long life, Williams replied that he didn't have a theory but that "the main thing is to live to make friends and to grant their requests if you can, especially if they ask you to have a drink." The newspaper began to feature more ads for goods and services, including out-of-town ads, such as those for Salt Lake City mining and drilling equipment companies, for example. Items of mining interest and local concern came to dominate the paper more than ever as national features, including comics and sports stories, began to disappear from the paper's pages.

Community growth was reflected in some of the newspaper's advertisements of new stores and services. Moab was gaining all the businesses one would expect from a bustling small city. For example, on 18 February 1954 the *Times-Independent* reported that a drive-in movie theater, the Nu-Vue, was being built; and the theater opened a couple of months later. Business people and other professionals also began to move to Moab to serve the expanding needs of the area. Likewise, religious denominations were moving to the area to serve newcomers. By 11 November 1954 the church column of the paper listed eight different religious groups: Community Baptist (which was about to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in Moab), Southern Baptist, LDS, Seventh-day Adventist, Assembly of God, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and nondenominational Christian.

Success in uranium mining seemed to spark other successful activity in oil exploration. On 11 February 1954 the Moab newspaper reported that a new well at Cisco had struck oil; and slightly more than a month later, on 18 March, huge headlines heralded a new discovery by Monte G. Mason's M.G.M. Petroleum Company at Cane Creek near Moab with a test output of 2,666 barrels per day. Though oil discoveries in the county never reached bonanza proportions,

producing wells were established in the years to come in a number of areas, boosting the county's economy, as did the actual drilling and exploration of sites, whether or not the wells ever became productive. Monte Mason in particular was credited with zealously promoting area oil potential, even to the extent of being accused with misrepresenting certain prospects. Although officials were not as tolerant, grateful Moabites forgave him his errors, happy with the oil-drilling and exploratory activity he helped bring to the region after World War II. Producing oil wells would now finally contribute to the county's economy after more than a half-century of high hopes.

The newspaper, however, could no longer ignore some of the problems that were beginning to be manifest with the growing boom times. On 25 March 1954 the *Times-Independent* reprinted an editorial from the *Ogden Standard Examiner* of two days earlier, describing the woes and problems associated with the boom in Moab. On 15 April, under the title "Growing Pains," Beverly Spencer editorialized about the problems population growth brought to water and sewer systems as well as to education and housing in the area. Moab had doubled its population of 1,200 people in the twelve months just passed. The next week, the paper's editorial was entitled "More Publicity, More People, More Problems." In April, Moab voters had approved a school bond to help improve the increasingly overstressed classroom facilities. On 6 May another editorial urged the adoption of sanitation, building code, and traffic ordinances to help the city cope with the influx of people. Talk was revived of building a dam on Pack Creek to help provide water to Moab, and on 27 May the paper published a zoning map to help guide development in the city.

UTEX held another party for area residents at the Moab airport hanger on 5 June 1954, at which there were more than 3,000 people in attendance eating ham and potato salad. Such parties became annual events for a number of years, with as many as 8,000 people coming from throughout the region to attend the festivities. In July the newspaper informed its readers of plans for a radio station—KQKW—in Moab as soon as land for facilities and transmitter could be located. Like many other period projects, this one seemed to be more planning than execution. If the station was established, it was short-lived. Other developments did come to fruition, however. On

22 July, Moab's first subdivision—the Grandview—was announced. Moab was becoming a bustling little city. Natural gas also was coming to—and through—the area. Plans for a pipeline through the county were announced by Pacific Northwest Pipeline Corporation in July, with construction to begin in August.

The strains of rapid growth continued to mount, however. Officials scrambled to enact ordinances to help control the situation, and on 14 October the paper published some of them to help inform the citizenry of what was expected of them. A week later it was announced that there would be double shifts in city schools due to the unprecedented number of students and lack of physical facilities to house them. On 4 November 1954 plans were announced for a new elementary school to be built as soon as possible to help ease the crunch. Charlie Steen donated the land on which the school was to be built. Area mining news competed with local news to fill the paper's pages; oil and mining activity around Cisco made it the only other inhabited part of the county somewhat regularly mentioned in the *Times-Independent.*

There were also unexpected troubles: airplane crashes began to be more common in the region, and automobile fatalities continued to rise. On 5 August 1954 the newspaper reported that the U.S. Department of Health was beginning to examine uranium miners as information about the hazards of the material was becoming more known. In that same issue, mention was made of the exploding uranium penny stock market; there were also rumors of fraud and boom/bust speculation. Anything that threatened the newfound economic bonanza was downplayed by many in the community, but some community members were beginning to have serious doubts about the ultimate benefits of such unrestrained and rapid growth.

On 7 March 1957 the paper published an article by city administrator Ellis Foote that presents a concise summary of many of the problems faced by the town in 1954. Foote was writing to defend the administration of Moab mayor Ken McDougald and other local officials. He pointed out that within a few months the population of the town had unexpectedly tripled—something the small town had not expected; nor could it be expected to have the resources or facilities to handle such a population explosion. Tent villages sprang up around

the area, with some men living in the open and families dwelling in chicken coops, sheds, and other makeshift structures. The sewer system was overloaded; raw sewage flowed in some Moab streets during the bleakest period, prompting great concern about epidemics, including dreaded polio. Thankfully, Moab never experienced a serious epidemic during the period of inadequate sanitation facilities.

Ellis Foote listed the accomplishments of city and county officials in the face of such problems. A planning commission had been appointed to try to manage growth, and uniform building codes and zoning ordinances were enacted. There were also water and sewer ordinances, a garbage disposal ordinance, plumbing and electrical codes enacted, and a board of health appointed. A modern sewage treatment plant was constructed along with 10,000 feet of sewer trunk line; 13,000 feet of new water lines were installed and the city's water supply was tripled. These lines were connected to city trailer courts and to the more than 150 new houses built during the period.

The frenzy of uranium mining did nothing to boost agricultural production in the county, which remained of limited importance in the 1950s. In the U.S. Census of Agriculture for 1954, Grand County was among the top five corn-producing counties in the state but was low in almost all other categories, especially grain production. County fruit trees produced a moderate amount of peaches and cherries, as well as some apples, making fruit the only crop of any exportable quantity. Hay production was the lowest in the state. The county had the second-lowest number of farms at fifty-nine (Daggett County had forty-nine), and it was lowest in farm acreage under cultivation. Livestock production was similar: the county was among the three lowest poultry producers and was lowest of all Utah counties in the value of livestock sold—a figure which included cattle, hogs, sheep, horses, and mules—a far cry from a few decades earlier when ranching was Grand County's major industry.[23]

Things became even more wild in 1955 as growth continued unabated. Uranium frenzy is an apt description of the area at the time. The success of Charlie Steen and a few others continued to attract hundreds of newcomers to the region, either looking for uranium or to service those who were prospecting. Many of them located in Moab where there was at least a semblance of services and

facilities, although most of these facilities were severely overtaxed. It has been reported that at the height of the boom, those with the means would fly their planes to Grand Junction or Wasatch Front communities to go shopping or even to make an important telephone call. Others would make a long automobile drive of five or six hours for the same purpose. Phone calls were limited to three minutes, and it was impossible to get a phone line without sharing it with other customers, often as many as a dozen. The Midland Telephone Company had a 150-line telephone system with only five long-distance circuits at the beginning of the boom activity; on 20 January 1955 the newspaper reported that it was upgrading its system as rapidly as possible. On 7 March the *Times-Independent* announced that Mountain Bell was investing $200,000 to improve the local long-distance phone system.

Other utilities were also overburdened. The paper reported on 27 January 1955 that a city planner had advocated a "brown out" for area lawns that coming summer as a way to conserve the city's limited water supply. Sewer system use was up 300 percent, and the planner recommended spending more than $166,000 for improvements to the sewer and water systems (which had just been upgraded four years before). In that same issue, the paper notified readers that Utah Power & Light Company was going to bring a new 100,000-volt line to the Moab area. It then editorialized that Moab had three main problems to meet: a housing shortage, a shortage of school facilities, and an overburdened water/sewer system. The population was estimated as "at least 4,294" with 534 new families arriving the previous year alone. Out of 865 families in town, the editorial estimated that 426 were inadequately housed. It proposed a solution of joint federal grants (50 percent) and loans at 2 percent interest (as was being done in Alaska), since it was the government that was responsible for the boom, with the AEC encouraging the hunt for uranium that was overpowering the county's resources.

Stock certificates floated around Moab like money and were often used in barter or exchange for groceries or other goods and services. Lawsuits were common, as were accusations of claim-jumping and other complaints. The Spencers wrote an editorial on 24 March 1955 lamenting the greed that was becoming common in Moab, changing

the nature of the town and its inhabitants in their lust to get a large share of the newfound wealth by aggressive and sometimes even fraudulent means. Two weeks later the *Times-Independent* had a new editor, H. R. Holiday, a Colorado newspaperman, who now had the stimulating but mammoth task of reporting on the unprecedented boom. On 14 April, Holiday reported that Ralph Miller's Moab Co-op store was expanding—just one among the dozens of newly established or recently expanded and revitalized enterprises in the county. On 19 May, Holiday called for improved water supplies as the key to Moab's growth; a week later he and other residents were cheered when the federal Housing and Home Finance Agency approved a grant of $113,000 and a loan of $49,000 to aid in improving the local water and sewer systems. Water was crucial for life in the desert area of the Colorado Plateau; Moab's culinary water was supplied by springs normally discharging 50–60 gallons per minute and was stored in a tank of 400,000-gallon capacity. By 9 June the *Times-Independent* reported that the tank was already only half full, with the heart of the summer yet to come.

Water—and any other potential woe—was virtually forgotten on 23 June 1955 when the paper proclaimed that a "new era" was beginning for Moab and the surrounding area: UTEX had announced plans to build an $8 million uranium processing mill directly north of Moab by the banks of the Colorado River. A major industrial plant had finally come to Moab, with a promise of large-scale employment. Charlie Steen built the mill because existing uranium-processing mills could not keep up with the mining production on the Colorado Plateau. According to Raye Ringholz, by the mid-1950s there were almost 600 uranium-producing enterprises in operation; production figures were doubling every eighteen months, and more than 8,000 people were employed in the region's mines and mills.

The huge mill was a gamble, but Steen was a gambler. He formed a new company—Uranium Reduction Company (URECO)—to build and manage the mill and also purchased a local motel in Moab to accomodate some of his employees. He later developed a 160-acre tract, nicknamed Steenville, on the north part of town, where he built extensive employee housing for employees of UTEX and URECO. At the time, employment in local construction was booming: on 30 June the paper reported that, counting the new mill, there were $14 mil-

lion worth of construction projects underway in the area, including new hospital facilities, a new highway to Crescent Junction, a new bridge across the Colorado River, a new elementary school, and new housing for the continued migration of newcomers to the town.

The year 1955 was in many respects the high (or low) point of Moab as a boom town: a time when explosive growth was continuing unabated, but where a supporting service and facilities infrastructure was not yet in place, and in which the actual construction and establishment of such an infrastructure actually added to the turmoil. Stories of the turmoil of the times are legion, and they add the human dimension to the bare recital of the historical situation. Unfortunately, only a few examples can be included in these pages.[24] For example, local service station operator Curt Robertson told of selling some gas on credit to a UTEX employee and was rewarded with the company's business—his own gasoline sales jumping from 35,000 gallons a month to as much as 576,000 gallons a month. He came to employ eighteen others as a result.[25]

The school situation illustrates some of the problems. At the beginning of the 1955 school year in September, enrollment in Moab schools was 1,032 students—up 18 percent from the year before. The new elementary school had been completed on the land donated by Charlie Steen, easing some of the load that had to be managed by Grand County school superintendent Helen M. Knight, for whom the new school was named. At one time, school shifts had to have triple sessions, three students at times shared one desk, and twelve grades were housed in one building. To add to the already overloaded resources, the district also began to supply free lunches to schoolchildren, since so many were dependents of destitute prospectors scouring the countryside for that elusive bonanza strike.[26]

Things were changing rapidly around Moab, causing delight as well as consternation. Many new businesses were coming to town, and both new and long-established merchants were thrilled with the rapid population growth; but they were not as happy on 1 December 1955 when the paper reported a new tax levy on Moab businesses. Earlier, in July, city officials had authorized parking meters to be installed in downtown Moab—an act that even today would raise eyebrows, and that certainly caused much controversy then in what

only a few years before had been a sleepy little hamlet. However, Moab and Grand County were desperate for revenues to help provide services for the city, which could be described as exploding at the seams. According to a newspaper report of 29 December 1955, the city budget for 1956 was an unprecedented $122,082.

In its first edition of 1956 the *Times-Independent* reported that building permits had been approved for structures whose combined value was more than $2 million; they included the new bridge across the Colorado River and a new post office. Postal receipts had soared from about $8,000 a year before the boom to more than $80,000 a year—necessitating three moves to larger quarters before the new building was completed.[27] Moab also got its first traffic light early in 1956, as well as a laundromat—both signs of a new era. Life was more complex than before, if only because now there were more people to get into trouble. Legal notices were now a major feature of the paper; reports of crime and fraud regularly could be found in its pages; some involved the uranium penny stock market, but a great deal of crime was local. In fact, on 19 April 1956, the newspaper in Moab reported that a curfew was being enacted in part due to many break-ins, burglaries, and other crimes.

The newspaper itself was in a state of transition during the period. On 28 July 1955 H. R. Holiday was listed as publisher, but the new editor was Mack Turner; Loren Taylor still retained ownership of the newspaper, leasing it to the men. The front-page masthead soon boasted a nuclear atom device with the words "Uranium Capital of the World"—a slogan it would employ for decades to follow. By 12 April 1956 there was a new publisher, Clifford Halls, though Turner continued as editor. The press of news had led to many minor errors creeping into the published reports—more, it seems, than had been usual before. Like other Moab establishments, the resources of the newspaper were put to a test during the period.

The Taylor family had been dissatisfied with the management of the paper, and by July 1956 another editorial change was made: Samuel Taylor, college-age son of Bish Taylor, took over as publisher after returning to Moab from a five-year absence at school and in military service. Although Sam Taylor originally began working at the paper only to help it get out from under its debts and make it more marketable for sale, he soon decided to make it his career, in the

process also managing to get a degree in journalism from the University of Utah. Taylor switched majors from geology—which he had studied prior to being drafted into the military in 1953 (serving in Japan and Korea)—and, in a tremendously accelerated program, was able to get his degree in three quarters of course work, involving twenty-nine round-trips in thirty-one weeks between Moab and the campus, most by railroad from Thompson to Salt Lake City.[28] It was soon apparent that, like his father, he was a natural as a small-town newspaper editor, combining a love of the area with insight, passion, and leadership qualities which would help direct and influence county and regional affairs for what is now forty years and still counting.

Sam Taylor was doubtless surprised at the transformation of Moab in the years he had been away, and things were still happening at an almost feverish pace; but he was aided in this period of accommodation by the fact that the boom was starting to slow down after almost four years of frenzied growth. The slowdown was at its root due to a change in government policy: by 1956 the AEC was no longer encouraging unlimited prospecting and production of uranium, though it would be a few years before the government would halt its purchases of uranium ore. Scandal in the stock market was also a factor. In addition, consolidation within the uranium industry had begun to eliminate some of the small producers who had helped begin the boom; large companies now controlled most of the valuable properties, and with the scouring of the area by armies of prospectors, there were no longer many finds of importance. These facts didn't deter some from seeing other culprits closer at hand. An editorial on 10 May 1956 said that the boom was now over and that in part it had been ruined by taxes and the high cost of living in Moab. On 12 July the paper claimed that parking meters were making a "ghost town" of Moab. A week after Sam Taylor took over the paper, however, the editorial on 26 July said that the end of the boom was a good thing—the area could now move on to solid, steady growth on a firm foundation.

Historian Gary Shumway suggests that 1956 marks the second phase of the boom—the phase of consolidation after the wild days of exploration. The AEC had made the major commitment to support the nuclear industry by continuing to purchase uranium ore, even with its massive stockpiles, until private enterprise with its associated

plans for domestic nuclear-generated power plants became a major factor—something the government calculated would occur in the mid-1960s. The weeding out of the small producers as well as fraudulent and mismanaged companies also allowed for the consolidation of the uranium mining industry with only a handful of important players, including UTEX and URECO.[29]

Although the growth was tapering off from its earlier pace, many aspects of the boom were definitely *not* over. In fact, 1956 was the year that seemed to bring most boom-related publicity from both outside media and local economic boosters. The week after its comments on the baneful effects of parking meters, the paper's headlines proclaimed that building permits in the purported "ghost town" had topped $1.2 million for the first six months of the year. Earlier, on 26 April, the Delhi-Taylor Oil Company had made headlines with its plan to develop county potash reserves—a move that would come to have tremendous economic benefits for the county.

Other activities were also booming—one, unfortunately, all too literally. That same April issue of the newspaper reported an explosion on Pacific Northwest's natural-gas transmission pipeline being laid near Moab. The blast caused a power failure in the town by knocking down nearby power lines. Three months later, on 26 July, the *Times-Independent* was happy to report that natural gas was available in Moab. Tourism and public relations were not neglected. On 17 May the paper announced an area-wide competition for "Miss Atomic Energy of 1956 of the Colorado Plateau," and in mid-August the town of Moab celebrated "Uranium Days"—a two-day festival. A proposal by state officials to create a system of state parks was reported in the 21 June issue of the newspaper, and Dead Horse Point was mentioned prominently as a possible park in the system. It was hoped by county residents that this would bring in more tourist dollars to Moab, the closest town to the proposed park.[30]

The article by Elizabeth Pope, "The Richest Town in the U.S.A.," was featured in the December 1956 issue of *McCalls* and brought national attention to Moab. Though the author mentioned that the wildest part of the boom was over and the thousands of weekend and migrant treasure hunters who expected to find uranium "lying around in chunks" to be picked up were now gone, Moab itself

remained the "uranium capital of the world." She reported that the world's greatest concentration of millionaires (anywhere from twenty to thirty, depending on who was counting) lived in Moab. The percentage was about fifty times the national average, a rather meaningless fact but one important to the magazine's readers, one must suppose. It has since been pointed out that much of the wealth Pope mentioned was on paper only, disappearing when the boom went bust; but there still was real wealth in Moab, and the article remains valuable for the glimpse it gives of the town at the time.[31]

Pope wrote that Moab did not look like a town of millionaires. Although bustling, it retained a small-town character, somewhat more dishevelled than might be expected due to the trailers and tar-paper shacks in which many residents of Moab lived: "Moab's backyard strikes you as one vast trailer camp." Even the truly wealthy generally lived modestly, with no ostentatious show of wealth. Charlie Steen was the exception, though his house, lavish in Moab, would not be considered pretentious in most areas of wealth. Steen's house featured a swimming pool and an electric fence, but other millionaires such as Dan O'Laurie and Jack Stocks lived modestly. Rags-to-riches stories always seem to appeal to those who have only rags, and Moab actually did house those who could inspire others' dreams.

Pope found one indulgence that the wealthy shared: ownership of airplanes and motor vehicles. During the mid-1950s the Moab airport was second in the state in traffic and gas sales. Charlie Steen had made arrangements for his friend and pilot Dennis Byrd to take over the operation of the airport, and Byrd managed the busy facility through the boom time, starting his own successful aviation company in the process. Others did likewise, flying freight and passengers throughout the plateau country.[32] Actually, considering the terrain and available services, airplanes could almost be considered necessities: most local roads were poor and highways few. Moab ranked second in the nation in airplanes per capita. Pope reported that before the new telephone circuits were installed, there were reports of a three-day waiting period to make or receive a phone call.[33]

Local businesspeople and other promoters were generally anxious to continue the boom times, and advertisements created by them can be most revealing. One, prepared by land promoter Sam Constantino

in 1956, endeavored to persuade outside interests that there were "59 Good Reasons" to locate one's plant or office in Moab, Utah.[34] It is interesting—to some, perhaps, almost appalling—how Moab was presented there to the world. Sometimes the facts were accurate, sometimes they appear to be pure fancy—such as the claim that Moab Valley could accommodate a population of 90,000 people with its "inexhaustible fresh water" and "adequate facilities and housing." Though some "planned" developments never materialized—such as a ski resort in the La Sals, a crude-oil pipeline through Moab to Salt Lake City, and a reclamation dam on the Colorado River near Moab—and other developments were exaggerated, such as the implication that copper mining and movie production were major industries in the area, the advertisement provides a valuable summary of what was being accomplished as well as the tenor of boosterism campaigns to keep the boom going.

The advertisement correctly informed readers of expanding oil and gas development and of vast potash deposits in the area that were beginning to be mined. Tourist promotion was gearing up, and facilities were being built for those visitors: by the end of 1956 Moab boasted 181 air-conditioned motel rooms, and seven new service stations, and the same number of new restaurants had been constructed in the past year alone. A golf course was planned and airport facilities had been approved. A new hospital, grade school, stores, service industries, city park, and public swimming pool were touted, as were the improvements in communication facilities and the new interstate freeway system with a proposed east–west route north of Moab near U.S. Highway 6/50. The local talent pool of workers was extolled as "above average," and the area was said to be proud of its "alive, alert city council, county commissioners, chamber of commerce."[35]

To the relief of many, Grand County and Moab never developed to the extent of such land developers' dreams; nonetheless, the area was irrevocably changed. Constantino's advertisement claimed that forty railroad carloads of peaches had been shipped from the area's 152 orchards and 19,000 peach trees in 1954; but those trees were fast disappearing when they were in the path of the developers' bulldozers. Since the numbers are at such variance with agricultural census figures, it must be supposed that many of those "152 orchards" consisted of a few trees in some area residents' backyards. Much of the

land was now too valuable for agriculture: Pope mentioned in her article that land that a few years before sold for $500 an acre now sold for as high as $5,000 an acre; Main Street frontage had gone from $10 to $100 a foot. She wrote that area prices for goods were also high and that food cost a third more in the Moab area than it did in non-boom towns. Moab businessmen had the reputation for being sharp traders. The airport touted in the advertisement was called "undersized, unlighted, uncertified and mountain-surrounded" by the magazine writer. She also contradicted the ad by maintaining that the movie industry was essentially gone from the area: between the lack of accommodations and bustling county activity, film crews found it too difficult to film in the area.[36] In this she was accurate; but movie making would return when mining activity subsided.

It was more difficult to find pristine vistas and untrammeled areas in the county. One lasting result of the uranium boom years was the greatly enlarged network of roads and jeep trails throughout the region carved by prospectors and their machines as they scattered over the land seeking mineral wealth. In part, this was another legacy of World War II, with the development of jeeps and other four-wheel drive vehicles that became useful and popular in the rugged landscapes of the county in the post-war years. In *Desert Solitaire* Edward Abbey lamented the scarring of the landscape, writing that "the ethical and political implications of uranium exploitation are simply unknown in these parts," but his views were in the minority. The scarred landscapes have come to be mourned by those who have been labeled environmentalists; but many others have seen the trails and roads as welcome and even necessary additions providing access to areas otherwise accessible only on horseback or foot.

Doctor J. W. Williams died on 13 August 1956 at the age of 103 years. If there was any regret, it was perhaps that he did not live to see the new entrance road to Arches National Monument, which was opened two years later, his widow, Lavina, cutting the ribbon at the ceremony. With the exception of ranger Edward Abbey and a handful of others who lamented the increased crowds the road would bring, almost all locals welcomed the improved access to the monument.

Area growth was also reflected by religious denominations. Baptists in Moab divided into two congregations in 1956: a Southern

Baptist church was celebrated in May and a new Community Baptist chapel was announced in the 25 October issue of the *Times-Independent*. Within a few months, in January 1957, the Moab LDS congregation was separated into two wards. The paper announced on 30 August that international industrialist Floyd Odlum had purchased a 30 percent interest in the new UTEX mill under construction. An automobile accident claimed the life of civic leader William R. McConkie that August. It was one of an increasing number of fatalities periodically making headlines during the period. On a more pleasant note, as things began to settle down, sports news and comics began to return to the pages of the local newspaper.

On 17 January 1957 the *Times-Independent* was pleased to announce that the new hospital in Moab—named in honor of Doctor I. W. Allen—had received its first patient. In his article of 17 January 1957 praising the accomplishments of civic leaders in 1954, Ellis Foote had credited them with gaining grants from the federal government to help with the problems, and, two months later, on 9 May 1957, the current civic leaders showed that they were still adept at such measures: a new government grant of $17,000 was given to Moab to help improve local schools.

Growth continued to bring expansion; Ralph Miller announced the building of Moab's first supermarket, which was to be constructed south of town in an area with limited access, making it a risky venture at the time.[9] The paper reported the store's grand opening on 17 April 1958. Expansion also occurred in some arenas completely unrelated to the boom: for example, the National Park Service in 1956 had announced its "Mission 66" plan to improve facilities at the nation's park areas by 1966, the firftieth anniversary of the National Park Service. As part of this effort, Arches National Monument was slated to receive more than $2 million—$1.7 million to build and improve roads, and approximately $0.5 million for new buildings and a visitor center, according to a report in the *Times-Independent* of 21 March 1957. But by far the biggest local news of 1957 was the completion and dedication of the URECO uranium mill on 16 September—an act of great faith and optimism by Charlie Steen and his partners, since the government had only guaranteed to purchase uranium ore through the year 1958.

In November 1957 a group of Moab civic leaders met and began to plan a city museum. Private collections, including archaeological relics from J. W. Williams and prehistoric materials from Ross Musselman, were assembled with more recent artifacts including a telephone history collection of Ila Corbin. In February 1958 the group was named the Moab Museum Association, although it was incorporated as the Southeastern Utah Society of Arts and Sciences. In March the city of Moab allowed the group to "temporarily" house its growing collection in a small house on Center Street, which was to serve for seven years. The support of other individuals, businesses, institutions, and government agencies was sought and in great part gained by the energetic directors, and the museum opened to the public on 22 August 1958. In its first fourteen months of operation more than 6,000 visitors toured the museum, which has grown in quality and size through the succeeding years.[38]

The Moab newspaper reported on 10 April 1958 that with its estimated population of 5,500 people Grand County led the state in population growth since 1950—a 189 percent increase (more than 3,600 people), compared to the state's growth rate of 25 percent. Increased population brought increased valuation of county property, which in turn brought increased taxation. The *Times-Independent* reported that county property taxes collected the previous year were $617,335—approximately 71 percent of which was from industrial property, 10.7 percent residential property, with agricultural property and motor vehicles each accounting for about 7.5 percent. On 3 July the paper announced water rationing for Moab—the "inexhaustible fresh water" that developers touted was apparently exhausted, leading one to suppose that they must have been referring to Colorado River water rushing by, north of the city. Other troubles came in August when San Juan County filed a lawsuit over its boundary with Grand (discussed in chapter 8), a suit eventually won by San Juan, claiming a half-mile strip of land running the width of the county—land that was now seen as potentially valuable for its oil and mineral deposits.

More positive news for most county residents in 1958 included news on 21 August that Dead Horse Point was going to be designated a state park, one of the inaugural state park units designated by the newly formed (in 1957) Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation;

the next week brought the news that on 22 August the paved entrance road to Arches was finally opened and dedicated. Area promoters endeavored to diversify attractions, including establishing a marathon run in June 1957 which became an annual event in June 1958, although it was later changed to two races: a half-marathon and a 5-kilometer race. An arts festival also was inaugurated at Moab in 1958. In the election that November, revealing their conservative bent, the majority of Grand County voters cast their ballots for independent candidate J. Bracken Lee in the U.S. Senate contest, won by Democrat Frank E. Moss. Also, Charles Steen was elected a state senator for the district after being modestly proclaimed in his advertisements "Moab's Outstanding Citizen and Payroll Builder."[39]

Charlie Steen was generous with his money, donating $50,000 for the new hospital and land for a school and various churches in Moab. He also contributed to many civic projects. He was active in real estate among other business ventures, and was well aware of the impact he had made in Moab and the region in general, sometimes perhaps exaggerating his contributions. He reportedly later said: "When I hit Moab in the beginning, there probably wasn't more than a half dozen indoor toilets in town and damned few window shades. . . . I certainly left Moab a much better place to live than when I first got there."[40] Although none would deny Steen's impact on the city, a few in Moab would argue with the last claim: there was a minority which resented the changed lifeways of the region, not certain that the growth was altogether desirable.

In 1959 regular (non-cable) television came to Moab, according to the newspaper issue of 8 January. (A form of cable television had been available a few years earlier to those with the means to connect it.) A few weeks later, Moab acquired regular commercial air service when Frontier Airlines announced plans for two daily flights beginning 1 July to and from Moab, linking area residents directly with Salt Lake City, Denver, Albuquerque, and Farmington, New Mexico. The Moab Chamber of Commerce was active, and the newspaper helped promote the area: an example is found in an 18 June feature article on the popularity of river running. In May the *Times-Independent* informed readers that Utah produced one-third of the nation's uranium; but rumors of an industry slowdown were beginning to sur-

face, prompting commentary and advertisements touting the benefits of nuclear energy for domestic purposes. By the end of the decade, the need for uranium was reduced, as the military had stockpiled all the material even it could conceivably use. The bonus program for new ore discoveries also had been discontinued. Most county residents therefore were relieved and pleased when the paper reported on 6 August 1959 that the AEC had agreed to purchase uranium from Charlie Steen's URECO mill in Moab until at least the year 1966; however, in ways this news confirmed the slowdown: only limited amounts of ore would be purchased, and this only from ore reserves developed prior to 28 November 1958.[41] A cloud had definitely appeared on the horizon of the sunny world of uranium development in Grand County and throughout the Colorado Plateau.

In July 1959 tax valuation of Grand County property dropped; a month later (on 13 August), the Moab paper announced that the property tax mill levy was going to be raised due to a resulting county budget deficit. With the death of J. A. Scorup in October, the region lost one of its most prominent cattle ranchers. The year ended with the official dedication of Dead Horse Point as a state park on 18 December. It was the only Grand County area made into a state park out of five county sites considered, including Fisher Towers, areas on the Green and Colorado rivers, and Sego Canyon. About a month later, construction of the visitors center was completed at Arches National Park.

The end of the decade of the 1950s closed what is arguably the most tumultuous and transforming decade in county history. During the period, the population of the county more than tripled and the population of Moab Valley grew by about 450 percent. The county irrevocably changed from the sleepy rural mining and ranching region of earlier years as recent as 1950. It was now both more populous and more prosperous, although a note of uncertainty was faintly audible as the uranium-based economy entered the new decade. The boom period was over; Moab City and Grand County were still trying to cope with its legacy but were making progress in the arenas of housing and city services. The long-term goal was to orchestrate stable continued growth, and with the establishment of the URECO mill, the county had what seemed a relatively stable base on which to

build. Unfortunately, the economic prosperity promised by uranium was to prove as unstable as the element itself.

ENDNOTES

1. Franz Kolb, "The Northern Ute Indian Reservation: Established Portrayal and Change," M.A. thesis, B.Y.U., 1983, p. 58.

2. The article, "Utah's Arches of Stone," by Jack Breed was published in the August 1947 issue of *National Geographic.*

3. See Angela Bautista and Kurt Balling, "Aviation," in *Canyon Legacy* 8: 28–31, for an overview of early aviation history in the Grand County area.

4. Moab *Times-Independent,* 2 October 1947.

5. Advertising newsletter, "Crescent Junction Service and Cafe," No. 1 (Winter 1992), supplemented by personal conversations with various family members in 1994.

6. *Grand Memories,* p. 155.

7. See Bette Stanton, "Getting the Picture: Hollywood History from a Small Town in the West," *Canyon Legacy* 2: 3–9, for a good basic article on Moab's involvement with film making, and also see Bette Stanton, *Where God Put the West* (1994), for a booklength treatment of the subject.

8. Stanton, "Getting the Picture," p. 4.

9. See Jean Akens, "Moab's Mark on Hollywood," *Canyon Legacy* 2:12–15, for a listing of the major motion pictures shot on location in the Moab area. See other articles in that issue of *Canyon Legacy* for more information and movie stories, including George White's reminiscences.

10. Stanton, "Getting the Picture," pp. 5–6.

11. Moab *Times-Independent,* 5 February 1948.

12. See Gary L. Shumway, "Uranium Mining on the Colorado Plateau," in Allan Kent Powell, ed., *San Juan County, Utah: People, Resources, and History,* pp. 265–298, for a more detailed account of the AEC policies and prices, among other information about the entire uranium industry.

13. Shumway, "Uranium Mining," pp. 284–86.

14. Robert J. Wright, "What the Uranium Prospector Should Know About Radiation," pamphlet reprinted from *Engineering and Mining Journal* (January 1953).

15. See Howard Balsley, "Early Days of Uranium," *Canyon Legacy* 10:6–7.

16. See Raye Ringholz, *Uranium Frenzy: Boom and Bust on the Colorado Plateau,* for many related uranium-discovery stories.

17. Ringholz's *Uranium Frenzy* is a good book on the subject, and its bibliography lists other books the interested reader can consult.

18. Ringholz, *Uranium Frenzy*, pp. 128–29.

19. Jean Akens, "Uranium Penny Stocks: Dream or Scheme," *Canyon Legacy* 12:23–24.

20. Ringholz, *Uranium Frenzy*, p. 186.

21. Shumway, "Uranium Mining," p. 291.

22. See also an edited excerpt of the article in *Canyon Legacy* 10:8–13.

23. See 1954 U.S. Census of Agriculture, part 31.

24. The interested reader is referred to articles in many of the issues of *Canyon Legacy*, as well as to *Grand Memories*, *The Far Country*, *Uranium Frenzy*, and the *Times-Independent*, among other works cited in the bibliography, for more of the human stories of the period.

25. Maxine Newell, "The Scrapbook," *Canyon Legacy* 14:13.

26. Ibid, pp. 14–15.

27. Ibid., p. 15.

28. Conversations with Sam Taylor in August and October 1994.

29. Shumway, "Uranium Mining," pp. 293–94.

30. Although the southernmost points and overlooks at Dead Horse Point are technically south of the Grand County line, much of the park is in the county, as is access to it.

31. Elizabeth Pope, "The Richest Town in the U.S.A.," *McCalls* (December 1956); reprinted in slightly abridged and edited form in *Canyon Legacy* 10:8–13.

32. Bautista and Balling, "Aviation," p. 29.

33. Elizabeth Pope, "The Richest Town in the U.S.A.," *Canyon Legacy*, pp. 11–12.

34. Advertisement reprinted in *Canyon Legacy* 10: 10.

35. Ibid.

36. Pope, "The Richest Town," pp. 11–12.

37. See Maxine Newell, "The Scrapbook," in *Canyon Legacy* 14 for details on this move and other stories of the uranium boom years. See also *The Far Country* and *Grand Memories* for other personal accounts.

38. See Lloyd Pierson, "The Moab Museum 1957–1988," in *Canyon Legacy* 1:25–29, for a more complete history of the early years and the names of people prominently associated with the museum.

39. Moab *Times-Independent*, 21 August 1958.

40. Quoted in Ringholz, *Uranium Frenzy*, p. 144.

41. Ibid., p. 206.

13

Grand County Rides a Roller Coaster: The 1960s and 1970s

The decade of the 1960s—generally regarded as among the most turbulent in American history—was also turbulent in Grand County. However, compared to the explosive growth of the 1950s in an area almost completely unprepared for it, the 1960s saw county residents continue to adjust to the changing conditions, but without the sudden impact of the boom. The 1960s and the following decade comprised an era in which the local economy was dominated by mining (mainly of uranium and potash) and oil production. Most residents welcomed the situation—opponents to growth were few and relatively powerless—but national and worldwide economic developments helped create a series of ups and downs that at times left the local economy struggling. Grand County was very much at the mercy of larger economic forces—a fact difficult for many people to understand and accept. Local booms and busts were dramatic, leaving residents coping with growing pains during the boom periods and suffering from lost jobs and displacements when the inevitable busts followed. In their frustration and loss, some began to look for villains to blame for their situation, not realizing that the

world itself was rapidly changing. Economies were at the mercy of natural and increasingly global forces beyond anyone's ability to totally control, as governments began to grapple with the problems of a developing world economy.

The 1960s began with important news: Texas Gulf Sulphur Company had acquired the Delhi-Taylor oil company potash properties in the county, according to the *Times-Independent* of 4 May 1960, and the new owners announced plans in the 3 November issue of the paper that year to build a plant near the Cane Creek property. Census figures in the paper listed 6,332 people in Grand County—a huge increase from the 1,903 of the 1950 census. Moab's population grew during the decade of the 1950s from 1,274 to 4,683—with another 1,210 residents in the unincorporated areas of Moab Valley. A closer analysis of the numbers reveals that fewer than 500 people in the county lived outside of Moab and Spanish Valley. The 1,518 registered students in Moab schools that fall constituted a new enrollment record. The next year, 1961, Cisco was eliminated as a county school district, its area students thereafter bussed to Moab.

County property valuation rose in 1960 to $12.5 million, from $11.8 million the previous year. The growth was dwarfed by the tremendous growth of valuation in neighboring but less-populated San Juan County, where the valuation increased $40 million—up to $132 million, second only to Salt Lake County in the state. Uranium had given San Juan a large edge years before and this was now spurred on by oil and natural gas developments. Residents of Grand County couldn't help but feel envious of the southern county's material prosperity—an envy that led to a greater encouragement of mining and oil enterprises within their own county.

County voters joined with the majority of their fellows throughout the state when they showed their conservatism in the November 1960 election, giving Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon a 325 vote edge (1,130 to 805) over nationally successful Democratic candidate John F. Kennedy (who carried only four counties in Utah). Still, national election campaign news was sparse in the Moab paper, where local news items filled most of the pages. Before he left office, on 22 July 1960 President Dwight D. Eisenhower had added 480 acres to Arches National Monument to help compensate

for another 720 acres with possible rich mineral deposits he took away, resulting in a net acreage loss for the monument.

A new road to the Windows area of Arches was under construction in early 1961 as part of the National Park Service's Mission 66 program of park improvements. State senator Charles Steen surprised his constituents in March when he resigned his senate seat and announced plans to move to Nevada. Steen was frustrated by the defeat of various bills he had sponsored, including liquor reform laws, and found that his personality was not well suited to the legislative give-and-take process. His move was prompted by his unhappiness with what he perceived as Utah's outdated notions on liquor and other matters as well as by personal tax advantages to be found in Nevada residency. Moab thus lost its most famous and flamboyant resident, but his mining and milling operations remained.

In April 1961, county residents witnessed something that had been longed for and sought since the first years of settlement at Moab: a railroad spur was announced for construction south from the main tracks near Crescent Junction. The spur was being constructed by the Texas Gulf Sulphur Company to its new potash plant under construction southwest of Moab, however, and it thus would not actually serve or enter Moab. In addition, its use was restricted to the company only; but the new line still was a major economic boost to the area's economy, and boosters saw increased reason for hope that the railroad spur might still be linked to Moab someday. In July the contract to build the spur line was awarded to the huge Morrison-Knudson construction firm of Boise, Idaho.

Things continued to be a mix of good and not so good. Plans were announced on 13 April 1961 for a Lutheran chapel to be built in Moab, and on 6 July the paper reported that five holes had been completed on the new Moab city golf coarse under construction. A week later, the paper reported that county valuation had increased to $13.5 million, up $1 million. That same issue, however, included the tragic news of a murder and kidnapping of tourists near Dead Horse Point. A mother was killed and her teenage daughter abducted, much to the horror of county residents as well as those elsewhere. An extensive search that continued for months failed to find the young kidnapping victim, and the tragic case remains unsolved. The Moab



Train entering tunnel on Potash spur line in Grand County, 1965. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

airport was also plagued by various woes, including frequent high winds and lack of adequate lights, which caused the cancellation of many flights and prompted the search for a new airport site outside of Spanish Valley. Water shortages occurred in Moab in June only to have floods reported in late August. School enrollment in Moab was near 1,800 in August, and in November the paper reported that enrollment had increased to more than 2,000 students.

The year 1961 was noteworthy for development projects. Besides the new railroad spur to the potash plant under construction, subdivisions were approved in August to help ease the local housing shortage. On 30 November the *Times-Independent* reported that county lands had been withdrawn by the federal government for the planned interstate highway system—route I-70 was scheduled to go through Grand County, following much the same route as existing federal Highway 6/50. Other major development plans were also announced. Grand County commissioner Winford Bunce announced efforts on 3

August to get a road across the Book Cliffs near Thompson to the Uinta Basin; however, the plan eventually fizzled as opposition to its cost mounted. Plans for a possible dam on the Green River at Grey Canyon were announced in the *Times-Independent* in that same issue; it had the somewhat surprising backing of U.S. senator Frank Moss. This project also quickly faded when actual funding for the dam had to be considered. County residents were generally opposed to any project that would necessitate a large increase in their taxes, and the federal government was not willing to commit to such a project at the time with Glen Canyon dam under construction downstream.

Another project on which Moss had worked was a proposed national park—a small portion of the earlier proposed Escalante National Monument—and on 20 July it was announced that the park, to be just south of Grand County, would be named Canyonlands. Opposition immediately mounted, and by the next March the controversy was in full swing in the pages of the local paper and among county residents as well as others.

A colder than normal winter with an accumulation of snow and temperatures at times dropping to near zero ushered in 1962; but February brought welcome news: the newspaper announced that Moab was getting a new bank—to be called the Moab National Bank—and that the city had just been awarded a $175,000 federal grant to improve its school system by adding more classroom space. The bank (which later merged with larger First Security Bank) would facilitate borrowing for local projects. That same issue, the newspaper listed figures for BLM mine royalty payments to the state. Out of a total of $1.24 million, Grand County's share was $126,102—the fourth largest among the counties, indicating that mining—particularly for uranium—was still strong in the area.[1]

County residents were saddened in late March by the death of beloved doctor I. W. Allen, who had practiced medicine in the area since 1920. Things brightened up literally a couple of weeks later: on 12 April the newspaper announced that Moab was going to get new street lights. Another two weeks brought the news that the local Rotary Club was going to restore the old city park. Other area news included the dedication of the new visitors' center at Arches in early May, and a report on 31 May that the annual Friendship Cruise

between Green River and Moab had attracted about 1,000 boats. The cruise, which was started in 1958 by area boosters and river craft lovers, was becoming a public-relations success story, as people came with assorted craft from distant locales to travel on the rivers, mingle, and celebrate the gorgeous scenery of the county. The chamber of commerce and local service clubs and organizations came to actively promote the cruise, which continued to grow in popularity over the years. On 14 June the paper announced the opening of Moab's golf course with a full nine holes.

Relations weren't quite as friendly with San Juan County, which finally won its boundary-dispute suit in the Utah Supreme Court that May, gaining title to a half-mile-wide strip of land running the length of the two counties' shared boundary, and with it the prospective revenues from any mineral deposits in the land. Better news came on 28 June when the newspaper reported the completion of a 7,000-foot tunnel through Moab Canyon on the railroad spur line being built to Potash, the name for the new plant site. The potash plant itself was well under construction, with total costs estimated at $30 million, promising a great boost to the county economy when it was finished, while providing substantial economic benefits during the construction phase. On 26 July the *Times-Independent* reported that county valuation of property had increased by $2 million, and that same issue informed readers that a new water well was being drilled to ease Moab's chronic water-shortage woes.

Although the county was prospering, only Moab and unincorporated Spanish Valley were growing. Other towns in the county continued to fade, though there was some drilling activity near Cisco. On 9 August the newspaper reported that the old one-room school in Thompson was closing, leaving Moab as the only county location with active schools. Students from outlying areas were bussed to Moab, where school enrollment was at an all-time high. Moab served as the site of virtually all county functions, including a new three-day rodeo, known at the time as the Canyonlands Festival Rodeo—the county's most recent promotional activity. On 23 August readers of the local paper learned that Atlas Corporation had completed its purchase of the URECO mill, but this transfer did not affect local uranium production, which continued unabated.

Oil activity in the county during the period included a well drilled by Pure Oil Company in 1962 between Moab and Dead Horse Point that produced an average of 450 barrels per day. The Southern Natural Gas Company operated a well that was drilled into the same geologic layer some six miles closer to Moab. This well produced 660 barrels per day (and by 1991 had produced about a million barrels of oil). These wells and many others are found interbedded between the fluid layers of salt in the area, which not only contribute to the the potash reserves but also are believed by many authorities to be related to the great helium and uranium deposits in the region.[2]

Ice could be found on county roads in the winter of 1962–63, and on 24 January 1963 the *Times-Independent* reported that salt brine from the nearby salt anticline was used for de-icing, prompting speculation and enthusiasm about a potential new local industry. In an editorial a week later, Sam Taylor wrote that potash would likely be the future of Grand County economic development, and he paid special tribute to things which were vital to a community's survival and vitality. Such, in his opinion, was the construction of the potash plant by the Stearns-Roger Construction Company, which provided employment for 600 people while improving the economic, social, and cultural life of the community. The newspaper itself actively worked to celebrate the cultural heritage; that same issue (31 January) included an article by Maxine Newell on the Amasa Larsen home, considered one of the loveliest in Moab. *The Times-Independent* adopted a new slogan—"Heart of Canyonlands"—on its masthead in March, replacing the "Uranium Capital of the World" slogan, but it retained the symbol of a nuclear atom.

Shades of the Old West resurfaced in February 1963 with bullets firing in a high-speed chase after the robbery of the service station at Crescent Junction. The three culprits soon were caught by law-enforcement officers. Important news occupied the 21 February issue of the Moab paper: the city of Green River was to get a missile-launching contract from the government, with 300 new civilian jobs and a total of $30 to $40 million estimated for the project. Not only would some of this money filter into Moab and Grand County but the launch complex was to be built on land that was actually in Grand County on the east side of the river directly across from the town of Green River.

Missiles would be fired from there to a target site at White Sands, New Mexico. Although there was some concern expressed by Senator Frank Moss and others about the potential for misfirings as well as for debris from missile booster stages falling into proposed Canyonlands National Park, the project was rapidly pushed to completion. The base was built by the Olsen Construction Company at a cost of $1.23 million. It was a time when the military more easily received what it wanted, what with Cold War crises of the Bay of Pigs invasion, missiles in Cuba, and other national security worries.

The fact that unexpected accidents could happen to the best planned projects was underscored in July 1963 when a train derailed on the new potash spur line due to rainstorms. Fortunately there were no serious injuries. However, tragedy struck in late August at the potash mine south of Moab. On 28 August an explosion deep in the mine trapped twenty-five miners 2,700 feet below the surface in what was at the time the nation's deepest mine. Despite massive rescue efforts over a two-day period, eighteen of the twenty-five died. It was the greatest mining tragedy in county history. Many of the victims were from Grand County, with a few from as far away as Helper, Utah, and western Colorado. Some were killed by the blast (thought to have been triggered by natural gas leaking into the tunnels), others died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Two of the rescued miners—Donal Hanna and Paul McKinney—criticized mine safety precautions and rescue efforts, contending, according to statements reported in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, that mine inspections were lax and infrequent. Texas Gulf officials and state mine inspectors maintained that inspections were routinely carried out every two to three months.[3] A federal probe was ordered which eventually led to tighter regulations and safety procedures, but work continued on the project. Friends and loved ones of the deceased coped as best they could with the losses so often associated with what remains a dangerous industry even in the technologically advanced twentieth century.

According to a report in the 4 April 1963 paper, the state of Utah had gained title to 30,000 acres of the Book Cliffs region of Grand County. The land was mainly covered by mineral and gas leases and was selected by state authorities as compensation for state lands

appropriated earlier by the federal government for the Dugway Proving Ground and the Wendover Bombing and Gunnery Range in northern Utah. The direct impact of the land transfer on Grand County was minimal, but most county residents favored anything that would bring control of county lands closer to the local level. County valuation of property again increased—this time by some $3 million to a total of more than $18 million; but this was accounted for in great measure by the new construction projects—there were actually 300 fewer automobiles and 200 fewer trailers in the county than had been taxed in 1962. In September voters approved plans and financial outlay for a new airport to be built some fifteen miles north of Moab by Klondike Flat, and the paper counseled readers that the future for uranium was uncertain—the government had now ceased its extensions for purchasing uranium ore and private industry had yet to create a great demand for the material. The town of Green River opened its missile base to public inspection on 23 November, but the day turned out to be anything but festive—in Dallas, Texas, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, much to the shock of Grand County residents as to people throughout the nation.

The year 1964 began with more bad news: the 2 January issue of the Moab newspaper reported a huge explosion and fire at Moab's McDougald Oil Company, owned by the former mayor during the boom years, Ken McDougald. The next week brought the report that building in Moab had declined the past year although it was up in Utah as a whole. Moab was definitely in an economic slowdown, but area residents hoped it wasn't a full-scale slump. One result of the economic trouble was that it finally led in March to the removal of Moab's parking meters, which were hated by downtown businesses and their customers. Unfortunately, things went further downhill in June when Atlas Corporation cut its work force at the Moab uranium mill. Moab also was plagued by vandalism that summer.

Bright spots during 1964 included a visit to Moab by the Utah Symphony Orchestra in January, renewed interest expressed in county helium deposits in March, the opening of a campground at Devils Garden in Arches in July, and the news that month that county property valuation was up another million dollars. Moab attorney Mitchell Melich, who had been a close associate of Charlie Steen and

an influential Utah politician in his own right, was the Utah Republican party nominee for governor that year, bringing a great deal of media attention to the region and fostering local hopes that the next governor would be from Grand County.

Depressing news generally outweighed the positive for many county residents that year, however. County population was decreasing as people began to move out of the county in search of employment elsewhere. The 27 August issue of the newspaper revealed that school enrollment was down to 1,775 students—almost 600 fewer that the 2,372 of the year before. That issue also reported a deficit of $177,000 in county operating expenses as oil production activity was at a low ebb in southeastern Utah. The next week the Delhi-Taylor Oil Company announced plans to liquidate, although this news was not too shocking to area residents since the company had already sold much of its holdings and leases to Texas Gulf Sulphur and other companies. The *Times-Independent* of 1 October 1964 proclaimed that an era had closed with the recent closing of Charlie Steen's Mi Vida uranium mine in San Juan County.

Another era could be said to be opening, however, which in years to come would more than compensate the county for its economic losses. A graded road was under construction to the new state park at Dead Horse Point, and it was hoped that this would help lead to an influx of tourists to the area. Even bigger news on that front was the official establishment of Canyonlands National Park south of the county. The new park was approved by Congress on 12 September 1964. The new local airport opened in October that year, further improving access to the county. Anything that would boost tourism was welcome to area promoters, for even tourism was suffering: on 3 December the Moab paper reported that visitation at Arches was at 98,260 compared to 115,000 the year before. The month previous, general national and state prosperity had resulted in success for the Democratic party in the general election. Grand County residents voted for their native son by a margin of almost three to one (1,628 to 639), but Calvin Rampton defeated Mitchell Melich in the governor's electoral contest. The year closed with the mention of an obscure country in a letter home by a Moab serviceman, published in the *Times-Independent* of 24 December. The name of the country

was Vietnam, and it would profoundly affect events in Grand County as elsewhere for the next decade.

Good economic news brightened the first part of the new year: Texas Gulf began actual potash production, according to a report in the Moab paper of 14 January; two weeks later, on 28 January, came the welcome news that $2 million had been budgeted by the federal government for funding Canyonlands National Park. Moab was the closest city to the large (more than 337,000 acres) new national park, and it looked like much of the park's administrative and tourist services would be located in Moab even though the park itself was outside Grand County's boundaries. An instrumental figure in the creation of Canyonlands was longtime Arches ranger and superintendent Bates Wilson, who served as superintendent at Arches for twenty-three years, from 1949 to his retirement in 1972. He also served in that capacity for a time at Natural Bridges National Monument and was the founding superintendent at Canyonlands, the creation of which he had promoted for years.

On 11 February 1965 the newspaper put the best spin on a bad situation by celebrating the fact that Grand County got back a strip of land varying from 25 to 300 feet wide as the result of a boundary survey adjustment of the half-mile-wide strip it had lost to San Juan County in 1962. The new airport—Canyonlands Field— was dedicated on 25 April 1965. At about that same time, the revamped Moab Museum had its opening at it new location in the old city office building, which almost doubled the museum's available space. The museum's programs and collections were stimulated as a result; however, major growth for the institution was to wait till the end of the 1970s and start of the following decade.[4]

The newspaper reported on 29 April that the average net worth of Grand County residents was $18,100 compared with $17,500 nationally and $16,400 in the Intermountain West. Although such items looked good on paper, as usual they were distorted by the disproportionate wealth of a few individuals—most county residents would have loved to make the lowest of the three figures. In an editorial on 6 May, Sam Taylor wrote that tourism was Moab's "ace in the hole" in the economic game, and tourism plans were repeatedly discussed and formulated by area civic leaders. These included local

plans announced in the *Times-Independent* on 22 July 1965 to restore historic Star Hall as an auditorium for community functions, and most residents accepted the need to spend their dwindling dollars on projects that would enhance the appeal of the area.

The week before, on 15 July, the newspaper published county valuation figures, which showed a decline from $19.7 to $19.1 million. The continuing economic downturn forced some reductions in city personnel and police—moves announced in the 5 August issue of the paper. The *Times-Independent* was definitely in the category of county-booster organizations; it extolled what it believed would benefit the county—particularly in an economic sense—while downplaying or ignoring items with potential negative impact. Thus, for example, the overshooting of its White Sands, New Mexico, target by a missile launched from Green River was relegated to a small news item on page nine of the 12 August edition. One thing that the paper couldn't easily ignore was problems with Moab's sewage treatment plant, about which Sam Taylor regularly complained.

On 26 May 1966 the *Times-Independent* informed readers that it had received a national award for its news writing. Local sports and society sections of the paper were expanded features of the paper. An important story in the 7 April paper that year informed readers that the Ute Tribe had withdrawn permission for a road across its reservation lands in the Book Cliffs. This was a major setback to area developers who were trying to link Grand County to Vernal in Uintah County to the north. Better news for county promoters was the success of the annual Friendship Cruise between Green River and Moab: in 1966 it attracted more than 2,500 participants.

Although tourism to the local parks and monuments was touted by the paper and others in the community, there was still opposition to withdrawal of public lands by the government. The *Times-Independent* of 21 July spoke for this element when it came out in opposition to a plan by Senator Frank Moss to enlarge Canyonlands National Park and to add Dead Horse Point State Park to Canyonlands. Ranchers still had great political power even though they possessed nowhere near the economic clout that they had in the past. On 18 August large headlines in the paper welcomed the Utah Cattlemen Association meeting, held that year in Moab. The next

week the paper had to report (and lament) the fact that grazing permits for the Moab Grazing Unit on BLM land had been cut from 11,951 animal unit months (AUM) to 4,242. According to BLM officials, it was a necessary step to improve the quality of the range.

Earlier, on 4 August, the paper reported a gunfight at Thompson in which an officer was wounded and his assailant killed. Though remote, the county still experienced troubles common throughout the nation. The newspaper also reported on Moab soldiers being sent to Vietnam; it was an increasingly less exotic news item. Moab continued to provide cultural attractions for the region: the Moab Valley Community Concert Association was formed in September to bring classical, pop, and folk music entertainers to the city. That November county voters elected a majority of Republican candidates. An item in the 15 December issue of the paper reported the interesting fact that most of the 350 new employees at the Green River missile complex lived in either more cosmopolitan Moab or Price, preferring to commute to Green River, which had a population increase of only 125 people since the creation of the base.

In 1966 the uranium industry began to concentrate on private companies like General Electric and Westinghouse to produce nuclear-powered commercial electrical generating plants. Times were tougher than they had been in the 1950s for suppliers because the new buyers did not pay for transportation of ore, nor did they offer bonuses as the federal government had done. Also, mining technology was more sophisticated and required a greater investment of capital. This resulted in small claim holders hoping to sell or lease their claims to large companies, and thus it paradoxically sparked a rush to stake claims for resale. In Grand County alone, 5,810 claims were filed in 1967 and thousands of others in the next year or two.[5]

The late 1960s also saw a revival of sorts of the old uranium stock market, although the more tightly regulated system did not witness a repeat of the frenzied buying and selling of penny stocks. In this case, old and seemingly worthless mining corporations had new value for their old corporate structures, which were used as shells for new business ventures. Many of these ventures were unsound and others were fraudulent, resulting in an investigation by the Securities Exchange Commission and a shutdown by the end of the decade. Before that



Texas Gulf Sulphur Company plant in Grand County in the 1960s. (Dan O'Laurie Museum)

happened, however, some holders of what had been considered worthless stock received a handsome profit on their old certificates.

Potash development was becoming more important economically during this period. From 1965 through July 1970 the Texasgulf mine deposits were mined conventionally at the Cane Creek operations south of Moab at what came to be called Potash. In July 1970 the company changed to solution mining, pumping water from the nearby Colorado River into the mine. (Note also that the company had changed its name from Texas Gulf to a one-word version of same.) The water dissolved the minerals and in turn was pumped from the mine into large evaporation ponds. There were twenty-three of the vinyl-lined ponds (covering some 400 acres of ground) built on terraces south of the mine site. More than 450 million gallons of water were evaporated from the ponds each year, with a production potential of up to 750,000 tons of solid deposits left behind. The new method was more productive and efficient, resulting in greater production and profitability for the company but reducing the number of company mine personnel. Two materials were recovered for resale:

potassium chloride (potash) and sodium chloride (salt). Both were marketed; after being separated, they could be stored in two huge warehouses, each able to hold 125,000 tons of material. They eventually were loaded on railroad cars and shipped north to the main line and on to national and international markets.[6] The proximity of the Colorado River and the area's generally sunny weather combined to make the operation profitable.

Even with the growth of the potash industry, mining in Grand County produced only a fraction of what it did in other southeastern Utah counties. In 1960 Grand County's value of minerals produced was only one-hundredth of that of San Juan County and, at $1.2 million, only one-seventh of that of Emery County. Five years later, it had increased by 400 percent in Grand County, and it almost doubled again in 1966; but at $8.3 million it was still one seventh of San Juan's total of $58.3 million. Grand County did have a higher total than Emery County by this date, although by the end of the decade Emery was again producing more mineral wealth than Grand County, with San Juan leading the way by far.[7]

The 12 January 1967 edition of the Moab newspaper reported that Castleton was officially vacated as an occupied town by the county commission. A national oil and mining slump was hitting southeastern Utah hard—San Juan County valuation had plummeted from $132 million in 1960 to less than $57 million in 1966. Grand County, however, had fewer mining and oil-producing facilities, and so its total valuation remained at about $20 million, with new investments compensating for the loss in value of mineral and oil property. Promoters tried to start "Fort Moab," a frontier-style tourist theme park on the north end of town, but the project fizzled. A more successful promotion was an Easter Jeep Safari, which was sufficiently popular that a second one was planned for the Labor Day weekend by the local chamber of commerce. The safaris essentially involved the opening of motor trails to jeeps and other off-road vehicles, and they have grown from their relatively modest beginning of one trail used by a few dozen vehicles to thousands of vehicles traveling on more than a dozen routes through the nearby canyon country. The events have continued to grow and at the present time bring in thousands of people and hundreds of thousands of dollars to the

local economy. However, from the first, such events also generated opposition from those who feared the destructive impact they would have on the terrain—an opposition that has grown with the events.

In late April 1967 hopes were kindled for a revitalized uranium industry when the federal government allowed (and Atlas announced) plans to sell uranium to private industry for nuclear power generation. The *Times-Independent* jumped on the bandwagon, publishing articles in support of nuclear plants for the generation of electricity. The newspaper vehemently opposed new, tougher federal radiation safety standards in its 15 June issue, and cheered along with many other county residents on 7 September when a temporary reduction of the standards was allowed. On 11 May the paper had announced the firing of the final Athena missile (the 77th) of the first phase of the program at the Green River launch site; but the area economy received a boost soon after in August when two motion pictures—*Blue* (a western with Terence Stamp and Karl Malden) and *Fade In* (a romance featuring Burt Reynolds)—were being shot in the county. This signified a major—and most welcome—revitalization of the film industry in the area.

The year 1967 closed with the unexpected opposition of local cattlemen to a new highway through the Book Cliffs. They claimed it was unnecessary and would bring higher taxes. This opposition, coupled with Ute Indian and growing environmental group resistance, was a blow to promoters of the road. A more predictable editorial in the same issue of the paper came out in opposition to wilderness status for some portions of Arches National Monument, as this would even more severely limit use of the land by organized private interests.[8] Visitation at Arches generally increased in the early part of the decade: from 71,600 in 1960 to 143,000 in 1965. From that point, it fluctuated up and down, but reached 178,500 in 1970—the visitation generally, but not consistently, up.

On 7 March 1968 the paper printed the news that a Marine pilot from Moab was missing in action over Vietnam—the first of a series of sad news announcements relating to that tragic conflict. That same issue also informed readers that Texasgulf was considering solution mining of potash—a move that, as mentioned earlier, was undertaken and increased production but resulted in a reduced work force.

Better news was found three weeks later when the army announced an extension until 1970 of the Athena missile program at Green River—a move that would bring an additional $43 million to the region. The Jeep Safari was expanding and the Friendship Cruise continued to attract hundreds of participants, but the latter event was marred by the death of a boater who failed to make the turn at the confluence and was swept to his death downstream in the ferocious rapids of Cataract Canyon.[9]

The Moab newspaper now featured travel and tourism sections, and the educational resources of the community were considerably enhanced when Utah State University began a continuing education program—Southeastern Utah Center for Continuing Education (SUCCE)—in Moab (among other locations in the region) that has continued to the present time. Many different classes—from auto mechanics and accounting to English and zoology—are offered each term, and hundreds of locals have made good use of the educational opportunity since the program's inception. The community's educational resources were boosted by the opening of the new county library in Moab on 30 August 1968. Most of its books had been saved from a fire the year before in the old high school building in which the collection had been housed after it had been moved from the county courthouse building some years before.[10] Moab also gained a new post office in 1968, celebrated in the paper of 14 November. County property valuation increased that year to $21.5 million.

Other news was not as good. On 15 August the *Times-Independent* reported that floods had ripped through Moab after an inch of rain fell in an hour. On 17 October the grim news was reported that a Moab soldier had been killed in action in Vietnam. The BLM proposed an increase in grazing fees in November which brought a storm of protest including complaints fom Senator Frank Moss, known as a liberal Democrat.[11] The year closed with news in the 26 December issue of the paper that a major fire at the Atlas mill had resulted in damage estimated at one million dollars.

The *Times-Independent* generally could be counted on the side of developers and private enterprise, but in its edition of 9 January 1969 editor Sam Taylor came out in favor of strict and limited timber cutting in the La Sal Mountains. He wrote that although areas had been

replanted and seeded after clear-cutting or extensive harvesting of timber, many of these programs "have been 100 percent failure, and it becomes obvious that heavy lumbering could do untold damage in the forest land for generations to come." Figures of the amount of timber cut are not available for the Grand County portion of the Manti-La Sal National Forest.[12]

Private industry was not developing nuclear energy as rapidly as the government had foreseen and there were increasing public fears and resistance to the new energy source. As the nuclear-power boom was beginning to go bust, a few county leaders began to place increased emphasis on wise management of fragile resources. On 23 January 1969 came the news that not only were BLM grazing fees going up but that the AEC had reduced its uranium purchasing quotas and plans. The newspaper continued to extoll atomic energy, but the emphasis was on the private sector for energy development, and a note of anxiety could be heard in the praise.

Tourism appeared to be the most promising area of economic growth as other parts of the economy experienced a downturn. The movement to make Arches a national park was gaining strength, and the Moab paper increased its features on tourism and scenic features of the region. Just before he left office, on 20 January 1969, President Lyndon Johnson by executive order more than doubled the size of Arches National Monument, from approximately 52 square miles to more than 130 square miles. The move angered some in the area, but opposition was generally muted as many more locals saw economic benefits to be gained with a larger national monument. Commercial tour guides and outfitters began to increase in numbers and to expand their itineraries, introducing ever greater numbers of visitors to the beauty of the county and region. Others stayed closer to Moab with short river-running trips or more sedate cruises on the rivers, such as the innovative "Canyonlands by Night" music-and-light show projected on the river canyon walls.

Although conservation was seen as important for the La Sal timber resources, that protective attitude did not extend to the slickrock areas of the county, which were perceived to be more durable. Those who feared the degradation of the plateau lands by their increased use from increasing numbers of motorized tourists and recreation-

alists were in the minority: the Jeep Safari continued to grow, and on 5 June 1969 a slickrock trail was completed near Moab for the use of motorcycles. Large enterprises including the Atlas mill and the potash plant of Texasgulf helped insure that county property valuation figures would rise a bit, but the area as a whole was beginning to see a steeper economic slide ahead.

In 1969 the Grand County School District had 2,347 students enrolled—1,713 in elementary grades, 620 in secondary schools. Though the numbers were large for the county, they constituted only 0.75 percent of Utah school students. That year there were 121 graduates from Grand County High School. Moab had only experienced a growth rate during the decade of about 2 percent, although greater numbers had moved into unincorporated Moab Valley.

Grand County did not experience much, if any, counter-culture social unrest or protest during the latter part of the 1960s, in contrast to much of the nation. A busload of what the newspaper labelled "psychedelic hippies" made news on 20 June 1968 when it passed through town, and on 12 February 1970 the *Times-Independent* felt it necessary to explain marijuana use to its readers. In the months that followed, marijuana and LSD busts were added to local law-enforcement activities.

Inflation was a national problem as the new decade began, and it put increased pressure on Frontier Airlines, which was the only scheduled commercial carrier at the new airport. On 26 February the paper reported that the airline had asked for increased federal subsidies (which were awarded in order to provide sevices to remote areas) in order to keep its operation to Moab going. Grand County began an aggressive ad campaign, including advertisements in Salt Lake City newspapers, a fact the local paper credited on 9 April with helping increase tourism to the region. Five hundred people came for the Jeep Safari that Easter weekend. The first Earth Day was celebrated on 21 April 1970, and the *Times-Independent* that year published a number of articles about the care of the earth and its resources, evidencing a greater environmental awareness.

Another local soldier was killed in Vietnam, according to a published article in the newpaper for 3 September. Better news came in November as sections of Interstate 70 were completed in the San

Rafael area to the west of the county, helping better link the region with the nation's highway transportation network. However, once again the year ended on a sour note. The 24 December issue of the paper reported that the federal government was going to halt its uranium purchases on 31 December, after having purchased supplies for two decades. Small mining firms were already going out of business; an increasing fear now was that the government would sell part of its nuclear stockpile to private industry, thus flooding the market and forcing other producers out of business.

The year 1971 began with an increase in BLM grazing fees from forty-four to sixty-eight cents per animal unit month, provoking outrage in many area ranchers. The BLM countered that the increase was necessary to fund needed range improvements. Census figures for 1970 showed that Grand County's population had increased by 5.4 percent from the previous decade; it was up to 6,668 people, a respectable gain but far below the state's growth rate of almost 19 percent. On 17 June the newspaper published figures that showed Grand County actually had a net out-migration for the decade of 1,090 people, as there were 1,856 births and 423 deaths in the county during the 1960s. These figures helped make more obvious the fact that without some important economic boom, the county could only support a limited number of people—much the same as it did forty or sixty years before, although the numbers now had increased somewhat, primarily due to government, tourism, and service-industry workers, it appears. Many of the brightest young people left the county and state for brighter opportunities elsewhere.

On 25 February 1971 the newspaper published a report that a study was going to be undertaken concerning the feasibility of a ski resort in the north end of the La Sals. Skiing was providing a major economic boost to northern Utah, and locals hoped to cash in on the winter tourism bonanza, but to this date no developers have been found to invest in such a project or to gain the permits and/or land. Spring and summer tourism continued to increase in the county, however. That April, 800 people in almost 200 vehicles participated in the Easter Jeep Safari. Another developing Easter tradition was sunrise religious services held at Arches National Monument. Though a devotional in such an inspiring setting seems more appro-

priate to the occasion—and consistently attracted a number of people—the more wild joyride was what most visitors came to the county for. Christian denominations continued to grow in Moab; by July at least eleven different groups were advertising services in the paper, with pentecostal groups being among the newly organized worshippers. The LDS church had grown to the point that members in the Moab area had been divided into four wards.

Early in the year, Utah Power and Light Company had increased its service line to Moab to 345,000 volts. The Green River Missile Launch Complex received a boost that spring when it was selected as a firing site for Pershing missiles, but such firing required road blocks of some areas south of Green River, including Canyonlands National Park, due to the dangers from falling debris and booster rocket shells. This angered some and helped generate opposition to the missile firings. Further environmental controversy was reported in the 2 September issue of the *Times-Independent* when Utah historian Ward Roylance wrote about the negative impact of Texasgulf's solar evaporation ponds south of Moab. Editor Sam Taylor defended the company as well as its importance to the local economy. Another controversy that developed involved whether Moab City should purchase a natural gas supply company or have the service provided by private enterprise (which was the decision eventually made).

Less controversy attended what was perhaps the most important development of the year: the establishment of Arches as a national park on 16 November 1971. President Richard Nixon signed the bill, but it involved a reduction in size of the park to approximately 114 square miles—73,233 acres—thus returning some of the land to public entry that Lyndon Johnson had included two years before in the enlarged national monument. This reduction pleased area ranchers and many political conservatives; more liberal conservationists were generally distressed by the reduction but were pleased with the enhanced status of the area as a national park. Area residents generally had seen the economic benefits of tourism to the area and were happy about the site's new prestige and status.

County residents were kept updated by the paper regarding the progress of the construction of federal highway I-70, which was taking place in the Thompson–Crescent Junction area in early 1972. In

March problems with the cracking of airport runways were sufficient to merit newspaper attention. The problems were in great part caused by the unstable Mancos Shale surfaces on which the runways were built; and similar problems came to characterize I-70 a few years after it was finished, posing danger, causing frustration, and necessitating frequent expensive repair work.

The new route of I-70 through the county bypassed Cisco, effectively dooming the area as a population or service center. Although the town had relocated to stay on the railroad line in the late nineteenth century, no equivalent effort characterized its response to the new challenge. Most economic activity in the vicinity was tied to mining or to oil and gas production, anyway; there was little commercial retail activity to be lost to the isolation from the freeway. This economic situation continued for the handful of families who remained in the area. In 1994 a part-time post office remains to distinguish the area of trailer homes and a few other structures, but all commercial activity must be conducted elsewhere.

Also in March 1972 the BLM proposed chaining some pinyon–juniper land to foster the growth of grasses for the increased grazing of cattle, which would benefit local ranchers. Although the proposal seemed to meet little resistance at the time, such practices in later years have sparked a firestorm of protest from environmentalists and others, further dividing county residents into polarized camps.[13] Members of both groups still join together in some things, however; and the community members have taken great interest in teams fielded through the years by the Grand County High School. Football, basketball, softball, and wrestling teams and events were prominently reported by the *Times-Independent.*

Oil-drilling activity in the Book Cliffs gained newspaper coverage in the spring of 1972, and on 13 April the newspaper reported that a new series of Pershing missile launchings had been scheduled for Green River, keeping that military installation active. The area recession had resulted in a decrease in Grand County property valuation, according to the *Times-Independent* of 23 March. Movie making in the county was also in decline as television was starting to compete successfully with the older medium. Big, expensive scenic features, the kind for which the county was especially suited, were

especially hard hit, becoming less affordable when faced with the challenge of the less-expensive medium.

The newspaper touted anything that promised to boost the economy or the spirits of Moabites. On 6 April 1972 it reported that Charlie Steen had announced plans to use his Moab mansion as a museum to celebrate his life and successes. Since leaving Moab and Utah in 1961 Steen had had troubles with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and with many of his business investments. In 1968, IRS agents had siezed his Nevada offices because of a tax dispute and many of his other business ventures had turned sour.[14] Much of his fortune was gone; but among his remaining assets was his Moab home. The museum was tried briefly, it seems, but soon its contents were transferred to the American Museum of Atomic Energy at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and to the local Moab museum.[15] A restaurant was then begun at the premises, and the property has continued in such use to the present time. Steen had little personal involvement with the project and did not return to live in Grand County. By 1979, when his accounts with the government were finally settled, Steen had lost most of what he had previously gained.

Another new tourist venture was the launching of a commercial riverboat on 30 April 1972 by Tex McClatchy. The vessel took sightseers on the Colorado River near Moab, making a success with a more limited route where other endeavors had failed some fifty or more years before. Better craft and less risky trips made the enterprise possible. Well constructed boats that drew little water also made for the generally safe boating of the vessels participating in the annual Friendship Cruise, which was in its fifteenth year that spring.

Arches National Park was officially dedicated on 13 May 1972, and Bates Wilson retired as superintendent of the park that year. It was a fitting end to his years of service and dedication to the lands of southeastern Utah. Within a month, the Grand County Travel Council was formed to enhance and coordinate tourism promotion in the county. In June a new BLM policy of requiring land-use permits costing ten dollars for commercial tour guides upset local outfitters; however, as recreational use of the land and the waterways increased, the government found it necessary to charge fees for maintainance and reclamation purposes as well as to regulate and restrict

the use of popular areas. Fees for national and state parks were also becoming more common during the period.

The county lost one of its foremost leaders on 9 July 1972 when L. L. "Bish" Taylor died. A fitting eulogy and tribute was found in his own words written in 1916 when he took over management of the *Grand Valley Times*: "We shall continue to work for the development of Southeastern Utah; to publish all the news no matter whom it strikes; and to advocate those moves that will result in civic and moral betterment." With his son Sam in charge of the newspaper, county residents continued to be well served by the Taylor family, but Bish Taylor was sorely missed by many even though he had not been actively involved in county affairs for some twenty years following his stroke in 1953. In its history, no one has so influenced Moab, Grand County, and the entire plateau region as did Bish Taylor.

Moab faced both a water shortage and airport problems in 1972. High use in a drought year had forced the rationing of water in July. The airport runway continued to deteriorate, and, in addition, throughout the fall and coming spring, Frontier Airlines periodically talked of petitioning Congress to allow it to drop service to Moab from its routes. Congress did not consent to do this, and on 19 July 1973 the *Times-Independent* reported that Frontier had been ordered to continue to serve Moab and Grand County.

Grand County's economy was predominantly based on mining, with an increasing emphasis on service industries and government employment. Construction accompanying the growth also contributed to the economic base. Manufacturing comprised a very small segment of the economy—one that never seemed to grow. In 1963 there were four manufacturing establishments in the county; they employed seventeen people and contributed $159,000 in added value to the products. In 1967 there were still only four manufacturing establishments, and the added value had shrunk to $100,000. This last figure still characterized the result of the six manufacturing companies listed in 1972, though 100 people were employed at the time, indicating that the work was part-time for many, if not most.[16]

The Grand County High School boy's basketball team won the division 2-A state championship in March 1973, and the boy's track team almost won a championship in May. Turning the tables on the

old outlaws of the region, more modern businessment tried to capitalize on their notoriety by celebrating "Butch Cassidy Days" in conjunction with the annual Canyonlands Rodeo held at Moab in June. The Rio Algom uranium mine that was flourishing in nearby San Juan County was an important source of news during the period, as the industry certainly was not very successful at the time in Grand County. Newspaper advertising revenues benefited from two competing supermarkets in town: Ralph Miller's and City Market. Other tourist-oriented businesses were coming to town. With Moab almost the only population center in the county, there was talk in 1973 of consolidating city and county governments; but the plans were never effected due to oppostion from many residents outside Moab and a few within the city itself. According to a report in the 30 August edition of the paper, Moab opened a new visitors' center on the north end of town that year.

National news was seldom printed in the newspaper although scandals were beginning to rock Washington, D.C., at the time, involving both President Richard Nixon and Vice-president Spiro Agnew. A rare political cartoon in the *Times-Independent* of 27 September 1973 was concerned with inflation rather than political personalities and their problems. Oil prices were beginning to increase worldwide due to the establishment of fixed higher prices by the OPEC cartel of oil-producing countries; and on 20 December 1973 the Moab paper published an article on fuel rationing and how it would hurt the county and the region, particularly curtailing tourism and travel-related activity. Though rationing was never put into place, the escalating prices at the gasoline pump began to affect and limit travel throughout the country.

Early 1974 brought a new form of city government to Moab: a mayor-council form replaced the full-time mayor system. In April the Corbin family sold its interest in the Midland Phone Company, which was merged with the Continental Telephone Corporation. Two weeks later, on 25 April, the newspaper reported that a new airline—Sun Valley Key Airline Company—was coming to Moab, replacing Frontier Airlines. On 4 July the Watergate political scandal in the nation's capital was finally mentioned in a local editorial cartoon, but President Richard Nixon's resignation from office the next month

merited no local headlines. Oil-drilling news and the "4-Wheeler Campout" planned for Labor Day Weekend did get prominent coverage, as did the wreck of a train on the Potash spur line in which the engineer and brakeman were killed.[17] The local newspaper was obviously concerned with reporting local and regional news; national news was provided by television and more readily available larger metropolitan area newspapers.

In 1974 there was 5.6 percent unemployment in Grand County. There had been a gradual decrease in county population in the first years of the decade; in 1974 there were 1,890 student enrolled in Grand County schools, more than 450 fewer than had been enrolled five years before. Eighty graduated from the county high school in 1974. During that same period personal income from mining had shrunk from $4.6 million to $3.6 million, although the income of the increasing number of government employees in the county had risen those same years from $2.4 million in 1970 to $3.0 million in 1974.[18]

Boundary disputes with Uintah County (mentioned in chapter 8) began to occupy the Moab newspaper's pages in the early part of 1975. The Southeastern Utah Center for Continuing Education (SUCCE), established in 1968 by Utah State University, was facing a funding crisis that spring due in great part to the high cost of flying course instructors to and from Logan each week to teach their classes—classes which that spring numbered twenty-five, with an enrollment of 300 students. Good news was published in the paper on 13 March when the state legislature approved funding to continue SUCCE. Community leaders worked to have a vital, progressive community, and the *Times-Independent* still actively supported annual clean-up campaigns as well as periodically inveighing against littering, vandalism, and other acts that, according to the 6 March issue, were "tearing down" all that for which Moabites had worked.

In May the 300th Pershing missile was fired from the Green River launch site. Hang-gliding near Moab was one of the newer sports recreational activities in the area. In June an article called Moab a "city of churches," and area news included the filming near Moab of a feature western film, *Against a Crooked Sky.* That summer, programs at Moab's community swimming pool were popular, as area residents sought ways to escape the heat. On 10 July the newspaper published

some BLM news most residents would welcome for a change: due to consolidation, Moab was going to be the home of a new BLM district office, which would bring increased revenue to the city. County valuation increased to $23.5 million that year, but airline troubles continued: on 11 September came the report that Key Airlines wanted out of Grand County if it could not get increased federal subsidies. The year 1975 closed with news on 11 December that the Wolfe Ranch at Arches had been designated a national historic site and that park visitation was almost 250,000 people for the year.

The county's scenic beauty and recreational opportunities were becoming ever more popular and widely known, helping to attract the tourists and their money that many locals longed for; but the influx of visitors was also putting a greater strain on county and city services as well as threatening to degrade the very land they came to celebrate. It was becoming obvious to some that more management and planning was needed. One result of this was that the Bureau of Land Management began to require permits beginning in 1976 for river running in Desolation and Westwater canyons. Although the permits were free of charge, the system did help alleviate some overcrowding and helped prepare tour-guide operators and others for further rules, fees, and restrictions in years to come.

Health problems began to be more common in the 1970s for uranium workers of the 1950s and 1960s. Many of these people, who had resisted government measures to protect them in the past, now blamed the government for their problems and sought relief and aid from the general American taxpayer, who had to foot the legal and medical bills of those earlier zealous advocates of national security and free enterprise. Political liberals thus were seen to have their own complaints about government spending on site reclamation and clean-up and on personal medical problems that should have been accounted for by the concerned parties years before. This issue has increased the bitterness and polarization of the two camps in the latter half of the twentieth century, although some former miners now find themselves on the side of the environmentalists in their attacks against industry, even though those miners had previously generally supported their employers' efforts to block government regulation and enforced safety policies and procedures.

The proposal to consolidate county and Moab city governments was again raised in early 1976 but was rejected by voters that November by a four-to-one margin. That election, county voters rejected liberal, three-term incumbent U.S. senator Frank Moss by a 966 to 1,750 vote count, favoring Republican party conservative Orrin Hatch, who joined fellow Republican E. J. "Jake" Garn in the Senate to give Utah a conservative representation in that august body. Most Grand County residents were pleased with the arrangement and continued to re-elect the conservative Republicans to the Senate in succeeding years. Liberals had to look elsewhere for political support, although sometimes not too far: Democrats had controlled the Utah state house since 1964, and both three-term governor Calvin Rampton and recently elected governor Scott Matheson had the general support of the majority of county residents. It was true, however, that both were considered conservative on many issues affecting the lands and federal government involvement in the state. Rampton especially was adept at gaining support from many who in other respects considered themselves Republicans, while Matheson came to be respected and well-liked by members of both major parties.

To help the county and Moab city generate needed funds, the local transient room tax at motels was raised in 1976. It was felt by most residents to be an appropriate measure since visitors did make extensive use of county facilities and services. The majority of Grand County residents were politically conservative, fond of proclaiming their values of self-reliance and the virtues of free enterprise and limited government. Figures published in the *Times-Independent* on 18 March 1976 revealed, however, that Grand County was an above-average beneficiary of federal government spending, which was almost $14 million in 1975 alone. This figure represented more than 46 percent of county residents' personal income and averaged $2,150 per capita, far above the state per capita figure of $1,500, or 32 percent of average personal income. Grand County, for all its rhetoric of rugged individualism, benefited significantly by the government's largess. The federal government's new PILT program of payments in lieu of taxes for federal lands also brought tens of thousands of dollars of revenue to the county.

More welcome news for many came on 6 May when the paper

reported that business growth in Grand County was twice the state average. Park visitation also continued to soar that summer, and Grand County property valuation climbed to an all-time high of $26.5 million. The newspaper reported that during the past two years more than $5 million had been spent on construction projects in Moab. Nearby Castle Valley was receiving a new lease on life as county residents began to build homes there, and a "Castle Valley Comments" section became a regular feature of the Moab paper.

In September 1976 a section of Interstate 70 was finished between Floy and Crescent Junction in the northern part of the county, essentially completing the freeway in Grand County after many years of construction. Most of the freeway sections had been completed between 1971 and 1975. A couple of stretches at the far western edge of the county remained to be completed (and were not finished until the early 1980s), but safer and more rapid travel within as well as to and from the county was now a reality.

The year 1977 was a drought year—Colorado River runoff was only 28 percent of normal—and served as a reminder of how tenuous was human tenure on the land. Moab City was forced to adopt a no-new-water-hookup policy, thus slowing construction in the area, and the annual Friendship Cruise was cancelled due to low water in the great rivers of the region. On 10 March the *Times-Independent* reported that Grand County officials had broken from an association with Carbon and Emery counties to join one with San Juan, feeling that the two southeastern counties had more in common and could better coordinate their political and economic efforts. Moab also adopted a new city-manager form of government as the increasingly polarized community tried to find political agreement somewhere. In October, festivities celebrated Moab's diamond jubilee—75 years since its first incorporation. Much had changed in the interim.

Some things, however, never seemed to alter much. The majority of county residents continued to consider federal lands to be theirs to use as they wished, and they resisted any restrictions or payments imposed by the BLM or other agencies. On 26 May the *Times-Independent* reported that most Utah politicians were opposed to President Jimmy Carter's plan to ban off-road vehicles (ORVs) from some public lands that were considered fragile and highly suscepti-

ble to degradation; local politicians also opposed the Democratic president's plan to make wilderness areas of national park lands, which would restrict some development that was allowed within the parks. Both opposition efforts were widespread and successful in defeating the president's proposals. On 27 October both Democrats and Republicans in the county as elsewhere blasted the BLM for its proposal to hike grazing fees; but this time the federal government won the battle. In their anger over federal "interference" and management, opponents seemed to be able to overlook or disregard the $16 million that the government spent in Grand County in 1976.[19]

A preliminary agreement between the Grand County and San Juan County commissioners for the annexation of Spanish Valley lands to Grand County surprised county residents when news of it was published in the *Times-Independent* of 3 November 1977. Although the move seems logical to most people, since only an artificial abstract barrier separates the neighbors within the valley, most political entities jealously hold onto their territory regardless of common-sense considerations. However, even though in this case the politicians agreed, the annexation was rejected by the residents of Spanish Valley in a vote in January 1978—primarily because they feared increased taxes from the less affluent county to the north, according to the *Times-Independent* of 5 January 1978.

Arches National Park visitation reached a record of more than 313,000 visitors in 1977. On 2 March 1978 the newspaper reported favorably on a bill introduced in the U.S. Senate by Utah senator "Jake" Garn to divest the federal government of its western land holdings, turning the lands over to the respective states for management. Westerners had long resented what they considered their status as "colonies" of an increasingly removed and despotic national government, and gaining control of the huge federal land holdings in the West seemed a good start in the declaration of their independence from outside control and management of what they considered their land, even though technically it belonged to all of the citizens of the United States. Garn's move was supported by many other locals, and was an important manifestation of what has come to be known as the "Sagebrush Rebellion." This movement was in some ways the culmination of the longstanding resentment that many residents of the

western states had for the Bureau of Land Management and other government agencies charged with regulating use and disposal of the public-domain lands—which included more than 70 percent of Grand County's area.

More immediately, however, the Sagebrush Rebellion was a response to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), signed into law by President Gerald Ford on 21 October 1976. This was a sweeping revision and consolidation of federal land policies. The BLM had pushed forward the bill, which included among its provisions a directive for multiple-use and sustained-yield policies for federal lands. Also, disposal of federal lands was henceforth to be more highly selective and only for fair market value by means of land sales and exchanges. These provisions crimped both conservative and land-development interests which were trying to divest the government of its land for private purposes. The new law also repealed a number of old laws from the nineteenth century, including right-of-way and road statutes—again threatening prospective development.

FLPMA took years to get through Congress but became surprisingly successful in 1976 as opponents—primarily western interests—were unable to block it. Though they had failed in Congress, opponents of the bill then began to organize grassroots opposition. Many residents of Grand County, as elsewhere, were outraged by the new and seemingly ever-increasing regulations and restrictions on what they assumed was their own land to be used by right, not as a privilege.[20] New environmental and other assessments were required for any proposed developments or important use of public land, confusing and angering developers and other residents. In addition, the movement to inventory and set aside lands for wilderness increased fears and anger about the government limiting access to public lands.

On the other hand, both the FLPMA and the public lands it regulated had increasing numbers of defenders—generally lumped together as "environmentalists" by their opposition, but including groups and individuals with very different interests and concerns. All opposed, however, what they saw as local exploitation of lands that belonged to the citizens of the nation as a whole. One important point of controversy became the issue of just what constituted a viable road. This determination was vital as to whether or not a

wilderness designation could be established for an area, and it has continued into the 1990s to spark fierce controversy and heated debate. As the opposing camps became more vocal, they also became better organized and often more flamboyant in their actions and rhetoric. The controversies over the use of public lands and the designation of parts of them as wilderness have polarized the citizens of the West, and Grand County residents have been in the forefront on both sides of the issues.

Area proponents of the uranium industry were still trying to boost the nuclear energy industry as well, and they were cheered when Green River was mentioned as the possible site of a nuclear electrical power plant. On 20 April 1978 nuclear-power proponents were pleased when the *Times-Independent* reported that Utah governor Scott Matheson had approved the conducting of a study of the feasibility of such a plant. Local efforts that year continued the trend to emphasize tourism in the region. On 30 March the newspaper had reported that Moab's population had doubled over the weekend of the Easter Jeep Safari, which also featured local sand drag races. Sales taxes were becoming a large source of revenue for Moab and the county: more than $325,000 had been added by that means to county revenues in 1977. Thompson received a big boost in April when it was announced that a tourist information center was going to be installed on I-70 near the town. The freeway was finally nearing completion, promising not only easier travel to and from the county but increased numbers of visitors as well.

Growth and tourism still created problems, however—especially with Moab's limited water supply. In June county leaders began to actively push plans for a large reservoir to be constructed in Spanish Valley, with water to be supplied from Mill Creek; but the ambitious project, which necessitated a tunnel through a hill to divert the water, met repeated delays and complications in the ensuing months. On 31 August 1978 the newspaper notified residents that once again water rationing was necessary in Moab.

The 1978 Census of Agriculture revealed that Grand County was one of seven Utah counties with less than 10 percent of its land cultivated as farmland. The few farms (there were fifty-nine at the time) in the county were generally large: Grand and Uintah were the only

two Utah counties where the farms averaged 2,000 acres or more in size. Grand was among eight Utah counties with less than $5 million worth of agricultural produce annually. There was no wheat grown in the county and only a little barley. Fruit and corn production were somewhat viable, but the total numbers were small. There were fewer than 10,000 cattle and calves and not even 100 milk cows in the entire county—a far cry from a century before when cattle ranching was the primary attraction of early settlers to the area.[21] Although some ranchers and politicians blamed this condition on increased government regulation, interference, and restrictions, others realized that there was a changing national economic structure and that a large share of responsibility rested with those who had mismanaged and overgrazed the fragile lands in the first place, making some form of restriction not only necessary but desirable. The best hope for the land and those who would make a living raising livestock upon it was to preserve it for the morrow, not just exploit it for maximum immediate personal gain.

Another factor of equal if not greater importance to the decline of farming and ranching, however, was that increased mechanization and improved refrigeration, transportation, and storage facilities for produce had created a streamlining and consolidation of agriculture as a national industry in which local production could not compete unless it was ideally suited to the particular crop. The planting and harvesting of crops most suitable for various areas was maximized by using machinery and methods often unavailable or too expensive for smaller farming concerns. Marginal farming areas were unable to compete on a large scale. This was generally the case in Grand County, as it was in much of the rest of the country. Grand County's land was just not suited for successful farming in the highly competetive agricultural economic structure of the late twentieth century.

National inflation and a worldwide energy crisis added to national discontent in 1979. This was exacerbated later during the year and all through the next after the U.S. embassy in Iran was seized on 4 November by terrorists who held embassy personnel hostage. The helplessness of the United States and its inability to obtain the release of the imprisoned Americans added fuel to growing national anger and frustration. Like other Americans, Grand County residents

endeavored to make sense of the changing world where U.S. power didn't automatically solve problems and where the economy could be greatly influenced by developments outside the country. Many county residents experienced added frustration when they learned in 1979 that the Green River Missile Launch Site was scheduled to shut down soon. The base employed 105 employees and at its peak had had an annual payroll of $3 million, the loss of which was an additional severe blow to the local economy.

The county shared in the fiftieth anniversary celebration of Arches in April. The energy crisis had definitely affected travel to the area; numbers of visitors were down at the parks. In fact, numbers published later for the year listed only 269,800 visitors to Arches—a figure far below the 326,900 who had visited the park in 1978. The Arthur Taylor ranch house (built in 1896 of locally made red brick) was to be restored as a restaurant. The county opened bids for the Mill Creek reservoir project in June, and in October officially authorized the beginning of the project.[32]

Grand County commissioners officially came out in opposition to Bureau of Land Management wilderness designation plans, according to a report in the *Times-Independent* of 5 July 1979, claiming that wilderness was not the best way to manage public lands. The next month, on 9 August, the Moab paper reported that Grand County had fired a major salvo in the Sagebrush Rebellion by tearing down barricades to Negro Bill Canyon, which the BLM had proposed for wilderness-status consideration. The county appeared ready to take on the federal government—by extralegal means, if necessary—despite the fact that, according to the newspaper on 26 April that year, federal expenditures in Grand County totaled $13,689,000, which was 28.2 percent of the local economy. The proposed county budget for 1979 was $1.8 million, which itself was a record, topped by a $2 million proposed budget for 1980 announced in the Moab paper on 15 November 1979.

As the decade of the 1970s ended in Grand County, things could be said to be lively, with county residents struggling to survive a series of ups and downs. Unfortunately, the struggle was becoming characterized by much in-fighting and polarization within the increasingly inpersonal and divided community. Though many would have

favored a return to quieter times, those times seemed to have disappeared for good in the early 1950s; in fact, the years ahead would prove to provide more of what had just passed, and perhaps in even greater measure. The roller-coaster ride was by no means finished.

The period just passed had introduced a dramatic tension of unprecedented magnitude. County residents had weathered tough times before—most notably in the Depression years of the 1930s—but the entire social and economic way of life was now being challenged. The West, in general, was being transformed from a rural, neglected, predominantly mining and ranching region to a playground and sanctuary of increasingly mobile and concerned urban Americans, many of whom wanted a greater say in protecting and using the land on which others had struggled for decades to make a living. Thus the land was the center of two radically different and competing visions as to how it should best be utilized and who had the right to control it. As the traditional economies of the land—ranching and mining—began to fall victim to an increasingly global world order in which they could not as efficiently compete, the rear guard of the old Grandites began to scuffle with the vanguard of a new order intent on celebrating the land. That this group would in turn divide into different factions was glimpsed by the more perceptive observers as the decade of the 1970s ended. The developing conflict of all these groups would come to occupy center stage in Grand County and much of the rest of the West for the remainder of the twentieth century.

ENDNOTES

1. Moab *Times-Independent*, 8 February 1962.

2. See Robert Norman, "A City on a Cushion of Salt," *Canyon Legacy* 10:24–25.

3. See the *Salt Lake Tribune*, 30 August 1963, p. 1.

4. See Lloyd M. Pierson, "The Moab Museum, 1957–1988," *Canyon Legacy* 1:25–28.

5. Raye Ringholz, *Uranium Frenzy*, pp. 211, 214.

6. See Robert L. Curfman, "Solution Mining Project," *Mining Congress Journal*, March 1974. Other information provided in November 1994 by Texasgulf in a typewritten handout.

7. *1976 Statistical Abstract of Utah* (University of Utah, 1976), pp. xvi–11.

8. Moab *Times-Independent,* 7 December 1967.

9. Ibid., 30 May 1968.

10. See Tanner, *The Far Country,* pp. 262, 265.

11. See issues of Moab *Times-Independent* for 28 November 1968 and 19 December 1968.

12. *1993 Statistical Abstract of Utah,* p. 287.

13. See, for example, Vicki Barker, "The Amasa's Back Chaining: 'Murder on the Mountain,'" *Canyon Legacy* 17:26–30, for a discussion of a later event and protest involving the chaining of land in La Sal Mountains benchland just south of Grand County in San Juan County.

14. Ringholz, *Uranium Frenzy,* p. 267.

15. Moab *Times-Independent,* 13 December 1973.

16. *1976 Statistical Abstract of Utah.*

17. Moab *Times-Independent,* 26 September 1974.

18. Figures from 1969, 1970, and 1974 collected from the *1976 Statistical Abstract of Utah.*

19. See Moab *Times-Independent,* 12 May 1977.

20. See Jean Akens, "FLPMA and the Sagebrush Rebellion," *Canyon Legacy* 17:20–25, for a good background study of the movement.

21. See *1978 United States Census of Agriculture* for detailed figures in the few areas for which they are available for Grand County.

22. Moab *Times-Independent,* 11 October 1979.

14

Tourism and the Environment: 1980 to the Present

Grand County entered the 1980s as it had left the previous decade: with an increasingly polarized citizenry which was dividing on conservation and environmental issues more than on economic or political ones, although political and economic groups often were quickly cast on one side or the other of the environmental issues. Residents of Grand County, like their counterparts throughout the nation, faced with some uncertainty and bewilderment a rapidly changing world—a world that could be said to be shrinking rapidly due to advances in communication technology and the rise of multinational global economies and free markets, where what was happening on the Tokyo stock exchange or in a boardroom meeting in Brussels or New Delhi could directly affect an employee of a potash plant in Grand County. The decade witnessed the decline of the county's traditional economic mainstays—mining, oil production, and ranching—leading to a loss of a third of the county's tax base and a quarter of its population by the late 1980s, only to get caught in the midst of an unprecedented rise in tourism and recreational use of the county towards the end of the decade. This rise of tourism has

continued up to the present and shows no signs of abating. In fact, it has grown to the point that Grand County currently is facing a crisis of how to manage a boom which has caused serious environmental and social problems.

In addition to the problems presented by the new era, Grand County also had its share of old-fashioned problems and concerns on the local level. Old financial woes continued to plague the new era. Grand County and Moab City budget managers were challenged by the continued decline of the ranching and uranium-producing industries. More strict environmental regulations hindered or halted much proposed area development, and increased grazing and mining fees for use of government lands further provoked the wrath of many new developers and longtime county residents. Even the increase in tourism to the area presented problems for its boosters, as increased funds were needed to provide additional services for the visitors, putting a strain on the pocketbooks of local residents. In addition, conservationists were increasing their attacks on those who wanted to develop the area, and they redoubled their efforts to preserve and protect the increasingly threatened lands even though that would mean a sacrifice of additional money coming into the area. A year-by-year look at the county through the pages of the *Times-Independent* will help reveal the complex story as it has unraveled.

Although potash production was doing well as the decade opened, oil production was in a slump. Old problems were compounded by new woes. In March 1980 the county commissioners voted to place the county hospital under private management. However, this did not solve the difficulty—problems with hospital management and county health-care have continued since that time to concern county leaders and residents, reflecting the national concern to provide affordable health care to all citizens while maintaining a free-market medical economy along with the additional problem of providing for the emergency care of thousands of visitors.

Environmental issues soon came to the forefront of public attention. On 27 March the *Times-Independent* announced that plans were being developed for a crude oil pipeline to be constructed across Grand County. Opposition to the project immediately mounted. A week later, it was the turn of local promoters and developers to howl

as the paper reported that 864,510 acres of the BLM's Moab District had been recommended for wilderness study review. Opponents thought that this figure was too high; some environmentalists, however, were unhappy that even more land was not recommended for study as proposed wilderness.

On 4 July about 300 residents, including all three county commissioners, gathered at the foot of Negro Bill Canyon northeast of Moab to protest its inclusion as a wilderness study area and to express their general displeasure with the BLM in particular and the environmental movement in general. They were also protesting the federal government's management of public lands through the Federal Lands Policy Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. Most of the participants cheered as a bulldozer flying a U.S. flag illegally entered the study area and scraped 200 yards along what was an old seismographic study road, "opening" it and thus symbolically asserting that the area was not a proper wilderness study area since it had been developed and used. This act has been called the firing of the first shot of the Sagebrush Rebellion of western conservatives, and, for good or ill, it brought a tremendous amount of publicity to the county.[1]

The action brought a stream of protest, including threats of legal action from the federal government against Grand County if the damage to the area was not repaired. Ironically, the bulldozer had not actually entered the restricted area on 4 July; but, when this became known, some of the Sagebrush rebels went back with the bulldozer on 7 July and extended their "road" into the actual wilderness study area. Passions were running high on both sides of the issue, and acts of vandalism and flamboyant rhetoric characterized the period. It is not known if the wanton destruction of some archaeological sites was related to this antagonism, but the Courthouse Panel near Moab was one of several sites damaged around that time. However, most area residents on either side of the Sagebrush Rebellion issue were shocked by such mindless acts of willful destruction.

The majority of county residents was inclined to support the Sagebrush Rebellion, or at least to call for less federal control and restrictions on public land use. They also resented people from outside the county having an important voice in what they considered

their own affairs. Their point of view was amply demonstrated in the election that November in which nationally victorious conservative Republican challenger Ronald Reagan received more than three times the votes in the county that incumbent Jimmy Carter received: 2,362 to 703. These numbers were almost matched by conservative Utah senator Jake Garn, as he easily won re-election. Grand County voters joined the majority of their fellow voters in the state, however, in re-electing Democratic governor Scott Matheson, revealing their independence and the fact that the candidate was more important than the party affiliation. Matheson outpolled his Republican opponent, Jim Wright, by a 1,849 to 1,410 vote margin in the county.

Census figures for 1980 showed that the population of the county had increased from 6,688 in 1970 to 8,312 people. Moab grew to 5,340 from 4,272 the decade before, and the Moab Valley area was now at 7,958—up from 6,272. As can be seen, all county growth could be accounted for by Moab Valley. Though this was not strictly true, since the Elgin area had gained forty people to stand at 104 residents, few people in Grand County lived outside Moab Valley. The Thompson area experienced a drop from 416 in 1970 to 354 residents. On the whole, the county's population gain was nearly 25 percent, a surprising increase considering the turbulence and slight downturn of the previous decade; but the increase was much smaller than the state's growth rate of almost 38 percent for the decade and can be attributed to a general spreading-out of Utah's growing population as people looked throughout the state for living space and economic opportunity. Still, things were looking up for Moab.

On 12 March 1981 the *Times-Independent* published a list of the largest taxpayers in the county: the D&RGW railroad led the list, followed by Utah Power and Light Company, Texasgulf, Continental Telephone, and Northwest Pipeline Corporation; Atlas Corporation was no longer among the leaders. The next month—on 16 April—the paper brought the unpleasant news that the Utah Tax Commission had threatened legal action against Grand County for its failure to assess property at state-mandated levels. Apparently, either by mistake or to secure their good will and commitment to the county, certain entities had been assessed at special tax rates.

This was not the only problem facing the county. The Sagebrush

Rebellion activities of the county commissioners and others were creating a storm of protest, according to a report in the 19 March 1981 Moab paper. A week later, a radical environmental group, Earth First!, got the newspaper's attention with its protest against Glen Canyon Dam, hated by many western conservationists and nature lovers since it was begun in the early 1960s in northern Arizona, creating massive Lake Powell in southern Utah. Many in Grand County, however, greatly valued both the dam and its reservoir, which was becoming a popular tourist attraction for the region. Opponents looked to any avenue they could find to attack their foes.

On 5 June 1981 the Mill Creek reservoir officially became known as Ken's Lake in ceremonies held in honor of former Moab mayor Ken McDougald, who had served during some of the most hectic of the uranium-boom years and was known for his support of many other civic projects. The reservoir was designed to hold 2,700 acre-feet of water, which was routed from Mill Creek through a 645-foot tunnel, called the Sheley Tunnel in honor of Horace Sheley, who had attempted just such a tunnel in the early part of the century but was unable to complete the ambitious project. The reservoir was a dream come true to many area residents and to local land developers, promising to help alleviate water shortages while facilitating new area growth. Ken's Lake also rapidly became a playground for locals and visitors alike. Fishing, camping, boating, and water sports were soon enjoyed at the lake, which is only a few miles south of Moab.

The year 1981 came to a close with more controversy. In November public hearings were scheduled at many Utah locations concerning the construction of a nuclear-waste dump in southeastern Utah. Environmentalists squared off against rural Utahns who looked to the revenue and employment such a facility would bring to the region. There were also more problems with Moab's city government. The city administrator quit when it was announced that his position was to be eliminated. Other city problems arose in February 1982 when the mayor and city council disagreed about the firing of the local police chief.

The new year 1982 began with a bad start economically: in its first issue, on 7 January, the *Times-Independent* reported that Atlas Corporation was planning to cut its national workforce from 19,000

to 11,000, with 100 of the company's 500 employees in Moab expected to be left without jobs. Ranchers were encouraged when the paper reported the next week that James Watt, the controversial Secretary of the Interior, planned to simplify government procedures, making it easier for individuals and companies to utilize the public lands. They were even more pleased the next month when the Bureau of Land Management announced a grazing-fee reduction of 45 cents per animal unit month—from $2.31 to $1.86.

Howard Balsley died 11 April 1982. Known as "the father of the Utah uranium industry" for his contributions and long service to that industry, he had also served Grand County faithfully for forty years as a member of the board of education. He was also county clerk and recorder for thirteen years and had helped develop and fund the county library and the hospital as well as other civic projects.

Financial concerns and news occupied the paper's pages in the coming months. Area residents were probably a bit surprised to read on 13 May that Atlas profits for the 1982 fiscal year were the highest in that company's history—this after it had laid off 175 employees in Moab in January, a number almost double that which originally had been announced. That issue of the *Times-Independent* also reported the depressing news that unemployment in Grand County had climbed to 11.9 percent—up from 7 percent the year before. On 27 May the paper reported that Moab had a $1.25 million budget. Two weeks later it was reported that Grand County property valuation, including mining and utility companies' property, exceeded $60 million, a number that reflected both the growth of the potash and oil industries in the 1970s as well as inflation, which had devalued the dollar, making the figures higher than one would expect.

The proposed nuclear waste dump for southeastern Utah was another important news item of the period. In April 1982 Moab residents had the opportunity to comment on the issue in public hearings. On 17 June the *Times-Independent* reported that a group of citizens from Grand and San Juan counties, including two Grand County commissioners, had met with Utah governor Scott Matheson to urge his support for a nuclear waste facility. They called the risks "insignificant," particularly when viewed against the economic benefit and increased employment that the facility would bring to the eco-

nomically depressed area. The week before, the three-member county commission had come out in official opposition to Negro Bill Canyon as a wilderness study area, although that came as no surprise considering the illegal bulldozer incident of the previous year.

On 22 July the newspaper published the bad news that Texasgulf was going to cut 10 percent of its Potash employees, although the reduction only amounted to ten jobs due to the highly mechanized nature of the solution-mining operation and its relatively small workforce. Still, it was both a real and a psychological blow to the struggling local economy. Because of lack of funds, the request of Thompson for a permanent deputy sheriff was denied. In the same issue of the paper, it was reported that Governor Matheson had come out in opposition to Department of Energy (DOE) studies for a proposed nuclear waste depository at Gibson Dome in San Juan County. Many Grand County residents were angered at the governor's position and mounted a public protest the next week. The anger was such that when Matheson came to Moab to speak on the issue in late August Sam Taylor urged residents to be civil and polite; he then congratulated them later for their restrained behavior at the meeting.[2]

A vocal minority in the county supported Matheson and was generally in favor of increased protection of the land. These environmentalists in turn had been disappointed when the *Times-Independent* reported on 5 August that the BLM planned to drop four of its six Grand County wilderness study areas—three of which were in the Book Cliffs and suspected of having oil and gas deposits. Only one unit, of 12,700 acres, within the county was to be recommended for wilderness status, according to the report. Statewide, the agency proposed to drop more than a million acres of its earlier proposed areas, recommending only 678,000 acres for wilderness. Environmentalists were angered at what they saw as the selling out of the agency to commercial and political interests.

The BLM's original proposal of 1.6 million acres of wilderness areas in the state was only one of many plans being considered during the period. Among them was one favored by Congressman James Hansen (from Utah's First Congressional District) and other conservatives of 1.4 million acres, and another of 5.7 million acres sponsored by liberal Congressman Wayne Owens from the more

metropolitan Second Congressional District of Utah. Many in Grand County and throughout Utah divided along the lines of these two proposals although there were other proposals to consider: for example, Earth First! agitated for wilderness status for 16 million acres of Utah's BLM-managed lands. Grand County residents were becoming increasingly polarized and angry, resulting in a hardening of already opposed points of view. Further fuel for discontent came in September when figures revealed that the county's unemployment rate was at 12.9 percent, compared to 8.3 percent statewide.

Mixed discontent resulted in mixed election results in November 1982. Democrats won the local commission races but Republicans were victorious statewide, with Orrin Hatch holding his Senate seat against former Salt Lake City mayor Ted Wilson by a margin of almost two to one in Grand County. Conservative Republican Howard Nielson also won an easy victory to become the first representative of Utah's new Third Congressional District, which included Grand County and southeastern Utah. Voters in Moab rejected a full-time mayor position, spurning their own mayor's support of the plan. City problems continued in November when the Moab police chief and two other city officials resigned. The prevailing mood was troubled and angry. Good news that all could share seemed limited to cheering-on the high school's sports teams, the basketball and wrestling teams being particularly strong during the period.

Interstate 70 was essentially completed in Grand County in the mid-1970s except for a stretch at the west side of the county. In December 1982 the freeway section from Elgin to Floy Wash was finished. Only a tiny area west of Elgin remained, and it was finished in August 1983.

January 1983 brought the news that grazing fees on BLM land had again been greatly lowered—this time by 42 cents from the year before, down to $1.40 per AUM. Environmentalists saw it as a give-away of the public lands, but the move was favored by the majority of residents in Grand County. On 10 February came the bitter news that the unemployment rate was now 17.5 percent, second in the state to San Juan County's 20 percent. The loss of oil and mining jobs was reverberating through all sectors of the local economy, forcing many of the county's relative newcomers out and leaving others in

the unemployment lines, with few prospects on the horizon. The bad news wasn't affecting Atlas Corporation on the national level, however; the company again posted record profits for the year past, according to a report in the *Times-Independent* of 17 February.

In early March revised BLM wilderness figures were published—this time 83,620 acres in the county were recommended for wilderness status; this was 39 percent of the 212,425 acres in the county studied by the agency. The issue of the newspaper that brought that news on 3 March included the sad news that Bates Wilson had died at the age of seventy on 25 February at his Professor Valley ranch. Wilson was one of the few men respected by many on both sides of the wilderness debate, as his efforts on behalf of the land of southeastern Utah could not be ignored—especially his years of service as ranger and superintendent in the creation and management of Arches and Canyonlands national parks.

Economic woes were worsening. Figures published on 10 March showed county unemployment at almost 20 percent; in addition, merchants reported that sales were down 6.5 percent from the year before. In June the city budget was cut more than 22 percent—down almost $300,000 from 1982. Efforts were made to enhance tourism, and the half-marathon river run attracted 800 runners that spring. Touring bicyclists were also beginning to frequent the area, and local promoters took note of that fact.

Nature contributed to troubles for the area. A local man was drowned when the Colorado River overflowed near Moab in late May. On 30 June the flow of the river at Cataract Canyon was 108,000 cubic feet per second—the highest since 1917. Fortunately there was little damage caused by the river at Moab. The river road—Utah Highway 128—was declared a "Scenic Highway" in November 1983, and the Moab Museum completed an addition; plans were also being made for a senior citizens center in Moab. Former mayor Ken McDougald was killed in an airplane crash in New Mexico on 18 November. The year ended with the county firmly in the grasp of a recession.

Grazing fees were again reduced at the beginning of 1984, but this time the reduction was only three cents per animal unit month. Devastating news came in the 23 February issue of the *Times-Independent*: Atlas Corporation announced plans to shut down its

Moab mill and uranium-mining operations, a move that would leave from 160 to 180 local people out of work. As reasons for the shutdown, Atlas cited the national recession and the fact that it was no longer profitable to mill uranium concentrate, which was selling at about $18 a pound, down from a high of $44 a few years before.

Efforts were increased to bring dollars to the county. The Grand County Travel Council promoted the Moab golf course and a planned convention bureau. In March a motocross race across slickrock areas in the county was organized, much to the displeasure of some in the environmental camp. The county tried unsuccessfully to get a briquette manufacturing plant to locate at Thompson. Going concerns like the Easter Jeep Safari were aggressively promoted and advertised by concerned community leaders. A fruit-growers' co-op was formed that spring and thousands of grapevines were planted in southeastern Utah, including Spanish Valley. The Utah Symphony Orchestra presented a concert in Arches National Park in August—one of the innovative promotional ideas tried during the period. Film production was actively promoted and achieved a good measure of success. A list compiled by *Canyon Legacy* editor Jean Akens included *Choke Canyon* as a feature movie filmed in the county in 1984, only the second since 1978 on the list.[3]

In May 1984 popular but retiring governor Scott Matheson came out in opposition to any nuclear waste dump in Utah, a position that did not endear him to many in southeastern Utah. The hope for a major industrial facility in the region was stronger than fears for safety or concern for the environment in the minds of many area residents who were looking for good-paying employment that would allow them to stay in the region. After all, the reasoning went, there was plenty of beautiful land—if necessary, some could be spared to provide regional prosperity. That November, Republicans swept to victory on the local, state, and national levels, with conservative incumbent president Ronald Reagan gaining a huge majority of almost three to one in Grand County over challenger Walter Mondale. Conservative interests definitely were continuing in the ascendency in the county, but the more liberal minority had greater support in Salt Lake City and other urban areas, prompting some bitterness and cries of "outside meddling" from local conservatives.

Attention was focused on the golf course as 1985 got underway. The course was on city-owned land, but operation of it was leased to a private company, which initially had constructed the facility. In April 1985 the golf course lease was extended for five years, although some in the community felt that the operation should be managed by the city. The *Times-Independent* reported on 14 March that new offices were to be constructed in Moab for the national forest and park services; but employment news was generally bleak—on 21 March the unemployment rate was listed at an alarming 21.2 percent. The county budget was about $2.74 million, but the recession was creating many budget problems. More than 500 people had registered for the Jeep Safari that Easter—an economic bright spot in a gloomy time. On 2 May the *Times-Independent* reported that the railroad depot at Thompson was going to be closed; however, it was announced that passengers would still be able to flag the train at Thompson, preserving railroad service in the county.

The increasingly worried community leaders planned an "Up Rally" for 29 May in Moab, in which ideas would be solicited to promote the area and members of the community encouraged not to give up on the county during the bleak times. Figures collected from the year before showed that the volume of goods sold in Moab was down 3.9 percent from the already depressed figures of the year before. It was estimated that the county had lost about 5 percent of its population—some 440 people—between 1980 and 1984. The boys high school baseball team won the state championship in June, bringing welcome diversion; flash floods that contaminated Thompson's culinary water supply in late July brought unwelcome diversion. The Moab Fast-pitch Softball Tournament was one of the more successful activities promoted during the period.

Funding for a new concrete multi-lane bridge to replace the old one-lane iron suspension bridge at Dewey was authorized by the state legislature, and a bid of $2.7 million was awarded in mid-August only to be rejected as too high two weeks later.[4] Matters were eventually straightened out and construction began on the project, which was completed the next year, providing a modern transportation link from Highway 128 to Interstate 70 north of Dewey.

On 19 September the *Times-Independent* published a set of

revealing figures showing federal expenditures in the county in 1984. The total was more than $17.5 million, up 17 percent from the year before, and amounted to $2,188 per capita; the average per capita income was about $10,000 at the time, so it can be seen that the federal government was a major player in the county's economy. In 1984 government had almost replaced mining as the major source of personal income in the county, at $8.89 million compared to mining's $9.17 million. Texasgulf's potash mining was about the only successful extractive enterprise. Only five years before, mining had stood at $12.54 million compared to government salaries of $7.47 million.[5] In 1980, mining had soared to $16.3 million with government at $7.7 million; but since that time mining had been in decline while government continued what seemed to be an inexorable rise.

Although the revenue brought into the county by the government was welcome, the accompanying governmental regulatory and bureaucratic presence was not nearly as favorably received by many county residents. Like most Americans, they prided themselves on their self-determination and they perceived a threat to individual freedom in the government's increased presence. Also, it symbolized the bureaucratic inefficiency and taxing power unpleasant to almost all. It seemed easier for many to overlook that they received benefits and protection necessary in an increasingly complex society where the few can easily victimize or jeopardize the many.

More than $1.1 million of the 1984 total of $17.5 million from the government was spent for defense contracts; almost $5.4 million was in the form of various grants; $5.7 million in social security payments; $3.9 million in salaries; and another $1.2 million in other miscellaneous payments. Despite all this, the economy was hurting badly. That same issue of 19 September the newspaper reported a "uranium rally" held to try to get more government and private-enterprise support for the increasingly troubled and nationally suspect industry. The severity of the recession was evidenced by an unemployment rate in the county of 15.4 percent in 1984 and 13 percent in 1985—both among the state's highest. In June 1985, 413 families (5.8 percent) in the county were receiving welfare assistance—the state average was about 2.5 percent—reversing a trend in which Grand County usually had a smaller percentage of its residents on public

assistance than the state average. Until the early 1980s, only in the tumultuous years of the 1950s had Grand County been above the state average. Gross taxable sales, $84.13 million in 1982, shrank to $57.48 million by 1985—a loss of more than 30 percent.[6] Longtime county residents were suffering—many leaving the county—frustrated by conditions over which they had no control and longing for a return to "good old days," the loss of which many blamed on government regulation or outside meddling in what they considered local matters—even if those matters involved public lands.

Things did not get better as the next year began. On 6 February 1986 the *Times-Independent* reported that Texasgulf was cutting another twenty-five of its Moab employees. A town meeting again was called to rally Moabites; increased tourism was seen as the best economic hope for the county. Two weeks later, newspaper readers were notified that television commercials promoting the county were to be aired on one of Salt Lake City's network stations. The following week brought the pleasant news that Loren Taylor had been posthumously elected to the Utah Newspaper Hall of Fame; but that issue also brought the figures that homes in Moab were now valued at only 82 percent of what they had been worth the previous year.

The half-marathon and 5K runs continued to attract runners—some 800 for the March events—and April brought the welcome information that visitation at Arches was up 72 percent for the first three months of the year: more than 40,000 visitors had already entered the park, which now boasted desert bighorn sheep, transported to the park in early February. Canyonlands visitation also had nearly doubled during the same period and was up to 19,500.

Another source of economic growth and increased tourist visitation was bicycling, both touring and mountain biking. Some perceptive local residents began to advertise the plateau country to these athletes and recreationalists. In late April the second annual Moab Stage Race, featuring 130 world-class riders, was held, and the *Times-Independent* published an article on mountain biking, which was increasing in national popularity by leaps and bounds and, according to some, was a natural means of travel and recreation in the slickrock areas of the region. In October that year Moab held a new event for mountain bikers: the Canyonlands Fat Tire Festival.

The Grand County Commission unanimously voted in early May to oppose *any* wilderness areas in the county, further alienating the minority environmentalist constituency. Some of these folks were cheered when federal agents conducted a series of raids in Grand and San Juan counties to obtain illegally collected archaeological artifacts. More than 300 items were siezed, some from noted San Juan county commissioner and former state representative Cal Black, considered by many to be the model for Bishop Love in Edward Abbey's novel about the canyon country, *The Monkey Wrench Gang.* Although Black and others called the actions "gestapo raids," United States Attorney for Utah Brent Ward countered: "We feel very strongly that it is time for the looting of public sites to stop, and I think we made a strong statement."[7] Among other things, the raids prompted a series of articles from the Moab paper on archaeology and vandalism.

Times were changing in Grand County, reflecting national trends. Despite traditional woes and complaints, America was an immensely wealthy nation, and many Americans had ample means to enjoy their material prosperity and were looking for ways and places to spend their wealth. A younger, more self-indulgent society was emerging. Americans were touring the country as never before, many able to spend large amounts of money on food, lodging, and entertainment. Spectacularly scenic spots with accompanying recreational resources were being touted and investigated in the national press. Grand County was second to none in many of these attributes, and, as they turned to tourism in desperation for solutions to an economy turned bad, county leaders unwittingly tapped into a major national development, one that was bound to come to Grand County anyway but could have been better managed had its magnitude been anticipated. As it was, many community leaders touted anything that would bring growth and visitation to the area with little regard for potential environmental or social repercussions, provoking an angry countermovement from a more environmentally conscious minority (that was, however, steadily growing).

In August 1986 a newspaper called *The Stinking Desert Gazette* was published by a local group of more radical environmental activists and sympathizers. It was planned to be a monthly publication, and its publisher was Robert Dudek. Its intention seemed to be

to pull a few tailfeathers and tweak a few noses, since it proclaimed in the inaugural issue that "we will check no sources nor will we overburden our staff with investigative reporting." However, the publication did help to galvanize support for various causes among environmentalists, whom it incidently helped to bind together. Also, in its two and a half years, it managed to publish some interesting interviews with area old-timers such as Pearl Baker and Ken Sleight, while also featuring works by Edward Abbey. Jim Stiles came to prominence with the publication as an artist but began more serious reporting. His own monthly newspaper, *The Canyon Country Zephyr,* created in 1989, emerged as a serious publication and a forum for points of view often neglected in the *Times-Independent.*

In early 1986 Castle Valley residents had incorporated their growing area as a town, joining Moab as the only incorporated areas in the county. However, by June, many residents wanted to disincorporate due to the added restrictions and expenses that had come with the move. Problems with other populated areas of the county surfaced that fall when the newspaper reported that residents of Elgin had joined with Green River townfolks to protest that they did not feel fairly represented by the Grand County Travel Council, which was responsible for promoting that part of the region. They wanted their own funds; but such action was not forthcoming from the travel council or the county commission.

There were a few success stories during the period. Vines planted in 1984 were beginning to produce by 1986, with the grapes being sent to a winery in Grand Junction, Colorado. Forty thousand more vines had been planted in 1985 in the hope that grape horticulture and winemaking would become successful in the region. In 1986 imaginative area promoters had come up with a "World's Most Scenic Dump" contest in an effort to publicize the natural beauty of Grand County where even the refuse heap was surrounded by spectacular grandeur. By October the contest was receiving national attention and publicity—a major coup for the county.

Tourism was helping improve the economic situation. Visitation at Arches for the first nine months of 1986 was 381,044 people, two-thirds of the visitation at famed Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado, establishing Arches as one of the premier parks in the

nation, according to the *Times-Independent* for 9 October. Federal spending in the county was also helping, although the government—particularly the Department of Energy and the Bureau of Land Management—was regularly attacked in the newspaper. In 1985 federal spending in the county had totaled almost $24 million, almost $3,000 per capita. On 13 November the *Times-Independent* published the news that SUCCE, the continuing education program of Utah State University, had just had its most successful academic quarter ever, with 453 area residents enrolled in classes. It also published the relatively good news that unemployment was 9.6 percent.

Assessed valuation in the county went from $71.01 million in 1985 to $340.78 million in 1986; however, the number actually represented a decrease rather than a staggering increase in value, since property was calculated at its full value in 1986 rather than at 20 percent of its value as had been the case up through 1985, which had it been calculated at full value that year would have been $355.1 million. The figures from 1980 to 1985 might have seemed high to many compared with those from previous years, but they were generally enlarged due to inflation and reassessment of many mining and oil properties. Per capita income in the county, which in 1980 had been $9,422 compared to a state average of $7,952, was at $10,046 in 1986; but this figure was now below the state average of $10,658. Personal income figures for the two years told the same story. In 1980, non-farm income in Grand County was $77.27 million, with mining income at $16.3 million (the largest among the categories) and government salaries and other income at $7.71 million. In 1986 the total figure had decreased to $74.74 million, with mining showing a great decline to $5.63 million, while government had risen to $9.81 million.[8] These figures incidently showed the rise in government-related employment as mining continued to decline.

Farming was not of major economic importance in the county. In 1980 income from farming was $653,000—which was less than 1 percent of non-farm income—and in 1986 the figures were $662,000. Totals for 1987 revealed that only 7.2 percent of Grand County land was used in agricultural pursuits compared to a state average of 19 percent. The total of 81 farms in the county was second lowest in the state. Of the 169,000 acres that made up the total figure, only 3,012

were harvested, only 4,397 irrigated. It was obvious that most agricultural land either was pasture or was lying fallow. The farms in the county were larger than the state average, however: 2,090 acres compared with a 710-acre state average.[9]

Visitation totals at Arches in 1986 were almost 420,000—up 15 percent from the year before. Dead Horse Point State Park visitation also increased by some 12 percent and topped 100,000 for the first time. Festivities in late January 1987 celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Canyonlands Natural History Association, a park- and conservation-advocacy group that had done much to celebrate and protect the plateau lands by increasing public awareness of, and knowledge about, the area. Although the region's parks deserved much of the credit for the increased tourism that was helping keep Grand County afloat, local residents were unhappy in April when fees for entrance and camping at the national parks were raised in an attempt by the National Park Service to generate additional funds to help maintain the popular areas and somewhat restrict their use.

The economic situation was improving from what it had been; however, it was still in a depressed condition. This was underscored in early February 1987 when substantial budget cuts were proposed for the Grand County School District. In essence, this was tied to a decrease in county population, which was estimated to be at 6,850, a number 200 less than in 1985.[10] Expenditures per pupil had been generally close to the state average since 1960 and continued to remain so. In 1985–86 Grand County school expenditures were $524,157 out of more than $253 million statewide. School enrollment in 1987–88 was 1,453 students, only about one-third of 1 percent of the students in the state. Seventy graduated from Grand County High School that year.[11] In May 1987 the school board adopted a four-day school week as a cost-cutting measure.

The 19 March issue of the *Times-Independent* reported that Moab shared the honor of having the "World's Most Scenic Dump" with Kodiak, Alaska, which was now Moab's new sister city. The contest itself had proven to be a big publicity winner for Moab. Attracting people to the area seemed to be the only really successful economic activity at the time. The river races that spring drew more than 1,000 runners; and 1987's Easter Jeep Safari was the largest ever,

with more than 700 official participants. On 14 May the newspaper reported that Moab's efforts to attract small conventions to the city were becoming moderately successful. The Grand County Water Conservancy District had also come up a winner: it was awarded a $170,000 grant from the Utah Community Impact Board to lay a pressurized line from Ken's Lake to the Moab golf course, which was being expanded to a full eighteen holes as a greater tourist attraction.

Despite its modest successes, the larger economic picture remained quite bleak. This was revealed by figures published in the 11 June 1987 issue of the *Times-Independent* under the headline, "County Assessed Value Dropped a Whopping 23% in 1987." The huge decline—from $343.7 million to $264.7 million[12]—was mainly due to a great decline in mining, oil, and gas production, which was down $73 million. That same issue of the newspaper reported that a movie entitled *Nightmare at Noon* was being filmed in the county. Though it might have seemed to be the title of the Grand County story, it was welcome economic news, and efforts to attract film producers to the area—for feature films, television shows, and commercials—were important to the community. The Moab Film Commission under director Bette Stanton aggressively promoted the area.

The remaining months of 1987 featured a series of economic ups and downs. On 25 June it was reported that even federal expenditures in the county had fallen by 10 percent, after having risen against the prevailing downturn in earlier years. Then, on 30 July, a lower-court decision to halt the importation of foreign-mined uranium gave hope to the domestic industry, including many of its supporters in Moab. August also brought good news with the report that Moab had been awarded funds from the state to help finish its 18-hole golf course and that the city had also received money to help remodel facilities to attract the Hollywood Stuntmen's Hall of Fame, which the city and the Moab Film Commission were trying to attract to town. Their efforts were crowned with success later in the year.

On 24 July groundbreaking ceremonies were conducted for a new museum in Moab to be named after Dan O'Laurie, an early associate of Charlie Steen during the boom times of the early 1950s who had made a fortune at the time. O'Laurie had chosen to remain in Moab, where he was a generous contributor to many civic projects,

including various upgrades of the Moab Museum through the years. Plans had been made to add a new addition to the old museum; however, in December 1986 O'Laurie agreed to finance a completely new and much larger structure. The old building was torn down in early 1987 and construction of the new building began in late July.[13] Dan O'Laurie did not live to see the new building—he died of cancer at the age of eighty on 7 January 1987—but he did have the satisfaction of knowing before he died that his bequest would enable Moab and Grand County to have a museum of which it could be proud for decades to come.

The Dan O'Laurie Museum in Moab opened on 20 August 1988 in its new building, and through its board of directors and staff, including museum board president Pete Plastow, Lloyd and Yvonne Pierson, Keith Montgomery, and others, sparked greater interest in the history and natural history of the region. Not only were the museum's collections upgraded and more professionally exhibited but also a new journal was planned. It was inaugurated the next spring as *Canyon Legacy,* the journal of the Southeastern Utah Society of Arts and Sciences. Jean Akens was the capable managing editor and has continued to fill that role in the succeeding years, as *Canyon Legacy* has become an excellent source of information about Moab, Grand County, and the Colorado Plateau in general.

On 3 September 1987 the Moab weekly newspaper notified its readers that Atlas Corporation was officially closing down its uranium division, electing to take a tax loss on the property while concentrating on its gold-mining operations out of state. Though the move surprised no one, since the property had been effectively abandoned years before, it did signal the end of the uranium-producing era in the county. Unfortunately, it did not end the uranium era—controversy over what to do about the uranium mill and the estimated eleven million tons of hazardous radioactive waste tailings left behind near the Colorado River would now move to center stage and occupy attention and concern for years to come, causing huge problems in the county and region.

It was suggested by some that Atlas had only delayed its official decision to dismantle the old uranium mill in order to postpone the day of reckoning regarding the pile of radioactive tailings left behind

In 1986 Atlas had presented a plan to cap the pile, leaving it in place, and had set aside $5 million in an escrow account towards the cleanup, which had received preliminary approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). In the meantime, however, opposition to this plan had mounted as health concerns over the proximity of the tailings both to Moab and the Colorado River drainage system downstream increased. The volatile nature of such concerns was evident in a 1 October 1987 report in the *Times-Independent* about strong opposition from Colorado downwinders to a proposed nuclear waste incinerator near Cisco. Although the plan would revitalize the economy of that Grand County area, in the new era of increased health and environmental concerns, decisions reached far beyond the area that was directly involved in development plans.

In the Moab paper the next week Texasgulf announced an expansion of its potash operations, bringing a few new jobs to the area. Federal PILT (payment in lieu of taxes) funds to the county were $324,089 that year. The Fat Tire Festival grew to 450 entrants. County commissioners continued to oppose measures favored by environmentalists: on 12 November the *Times-Independent* announced the county's official opposition to the designation of Westwater Canyon on the Colorado River as a "Wild and Scenic River," in part to express the commissioners' displeasure over Colorado's opposition to the Cisco nuclear waste incinerator plan. The city of Moab received unwelcome notoriety on 10 December when it was reported that it headed the list of communities in the United States losing population: at 4,410 its estimated population represented a decrease of 17 percent from 1980 census figures.

Controversy over the proposed nuclear waste incinerator at Cisco occupied the first part of 1988. County commissioners established a favorable zoning designation to permit such construction, but it was then decided that the question of approval of such a plant would be put to county voters in November. On 11 February the *Times-Independent* reported that Moab had been awarded a $372,823 grant from the state to improve its sidewalks, storm drains, and other parts of the city's infrastructure. Two weeks later, the news was published that Castle Valley voters had rejected a proposal to disincorporate,

even though the town had lost an eighth of its population since 1980 and now listed 210 residents.

The Easter Jeep Safari was now a week-long event, with 738 registered vehicles on eighteen trails in the area that year. Late April brought the news that the golf course was almost completed. Very good news came on 5 May when a $1.1 million funding grant from the Utah Permanent Community Impact Board was awarded Green River for construction of the John Wesley Powell River Museum, which was to be built on the east side of the Green River in Grand County. It was hoped and expected that the new museum would not only help the town of Green River economically but also would bring increased tourism to the entire region. In late June the Hollywood Stuntmen's Hall of Fame was officially opened in Moab, becoming a permanent reminder of the work of the Moab Film Commission.

The domestic uranium industry was dealt a severe blow by the U.S. Supreme Court in late June when it unanimously ruled that foreign uranium could be imported into the United States. In essence, free trade policies had made U.S. uranium production uneconomical on the international level—a situation already the case with many other American products. This helped lead to the closing of the nearby Rio Algom mine in San Juan County, announced later in the fall. In the meantime, in August Atlas Corporation announced plans to demolish its mill at Moab. In an editorial dated 11 August 1988, *Times-Independent* editor Sam Taylor called it the end of an age that had lasted longer than anyone had imagined it would back in 1957. He then said that it was time to move on to other things. Among those "other things," however, was the problem of cleaning up the old mill site and tailings.

In October 1988 Thompson was the location for the movie *Sundown*. In late October more than 2,000 people participated in the third annual Fat Tire Festival: the area was becoming a tremendous attraction and playground for mountain bikers. Arches visitation also continued to increase, passing the half-million mark in the first ten months of the year. Federal spending was up and unemployment down that year, althought the 8.8 percent unemployment rate was still above the state average of 4.9 percent. The Rotary Club was active during the period, and, like other area boosters, most members were

cheered on 17 November when the *Times-Independent* reported that $4 million had been granted for construction of a paved road to Dead Horse Point State Park.

Conservatives received a couple of setbacks late in the year when multiple-use management policies of the BLM were approved by the courts. Also, in the November election, county voters rejected the idea of a nuclear-waste incinerator near Cisco by a margin of almost two to one. Even though conservatives held most positions of power in the county, it was beginning to be evident that, on certain issues at least, many county residents did not see things exactly their way and that political power was shifting from the old Moabites to the group swelled by more recent newcomers to the county. It was now becoming impossible for conservative residents to rail against "outside" meddling: a strong environmental presence was now making itself known in local matters. This was shown when plans were later scrapped that had been developed in 1989 by leaders of Uintah and Grand counties to build a highway through the Book Cliffs to connect the two counties. On 6 April the *Times-Independent* reported that the two counties had come up with a plan to connect Ouray, Utah, to Cisco by way of Middle Canyon in the Book Cliffs. Three weeks later, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) said that it would pave the road if the two counties would build it.

At the beginning of 1989 Moab received a $450,000 grant to help build an indoor arena for what was to be the Moab Equestrian Center, or Old Spanish Trail Arena. Residents were pleased at the time, although the facility later proved to be a drain on county resources. On 2 March the newspaper reported that population estimates for the county continued to show a decline—to 6,550 from 6,700 in 1988—even as Utah's population was growing.

On 23 March the paper's headlines concerned the Jeep Safari, which was not unusual; what was unusual was what was not reported: the death in Arizona on 14 March of Edward Abbey, noted writer, environmental activist, and former Arches ranger, who had inspired thousands to speak up and act on behalf of the plateau country, earning in the process the enmity of many conservative residents of southeastern Utah. His most famous books, the non-fiction *Desert Solitaire* and fictional *The Monkey Wrench Gang,* both dealt

with Grand County, and his admirers were becoming a potent political force in the county and throughout the West. Although it appears that Sam Taylor thought that Abbey's death was best ignored, a memorial service was later held outside Arches National Park on 20 May which attracted hundreds to the county to pay tribute to Abbey and hear from nationally known writers including Wendell Berry and Barry Lopez, as well as friends of Abbey's including Terry Tempest Williams and Ken Sleight. The *Times-Independent* devoted a page-4 article to the event on 25 May.

Although the *Times-Independent* expressed its editor's attitude in the Abbey matter, the disregard helped spur a serious alternative newspaper, the *Canyon Country Zephyr,* begun that April by local artist, writer, and former park ranger Jim Stiles. From the outset the *Zephyr* intended to present a forum for the serious discussion of issues—particularly environmental and economic—affecting Grand County, and though its appearance was much less sedate than was that of the *Times-Independent,* many locals soon came to read regularly the new monthly publication, and not just for an opposing point of view. Stating the new paper's intention, Stiles wrote in the inaugural issue: "The Zephyr wants to reflect the diversity of both Grand County's land and people, hopefully in a positive and constructive manner." He continued: "The future of our community and the canyons and mountains that surround us is important to us all."[14] The *Zephyr* intended to present both sides of issues, and over the years has featured lengthy interviews with politicians and others who would have to be considered among the county's most conservative. Still going strong in 1995, it is a valuable voice in community affairs.

Film making in the area received an important boost during 1989 when portions of a greatly anticipated (and immensely popular) movie, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade,* directed by Steven Spielberg, were filmed in the county. This brought increased notoriety to the county and attracted the notice of other film, television, and television commercial producers. Utah as a whole had a banner year as a site for film crews: on 13 July the *Times-Independent* reported that filming within the state had brought in $33 million. The next month, on 10 August, published figures for film spending

in Grand and San Juan counties showed that it was up 61 percent for the first six months of the year—to more than $272,000.

The proposed Book Cliffs road came back to center stage in August 1989 when the Moab city council endorsed it by a 3–2 vote. However, before any construction could begin a full-scale Environmental Impact Study (EIS) was required by federal law to gauge the impact it would have on the local environment and ecological balance. This EIS was expected to take at least eighteen months. On 10 August the Moab weekly paper reported that $9 million in low-interest loans had been earmarked for the project by the state's Community Impact Board.

Other proposals and items affecting the land made news that year. A state plan to sell certain land within and adjacent to national park areas—including Arches and Canyonlands—sparked immediate and widespread protest from environmentalists when it was announced in mid-July. It quickly dropped from public sight. On 19 October the *Times-Independent* reported that the NRC had threatened Atlas Corporation with a $6,250 fine for excessive radon gas emmissions from its mill site tailings. Though the amount was tiny, it did represent the tip of a monstrous iceberg of public and government concern over potential health and environmental danger posed by the site—a concern that has grown with the succeeding years.

The economic situation was on people's minds as the county continued its slow climb to greater prosperity. Figures published in the 9 November 1989 edition of the *Times-Independent* were mixed: although the area had lost 3,250 jobs during the past decade, more than 3,000 in the mining industry alone, Grand County currently led southeastern Utah in employment growth. It ranked twentieth in 1987 among the twenty-nine counties of Utah in both population and personal income, which was at $77.7 million. The boom in tourism was now in full swing, with a related increase in local population growth. However, much of the employment was in low-paying retail and service jobs that did not make up for the great loss of county revenues from the lost extractive mining and oil industries with their licensing and royalty payments. Tourism and low-level employment population growth actually put greater strain on the existing tax structure, since these people required services such as

increased water, garbage collection, and hospital facilities without providing the means to pay for them. County property owners were beginning to feel a sharper economic pinch as they were being taxed to make up the difference. Construction of the John Wesley Powell River Museum at Green River was nearing completion, though plans were made to have opening celebrations the following spring in conjunction with the annual Memorial Day Friendship Cruise.

The county hoped to upgrade its courthouse and jail facilities but faced an estimated cost of $4 million for the project. The city of Moab was developing some ambitious plans of its own, including the building of a large new visitor center in the heart of town. On 14 December *Times-Independent* editor Sam Taylor notified readers that a $1.16 million grant/loan combination had been approved by the state Community Impact Board for the equestrian center. He also reported that another $4 million had been budgeted to complete the Dead Horse Point road, bringing the total to $8 million. As the year ended, on 28 December Taylor wrote that the past year had been one of transition—changing from bad to better. Though tourism was beginning to drive the local economy, the county revenue structure was becoming increasingly dependent on the few large companies remaining in the county. The list of the largest county taxpayers was headed by Utah Power and Light Company, followed by Northwest Pipeline, Moab Salt (a subsidiary of Texasgulf), Mid-America Pipeline Company, and the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.

Visitation to the region's parks was at record levels for 1989: Arches was 555,809, up from 520,455; Canyonlands' 259,162 visitors topped the 214,212 in 1988. In January 1989 the University of Utah announced the opening of the Moab Arts Center, offering twenty-nine college-level art classes—most being two-day to week-long workshop sessions. The program never really flourished, however; although the university still occasionally offers a short workshop course or two in the area.

The *Times-Independent* periodically published information on taxes paid by county residents, sometimes accompanying the figures with the opinion that local residents were overtaxed, although at other times reporting differently—such as the 12 April 1989 report that local property taxes were about average for the state. On 22

March county residents had been informed that in 1988 they had paid almost $4 million in federal income taxes; on 14 June they read that an additional $1.456 million had been levied by the state for its income taxes. The state returned to the county $2.2 million that year for education, according to the newspaper, which was $700,000 more than residents had paid in income taxes. It appeared that the residents were benefiting from the system. Two weeks later, the newpaper informed them that county taxes were going to be increased by 9 percent to help make up budget shortfalls.

Finding the money to pay for necessary services was becoming a more difficult problem to solve, a problem in part due to the influx of tourists and visitors to the area. These people had to be served by the county's infrastructure, and they made use of area services and resources, including frequent law-enforcement and rescue assistance, without any corresponding payment for such services. Local residents of the county had to face increased demands on a wide array of services, including water, sewer, and waste-disposals facilities. Increased funds were necessary to meet the demands, necessitating increased taxes or a decrease in services. Measures have been considered which have ranged from attempts to increase transient and tourist-related sales or other taxes to appeals for aid from state and federal government agencies. The problem grows hand-in-hand with the growth of tourism. Bill Hedden, vice-chairman of the Grand County Council, has called the monstrous growth of tourism and its related problems a great white shark that was inadvertently caught when county leaders went trolling in the mid-1980s for a little tourism to revitalize and diversify the economy. The shark now threatens to swamp the boat and devour all the crew.[15]

According to a study published as the *Economic Report to the Governor for 1989,* Grand County was one of eight Utah counties considered to be "tourism dependent." Tourism had become the county's major economic foundation, presenting in the process a host of problems: financial, environmental, and political. Even those organizations directly connected to the new boom were affected: in June 1989 it was reported that the Moab Chamber of Commerce might close its doors for lack of funds; however, the group was able to relocate to a less expensive location the next month.[16]

Film production was active in the county that summer. A number of commercials were shot near Moab, as was also a major portion of *Thelma and Louise,* a feature film starring Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon that was later a national box-office hit. Good news for nature lovers was published on 23 August: bald eagles were nesting near Cisco and Westwater—the only known summer residences for the great birds in Utah. On the agricultural front things continued to look up for the local grape/wine industry. On 27 September the *Times-Independent* reported that 7,000 gallons had been vinted by Arches Vineyards in Moab, up from 2,500 gallons the year before.

Throughout the year, the Moab weekly celebrated the county's heritage as it reprinted old articles from the *Grand Valley Times* as well as reminiscences of area old-timer Frank Silvey. The year before, the new monthly paper, the *Zephyr,* had reprinted extensive excerpts from the journal of Henry Schmidt, one of the first rangers at Arches National Monument in the 1930s. It later published reminiscences of Verona Stocks, another resident of the county earlier in the century. It became obvious that county residents liked to hear and read about the early history of the region. In October, residents voted down by a close vote of 710 to 658 a $4.5-million bond to renovate the county courthouse and jail. Approval of the bond would have meant a 2.2 percent property-tax increase. In the general election a couple of weeks later, bitter intraparty squabbles cost the Republican party Utah's Third Congressional District seat, in what had been considered one of the most secure Republican districts in the nation and which, despite the result, remained among the nation's most conservative districts. Grand County voters, apparently as disgusted as others in the district with the infighting, voted for longshot Democratic party candidate William Orton by a slim majority of 64 votes: 1,278 to 1,214 for Republican candidate Karl Snow.

According to a report published in the *Times-Independent* for 13 December 1990, the Bureau of Land Management had finally settled on a proposed wilderness plan of 1.975 million acres in sixty-six units, including Negro Bill Canyon and parts of Mill Creek and Desolation canyons in Grand County. This did not end the controversy, however, as the final decision had to be made by Congress; competing proposals still vied for congressional attention. As of 1996

the official congressional passage of a BLM wilderness act is still pending, including one for 1.8 million acres that was presented in Congress in 1995 by the Utah Republican delegates and supported by Utah Republican governor Mike Leavitt, although polls showed that most Utahns favored more wilderness than that.

Census figures for 1990 showed that Grand County was basically a sparsely settled rural area inhabited by white Americans. Among racial groups, there were only seven African Americans in the county (although this number was up from the two who resided in the county in 1980), as well as 203 Native Americans, and twenty-four Asians and Pacific Islanders. Hispanics were classified as an ethnic rather than a racial group; however, including all Hispanics of various racial extraction, there were only 291 in Grand County in 1990. Total population was down from 1980 figures; there were now only 6,620 residents of the county. This represented a loss of more than 18 percent during the period, while the state during that same time was growing at a rate of more than 18 percent. For the first time, females outnumbered males in the county: 3,406 to 3,214.[17]

Employment in the county reflected the loss of population and the increase of low-paying service jobs in the tourist-based economy. Out of a total group of 3,122 employed people, more than 550 were proprietors, another 1,012 were in wholesale and retail shops, and 703 were in service industries. There were 589 government employees in the county and only 81 farm workers; mining employees now numbered only 221. Transportation and utilities employed 142, construction another 130 people, and finance, insurance, and real estate 175, rounding out the main sectors of employment. Unemployment was down to about 8 percent, which was still above the state average of nearly 5 percent but much better than the bleak years of the mid-1980s. Of course, the fact that the county had lost population helped account for the lower unemployment rate. Government accounted for the greatest share of personal income—at almost $12 million it more than doubled mining's total of $5.58 million. Federal expenditures in the county accounted for 27.4 percent of its revenue in 1990, down slightly from 29.8 percent in 1989. The trend continued in 1991 as federal expenditures accounted for 26.7 percent of the

county's revenue that year. Per capita income for 1990 was $13,378, which was slightly below the state average of $13,985.[18]

Problems with the management of the Allen Hospital continued throughout the year, with the county council (formerly commission) firing the hospital board and taking over management of the hospital in January 1991. School expenditures for the 1990–91 academic year were $581,772 out of more than $230 million for the state as a whole.

The beauty and mild climate of the region continued to attract visitors. Arches and Canyonlands both set attendance records again: Arches with 620,719 visitors, Canyonlands with 282,043. On 24 January 1991 the *Times-Independent* published the important news that a conservation group, the Nature Conservancy, had purchased 690 acres of the Colorado River wetlands area north of Moab—the Moab Slough—for a wetlands preserve, using funds from a $450,000 grant from the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation. That issue of the paper further cheered environmentalists with its report that BLM grazing fees were being raised from $1.81 to $1.97 per animal unit month even though Republican George Bush was president.

Environmental battles were becoming more numerous and heated. The Easter Jeep Safari came under attack from the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA), the Sierra Club, and the Wilderness Society, among others, who asked that the five-year permit not be renewed for such use of BLM lands. On 21 March the *Times-Independent* was pleased to inform readers that the U.S. Interior Board of Land Appeals had rejected the environmental coalition's request, assuring that the popular event would continue for at least five more years. The newspaper that day also noted that a $1.6 million bid had been accepted for the construction of a new bridge at Courthouse Wash. It was expensive to maintain the transportation infrastructure of the area, but almost all residents realized that this was the economic lifeline to the county.

The Thompson Springs Water District was named the most improved in the state for 1990 after extensive repairs and improvements had been completed to the system, which had been damaged by flash floods in 1985. Two important bicycle events were scheduled for the Moab area in April 1991: one, the Tour de Canyonlands, was a touring race; the other, Moab Rocks!, was a mountain-bike competi-

tion. More than 400 riders—many of them world-class competitors—came to town for the events. The plateau region had become a mecca for recreational cyclists enticed by the scenic wonders and year-round riding possibilities. The Slickrock Trail had been set aside as a route for moutain bikers, and countless other roads and trails in the county were also explored (or created) by the riders.

A new oil strike was made in the Big Flat area about ten miles west of Moab and was reported in the *Times-Independent* of 18 April 1991. The time was long gone when the only income from oil wells came from their exploration and construction. Though Grand County did not seem to have oil reserves equal to those south and north of the county, it was still rich in oil and natural gas deposits, from the Book Cliffs to the Cisco and Green River deserts to the anticlines near Moab. Since the 1950s many producing oil wells had been developed in the county; in fact, since its discovery in 1962, the Big Flat area alone had produced about one million barrels of oil and one billion cubic feet of natural gas.

Although the oil industry had slumped badly in the early 1980s, it was now on the rebound. In fact, it was predicted that a new oil boom period was about to begin due to the development of horizontal-drilling technology, which had been first tried in Utah with a test drilling some fifteen miles southwest of Moab by the Columbus Gas Development Corporation in December 1990.[19] It was estimated that oil production could be increased up to 500 percent in what were otherwise marginal areas by the new technology. Huge headlines were now lacking for oil strikes, but the results far eclipsed those of the heralded discoveries earlier in the century. A vital oil industry was seen by most area residents as a welcome development; only as oil development was perceived to threaten ecological systems was there the threat of potential conflict.

Grand County residents remained so polarized, however, that conflict appeared inevitable. As oil exploration activity increased in the county, so did the resistence of environmentalists to what they perceived as further scarring or degradation of the land. On 27 June controversy erupted in the pages of the *Times-Independent* over a plan by Coors Energy Corporation to drill a test well north of Moab in view of Arches National Park. The Southern Utah Wilderness

Alliance, one of the most aggressive and effective of the environmental groups, threatened a lawsuit to stop the well, and on 4 July the paper reported that the drilling plan had been temporarily halted by court decree. On 11 July Sam Taylor reported that tempers were flaring over slowdowns and legal actions. The county was bitterly divided into two camps. Two weeks later, in an editorial, Taylor struck out at environmentalists when he wrote that a 5-million-acre wilderness bill would "sound the economic death knell of southern Utah."

A more cooperative conservation effort spearheaded by the Nature Conservancy and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation had been announced in early May when those groups announced that they had purchased the 7,583-acre Cunningham Ranch in the Book Cliffs, which they intended to establish as a wildlife preserve. Four weeks later, on 30 May, the *Times-Independent* announced that the new wetlands preserve north of Moab was to be named in honor of former governor Scott M. Matheson. Dedication ceremonies were conducted on 1 June.

Tourism remained the main economic base of the area, and it was clear by the beginning of the new decade that Moab had in one sense almost regained its economic feet, although from another view it was in danger of being knocked right off them again. On 6 June 1991 funding was approved for a new visitor center in Moab; a $800,000 low-interest loan was made available for the project by the state's Community Impact Board. Construction of the project began in September. On 11 July it was reported that business growth in Moab in 1990 was up 11.4 percent from the year before; there were $51.9 million in receipts, up from $46.6 million and near the record $53.9 million set in 1980. On 22 August the *Times-Independent* reported that during the past decade federal spending had greatly increased in the county: from $15.6 million in 1980 to $22.8 million in 1990—a 46.2 percent gain. Only 1.4 percent ($329,000) of the total was defense related; $5.7 million was from government grants, $9.8 million in social security and disability payments, and $4.9 million in salaries. Grand County property valuation for 1991 was $277.68 million—a far cry from the $340 million of 1986—but the county had reasonable hopes that the slump was coming to an end.

Despite the growth in tourism and federal spending, both the

county and city faced great economic difficulties, and unusual measures, including a special food sales tax, were being considered to help meet budget needs. Tourism itself created many of the difficulties with its increased demands on county services, and it indirectly led to area growth which created the need for expanded services. One of these was health care, and a half-million dollar expansion of the I. W. Allen Memorial Hospital was announced on 12 September in the *Times-Independent.* Also, on 5 November voters narrowly approved a $3.9 million bond to remodel the courthouse and jail (which was to be expanded from eight cells to twenty-three). The new plan was $600,000 less than the one rejected the year before. The state Community Impact Board had approved a 3 percent loan for the project.

December 1991 also brought opposition to the proposed Book Cliffs road from a coalition of wilderness groups which objected even to surveying wilderness study areas. Controversy also boiled over proposed gas and oil lines in the county. The community seemed to be irreconcilably divided, and most residents were aware of Sam Taylor's generally conservative political positions of most issues. Still, like the *Zephyr,* which leaned the other direction, the *Times-Independent* endeavored to discuss and present both sides of issues, especially in its "Letter to the Editor" column. A regular column by Taylor's wife, Adrien, helped add a more personal touch to the newspaper and a bit of small-town feeling to an increasingly impersonal community that featured an influx of many younger newcomers working at the tourist-related business establishments springing up (and often rapidly changing hands) throughout Moab.

As the year ended, a column on 31 December maintained that 1991 was the year in which Moab could be said to have been "discovered" at a national level. Park visitation figures published early the next year certainly did not contradict that claim: Arches recorded 705,000 visitors, a 14 percent gain; visitation to Canyonlands was 342,710, a 22 percent gain; and Dead Horse Point had an 18 percent increase—to 141,498 visitors. On 23 January 1992 the Moab newspaper published a summary of a study conducted by Thayne Robson, director of the University of Utah Bureau of Economic and Business Research, in which it was projected that Moab and Grand County would experience great tourist and recreation growth and also

marked population gain in the next few years. To many in Moab the report was most welcome; however, others were becoming increasingly worried that continued growth would compromise much of what was desirable about the area—particularly the environment and the quality of life, both urban and in the wilds. Many longtime residents of the area and development-oriented newcomers were frustrated by the increased opposition to tourism, as it seemed to them that environmentalists were now seeking to stifle the one thing that promised to bring Moab out of the economic swamp. Some were not shy in declaring that the environmentalists were elitists who wanted the area preserved only for themselves and who drew the line at in-migration right after they themselves had entered the area. In reality, however, the opponents were characterized by two radically different views of the land and the place of humans upon it.

Tragedy struck in February when four Moabites were killed in an avalanche while cross-country skiing in the La Sal Mountains in San Juan County. Though grief briefly united the community, events soon divided residents again. On 2 April the *Times-Independent* printed the news that Coors Energy Corporation had been given the go-ahead to drill its test well north of Moab. Protests mounted, and on 11 June it was announced that not only would Coors not drill the well but that the company was being sold by its parent corporation, the Colorado brewing giant. Liberal environmental interests celebrated that announcement and then launched a petition to enlarge the Grand County Council (formerly Commission) from three members to seven, hoping to gain more liberal representation in that politically conservative body.

In July 1992 Moab hosted a celebration of area history called "Discovery Days," with special emphasis on the uranium-boom years. It had been forty years since Charlie Steen's great discovery, and the man himself came to town where he was honored for his contributions to the community. A parade and fireworks display highlighted the celebration, which some wanted to make an annual event. A week later, on 16 July, a new controversy arose in the newspaper's pages between Moab City and Grand County over use and management of the new federally mandated landfill. Tourism had increased use of the

old landfill beyond all projections, and the increased use necessitated a new, more expensive landfill adhering to strict federal guidelines.

Controversy occasionally brought surprises. One came in late August 1992 when the Beartooth Oil and Gas Company, which operated about thirty natural gas wells in the region, came out in opposition to a highway through the Book Cliffs. The company felt that such a development would be too expensive to justify and that an improvement of existing dirt roads would be sufficient for the area's needs. The unexpected move did not please road boosters, including the three members of the county council.

The 1992 election indicated that Grand County could be shifting its political stance, although the mixed results did not make any conclusion certain. The presidential race was complicated by the entrance of third-party candidate Ross Perot, who actually outpolled victorious Democratic party standard-bearer William "Bill" Clinton in the state, in which the majority of votes were cast for incumbent Republican president George Bush. Grand County voters, however, by a slight margin voted for Clinton; he received 1,160 votes, Bush had 1,100, and Perot 991. More traditional patterns were followed in the U.S. Senate contest, where Republican Bob Bennett defeated Congressman Wayne Owens for the seat of retiring Republican Jake Garn. Owens was disliked by many in southern Utah for his support of a 5.7-million-acre BLM wilderness bill. The vote count was 1,803 to 1,413, which was closer than many might have expected, indicating that many new residents of the county were more liberal politically than their predecessors. Bennett might normally have expected the margin of victory incumbent Democratic congressman Bill Orton enjoyed over his Republican challenger Alan Harrington: 2,172 to 881.[20] Orton had emerged as a conservative Democrat who had gained the support of many Republicans while still holding the allegiance of Democrats who felt they had no other alternatives in the state some called the "most Republican" in the nation.

Local environmentalists were pleased with the election of Clinton, hoping it would bring policies favoring conservation; but perhaps even bigger news locally was the approval of county voters—by a count of 1,822 to 1,482—for an enlargement of the county council to seven members. This move has been considered a water-

shed development in county history, symbolizing the triumph of the new Moabites over the old guard, since the initiative was prompted by the desire of community members for more liberal representation on the hitherto arch-conservative county council. According to the report in the 5 November issue of the *Times-Independent,* the current council chairman, David Knutson, resigned immediately in protest. Two weeks later, a town meeting was held in which most attendees opposed the Book Cliffs road project, although the lame-duck council members favored it. On 26 November the newspaper reported that the BLM advisory panel for the area had come out in official opposition to a Book Cliffs highway.

Welcome economic news late in the year included a new oil discovery near Kane Springs in Grand County which used horizontal-drilling technology; the well tested out with a flow of 1,325 barrels of oil and 879,000 cubic feet of natural gas per day. The film commission also reported that more than $5 million had been spent by the film industry in the county in 1992. Despite this, however, Grand County faced a shortfall of $290,000 for the year, necessitating a property-tax increase of 8 percent for 1993.

New records were again set for visitation at area parks: Arches had almost 800,000 visitors, Canyonlands almost 400,000, and Dead Horse Point recorded a 20 percent increase in visitation and was up to 169,530 for 1992. The Utah Department of Fish and Game transplanted moose to the Book Cliffs area and river otters to the Green and Colorado rivers, increasing biodiversity in the region.

Many county residents were unhappy about the Grand County Roads Special Service District, which had been established in late 1992 by the two lame-duck county council members to try to establish the Book Cliffs road. There were also charges of nepotism and corruption in the selection of members of the new committee. The *Zephyr* was especially active in informing the public about the road-project controversy, and this information likely influenced some to vote for new council members who were opposed to the road. The election to choose the new seven-person council was held in the first week of February, and all of the successful candidates were perceived as the more liberal in their separate contests. The new council indicated as much the next week: on 18 February the *Times-Independent*

reported that they were unanimous in their disapproval of the Book Cliffs road project. Uintah County commissioners were unhappy about the new position of the Grand council and wasted no time making their displeasure known. This didn't seem to deter the southern county's leaders—on 11 March the Moab weekly reported that Grand County had officially rejected the Book Cliffs road idea.

On 5 February 1993 the Grand Resource Area of the Bureau of Land Management announced that new restrictions were to be put in place regarding film-making on BLM lands. Henceforth, any feature film project would be subject to a forty-five-day review period to determine if it would adversely affect the land in question. The Moab Film Commission soon protested that the new regulations could hurt the economy by deterring film directors on tight schedules from using the area. The city also ran afoul of federal guidelines: on 11 March the *Times-Independent* reported that new facilities were needed to meet federal building-access requirements. On 23 April a city manager post for Moab was officially created. A professional city manager, Donna Metzler from Glendale California, was hired in February 1994, and the mayoral position was reduced to essentially a ceremonial function.

Tourism showed no signs of abating that spring. The half-marathon celebrated its eighteenth year with more than 1,700 runners—a far cry from its beginnings with twenty-one runners. The Easter Jeep Safari also set new records, with almost 1,250 vehicles registered to travel the many trails used that week. The tremendous influx of visitors was putting a corresponding strain on the land and on county facilities. This was further exacerbated by hundreds of students coming to the area on spring break. It had been estimated the year before that 15,000 to 20,000 visitors were in the area that particular weekend, putting a huge demand on local services. Moab's search-and rescue unit was the busiest in the state in 1992.

Things were even worse in 1993. That year, vandalism, wanton destruction, and disregard of the environment were common as rowdy youth on spring break essentially "trashed" the area, including uprooting and burning trees and littering the landscape with human and other waste. Law-enforcement officers were unable to control the situation. Community residents who normally were opponents on

environmental and political issues joined in their outrage at the situation; but the problems were difficult to solve without compromising tourist promotion. However, according to a report in the *Times-Independent* of 15 April, even the organizers of the Jeep Safari conceded that the event had perhaps reached its saturation point and that further growth of the event could be undesirable.

Many residents were beginning to realize that unrestrained visitation and growth were compromising the very land that was attracting people there in the first place. It was also presenting officials with mutually undesirable alternatives, such as placing toilet facilities along the Colorado River and other scenic locations or else having the areas fouled with human and other waste. County resources were at the breaking points and facilities overloaded. Old foes began to realize that greater cooperation and a mutual search for solutions would be necessary if the county was to gain control of the situation.

Sweeping new management policies including greatly increased mining lease and BLM grazing fees were proposed early in the new administration of President Bill Clinton by his Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, who argued that it was time ranchers paid more of their fair share for use of the public lands and that the lands needed to be better protected for future use. Though ranching was no longer a major part of the county's economy, BLM grazing policies had become a focal point for those who supported the old Sagebrush Rebellion and many others who favored less government in their lives. The resulting consternation throughout the West resulted in Babbitt backing off from his original proposal in March.

On 8 April 1993 the *Times-Independent* reported that the army was again considering opening the Green River Missile Launch Site for testing. Opposition was immediate to the idea of debris falling into Canyonlands National Park and other parts of the region. The plan was put on hold by means of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which is still underway at the time of this writing; but the possibility remains for the base to be reopened. The major environmental controversy continued to be what to do about the 10–11 million tons of radioactive Atlas mill tailings at the old site on the outskirts of Moab. The company's plan to cap the pile on site had been initially approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

(NRC), but the agency's violation of its own rules for dangerous tailings in proximity to both an aquifer and a population center led to public outcry which prompted the agency to promise a reconsideration of the issue, according to a report on 30 September.

Diversions from controversy were often sorrowful in 1993. Tragedy struck the annual Memorial Day Friendship Cruise when two people were drowned in Cataract Canyon when they missed the turn upriver at the confluence. In late June a state highway patrol trooper, Dennis Lund, was killed during a high-speed chase on Interstate 70 after the fugitives had stolen gas from a Thompson service station. The fugitives, two teenagers from out of state, were arrested and later convicted and sentenced to prison terms.

Moab was experiencing many problems relating to the growth of tourism in the area, which resulted in a situation during much of the year when there were two to three visitors for every resident in the city. In July 1993 the federal government informed the city that improvements to its sewage-treatment plant were necessary. Moab's budget was increased by 20 percent in July to more than $2.7 million; but it remained insufficient to meet the many demands upon it. On 1 July Sam Taylor wrote an editorial about the lack of available housing in Moab. It was particularly acute in the rental market; many of the newcomers to town were employed in low-paying service and retail jobs and were unable to afford lodging, since rents were skyrocketing due to the demand. The influx of new residents had also placed demands on the school facilities; on 8 July the *Times-Independent* reported that the school board was considering a bond issue to help upgrade and expand facilities. The new Moab Information Center was opened to the public early in the summer.

Grand County had its own budget problems, which necessitated a large property tax increase in late July. Protests were so great that on 26 August the county proposed a 2 percent sales tax increase in unincorporated areas of the county to help ease the property-tax burden. Residents of the unincorporated areas of Spanish Valley were not pleased with this and also objected to efforts by county officials to enforce clean-up ordinances in the unincorporated areas of the valley. Hospital, health-care, courthouse renovation, and Old Spanish

Trail Arena (equestrian center) management and funding problems added to council members' woes.

County council members also faced a lawsuit from Uintah County for breach of contract regarding the Book Cliffs road. They countered that the road plan was neither economically nor environmentally sound and that it was unwanted by a majority of Grand County residents. A meeting with Uintah County officials was held in October 1993 in which Grand was asked to pay half of the $1.2 million cost of an Environmental Impact Study and to retain its right-of-way requests with the BLM. Nothing was officially resolved.

Some county conservatives and supporters of the former council members residents were still bitter about the election results and were also not pleased with the new council and its programs. A recall petition drive was mounted in 1993 to remove six of the seven new council members, and it gained sufficient signatures to warrant an election in November. Results of the election, however, confirmed that the majority of voters still favored the new arrangements—all council members were reelected, most by substantial margins.

In August 1993 Interior Secretary Babbitt had presented a revised proposal regarding the public lands. In addition to various range reforms intended to help protect the land, the plan included an increase in grazing fees from the present $1.86 per animal unit month (AUM) to $4.28 per AUM, phased-in over a three-year period. Although the plan included incentives and fee reductions for those who practiced good stewardship of the lands—a move that would help weed out those who were exploiting the system—opposition was still intense. Most local ranchers and conservatives were therefore pleased on 16 September when the *Times-Independent* announced that the U.S. Senate had imposed a one-year moratorium on the plan (which was subsequently abandoned by Babbitt in the face of opposition throughout the West).

The county was faced with a hospital shortfall of $82,000 needed in mid-November to keep the facility operating for the remainder of the year. The idea of hunting and other use fees (including biking on the Slickrock Trail) on public lands were proposed to help generate needed funds. On 16 December it was announced in the *Times-Independent* that budget cuts had forced the Moab Film Commission

to merge with its counterpart in San Juan County to become the Moab to Monument Valley Film Commission. Two weeks later, however, news was printed that 1993 had been the biggest ever for film production in southeastern Utah despite the tightened BLM restrictions: $11 million in film work came to the area, including two feature films, *Geronimo* and *City Slickers II.*

The 13 January issue of the *Times-Independent* brought the news of an increase in grazing fees for BLM land, to $1.98 from $1.86 per AUM—this compared to a private land fee average for grazing in the eleven western states of $10.20 per head per month. Liberals and environmentalists voiced their own outrage over BLM fees and the subsidies that area ranchers were receiving. The newspaper informed readers that half of the BLM fees went directly to improving the range, some 20 percent was returned directly to the state, and the remainder went to the U.S. Treasury.

Park visitation actually declined slightly in 1993: Arches was down from 799,831 to 773,678; camping in the park was also down, perhaps reflecting increased motel facilities in Moab. In 1993 Moab had twenty-four motels with a total of 998 rooms; another 146 rooms were available from other types of lodging. More than 1,300 tent campsites existed in the area, and thirty-four restaurants could be found in the city. Almost 500 lodging units could be found at Green River (a number of which are within the borders of Grand County), which also boasted eleven restaurants and more than 400 tent or RV campsites.[21] Transient room taxes collected in 1993 in Grand County were $334,833—more than that of Carbon, Emery, and San Juan counties combined. Gross taxable room rentals for the county that year were $16.3 million, which was also well over the combined total of $12.4 million for the other three counties.[22] Gift shops, restaurants, and other businesses were numerous in Moab. The city boasted two banks and two credit unions. Alpine Aviation served commuters at Canyonlands Field, while four charter airplane and two helicopter companies served special excursion and other needs.

Moab had its own radio station and was served by a police department of nine full-time officers. The Grand County Sheriff's Department included twelve full-time officers, and the Utah Highway Patrol assigned seven troopers to the county. Search-and-rescue and

fire departments were staffed by volunteers. Unemployment in the county was at about 7 percent, reflecting the growth of the area. Trade, government, and services dominated the employment sector at 30, 26, and 24 percent, respectively; only 6 percent of workers were involved in mining. Eleven religious groups were represented in Moab, which boasts that it has more religious denominations per capita than any other city in Utah.

Recreational outlets and opportunities were many and varied, with golfing, biking, four-wheeling, and river-running dominant—all attracting thousands to the area throughout the year. Grand County's population in 1993 was estimated at 6,900, while Moab had 4,124 residents. These figures reflected growth in Moab/Spanish Valley outside the incorporated city; other than a couple of hundred people in nearby Castle Valley, almost all county residents lived in Moab Valley. Cultural facilities included Star Hall and the new equestrian center, capable of seating up to 3,000 people. Cultural organizations included the century-old Women's Literary Club and the Moab Community Theatre, founded in 1972 and one of Utah's oldest non-religious-affilliated theater groups. Events were numerous throughout the year, including a new Moab Arts Festival in the summer and a Moab Music Festival in the fall.

The "Community Profile" published by the economic development office presents a portrait of Moab as a vital and growing city—something no one could deny. Charm does not go hand-in-hand with vitality, however, and there are both old-time residents and many newcomers who hope to limit the agressive tourist promotion which has put a strain on local facilities and on the environment and which also has led to increased taxation. Grand County still has almost no manufacturing base, and much effort is being undertaken to try to attract businesses and manufacturing establishments to the area. The "Profile" presents information on tax structures, facilities, and incentives—all designed to broaden the county's economy, that it not again become dependent upon only one major industry.[23]

A multitude of challenges faced the area, where the local citizens were about as polarized as anywhere in the nation. Realizing this, in early 1994 a new coalition called the Grand County Partnership, comprised of federal, state, and local government people, businesses,

interest groups, and private citizens, was formed to seek a middle ground on issues.[24] A film documentary on the uranium-boom era entitled *Atomic Stampede* was being made in the area by crews from the University of Utah's public-television station, KUED. It served as a reminder of how things could easily get out of control during what were thought at first to be good times. Balance was the new watchword and was seen as the key to Grand County's future. Sam Taylor wrote on 17 February that "managed growth," including more limited tourism, was essential for long-term prosperity.

Tourism, in fact, had been called "Moab's New Uranium" in an article by Renon Hulet that was distributed in 1994 as an advertising section by the chamber of commerce and other local promotion groups. The article touted Moab's facilities and accomplishments while presenting the case for those who would promote the growth of the area by catering to the wants of tourists.[25] But those who saw another part of the picture—the degradation of the environment and the increased strains on budgets and people—could see in the title of the article a great danger, akin to that created by the uranium boom.

The overuse of facilities prompted some containment measures. Camping fees were imposed in 1994 for some areas of Canyonlands, and permits were required for areas of Arches National Park. Water remained the key to life in the area, and a water shortage in Moab prompted construction of a new supply line. The half-marathon and 5K runs again attracted about 2,000 runners that spring; the Jeep Safari registered 1,350 vehicles for its nine-day outing, prompting renewed calls for its discontinuation by those who contended it was too destructive of the land and ecological systems. It was obvious that some problems are far from being solved.

The NRC announced in March 1994 that it would call for an Environmental Impact Study on the Atlas mill tailings, keeping that controversy alive but on hold for at least a few more months. In fact, in November 1994 Grand County hired a Chicago law firm, threatening to take the federal government to court in an effort to force it to remove the tailings. Utah congressman Jim Hansen announced in April that he was sponsoring a bill to turn over BLM lands to the states for management, thus fanning flames of the old Sagebrush Rebellion. Further controversy over wilderness areas and roads also

seems inevitable as groups are battling over old bill RS2477 and the issue of what is a road in BLM land. The film commission remained unhappy about the new BLM restrictions and claimed they were costing the area money. On 7 July, however, the *Times-Independent* reported that filming of commercials was way up in the area though no feature movies were currently being filmed near Moab.

Financial problems continued to plague Grand County and Moab City. In 1993 the hospital spent $540,000 more than it made; less than half the deficit was made up by a special property-tax increase, according to a report in the 31 March 1994 issue of the *Times-Independent.* Plans were announced to bring in new doctors and a mid-wife to the area to help ease the shortage of health-care providers. On 14 April the *Times-Independent* reported a county budget deficit of $300,000 for 1993—$180,000 of which went to additional unexpected costs for the courthouse/jail renovation project. The equestrian center was also costing the county about $80,000 a year, and plans were announced later in the year to sell the facility, if possible.[26] On 23 June the newspaper announced an increase in county property taxes to counter the hospital shortfall and other expenses. Less than two months later, on 11 August, it was reported that the county was nearly broke due to tourist-related expenses, and that a tax hike was needed. County residents were not thrilled. The fact that park visitation was somewhat down again was as much a relief as it was a source of possible future concern.

Moab City wrestled with its own financial problems, including a proposal to sell a number of properties in order to build a new city hall. The city budget for 1994 was $2.85 million. Welcome lighter news was provided by the high school girls softball team, which won the state championship in May. Also that month, the 2,000th arch was discovered at Arches National Park, according to a report in the 2 June *Times-Independent.* Important conservation news was also reported in that issue of the newspaper: the Book Cliffs Conservation Initiative of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation had acquired a 6,042-acre ranch that held permits to use an additional 109,000 acres—part of which was in Grand County—which the BLM and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources were to manage as a wilderness game preserve. Other pleasant news was the sixtieth anniversary of

the Grand County Camp of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, which was organized in 1934 and continued to contribute greatly to the recording and preservation of the area's heritage.

On 8 September it was announced that a new refinery was going to be built five miles east of Green River by county resident Gene Dalton. The plant would convert used petroleum products to gasoline and other products. The recycling effort gained the applause of many environmentalists who would otherwise oppose new oil-related industrial development. A week later, the Moab paper announced that deadlines were looming for the new federal-mandated landfill and that financing solutions were not yet in place. The problem had become a major source of controversy between the city and county. Sewer system and treatment-plant facilities also were high on both federal and Moab city's agendas, and plans were announced in October to improve the system, at a cost of $2.4 million. It was hoped that grants and low-interest loans would be forthcoming to help finance the project. This could be seen as emblematic of the area's plight and challenges: growth in tourism had necessitated expansion of facilities, which in turn are increasing taxation of residents and degradation of the environment while leaving officials scrambling to attract additional sources of revenue.

It is a challenge that will face Moab and Grand County in the years to come; how well it will be met is yet unknown. It seems crucial that old animosities be put aside by old and new Moabites and other county residents to gain control over the challenges of tourist-related growth and damage to the environment. Important as are basic principles and ideas of growth, free enterprise, wilderness, and conservation, county residents must grapple with other necessities before they can return to their old battles. As Bill Hedden testified to the House Committee on Natural Resources:

> A town that creates a certain critical mass of amenities and renown can experience an explosion of growth that sweeps away everything about what the town had been, and that damages the land biologically and spiritually in new and shocking ways. Believe me, I know. Traditional extractive economies and cultures simply disappear, and nobody is even sure where they went. Federal policies aren't to blame in any obvious way. . . .

> My constituents remind me every day that my job is not to argue ideology about grazing reform or RS 2477 rights-of-way or wilderness, but to try to restore solvency, sanity, and some sense of control in a place that has been completely transformed overnight.[47]

Ideological battles—particularly the debate over public lands policy and the role of government in the social fabric—are certain to continue for the foreseeable future in Grand County as in the state of Utah, the West, and the nation. And well they should: the issues are vital, the stakes are high. Grand County currently faces a crisis posed ironically by its very success in pulling itself up by its bootstraps. Park visitation has tripled in less than a decade and area visitation is even greater, putting unimagined strains on county resources. All citizens must join in finding solutions to managing this expression of the very love of the land they share and have helped foster if they are to remain on the land to fight its other battles.

Twenty-five years ago, at the conclusion of her book *The Far Country,* Faun M. Tanner speculated that the future county might be a "land of quiet peace." At this point in time, it seems that it will be anything but that. Grand County as it was only twenty years ago has been irrevocably transformed, but it still remains among the most beautiful places on earth. That it remains a good place to live is the challenge facing county residents and all other true lovers of the area. The gorgeous beauty of the area attracts thousands of people, the promotions to attract them have succeeded beyond most residents' dreams, leaving a reality of how to deal with their impact on the very land that attracts the visitors (and the residents) to the area. Those who favor growth will clash for the foreseeable future with those who would try to limit it while preserving the environment. Though residents might wish it was only they who would battle, the beauty and importance of the area (and the fact that 95 percent of the land is owned by the federal government, native tribal governments, or the state of Utah) will involve combatants from throughout the nation. That the prize—the land itself—will not be lost in the battle is the hope of all interested observers. A notion of responsible stewardship

of the land seems requisite and a responsible starting point for all citizens, whatever their political ideology.

The only thing certain about the future is that it will be filled with challenges and controversies. Grand County residents, it is hoped, will be able to find solutions that will unite rather than divide them while preserving the beauty and wonder of an area that is celebrated around the world, an area that is truly grand.

ENDNOTES

1. See Jean Akens, "'FLPMA' and the Sagebrush Rebellion," *Canyon Legacy* 17:20–25, for a discussion of the 4 July protest in the county and the Sagebrush Rebellion in general, including a bibliography of other sources.

2. Moab *Times-Independent,* 2 September 1982.

3. Jean Akens, "Moab's Mark on Hollywood," *Canyon Legacy* 2:15.

4. See Moab *Times-Independent* for 15 August and for 29 August 1985.

5. 1987 *Statistical Abstract of Utah,* p. 117.

6. Ibid., pp. 159, 326.

7. Moab *Times-Independent,* 15 May 1986.

8. *1993 Statistical Abstract of Utah,* pp. 135, 157, 219.

9. Ibid., p. 279.

10. Moab *Times-Independent,* 5 February 1987 and 26 March 1987.

11. *1993 Statistical Abstract of Utah,,* pp. 61, 63.

12. The numbers differ slightly—by about $3 million—from official figures published later in the *1993 Statistical Abstract of Utah.*

13. Lloyd M. Pierson, "The Moab Museum," *Canyon Legacy* 1:28.

14. Moab *Canyon Country Zephyr,* April 1989.

15. Bill Hedden, Testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, in Salt Lake City, Utah, on 7 April 1994.

16. Moab *Times-Independent,* 21 June 1989 and 26 July 1989.

17. *1993 Statistical Abstract of Utah,* pp. 13–17.

18. Ibid., pp. 103, 135, 157, 209.

19. Robert Norman, "City on a Cushion of Salt," *Canyon Legacy* 10:25.

20. *1993 Statistical Abstract of Utah,* p. 240.

21. "1993 Mini-Profile," a flier issued by the Grand County Economic and Community Development Bureau.

22. Data from Utah State Tax Commission research publications 94–10 and 93–18.

23. See Bette L. Stanton, comp., "Moab and Grand County Community Profile," published by Grand County Economic & Community Development, 1993.

24. Moab *Times Independent,* 20 January 1994.

25. Renon Klossner Hulet, "Tourism: Moab's New Uranium," special advertising supplement; no publisher listed but distributed by Moab Chamber of Commerce and others in 1994; copy in my possession.

26. Moab *Times-Independent,* 24 November 1994.

27. Hedden, Testimony.

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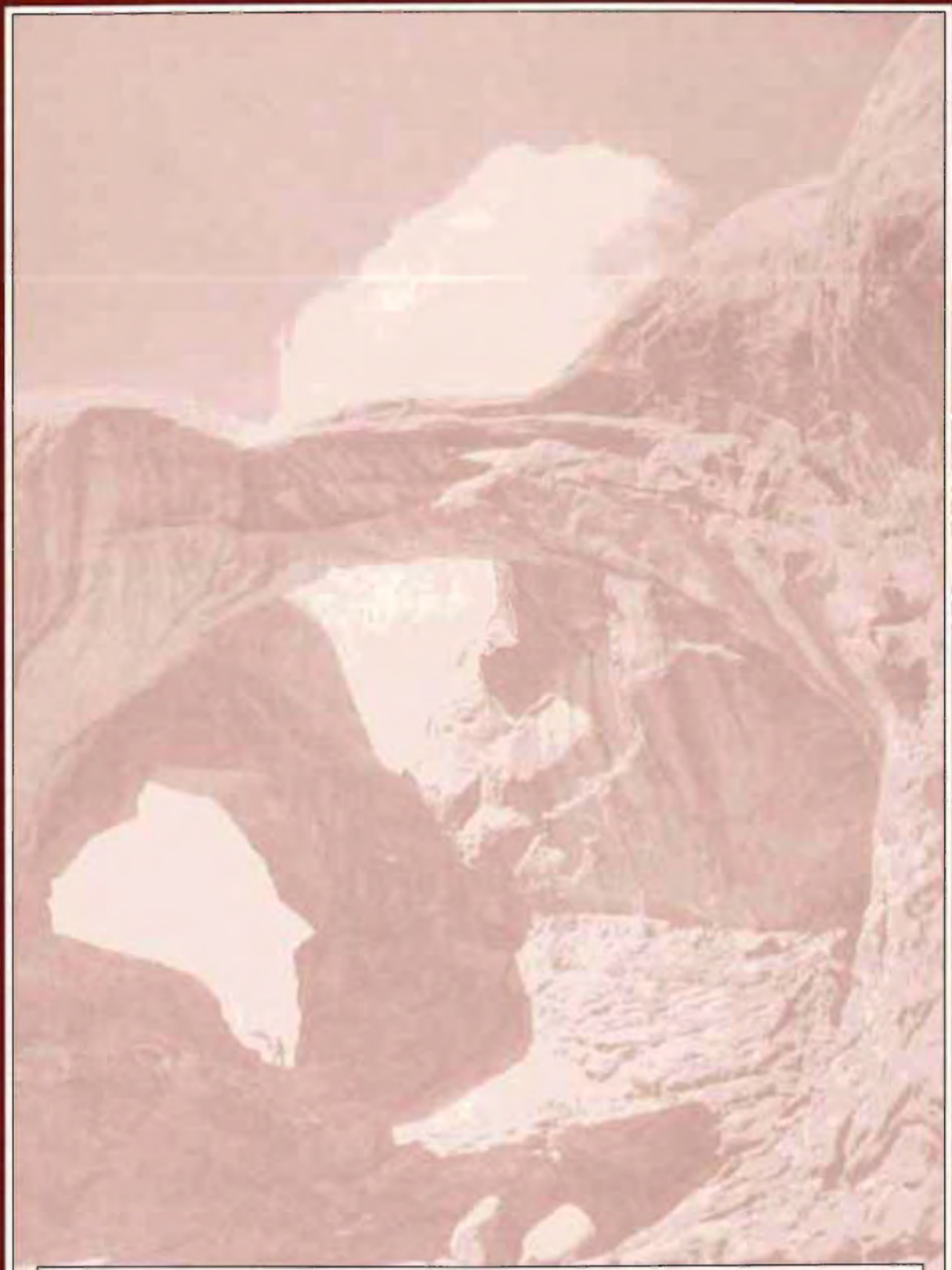

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