

“THE TELLIN’ TAKES ME HOME*”

Remembering the Canyon Country...#2



**COLORADO-UTAH STATE LINE
on old US 6/50.**

As recently as the early 1990s, the “Welcome to Utah” sign, north of I-70 was still intact. It vanished without a trace one day and no one has ever been able to explain its disappearance. County and state road crews insisted the removal was not of their doing. The white obelisk is still there, though someone has shot one side of it to pieces.



**CASTLE VALLEY DR.
& MILLER LN...1979**

There wasn't much development in Castle Valley when this photograph was taken in 1979, near the junction of Castle Valley Drive and Miller Lane (L). The aerial picture above was taken in 2007.

HIGHWAY JUNCTION... Utah Highway 313 & the Road to Deadhorse Point

Until the early 1980s, the road to the Island in the Sky was dirt and gravel, from the junction with the Deadhorse Pt. road, all the way to Grandview Point and Upheaval Dome.

The road could be slippery in wet weather but it was a very quiet place to be if you were willing to endure the washboard and the bumps.

Just to the left of this photo is The Knoll, a small mesa that can be seen for miles in all directions...



*And I'll sing about an emptiness the East has never known,
Where coyotes don't pay taxes and a man can live alone,
And you've got to walk forever just to find a telephone.
It's sad, but the telling takes me home.*

* “THE TELLIN’ TAKES ME HOME”
By Utah Phillips
<http://www.utahphillips.org/>

DON SWAYZE

He was one of Moab's most familiar faces for decades, and one of its most talented artists. Don was born and raised in Ferron, in Emery County, where his family had lived for generations.

But Don moved to Moab in 1970--he worked at the Green River missile base, at Atlas Minerals and at Moab Lumber for a few years, but in 1975 he bought the High Desert Gift Shop on Main Street. It was the perfect venue for Don to display his many talents. He was a line artist, a silversmith, a scrimshaw engraver. He ran his shop almost singlehandedly and no matter how much business he might have lost, he was always closed on Sunday.

But more than that, he was a generous member of the Moab Community. One would be hardpressed to find someone with an unkind word for Don.

When he died a few years ago, Moab lost one of her favorite sons.



HIGH WATER...1983

After a long winter and a very cold and prolonged spring, summer suddenly arrived in late May 1983, and with it, the rapid melting of the Colorado and Green River systems. It was one of the greatest floods of the 20th Century. Flows reached 130,000 cubic feet per second in Cataract Canyon, and for a while, it appeared Glen Canyon Dam' may not withstand the sudden rise.

At Moab, water almost reached the bottom of the highway bridge and crews worked frantically to remove debris caught underneath. Just south of the river, the overflowed river filled The Sloughs, eventually coming within a few yards of the road.

Today the Aarchway Inn sits in the foreground of this photograph.

UPPER SPANISH VALLEY...1978

The good and the bad...the utter lack of condo developments in this photo is striking. It was still just empty land, not worth much to anyone, 30 years ago. That's the good part.

If you want to look for ways Moab has improved since then, note the black pall of smoke that hangs over the valley on the right side of this photo.

It's almost been forgotten that until the mid-1980s, Moab burned its garbage nearly every morning. When the wind was right, or if Moab was caught in an inversion, the black acrid smoke would settle over the town and just hang there for most of the day.

If nothing else, Moab's air quality has improved since 1978.

