

**John
DePuy**
PAINTER OF THE
APOCALYPTIC VOLCANO
OF THE WORLD

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JOHN DePUY

April/May 2016 Volume 28 Number 1

STARTING OUR 28TH YEAR



Take It
Or
Leave It..

Jim Stiles

**RESTORE GLEN CANYON?
OR KEEP IT IN 'LIQUID STORAGE?'**

I drove past Glen Canyon Dam last week, on my way to visit friends in Springdale. It hasn't changed much since my last visit, or my first for that matter; it's still the biggest chunk of concrete I've ever laid eyes upon and it still floods one of the most beautiful sections of the Colorado River—Glen Canyon.

Of course, I've never really seen Glen Canyon in its pristine state. When the dam's diversion gates closed in 1963, I was still a kid in Kentucky, oblivious to these kinds of devastating man-made disasters.

Oh to be that innocent again.

My introduction to Lake Powell and its consequences came to me via an aunt I barely knew. Bertha Gunterman was a frail but feisty retired editor for Random House, living in New York, when she got wind of my interest in the West. She began sending me clippings from magazines about The Dam and the effect it was having both downstream in the Grand Canyon and, of course, the utter destruction by drowning upstream.



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Early on, it had become apparent that this dam was a bad idea. For example, water released from the bottom of Glen Canyon Dam is cold—very cold—and consequently, it killed most of the native aquatic life in the Grand Canyon. They've since stocked the river with trout, which is wonderful if you want to imagine you're fishing an alpine stream.

The dam had been built to "save" water for the Lower Basin states of the Colorado River Compact, but evaporation and bank storage was diverting millions of gallons of water away from the reservoir. That's what happens when you build a reservoir in...the DESERT! The politicians could just as easily have moved the measuring point to Hoover Dam, 300 miles downstream, but that would have made too much sense and saved too much money. So

the Bureau of Reclamation built another dam.

In my twenties, I became obsessed with The Dam and Glen Canyon. After my move to Utah, I made frequent trips to the reservoir and to Glen Canyon's above-water remnants. I discovered Ed Abbey and read The Monkey Wrench Gang about 200 times. I dreamed of "the precision earthquake" that Abbey's Seldom Seen prayed for. I drew a cartoon of The Dam with a gaping hole in its concrete facade and drove all the way to the remote Wolf Hole, Arizona to present it to my favorite author. Of course, Abbey didn't live there as he'd claimed—he'd never even been there. Still my passion for Glen Canyon stayed red hot.

But one day, more than a decade ago, I was ranting about dam removal to an environmentalist pal of mine (an attorney of course) and I noticed a certain lack of enthusiasm on his part.

The men and women who had stumbled upon Glen Canyon in the 1940s and '50s, who really found religion of sorts here, were like an exclusive congregation. Their names, like Glen Canyon itself, are the stuff of legend.

I said, "What's wrong with you? Don't you want to see Glen Canyon restored?"

He smiled sadly and replied, "It won't be the same."

It was true that the Glen Canyon Story went beyond the physical resource—there was a romance to it that elicited visions of a Desert Xanadu. Tucked away in this remote, unknown corner of the Southwest was an entire canyon system, almost 200 miles in length, and it was one of the best kept secrets in America. It truly was, as Eliot Porter later said, "The Place No One Knew." It was full of history, going all the way back to the Anasazi. It was inhabited by just a handful of hermits and oddballs and explored by a strange mix of cowboys and prospectors and river runners. The legendary Bert Loper lived down in the Glen, in his old cabin that he called The Hermitage. Art Chaffin ran the ferry at Hite. The place was full of ghosts.

The men and women who had stumbled upon Glen Canyon in the 1940s and '50s, who really found religion of sorts here, were like an exclusive congregation. Their names, like Glen Canyon itself, are the stuff of legend. Glen Canyon will always be inextricably linked to the lucky few like Ken Sleight and Katie Lee and Harry Aleson and Moci Mac and Doc Marston. How much did this place mean to them? Watch Ken and Katie choke back tears a half century after the Glen's demise. The loss runs deep.

"All that's gone," my friend said. "You can drain the reservoir but you can't bring back the way it felt. That's gone. All of it."

He looked at me and said, "If they ever drain the lake, it'll be a ZOO down there."

Still, when the drought in the early 2000s pulled Lake Powell's elevation down by 150 feet, I was anxious to see what the re-exposed parts of Glen Canyon would look like. Abbey had always insisted that Glen Canyon was not gone, that it was simply in "liquid storage," waiting to be restored and rejuvenated.

In March 2005, the reservoir fell to a level that, if my friend Rich Ingebretsen's calculations were correct, meant that one of the canyon's most iconic natural features, Cathedral-in-the-Desert, was completely out of the water. Ingebretsen is the president and founder of the Glen Canyon Institute and is probably more dedicated than anyone to its restoration.

We'd seen the photos of this extraordinary side canyon, with its tapestried walls and hanging gardens and its fluted waterfall. What would it look like 42 years after it went under? Would it have retained its splendor after all these years? And would it feel the same? Ingebretsen and I wanted to find out.

To add some irony (or hypocrisy?) to our quest, we rented a speedboat to travel the 30 miles down lake from Bullfrog Marina—the very motorized contraption that we both claim to loathe. But we forgot about our contradictions when we found the Cathedral looking almost exactly as it had been portrayed in

the old photos. Even small rocks on the ledges above the drop-off were just as they'd been in 1963. Later, we found inscriptions from the Hole-in-the-Rock Expedition, weathered but still readable after all these decades under water.

I'll be damned, I thought. Cactus Ed was right—it IS still here in "liquid storage."

Because we'd come down river in early March, we may have been the first visitors to see the re-emerging Cathedral. The ride back to Bullfrog was bitter cold and most people had the good sense to wait for warmer weather. And when the temperatures rose, the people arrived in droves. By May the narrow side channel was choked with tourists. Motorboats, house boats, canoes and kayaks—it was veritable gridlock down there. Scores of tourists rubbed elbows taking pictures and the silence we'd experienced in early Spring was gone, replaced by reverberating motors and the shouts and hollers of well-meaning admirers. It looked like Delicate Arch on Memorial Day weekend.

I wondered what Glen Canyon would be like if the reservoir were drained and the canyon restored. A free-flowing Colorado River would stop most of the house boats, but the river in Glen Canyon was serene and almost rapid-free. Motor boats were already making trips up and down the river in the last few years before the Colorado stopped flowing. They would surely return.

And what about the non-motorized traffic? I thought of the hundreds of thousands of 21st century recreationists who would descend upon this "secret place," all of them looking to "re-create" the Glen Canyon that we'd read about. They'd be replacing the jet ski/Evinrude people, it's true, and for some that's an improvement, but it dawned on me:

Today's noisy waterborne tourists recreate on top on Glen Canyon. Yes, they race about the lake at full-throttle and drink beer and make noise and disturb the general welfare, but the Glen is safe and sound under 500 feet of H2O.

Drain the lake and the New Generation of Glen Canyon Fun Hogs might make me nostalgic for water skiers. Instead of floating and boating over Hidden Passage, they'd be in it. The "place no one knew" would become "the place that got screwed." It would, as we say too often now, be loved to death by the very people who claim they wanted to restore it. It's an idea so common these days that the notion is a cliché.

The Park Service would naturally feel the need to control this mass, this mess of "adventurers," and Glen Canyon Recreation Area would eventually become yet another heavily-regulated river—the waiting list for permits would stretch to years.

I thought about the way the spiritual and moral aspects of our last wild places have been pushed aside in favor of their recreational and commercial components. I wondered if the return of those magnificent thousand foot canyons would be seen for their grandeur or their climb-ability. Would these spires inspire? Or just challenge gonzo climbers to 'conquer' them? Would visitors to the Cathedral-in-the-Desert feel reverent? Or would they instead be inspired to exploit its beauty in some commercial way nobody has even fathomed yet?



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A couple days later, returning home again via The Dam and Page, Arizona, I passed the overflowing parking lot for Antelope Canyon Scenic Tours. Twenty years ago, nobody had heard of this stunning slot canyon. Today its promoters are making the big bucks. It's a real "wilderness adventure." When I think about restoring Glen Canyon, I know that this is a harbinger of things to come.

And it occurred to me...maybe we don't deserve the return of Glen Canyon. Not yet. Would its restoration be anything but a cash cow for the "amenities economy?" Would it simply be the latest natural wonder to be exploited by thousands of entrepreneurs and trampled by millions of insensitive, thrill-seeking recreationists?

After decades of longing desperately to see Glen Canyon out of the water, I surprised even myself when I thought: Maybe keeping it in "liquid storage" is the better alternative. Maybe it's even safer down there under all that water. Because today, I'm not sure we humans are worthy of something as holy as 'The Place No One Knew.'

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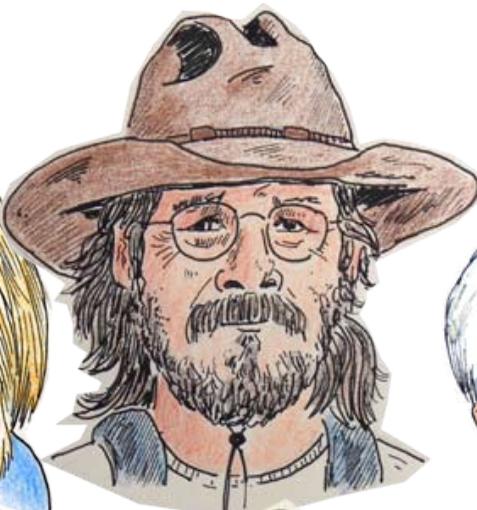
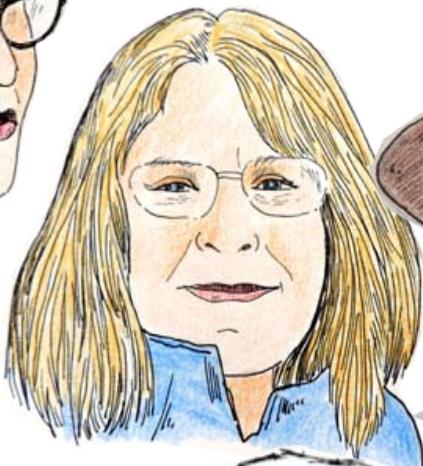
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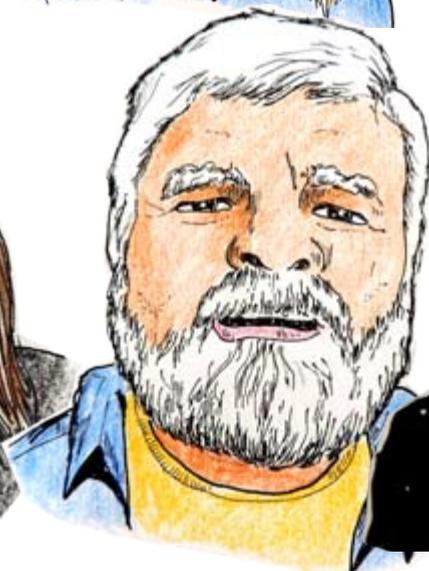
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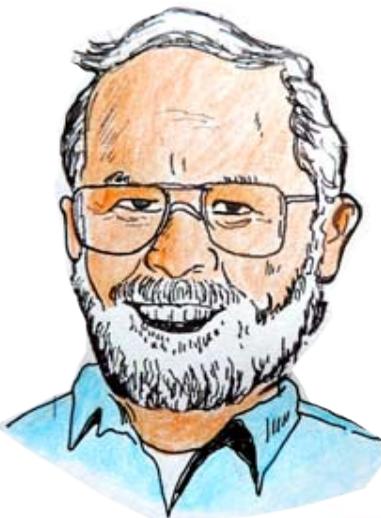
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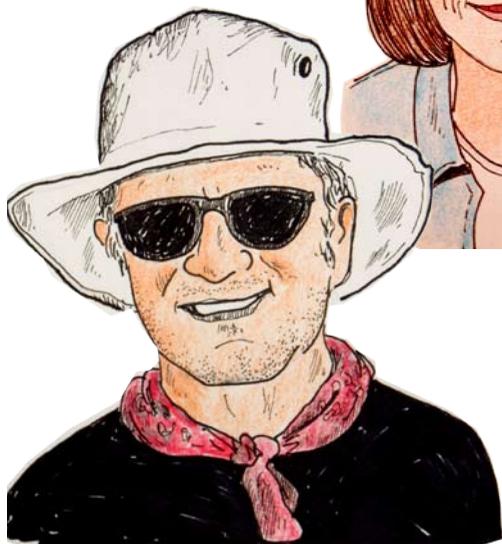
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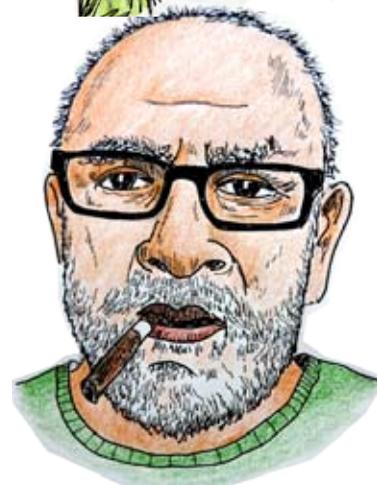


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How to Fight a Fire.

"It came from out of nowhere."

Things do, of course. Come out of nowhere. It's Easter week. Tuesday morning, waking up, every channel is BREAKING NEWS. There's been a Terrorist attack in Brussels. The airport and the subway system. You turn the channel and hear the screams of a child in the Zaventem airport over a black screen. The reporters queue up the next video and panicked faces stream past the camera, covered in soot. Unintelligible yelling. Crying.

You watch even longer, feeling that it's your duty to experience this trauma along with everyone else. You notice one man racing through the scene, his carry-on bag clutched in his arms, and wonder what he's holding on to. Does the bag contain his father's prized fishing tackles, the last poem his mother wrote, or drawings by his kids—something that, in its loss, would compound his pain beyond what he already feels, as a survivor who has just run past all the bodies he could have been?

Or is the bag just his standard business carry-on? Is he clinging so desperately to a change of clothes, a book he finished two days ago, a quart-sized plastic baggie of 3 oz allowable liquids? You place yourself in his shoes—why are you holding on? Have you forgotten what's in your arms? Are you afraid of losing your laptop and its data? Do you hold on because that bag was packed yesterday, was the final thing you touched, back when the world made sense, and you were still delusionally yourself and intact? In your shock, does some part of you believe the bag can take you back there?

Or are you just afraid? Maybe you're alone, in a country that isn't yours, with no one to care that you're alive, and you just need something to feel in your arms. Maybe you believe the bag is holding on to you, too.

After awhile, the news is just showing the same videos over and over again, and you get tired of the lack of information, and turn it off. The day proves to be sunny, warm, and windy. Too windy.

Mid-afternoon, the fire siren wails over the town. It's the same siren they trigger for car accidents on the highway, or, at one sustained high note, for tornadoes, but the weather suggests a grass fire. And that's what it is.

The local Police department doesn't have much to post, normally, on their new Facebook page. You're surprised to see they've updated their page to announce that the volunteer firefighters are all headed to the nearby border with Oklahoma to fight an encroaching wildfire.

This seems normal enough, though. You hear every few days about a small grass fire popping up somewhere and they never seem to be a big worry.

But this fire keeps going. By nightfall, the plume of smoke stains the Eastern sky and the wind whips through the town, overturning trash bins and whistling around the windows. You hear more sirens.



**Blackness, like you've never seen.
The ground, the trees, charred on either side
of the road stretching on to each horizon.
Your mind searches for an analogy.
It's like driving on the moon, or through an apocalypse,
or through hell.**

The wind never dies down. The rain never falls. And the fire rages for five days.

By the second day, your county is a regional headline. A "State of Emergency." Under the smoke, half the state of Kansas lives the day in perpetual dim twilight. The wind picks up litter and sticks and leaves, flinging them at you when you walk outside. The fire damage, reckoned in thousands of acres, counts higher and higher.

By the third day, the Department of Transportation begins opening roads behind the path of the monstrous fire, and, on the fourth day, you can drive through to run your errands. At first, everything looks the same. The road is the same road you've known. Until you reach the fire line.

Then blackness, like you've never seen. The ground, the trees, charred on either side

of the road stretching on to each horizon. Your mind searches for an analogy. It's like driving on the moon, or through an apocalypse, or through hell.

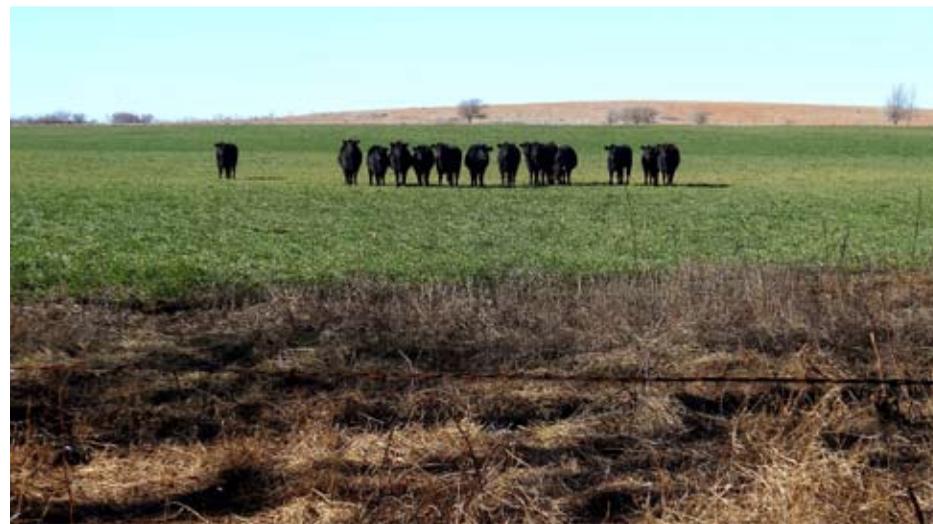
It's the same drive you've taken a thousand times, but it's through a foreign land. You drive for half an hour through unceasingly scorched earth, recoiling at each newly blackened vista.

When you first visited this place, six years ago, when you and your husband were deciding to move to this open, uncomplicated, flat country, the two of you had driven out to a dirt road on the county line and, looking out over the rolling prairie, you had watched the sunset and the fireflies waking up in the valley, twinkling among the tall grasses into the nightfall. But now you drive by that dirt road and the tall grasses are burned to the ground. The valley is filled with smoldering ash, which bleeds fresh smoke across the highway, and you're frightened to think that a strong wind could set it ablaze again at any moment.

That fear settles over you, and you note small, festering fires around you, in fields and under trees. You drive through one black field after another, over blackened hills, until you finally cross over a creek and you come out the other side.

The hellscape recedes behind you. Before you, a winter wheat field gleams a deep green. Trees are budding out with fresh green leaves. Everything is green. You could cry, it's so lovely.

You turn onto the Main Street of Sun City, KS and the first thing you see are the fire



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Trees are budding out with fresh green leaves.
Everything is green. You could cry, it's so lovely.**

trucks lined up to get more water. Across the street, pickups crowd the entrance to the town's one cafe, and you wonder how many belong to volunteer firefighters, on a short dinner break before they return to the front line of the blaze. On the way out of town is a small church, and the tiny dirt parking lot is full to bursting with cars. This is confusing for a moment, and then you realize. You almost laugh, though it isn't funny. It's just how timing works. Of course, you think.

It's Good Friday.

* * *

One Good Friday, more than any other, stands out in my memory. I was young, maybe 7 or 8, and it was the first year I sat through and fully understood the Good Friday Mass. The church was dark, with only a single light illuminating the altar, which had been stripped of all its cloth and left bare. The priest wore Black, and we read through the story of Jesus' death, with members of the congregation speaking in the voices of Jesus, Pontius Pilate and the various Disciples. I was a story-loving child, and I followed along in my hymnal as Jesus was betrayed and arrested. When Pontius Pilate brought Jesus out before Temple, the assembled congregation played the role of the bloodthirsty crowd. Around me, anonymous in darkness, my friends and family yelled "Away with Him!" They yelled, "Kill him!" at the appointed moment, and I read ahead in the story to see who would object. I waited for some voice to rise above the melee. But that wasn't in the script. I began to cry when I realized what was coming.

Through the dim light, some of the adults carried in a large plain wooden cross and planted it in front of the altar. They stood before the cross for a moment, and then kissed it. As we sang a quiet hymn, the congregation began to line up. I stood beside my parents, holding my mother's hand, as we made our way down the aisle. She, having memorized the hymn, sang along as we walked.

As we approached the cross, it grew taller and hulked over me, ten times my height or more. Even in remembering, it brings a shiver of fright. My fantastical mind, still immersed in the story we had read, turned this cross into its original—a place of fear and death—and I dreaded the moment when I would be brought close to it.

My father touched the cross, and kissed it, and then turned. My mother let go of my

hand and did the same. Then it was my turn. I reached out and brushed my fingers against the smooth wood. Then I put my mouth to it. Quickly. The cold stung my lips and, immediately, I turned and reached out for my parents.

Each Good Friday is spent deliberately in the presence of Death. Right up close to it. And that makes it a rare day in a modern life. While our ancestors spent their days immersed in the realities of disease and deprivation, we can largely go through life feeling that we have things under control. Our lives are an algorithm, in which the right nutrition and the right amount of exercise, the right "work-life balance" and checking-off of tasks, will produce a quality of life that rolls along quite nicely most of the time. Bad things only happen to people who aren't trying hard enough. And death, when it happens to others, is pushed quickly out of our sight. We aren't wallowers, we're doers! Optimists! We "think positive" and drink the recommended 8 glasses of water, and so we are due our happiness.

But it only takes a disaster for that algorithm to fall to ruin. For all our well-laid plans to be laid bare as facades. Frauds. A thinly plastered veneer that crumbles to reveal the truth—that we aren't in control. We were never in control.

Death. Terror. Destruction. They can arrive at any moment and burn all our world to cinders. Turn the place we once recognized into strange terrain.

And, when that happens, what are we left with?

I wonder how many of the people sitting in the pews of their Good Friday service had spent the two days prior watching their ranches burn—their homes and their animals threatened. How many had been spared when their neighbors hadn't, and were ashamed for it. And how many had suffered a total loss. And I wondered how close, during that service, came the specter of Death into their minds.

I hoped that they had faith enough to not be afraid.

That, after all, is the only thing under our control. The only aspect of our lives that can't be torched by fire or blown to shreds by explosives. Our faith. Whichever principles we hold that don't alter with circumstances. The belief that the land will recover, healthier than before. That there will be joy again. A belief in God, or in a core Goodness among men. The softness of heart that, paradoxically, is a stronghold against despair. A belief in Mercy.

All we hear on the news is chaos. It's all about fear, and anger, and vengeance. Politicians scream for blood, and tell us that we can destroy the darkness through targeted airstrikes and troop deployments. In our fear, we reach out to assert control. Lock down the internet. Search everyone's phones. Patrol the neighborhoods of people who don't look like us. We will destroy chaos with the force of our suppressive powers. And when it pops up again in a new spot, we will suppress it again. And again. And again.

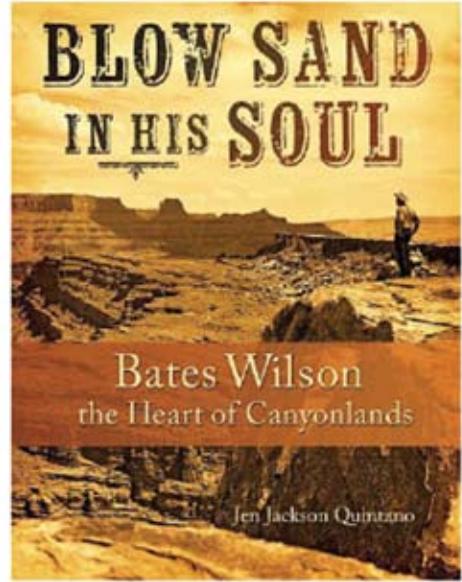
Chaos puts on a new face with each challenge. It will always adapt, shifting with the winds, to strike any vulnerability. And it would have us constantly altering ourselves to follow it. To confront the darkness of the world, we have to accept Death. We have to sit with it, seeing its power to disassemble our reality, and then we have to solidify what remains. What always remains.

In the end, our only retaliation is our character.

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'BEFORE & AFTER'



US 191 AT ARCHES NATIONAL PARK 1940s & TODAY

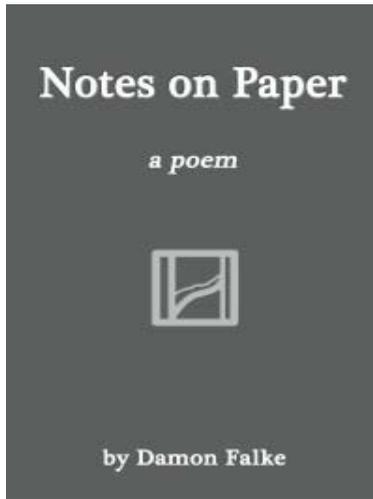
Until the 1950s, when the road from Crescent Jct to Moab was finally paved, just covering those 30 miles could be an ordeal. In this image, taken in the late 1940s, view of the "highway" is looking south, just north of Arches National Monument headquarters.

The original sandstone structure, "the Rock House," as it's known today, is visible in the distance. It served as residence to the park's various custodians and rangers, from the 40s until the last 1970s.

US 191 is now a four lane highway. The old road has been converted to be a bicycle trail.

The Rock House still stands.





In Notes on Paper, Falke walks us through the landscape of one man's mind, which contains both his past and an awareness of our common future. From within private memories the narrator reaches out to us with 'we' and 'you', and each spare line invokes the hope that we, like him, are worthy of return to our most longed for places. And if to return is not our fate,

and really it never can be, the narrator bids us survey our own memories, taking time in the present for the winds, and the words, that move the world.

NOTES ON PAPER DAMON FALKE

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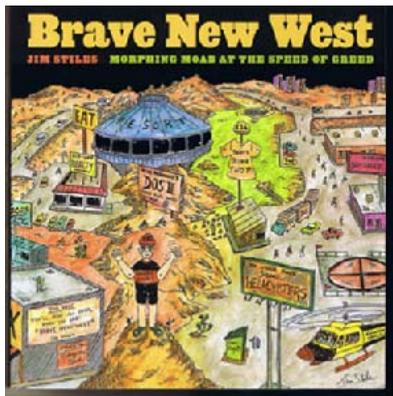


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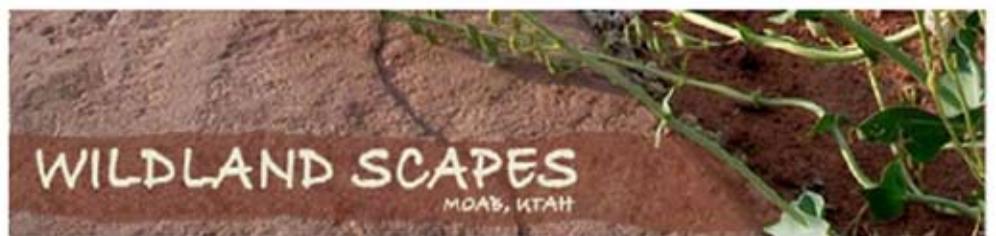
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"Jim Stiles holds up a mirror to those of us living in the American West, exposing issues we may not want to face. We are all complicit in the shadow side of growth. His words are born not so much out of anger but a broken heart.

He says he writes elegies for the landscape he loves, that he is "hopelessly clinging to the past." I would call Stiles a writer from the future.

Brave New West is a book of import because of what it chooses to expose."

Terry
Tempest Williams



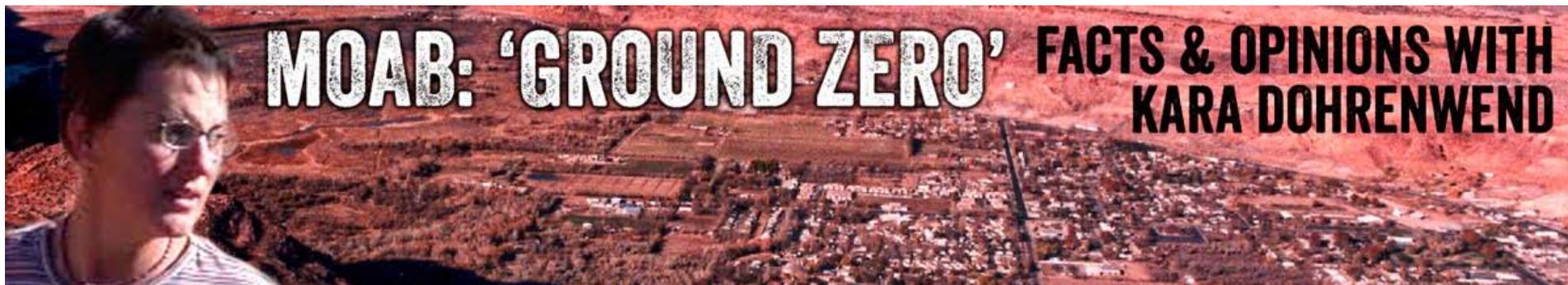
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They're BAAAAAAACK.....!!!

By April 1st tourist season in Moab is in full swing. With Easter as early as it can get this year the season starts off with a roar during March with a series of smaller weekend events and then the mother of all events, Easter Jeep Safari.

It's a tired old joke I first heard in 1992 or so:

"How do you know it's spring in Moab?"

"The license plates turn green"

This joke made me groan then, and I groan now, though for slightly different reasons. And living in downtown Moab I can say it never slowed down much this past winter, especially for a winter when the ski resorts were open and skiing was good.

With fuel at under \$2 a gallon (even in Moab) I suspect this year we'll have a doozy of a season. And with parking and lanes restricted on Main Street just north of 100 North, traffic downtown is going to be interesting come spring break and Memorial Day weekend.

Federal overreach, or an effort to cope with insane visitor numbers?

Impacts of a busy tourist season reach far outside Moab City and Spanish Valley limits. For the next few months I'll be focusing outside Moab and Spanish Valley looking at land management topics and challenges, and how the changes in visitor numbers and use patterns have dramatically changed over the last 20 years.

A series of new restrictions have been published in the Federal Register that impact users near Moab and Monticello. These rules were outlined in the 2008 Resource Management Plan (RMP) for this area, and were finally published on 02/25/2016 as official rules related to the Moab and Monticello Field Offices that go into effect on March 28th. Social media backlash to the Federal Register Notice was fast and furious with comments claiming that these rules would have negative impacts on everyone who uses federal lands in the Moab and Monticello areas – and disallow all kinds of legal activities and hurt small businesses, dog walkers and ATV users alike.

It's a tired old joke I first heard in 1992 or so:

"How do you know it's spring in Moab?"

"The license plates turn green"

This joke made me groan then, and I groan now, though for slightly different reasons.

And living in downtown Moab I can say it never slowed down much this past winter, especially for a winter when the ski resorts were open and skiing was good.

With fuel at under \$2 a gallon (even in Moab)

I suspect this year we'll have a doozy of a season.

The Federal Register Notice can be found at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-02-25/pdf/2016-04065.pdf>. It is 8 pages long, and outlines the planning process and public input process that led to these rules. The public process was not a short one. My primary complaint is that the scoping and public input all occurred in 2003 through 2007, with a final proposed Resource Management Plan provided for final public input in 2008; it is now 8 years after the RMP was approved, and only now are these rules being adopted. It has taken over 10 years to tackle the massive increase in visitor numbers and the recreation impacts on the land around Moab. I understand that public participatory processes require time, but over 13 years from initial scoping to final rules seems a little longer than is necessary.

There are a few area wide rules, but most of the rules for the Moab Area related to camping, campfires, human waste and wood gathering are primarily focused on the extremely high use areas of the River Road (Hwy 128), Hwy 313 (the entrance road to Dead Horse Point and Island In the Sky), the Powerdam area of Mill Creek and a few other specified areas that are to be signed.

The "short" version of the rules and the areas that they apply is as follows. I have taken this directly from the Federal Register Notice Final Supplementary Rules for Public Lands Managed by the Moab and Monticello Field Offices in Grand and San Juan Counties, UT. I have simplified some of the area descriptions by removing references to township range and section for readability.

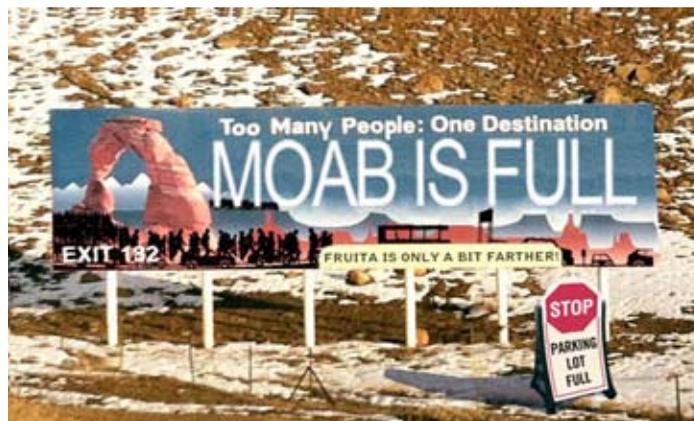
- 1) You must not burn wood pallets
- 2) You must not camp in archeological sites posted as closed to camping
- 3) You must not camp in historic sites posted as closed to camping
- 4) You must not operate a motorized vehicle or mechanized vehicle on any route, trail or area not designative as open to such use by a BLM sign, a BLM map or the Moab Field Office Travel Management Plan.
- 5) You must not gather petrified wood in the following two areas: i) The Colorado Riverway SRMA; and ii) High visitation sites within the Labyrinth/Gemini Bridges SRMA
- 6) You must not possess or use glass beverage containers in the following areas: i) Moab Canyon Sand Hill; and ii) Powerhouse Lane Trailhead, Lower Mill Creek and

the North Fork of Mill Creek for a distance of one mile from the trailhead...

Rules 7 – 10 apply to the following areas:

- i) Utah Highway 313;
 - ii) The Island in the Sky entrance road between ...313 and Canyonlands;
 - iii) The Gemini Bridges Route (Grand Co Road No 118) and the spur route into Bride Canyon...;
 - iv) The Kane Springs Creek Canyon Rim route from US Highways 191 to where it crosses the eastern boundary of section 20, Township 27 S, Range 22 E, Salt Lake Meridian, exclusive of the State and private land west of Blue Hill in Sections 25,26,35 and 36;
 - v) Lands within Long Canyon (Grand Co Road 135)...;
 - vi) Lands along other sites of the US Highways 191 bounded by Arches National Park...;
 - vii) Lands located between the upper end of the Nefertiti Rapid Parking areaThis includes all public lands between Nefertiti and Swaseys along Grand Co Road 154;
 - viii) Lands including Castle Rock, Ida Gulch, Professor Valley, Mary Jane Canyon, and the upper Onion Creek areas that are south of the Colorado Riverway SRMA, below the rims of Adobe and Fisher Mesas, and west of the private land in Fisher Valley;
 - ix) Lands along the Potash Trail...;
 - x) Lands located at the southern end of Spanish Valley located on the east and west sites of Us Highway 191 to the rim of the valley, south of the San Juan County Line to the Kane Springs Creek Canyon Rim Road;
 - xi) Lands within the Mill Creek Canyon ACEC and Wilderness Study Area. Backpack type camping within the Mill Creek ACEC and WSA is allows at sites ¼ mile or farther from designated roads and greater than 100' from Mill Creek and archeological sites;
 - xii) Lands within Desert Bighorn Sheep laming areas (46,319 acres) as shown on May 9 of the Approved Moab RMP.
- 7) You must not camp in a non-designated site
 - 8) You must not ignite or maintain a campfire at a non-designated site
 - 9) You must not dispose of human waste in any container other than a portable toilet
 - 10) You must not gather wood

Most of the new rules only apply to specific areas where "an estimated 90% of the 1.8 million visitors to the Moab Field Office" end up. Furthermore, "Public lands that do not receive intense visitation and are not listed in this notice and the 2008 RMP/EIS will not be affected by the final camping rules". The notice goes on to outline the reasons for these rules. Basic things like: no pallet burning because nails are left behind that "can cause physical injury to people and animals and property damage to vehicles" (especially since pallet fires usually are not confined in a fire ring or fire pan); not camping in archeologic and historic sites is important to protect these sites. These rules



sound pretty basic and unnecessary to me, but seeing the immense increase in visitor numbers, and understanding that for many of these people they have no context for what is common sense to most of us who live here, these rules are unfortunately necessary.

Over 20 years ago, when I was a caretaker at Horsethief Ranch, the Mineral Bottom Road was well used compared to other routes out by Dubinky Well and 10 Mile, but not the super highway it is today. A couple came to stay at the ranch in July. They slept in until around 11 am, and right when I was wrapping up the outdoor chores for the day and starting to think about settling in for some indoor/shade tasks and an afternoon nap. They headed out the kitchen door and announced they were going for a run. I mentioned that it was the heat of the day and that they should take care to bring water and not go far, and proceeded to finish fixing lunch, eat it and lie down for a rest on the front porch. I also suggested they take the dogs for company, and that they could always follow them home. The couple rejected the suggestion to bring water, but the dogs didn't give them much choice but to take them along.

Around 2 pm I woke to a wet nose in my face, followed by a lick and whine. I sat up, realized that the couple had not returned with Jade and Jazz, but the dogs has sensibly

returned home. I put out water for the dogs, and then got into the Jeep and took off down the road, hoping that I'd find the couple soon.

I picked them up a couple miles out from the ranch – they had gotten lost, saying that there were no landmarks and they got confused as to which direction to go to find the ranch house. By this point it was well over 100F on the mesa, and they had no water and had been out for over 3 hours. The Book Cliffs to the north, Cleopatra's Chair to the SW, Beehive Butte with the La Sals behind it, and the road down the center of the 1 – 2 mile wide mesa top can be a pretty big place in July with no water and nearly no shade.

Later that summer I was out looking for the horses – there were only two permanent horses on the Horsethief Point Range that summer. I drove towards the Mineral Bottom switchbacks and found Blackie and Shasta with their noses in orange Gott coolers busily slurping. After checking that the coolers held water rather than Gatorade, I chatted with the van full of people. They were amazed to find the horses and had given them the last of their water. I explained that there were several springs on the mesa, and the horses lived here and didn't need water. However with 10 more miles of dirt, followed by 20 miles of pavement to town I hoped they had at least a quart or two per person in case they got a flat or the van broke down. They looked at me rather blankly.

I don't spend much time out Horsethief Point/Mineral Bottom way anymore because it is too busy and not the place I used to love to get lost in, but for work I do drive the River Road (Hwy 128) regularly. In the early 1990s there were no designated campgrounds, and no toilets and it certainly looked a lot wilder and more "welcoming". That is until you got closer, and found human waste and toilet paper flowers decorating flat spots near the roadway or down by the river. It has been a shame to watch these high use areas get transformed into developed campgrounds – but the fact that they are full to overflowing most weekends from mid-March through June, and throughout the fall means toilet facilities are necessary and need maintenance.

Unfortunately we need these rules for the high use areas near Moab, the sheer volume of campers means that dispersed camping is impossible in this zones. What seems silly and unnecessary to those of us adapted to living in the desert is not common sense to those coming from big cities, or places with soil and rain. The sheer distance between towns makes places that really aren't that remote feel miles and miles away, and as if your actions couldn't possibly bother anyone else. These rules certainly won't prevent me from doing what I want to do when I am out and about in the desert – especially since I tend to avoid these high use areas as much as possible. At least the rules, while over 10 years in the making, still are relevant, perhaps even more so than when they were initially drafted during the scoping process for the RMP.

What does Federal Land Management have to do with Gun Control?

At the start of 2016 activity in Oregon at the Malheur Wildlife Refuge caught and held

Since January I have learned a lot about the position of County Sheriff, and have realized I need to be a more informed voter at election time. Whether the County Sheriff chooses to act as a mediator or chooses sides in a dispute is important.

my attention for most of January, and it has continued to interest to me. I have noticed that most of my friends and family who live in larger cities in the West or in the Mid-West heard little about it, proving to me I was obsessed. Living in a part of the country where approximately 63%-70% (depending on how the land is counted) of the land is owned by the federal government, and around 7% is owned by the state, the implications of federal land ownership are not insignificant. While estimates of the percentage of Utah that is managed by the Federal Government vary a bit, no matter how it's counted Utah ranks 3rd, behind Nevada and Alaska, for the smallest amount of private land in the country. Especially with populations growing, Utah residents perhaps understandably feel hemmed in and surrounded, with economic opportunities reduced or outright thwarted by rules that don't generally apply to private property. Public land ownership requires collaborative management – something that is a challenge in the best of circumstances, and is usually bound to leave someone feeling the decision is inadequate or wrong.

At the very start of what became a standoff in January, the occupiers stated that they would leave if the Sheriff told them to go. As I watched the events unfold, I wondered why the Sheriff's directive mattered more than other law enforcement. I have had little interaction with law enforcement, and so I assumed there is a lot I don't know about law enforcement organizational structure and I started looking into it. My research eventually led me to the Constitutional Sheriff and Peace Officers Association (<http://cspoa.org>) and a philosophy about the role of the County Sheriff that I had not heard about before.

A Sagebrush (or Constitutional) Sheriff subscribes to the idea that the Federal Government has no authority in the County, but that the County Sheriff is the highest authority. According to the Constitutional Sheriff and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA) website, Richard Mack, the founder of the CSPOA, began his career in law enforcement in Provo Utah. He returned to his childhood home in Arizona in 1988, was elected sheriff, and served two terms. During this time, Sheriff Mack challenged the constitutionality of the Brady Bill, and in 1997 a Supreme Court decision ruled in favor of Sheriff Mack that the federal government could not force county law enforcement to run background checks at the county expense.

According to Mr. Mack the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act, which limits the powers of

the federal government to use the military (specifically the Army) to enforce domestic policies, also means that agents of the federal government may not enforce local laws or laws in local areas, only the elected County Sheriff can do that. In other words, the federal government can make laws, but the County Sheriff is able to pick and choose which of these federal laws he chooses to enforce. A Denver Post article dated February 2, 2012, Emerging movement encourages sheriffs to act as shield against federal tyranny, reports on the inaugural convention of the CSPOA and highlights significant differences in opinions of sheriffs attending the meeting. According to the article, Sheriff Mack asserted "that sheriffs have the supreme law enforcement power in their counties under the Constitution and the 10th Amendment. Much of what federal agents are doing in counties is unconstitutional, he wrote. Federal agents have no authority beyond policing treason, piracy, treaty violations and counterfeiting."

Learning about Sagebrush Sheriffs provided some interesting context to the events this past January, as well as other recent confrontations between federal land managers and public land permit holders: April 2014 the events near Bunkerville NV attempting to enforce federal grazing rules; May 2015's Recapture Protest San Juan County Utah; April 2015's lesser publicized confrontation between BLM and mining claim holders occurred in Oregon at the Sugar Pine Mine; the Malheur Refuge Occupation in January and February of 2016; and February 2016's assertion by the Paiute County Sheriff at the Utah Rural Caucus on February 12th that he will "deputize every man, woman and child in the county to stop what's going on." (<http://fox13now.com/2016/02/23/piute-county-sheriff-threatens-arrest-of-forest-service-personnel/#>).

The Sugar Pine Mine confrontation in 2015 ended more swiftly and with less press than some of the other recent confrontations in part due to the choice of the Josephine County Sheriff, Dave Daniel, to act as a mediator between the BLM and the miners. The Sheriff of Harney County chose a similar approach to Sheriff Daniel's when the protest of the federal government treatment of the Hammonds, ranchers near the Malheur Refuge, turned into an occupation of the Refuge itself. Some reports state that Sheriff Ward did not support the way the federal government and the courts handled the Hammond case, however he separated his personal opinion from his role as a local law enforcement officer. The situation in Oregon this past winter is complex, as are all the land management actions and protests that have occurred over the past several years. What is interesting to note is that the dynamic between the local Sheriff and the federal land management agencies and law enforcement officers is a critical factor in how rapidly and peacefully these increasingly armed confrontations end. Resolution of the issues leading to the confrontations requires communication and mediation, and unfortunately likely requires lengthy legal battles in the courts.

Since January I have learned a lot about the position of County Sheriff, and have realized I need to be a more informed voter at election time. Whether the County Sheriff chooses to act as a mediator or chooses sides in a dispute is important. Recently I had a closer interaction with our local Sheriff's Deputies than I have ever had with law enforcement in my entire life. I was impressed with how they listened to both sides of what was going on, and in a potentially volatile situation treated everyone with respect, patience and integrity. I will admit to being nervous when they had to be called to help – but after the situation was over and the Deputies took the time to explain options, implications and possible next steps I was much relieved. Through listening and evaluating what laws had been violated and taking the time to inform those involved about the local laws and implications of pursuing enforcement the situation did not escalate.

I realize that the federal government is a much more powerful adversary than an individual usually is, but I would hope that a County Sheriff could refrain from taking sides in a conflict involving Federal Land Managers as much as they did in the small situation that I witnessed. Federal and State Land Managers are in an unenviable position of having to balance vastly different ideas of appropriate use. As the tourist season progresses I'll be looking at how recreation has changed in SE Utah as well as at the legal constraints of land ownership and management throughout the west. The role of the County Sheriff in federal and state land management is greater than I previously understood.

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AN EXCERPT FROM:
LAST OF THE ROBBERS ROOST OUTLAWS
Moab's BILL TIBBETTS...PART 5
 Tom McCourt

Making a New Start

Bill Tibbetts and Ephraim Moore stepped down from their horses and stood looking south down the gaping canyons of the Green River channel. They were high on a rim in the land between the rivers, about twenty miles west of Moab.

"What do you think?" Ephraim said with a wry smile as he took off his hat and mopped his brow with an old red bandana. The July sun was hot and heat shimmers danced above the rocks, partly obscuring the 100-mile view down the river. The land before them was a tangle of deep canyons and high sandstone rims.



"Damn," Bill responded quietly, "It's rougher than I remember; hotter, too."

"Well, we ain't there yet." Ephraim said with another smile. "I'll bet the grass is taller than your stirrups down there someplace, and I don't think anyone else has been desperate enough to try to run cows in such a rough damn place."

"Well, I'm purdy desperate, all right," Bill said with a smile of his own. "I just hope these crowbait old horses of yours'll get us in and out of there. I'd sure hate to walk home."

"You better make friends with that cranky old pack mule then," Eph said smugly, trying not to smile. "If your mount gives out, you ain't gettin' mine."

Both men laughed, remounted their trusty steeds and turned north toward Mineral Canyon and the top of the Horsethief Trail. Bill was only kidding about the horses being crowbaits. Ephraim owned some good horses. He just felt bad that he had to borrow one. He didn't own a horse of his own yet and he would have to fix

that soon.

The Horsethief Trail took them off the high mesa to the Green River. From there they set out to explore the country to the south.

For a couple of weeks Bill and Ephraim searched the rims and river bottoms south and west of Island in the Sky. They went forty or fifty miles down the river, checking the canyons and the ridges between the canyons, searching for grass and water. It was rough damn country, as Ephraim had suggested that it would be, with lots of sand and sandstone, scrub cedar, cactus and sage. They found no hidden valleys with thick carpets of grass like they had hoped for, but there was enough feed scattered in the rocks and on the hillsides to support a respectable herd if the cattle were spread over a wide area. And there was a little water there, too. The canyons had dry washes and not flowing streams of water, but there were a few springs in the sandy bottoms that could be developed and used. Most of the water was high in alkali content, but good enough for livestock. They found a few natural tanks in the slickrock that could be used by cattle, as well.

They found the country empty, but there were signs that someone had recently been there. There were a few old tracks suggesting that some stock, probably sheep, had been pastured there during the last winter. But there were no stockmen to challenge their right to be there, and no other man's cows eating the summer grass ... as yet. As far as they could tell, they had found a virgin territory unclaimed by any of the big cow outfits.

Bill and Ephraim were excited. They hurried back to Moab to make their final plans. They would gather what stock they could from the White Rim and from Bill's mother's place to put together a herd to take to their new range as soon as possible. They had to take possession before another stockman moved in on the land they had found. But first, Bill had to buy some horses.

The dusty cowboys arrived back in Moab on the 23rd of July, just one day before the town's big Pioneer Day celebration. The 24th of July was the day the first Mormon pioneers had entered the Salt Lake Valley back in 1847, and every year the event was celebrated with religious zeal all over the state of Utah. The boys found Moab crowded with people and there was a carnival atmosphere on the streets. Tomorrow there would be a big parade down Main Street, a horse race or two, a baseball game, a picnic in the park and a big dance in the evening. It was the most celebrated holiday of the year and people were flocking to town from all over the area, wearing their Sunday best.

Bill's uncle, Will Moore, had come to town for a few days to enjoy the festivities, and Bill was excited. The young man hadn't seen his favorite uncle for a long time. More important than that, the older cowboy worked for one of the big cow outfits on the Book Cliffs and he might know where to get some good horses.

Everyone in Moab knew Will Moore. He was famous in eastern Utah because he had a wooden leg like a pirate. Most people knew him as "Peg Leg Moore." Actually, the leg was made of cork instead of wood, and it was only his foot and not his whole leg that was missing, but the man walked like a penguin in a stiff, shuffling gait that made him stand out in a crowd. When he went to town, little kids came running to get a good look at the big cowboy with the wooden stump for a leg.

Will had lost his leg in November 1905, while herding cows in the Dubinky Wash

area, about twenty miles northwest of Moab. He was working for a man named Shorty Connell at the time. The ground was covered with snow and Will was chasing after a steer when his horse stepped in a badger hole while running full tilt. The horse broke its leg and came crashing down on top of Will, who was pinned beneath the animal with his foot twisted back and his toes pointed in the wrong direction. When the horse came down on his foot like that, it shattered Will's ankle and pushed a splinter of bone through the skin "several inches," according to the Moab newspaper.

Will was alone and had a terrible time getting out from under the injured horse. He would kick the animal in the face with his uninjured foot to make it rise up just a little, and each time he would try to pull the broken leg a little further out from under the floundering beast. The pain was terrible, but Will was finally able to pull the broken leg free. He shot the horse to put it out of its misery, and he might have considered doing himself the same favor, but he didn't.

The man was alone with the shattered leg, bleeding, in shock, on the ground and in the snow. He couldn't walk and there was nothing to ride. He was at least a mile from the cow camp and about fifteen miles from the nearest settlement at Courthouse Station. But, like the trooper he was, Will started to crawl on his hands and knees through the snow. He left a trail of blood and a strange furrow in the snow that was the drag mark of the broken bone sticking out through his torn boot. The cold and snow might have saved him from bleeding to death by helping the wound to clot.

Luckily, when Will didn't show up at the cow camp by late that afternoon, his boss, Shorty Connell, went looking for him and found him crawling in the snow toward camp. Will had lost a lot of blood and he was almost frozen to death. He had shot all of his bullets trying to attract someone's attention. Shorty took Will to camp and made him as comfortable as possible, then rode to Courthouse Station to summon help. Will had to stay all night in a tent without medication or anyone to attend to his needs or keep a fire going. It took eighteen hours for Shorty Connell to summon the doctor from Moab and return to the cold tent where Will was waiting.

Over the next two days, Dr. Williams treated the injured man while he was transported to Thompson Springs in an open buckboard. The rescue party took the shortest possible route, breaking trail through the rocks and sagebrush where no road existed. Buckboards were appropriately named. They had iron-rimmed wooden wheels mounted on axles that were bolted directly to the wagon box without any springs. The trip was absolute torture for a man with a compound fracture.

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The rescue party and their patient stayed the first night at a place called Valley City, about twelve miles southwest of Thompson Springs. When they reached Thompson Springs on the afternoon of the second day, Will was put on a train and taken to a hospital in Grand Junction, Colorado, where his foot was amputated.

It was a bitter pill to lose a foot, but, as a tough and practical man like Will Moore might have said, his foot was a long ways from his heart, so things could have been worse. Just a few months later, Will was back to herding cows. He simply wired a tin can to his right stirrup, and with his stump tucked firmly in the can, it was hard to tell he was a one-legged cowboy—unless he got off his horse, of course.

In Moab, on the 24th of July 1919, Bill Tibbetts was happy to see his peg-legged uncle. After the usual handshakes, back slaps, and bear hugs, the men got down to business over a foaming brew at the Moab pool hall. Except for Uncle Ephraim, of course. Ephraim was a better Mormon than the other two and adhered more strictly to the church's ban on alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco.

"I'm goin' in the cow business with Eph and I need some good horses," Bill said as he leaned forward over his beer mug so Will could better hear him over the din of the holiday crowd in the pool hall. "I'm talkin' about all-day horses, sixty-mile horses, horses that can cross that desert and not give out. We're crossin' the river to the Laterite country over near Hanksville and we gotta have some good mounts."

"You got pockets full of money?" Will asked with an amused smile.

"No, I ain't got much, and you know it," Bill said, becoming somewhat impatient with the older man. "But I thought maybe you could help me out. You know, maybe you got connections with one of the big outfits and could help me swing a deal or somethin'."

"Actually, you came to the right man," Will said very business-like. "I do know where you can get some good horses. And they won't cost you all that much, either. I'm in good with a band of Utes up on the White River country near Vernal, and they got just what you need."

"Indian ponies? Are you out of your mind?"

"They might not look as dandy as some of the horses you high-classed cowboys are used to," Will said with a sarcastic, half-drunken smile. "But they're tougher than boiled owl and more sure-footed than mountain goats. And they can go all day without a drink of water, too. Those horses run wild in the Book Cliff country when they're colts, and there ain't a better animal anywhere for workin' the rough country."

"Aw, I don't know, Will. Most Indian ponies I ever saw were almost starved to death."

"Those Northern Utes don't keep runted ponies like some of the other Indian tribes," Will promised. "They raise some good horses over on the Uintah Reservation. You'll have to see 'em to believe it."

Bill's favorite horse to come out of his Indian trading adventure was a big bay gelding he named Ute. The big horse was the toughest and most reliable cowpony Bill Tibbetts ever owned, and he was a pleasure to ride. The two would spend many years and many thousands of miles together on the deserts and cattle ranges of southeastern Utah. Bill talked fondly about old Ute for the rest of his life. There was no other horse quite like him.

Bill, Ephraim, and Uncle Will left for the Book Cliffs just two days later. Before they started out, Will gave them a lesson in the art of trading with the Indians.

"Those Utes are slowly learnin' the value of the white man's money," he said. "But when they trade horses, they gotta get somethin' of substance to show they made a good trade. If you go there to trade and take only money, they're gonna want whole big handfuls of the stuff to make it look like they got a good deal. So what you do is buy goods before you go, and then trade the goods for the horses instead of dealin' in money. I know it sounds crazy, but that's how it works. Twenty dollars' worth of blankets and calico, tin-ware, sugar, coffee, and such, will buy you a good sixty-dollar horse. If you go there with only money, that Indian is gonna want a hundred greenbacks for that same sixty-dollar horse. That's how it works. You can pay twenty dollars in goods or a hundred dollars in cash for the same animal. It all depends on how you trade."

For his first venture in the art of Indian trading, Bill took one of Ephraim's pack mules loaded with about forty dollars' worth of trade goods. A few miles from the town of Ouray, Will introduced Bill and Eph to his Ute friends and the Indians took them out to the horse pastures. Bill could see right off that Uncle Will had been right. The Utes had some fine looking horses. Bill was excited.

To the Indians, horse-trading was sport as well as economics, and Bill got caught up in the spirit of the thing. It was great fun. For most of the day he haggled, bargained, postured, and pouted. Will and Ephraim were greatly amused.

Finally, late in the afternoon, after softening up his trading opponents with a good campfire meal, hot coffee, and cigars, Bill traded his goods for three fine horses. The Indians were happy. Bill was happy, too.

Back in Moab, Bill gave one of the horses to his stepbrother, Kenny Allred. Ken was just a little kid who looked up to Bill and wanted to be just like him. Bill promised to help Kenny be a cowboy when he grew up, just like his uncles Will and Ephraim had done for him when he was a kid. The gift horse was a pinto, a fine looking animal with black and white spots that any Indian or aspiring young cowboy would be proud to ride. That fancy horse made Kenny Allred the most envied kid in Moab.

Bill's favorite horse to come out of his Indian trading adventure was a big bay gelding he named Ute. The big horse was the toughest and most reliable cowpony Bill Tibbetts ever owned, and he was a pleasure to ride. The Indians had trained old Ute, and like all good Indian horses, he could be mounted from either side, unlike most cowboy mounts that could only be approached from the left. The horse could also be guided Indian style by the rider's knees without the use of a bridle, and he had been taught impeccable manners. He didn't kick, he didn't bite, and he stood still while a man climbed aboard.

Bill and Ute developed a special bond of trust and confidence in one another. Ute would go wherever Bill pointed him, and Bill always took care of the horse's needs before his own. The two would spend many years and many thousands of miles together on the deserts and cattle ranges of southeastern Utah. Bill talked fondly about old Ute for the rest of his life. There was no other horse quite like him.

The young man took the rest of his savings and bought a few cows. It was a meager start for an ambitious young rancher, but it was the best he could do at the time. He also took Ute over to Brown's Hole and gathered all of his mother's cows he could find. Eph gathered most of his cows on the White Rim and bought a few more from some people from Texas who were selling out and going home. When Bill and Eph were ready and the pack mules loaded, they began their cattle drive to their new range on the Laterite country to the south. Elaterite Basin was the proper name of the place, but the Moab boys usually dropped the "E" and pronounced the name as "Laterite."

It was fall when they reached Elaterite Basin with the cows. The cottonwoods were yellow and the sun was dropping lower to the south with each passing day. The nights were cold but the days still pleasantly warm in the shelter of the ledges.

They were scattering their cows in the grassy pockets among the rocks and rims, preparing to settle in for the winter, when they came upon another man's cow camp. They were surprised and very disappointed to find it. There might be trouble if another outfit was claiming the range. They stopped and checked their guns, just in case. They never knew who or what situation they might be riding into out in the wilderness like that. The sheriff and the lawyers were a long, long ways away.

The enemy camp was at the north end of Waterhole Flat, a little south of Elaterite Basin. As Bill and Ephraim approached, they could see several horses tied to pinyon trees near a couple of big tents. Small groups of cattle were grazing in the background. As they got closer, they could see men standing around a campfire while another man was poking inside a big Dutch oven with a long, wooden spoon.

Cautiously, Bill and Ephraim rode toward the camp. Ephraim was the older man so he did all of the talking. From near 100 yards out, he shouted, "Hello there, we are entering your camp. We come as friends."

The cowboys gathered around the campfire were surprised to see the men from Moab, but they were true to the Western code of hospitality and invited them down for beans, cornbread, and coffee. Everyone was impeccably polite, but tension hung heavy in the air. There were six or eight cowboys in the camp, but most of them were teenaged boys.

The boss of the outfit came out of a tent when summoned, and extended his hand cautiously in a sign of friendship. "My name is Lou Chaffin," he said. "We're from over by Torrey. Got a place on the Fremont River." He was a man in his mid-forties, a reformed gold miner making a new start in the cattle business. Chaffin knew the area well, much better than Bill and Ephraim. He had placer-mined for gold on the Colorado River for years and had crossed this country many times before.

At first the boys from Moab didn't quite know what to make of this intrusion on their newfound grazing land. But Mr. Chaffin had a good eye and he was civil. Things could have been much worse. It surprised them that the man was willing to shake hands and offer part of his own supper to a couple of rivals from across the river. It was a hopeful beginning. Bill and Ephraim introduced themselves and then sat at the other man's fire and shared his evening meal.

"We thought we was goin' to be all alone down here this winter," Ephraim said as he chewed on a chunk of overcooked cornbread.

"Us, too," Lou Chaffin offered. "We didn't expect anybody to be here, other than those French sheepmen, maybe. They come here under the ledge almost every winter now. It's a good place to winter sheep. They take those woolies back on the mountains in the spring. It gives the grass all summer to grow back, like it is now."

"Under the what?" Ephraim asked.

"Under the ledge," Chaffin answered, somewhat surprised. "That's where we are now. Under the Ledge."

"I thought this was the Laterite country," Ephraim said.

"It's called Elaterite Basin just north of here," Chaffin explained, "but it's all Under the Ledge. That's the ledge over there," he said, pointing to the towering shadow of the Orange Cliffs to the west.

The Orange Cliffs, also known as The Big Ledge, span almost forty miles along the western edge of the Green River basin. Near Elaterite Basin, The Big Ledge is over 1000 feet high and an intimidating barrier to travelers.

"Well, maybe you men from Torrey came down under that ledge, but me and Bill here, we crossed the river from Moab. We ain't come down under that ledge yet. I think we'll just keep callin' it the Laterite country."

"That makes a good point," Chaffin admitted, careful not to smile, afraid the other man might take offense.

"So how we gonna split this range?" Ephraim asked, getting down to business. "We got a herd just north of here, in that E-Laterite basin you talked about."

"Well, since we're both new here, and neither of us seems to have a prior claim, I guess it's up to us how we divide the grass," Chaffin said.

There was silence around the campfire for a while, and then Chaffin spoke. "Tell you what, since you men are already in the Big Water Wash country over in Elaterite, I'll keep my cows south of here in Waterhole Flat. We'll let this area here be our buffer for now. You keep your stock north of here and I'll keep my stock south of here. Does that sound fair enough?"

"How does that sound to you, Bill?" Ephraim asked.

"Sounds good to me."

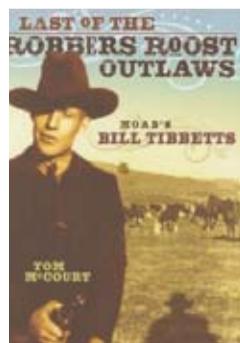
Ephraim extended his hand toward Chaffin for a handshake. "You got a deal, Mr. Chaffin. We'll keep our stock in the Laterite country."

On the way back to their own camp in the chilly moonlight, Bill turned to Ephraim with a smile. "You cut a good deal with that man, Eph. We got half the range and we ain't got enough cows to fill half of what we got."

"That man don't know how many cows we've got," Ephraim grinned.

"And we don't know how many cows he has, either," Bill admitted.

"Yeah, but we'll find out. And so will he. The important thing is, we got us a first-user's right to run cows on this range. We got us a gentleman's agreement with our neighbor, and we'll fight anyone else who comes along. It looks like we're in the cattle business, nephew. How does it feel to be a man of substance?"



TOM McCOURT'S great book about Bill Tibbetts is available from the Canyonlands Natural History Association.

Follow this link:

<http://www.cnha.org/product.cfm?id=67F84CFA-3048-C277-1143EF03215E77A5>

“more poets. fewer lawyers...” Ed Abbey

---Amy Brunvand

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Hiking to Delicate Arch

I've hiked up here so many times before.
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 To taste. Each of us takes a turn to pose
 Framed by the sandstone arch. I seize a crystal
 Of time, grip my camera in my mandibles,
 And take it home to store with past years' photos
 Taken other years in this same place
 Hoarding reassurance that some beauty
 Will persist. The vintage of my face
 And people standing near me tell the story:
 A man I didn't marry; a friend who died;
 My infant on my back; myself, a child.



Amy Brunvand is a librarian, writer, and part-time nature mystic from Salt Lake City, Utah. She agrees with Edward Abbey that the environmental movement needs more poets and fewer lawyers (even though some of her best friends are lawyers).

WHY READ THE ZEPHYR?

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be...The people cannot be safe without information. Where the press is free and every man able to read, All is safe."
 Thomas Jefferson

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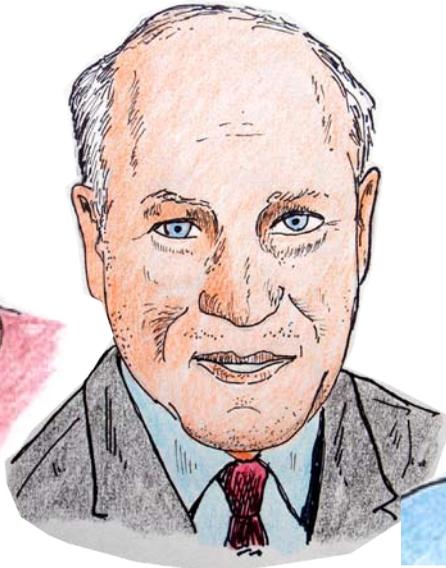


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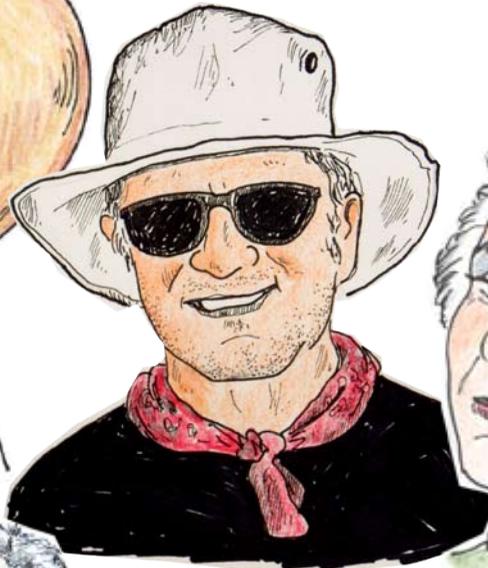
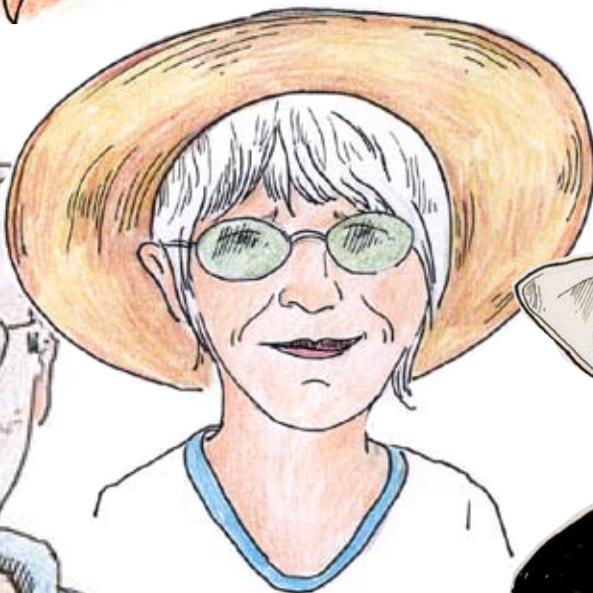
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THE ZEPHYR BACKBONE--Pt 2

October/November 2015

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My dear friend died on December 11, 1998...JS



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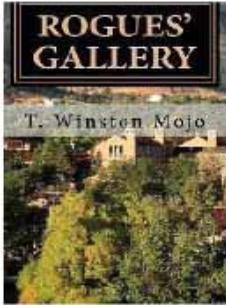
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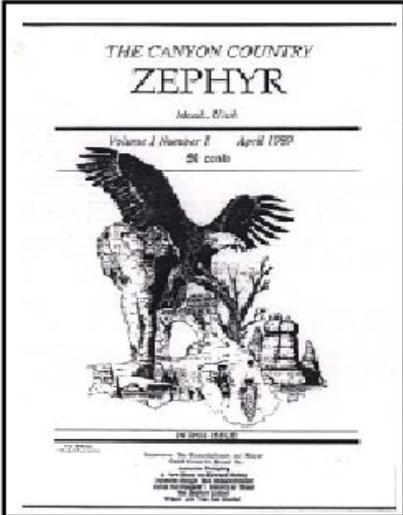


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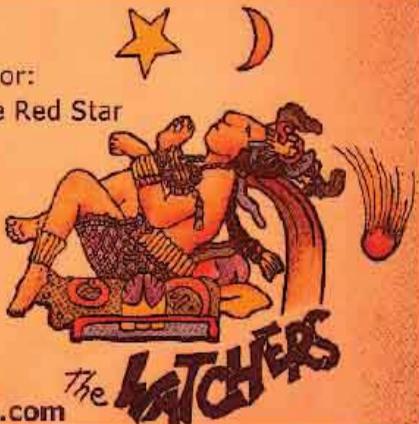
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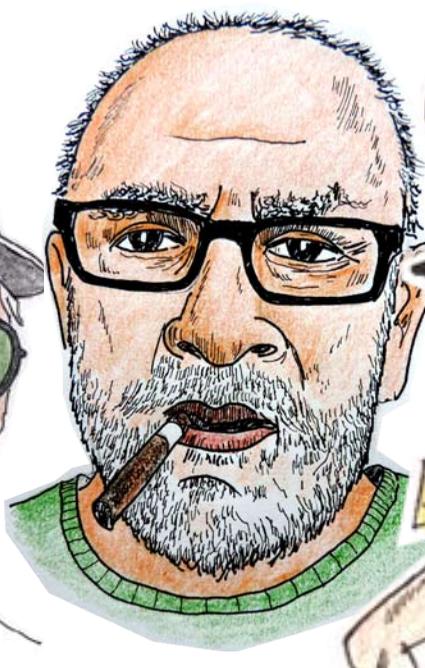
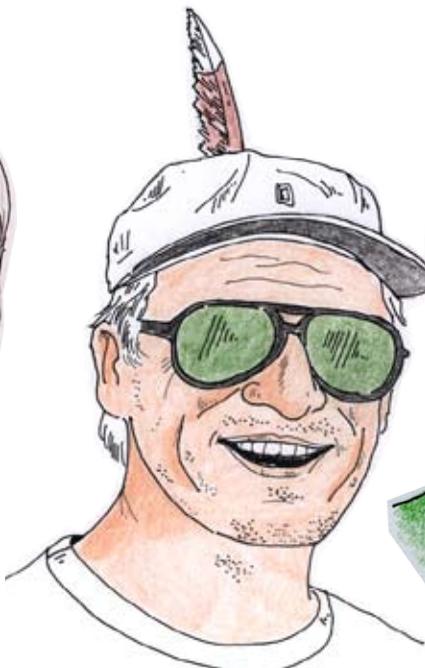
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COMMENTS

from Zephyr Readers RE:

“WHAT’S PAST IS PROLOGUE”

...Last issue’s 14,000 word investigative report on the hiring of Moab City Manager Rebecca Davidson generated a record number of comments on our web site. Here is a compilation of most of them...JS



Julianne Waters
February 1, 2016 at 12:10 pm

Hi Jim – this is a very interesting article, filled with exhaustive research. I echo your misgivings about this situation and the various players involved. I am of the ilk that ‘where there’s smoke, there’s fire’. I humbly ask any of the persons involved to respond to your questions, a few of which are:

“When the Moab City Council moved forward to hire a new city administrator, what were the qualities in Rebecca Davidson that made her the council’s choice among 57 applicants?”

and “With that in mind, how did the city properly vet Ms. Davidson? Did the city ever receive the copy of the “supplemental audit from the Town (of Timnath),” mentioned by city recorder Stenta?”

According to Stenta, the document “cleared (Davidson) of any allegations or wrong doing” Was that document sent to the city? If so, why was it not included in the GRAMA request?

and “Did the council investigate Davidson’s tenure in Kemmerer? Is there any written documentation? If so, why wasn’t it included in the GRAMA request?”

Hoping for answers, Julianne Waters

Mary Jane
February 1, 2016 at 7:07 pm

Excellent journalism on a very important topic. I have taken the liberty to forward this article to our City Manager and city council member Heila Ershadi.

Mary Jane

V
February 1, 2016 at 11:20 pm

Exhaustive is an understatement. You have found, digested, researched and written a impressive article, on what appears to be very effective camillion, with a talent of using ‘disparaging’ to keep her ill gains and business from the public. I’d bet, after reading this, that the new council members have already been given a disparaging contract to sign. The thought that Kemmerer employees Corwin and Jennifer L were charged is because RD did not get disparaging papers signed by them.

Keep your sights on you council, there seems to be a favorable need for Executive Session where RB is involved. Much secrecy. I witnessed a page of that secrecy. When I questioned the council the next day requesting information on inventory and diligent efforts to information hacking I was placated. Two weeks later public record shows an answer to my requests as. Everything is fine, nothing is missing, I can not discuss an open investigation. My question Why an investigation? , if everything is fine? God be with you Moab.

Thanks for this informative article.



Will Petty
February 2, 2016 at 4:13 am

Hi Jim. As a long time admirer of both Ken Davies and David Olsen, I was really saddened a few months ago to hear about their layoffs from the city. It kind of felt like the end of an era. I have never met the new city manager, but I also have sympathies with well meaning government employees who actually try to make things better in Western small towns filled with cozy relationships and same-old ways of doing things. I remember how up-in-arms so many people were with Donna Metzler when she first started her employment with the city. Then just as now, there were loud campaigns to undermine and get rid of her. So as i read your long and well-researched article, I was looking for two things:

1) A gotcha moment — I didn’t really see one of these. The fact

that a lot of employee issues happen in executive session without open records protects the employees as much as the governing body. It has to be that way, and is a fact of life. But it makes it easy to cast aspersions and make damaging suggestions which the participants aren’t free to address because they have an obligation to respect the confidentiality of the process. An alternate theory for a lot of what has happened here is that the new city manager is serious about making government function efficiently, and is willing to take action to make it happen, even if it upsets people. It would have upset people just as much in Kemmerer, Wyoming as here in Moab, Utah.

2) A motive — I just didn’t see a good explanation for why the council that voted unanimously to support the reorganization would have a motive to do something sinister. They would have been privy to all the facts. I think they are all sincere and well meaning people. Doesn’t the fact that they gave the reorganization full support say something to you — who are not privy to all the facts.

Yeah, I could be wrong, and our new city manager could turn out to be a dud. And probably this whole thing could have been handled more sensitively and compassionately. But I’m a bit suspicious of a journalistic pile-ons. I also feel a bit sorry for anyone who — because of the nature of executive sessions discussing employee issues — can’t defend themselves.



Lynn Jackson
February 2, 2016 at 11:26 am

Excellent investigative work Stiles. I know Ken and Dave well, and though I don’t always see eye to eye with either of them, I have considerable respect for them both based on their integrity of character and dedication to Moab. What happened to them is a complete sham.

Based on the factual information you’ve been able to obtain, it’s hard to even wrap one’s mind around this entire fiasco, there are so many things wrong legally and ethically with this situation. We start with what by now should be obvious to everyone, a completely unscrupulous and unethical City Manager, with a history of lawsuits,

secret agreements, blatant conflicts of interest, and bullying. Then we have the City “restructuring” City departments behind closed doors with no notice to or involvement by the public. One can see closed sessions for employee issues, but no open discussions in Council meetings about restructuring City departments? I guess government transparency is only important when it’s convenient.

We then have what appear to be selective responses to government records requests, with decisions on what gets released being made by an assistant City Administrator up to their eyeballs in the whole sordid affair. Then we move to ginned up “emergency” spending, to a contractor who seems to follow this City Manager around from town to town, mess to mess. The rationale for this spending, which goes against all contracting policy, allegedly based on the absurdity of some computer system “expert” telling the City it’s at risk from “nation-state” and ISIS” hackers. Seriously, they can make this claim with a straight face and no proof?

I guess next, with the new sewer system and water tank on the horizon, we’ll see a brand new engineering firm formed to do the work. Gee, wonder who will be the principle of that firm.... Hey it worked in Timnath, why not Moab.

Your investigation shows so many potentially illegal actions in this soap opera, that I would suggest the State Attorney General and the State Auditor need to be immediately brought in to get to the bottom of this. Some heads need to roll at City Hall! If this community does not get to the bottom of this, we’ll be just another wrecked City left in the wake. It may already be too late.



Gregg Baling
February 2, 2016 at 11:43 am

As an IT professional and security specialist, I would like to offer the following points.

—
“In December, Pearson and Goodman returned and examined the city’s computers, removing TeamViewer—the remote viewing software Darwin Parker had used as the City’s IT consultant—and hardening the firewall. And yet, when city employees complained again of problems with their computers in January, Pearson and Goodman continued to find TeamViewer on a number of computers, including the computer of the Police Chief and the main Police Department computer. The investigation report doesn’t explain whether they had failed to remove TeamViewer from those computers in December, or, if it had been removed, how the

software might have been re-installed—especially given that Parker had no physical involvement with the city’s computers during that time.”

—Users find convenience in using ‘remoting’ software to access their workstations. In all probability, this was an intentional utilization by the specific end users. Using TeamViewer as a ‘chat’ mechanism is not what that software was intended for. Yes, it has that capability. But it’s most commonly used to remotely access a users desktop for productivity purposes. It is NOT, however, the preferred method of doing so as there are absolute security ramifications involved in using TeamViewer and its ilk.

Therefore ANY use of remote access software CAN be considered a data-breach threat, and any data system which contains protected, sensitive and secure information should NOT use software of the ‘TeamViewer’ type, as exploits and vulnerabilities are much more likely.

A solution such as a secured VPN connection (hardware and software clients) is much more suitable, as any IT professional would acknowledge.

—
“Pearson, in his interview, went so far as to suggest that the TeamViewer connections were related to a mysterious parked car at the Event Center in January. He told DCI investigators that, “he noticed a sedan pulled up in front of city hall, and it sat there for five minutes watching him work before leaving.” But Pearson could not identify the vehicle, “due to vehicle lights shining in the center,” and though Tara Smelt reported a break in the next evening, there were no signs of forced entry and Chief Buck reported that all known city/county equipment “was accounted for.”

A simple walk-around to ID the vehicle and license plate could have covertly been conducted.

Also, proper video security, if in place, would ID an unauthorized intruder.

—Regarding a “Chinese Hack”- this is HIGHLY unlikely. What IS likely is that hardware in place (edge servers, firewalls, outward-facing servers, etc.) had firmware versions which had known security vulnerabilities which could easily be patched to mitigate or eliminate those vulnerabilities. The known “Chinese Hack” was primarily targeted against FEDERAL and STATE entities, and as far as I have been able to determine, few if ANY city\county entites across the country were ever affected. The claim of an intrusion via an international entity is, in my professional opinion, nothing more than a scare tactic used by an unscrupulous contractor to

- 1) generate panic, and in doing so
- 2) generate revenue for said contractor

—Regarding the “emergency situation involving a threat to public health, welfare or safety’.

Once the issues were identified, I could not go through a competitive process to procure consulting without further exposing the vulnerabilities of our critical systems and jeopardizing the safety of our water and law enforcement systems.”

Upon PROPER implementation of security measure to mitigate\neutralize the security implications mentioned, there should no longer be any issue regarding “exposing the vulnerabilities of our critical systems and jeopardizing the safety of our water and law enforcement systems.” Therefore, the alleged vulnerabilities, once mitigated, are no longer a threat and the details should be able to be made available without incurring further security intrusions.

DLC
February 3, 2016 at 12:10 pm

This article is one of the best pieces of journalism that I have ever read. I am thoroughly impressed by the attention to fact and it should serve as an excellent starting point for forthright discussions. I hope the city of Moab will continue to strive for transparency in the spending of public tax dollars and equitable treatment of all employees in local government.



Janet Buckingham
February 3, 2016 at 5:41 pm

I’ve had this situation playing like bad music in the back of my mind since it happened. Thank goodness the holidays took me away from it for awhile, but the ever-vigilant Jim Stiles continued the research and shared it with us all. Obviously there are some emails that were deleted, documents left out of the GRAMA request and many, many, closed door meetings to determine who was expendable on city staff. None of that can be undone just as the hiring of RD cannot be undone (for now.) My concern has been and still is the uncaring and unethical

way that Ken Davey and David Olsen were treated and the likelihood that others may end up in the same boat. The overwhelming silence of the City Council on the entire subject has been disconcerting. It demonstrates a group of uncaring people who simply flicked Ken and David off their coat

sleeves like summer mosquitos. I had never known them to be these kinds of folks and the only explanation is that they drank some sort of poison Kool-Aid.

At the time this happened, I expressed thoughts similar to this and was involved in several long threads on Facebook. I was called by city councilperson Heila Ershadi. It seems she wanted to smooth my ruffled feathers. She told me in no uncertain terms that both Ken and David knew this was coming. Two sentences later she nonetheless told me that it was very typical in "corporate environments" for someone to be asked to leave the building suddenly and without notice and to be monitored during the process. She also said I really didn't need to worry about Ken because he was of retirement age and David made \$90,000 a year and no doubt had a savings account. The entire conversation left me nearly speechless. Being of retirement age myself (and fast becoming familiar with fixed income living) as well as having a long history of corporate and government employment, there was no part of her conversation that I could agree with. But whatever....

What CAN we still do something about? 1) Monitor the actions of the city manager and city council VERY carefully. Demand to be a part of conversations. They work for the people who live in the City of Moab. They work for YOU! Demand transparency in ALL decisions! Don't let this get swept under the rug. Again, thank goodness for Jim Stile's tenacity.

2) I have not seen the terms of the City Manager's contract other than what Jim reported in his story about a high starting salary and ridiculous 10% salary increase after the first year. Contracts don't have to be renewed. What's the buyout? Surely, the city attorney left some way for the City to get out of a bad hire regardless of who it was.

3) Watch and see who is hired. Are they locals or are they transplants from Wyoming? When I started researching Tayo, Inc., I found that within weeks of the new city manager's hire, this company had already earned thousands and thousands of dollars from the City of Moab. Tara Smelt, who was at the center of some of the controversy in Kemmerer, is the registered agent. Her business now operates from Hale Street in Moab. Coincidence? Probably not.

4) Make noise. Make sure that the City Council and City Manager know you are watching and care how they treat people.

5) Vote out anyone who was part of the decision to fire Ken Davey and David Olsen. Do we as a community really want people in office who can so casually treat people in this manner? Watch who runs for Mayor; rumor has it one of the current city council members who supported the termination is planning on a run.

The City of Moab used to be a great place to work. It was warm, respectful and people had a lot of fun while getting a great deal of work done. Sadly, it doesn't sound like that kind of working environment has survived. Of course not; people are afraid they're next. We were very fortunate as a community to have David Olsen and Ken Davey make their marks before they were suddenly and inexplicably (STILL) erased from city staff rosters. Thank goodness that their hard work here can never be erased. This is a sad mess that will leave a bitter aftertaste for years, I'm afraid.



**Annie Payne
February 5, 2016 at 2:26 pm**

Excellent investigative journalism Stiles. Thank you for writing this! I have reread it several times and am still awe struck by much of it.

I wish to address the Former City Council members involved and the current ones involved in the Moab City reorganization and I will be CC-ing the following comments to them as well as the Moab weekly papers who, for whatever reason, have remained silent. I also will be addressing the Attorney General Sean Reyes concerning obvious omissions in Jim Stiles GRAMA requests by Moab City.

I believe the City Council needs a short crash course in a few areas. First, some basic ethics education is sorely needed by members of the 2015 Moab City Council. Also, I believe the City Council is unclear on basic HR protocols. It seems the City Council

is further trying to defend their erroneous conduct via some sort of justification that "Corporate America" does this type of thing all the time (as noted in Janet Buckingham's comments above RE a phone conversation with Heila Ershadi). I feel I can speak with authority in the case of Corporate America. I by no means wish to defend Corporate America but I know a thing or two about it. I have never witnessed Corporate America treat a worker as poorly as the Moab City Council treated Olsen and Davey. It is true that in Corporate America, workers are fired with no severance and as little as an hour or less to clear out their personal belongings. Those types of firings are almost exclusively in conjunction with alleged criminal activity. Moab City Council has defended themselves by stating that Davey and Olsen were not fired but rather, a reorganization in the City structure eliminated their positions. Reorganization happens more than it should in Corporate America. Typically, in Corporate America's reorganizations, there is much fanfare over the employees who lose their jobs. Corporate HR departments organize all sorts of things to honor the terminated; dinners are served, parties planned, early retirement offered, good byes and well wishes exchanged. Further, there is a formula in Corporate America for severance packages, which is generally agreed upon as 1 month of pay for every year worked. In Davey's case his severance payment would equal about a year salary, and in Olsen's case 2 years salary. Hardly what they received. Furthermore, corporate America, as awful as it is, would also compensate both men for an impending move as Corporate America would acknowledge that there are no comparable job opportunities in Moab for them, as there is only one City Office.

But a broader reaching questions for the Moab City Council (2015) and especially to Heila Ershadi; is it really Moab citizenry's desire for the City Government to act more in line with Corporate America? I think you will all agree that the average Moab citizen who carves a life for themselves in our little town does so with much sacrifice. We, (Moab Citizens), live, love and sacrifice in Moab for the very antithesis of Corporate American life.

I am very concerned that The Moab City Council was not following in good faith the wishes of their constituents, but rather pursuing personal gain (what that gain may be, I cannot speculate). I believe re organizing a city that was running perfectly well was a mistake. Moab City Council, rather than admitting they made a mistake and trying to right the wrong, are digging in their heels and grasping at straws for their justification. Moab City Council should apologize to Davey and Olsen and do what it takes to get them back. Olsen, along with some very dedicated volunteers, exponentially increased the real-estate value of Moab and grew Moab's economy more than any other investor, business or individual in all of Moab's history.

I would like Moab City Council members to poll their constituent's concerning the restructure. I think Moab City Council should take the results of the poll and reconvene in a public meeting and reevaluate the restructure and possibly abandon the restructure and return Moab City to the previous governing structure.

I realize mistakes and errors happen in every profession, including elected officials. I realize that mistakes can be a source of embarrassment for most people. I am certain the Council is embarrassed at this point by mistakes they have made. Admitting mistakes made, however, making apologies and righting previous wrongs can have the powerful effect of showcasing an individuals positively solid content of character.

**Annie Payne
February 8, 2016 at 10:36 am**

I sent my above posted comments to the Mayor and to City Council. The following is Heila Ershadi's response to me.

"Sent: Sun, 07 Feb 2016 23:53:33 -0000 (UTC)

Subject: Re: Moab City Restructure

Hi, Annie. Thank you for your email.

I have read the article but not Janet's comment. I did reach out to a number of people who I knew were concerned about the restructure, and Janet was one of them. I was not present for Ken and David's last day at work, and I had no part of deciding how that happened. My remarks to Janet were simply to relay what I was told by the people who were a part of that.

I understand your concerns, and I appreciate that you care. If you want to give me a call, please do.

Heila Ershadi"

So it looks like out of one side of Heilas mouth she throws Davidson, her new star employee, under the bus and blames Davidson for firing Davey and Olsen without direction from the Council. Heila in her email to me stated "I had no part of that happening". Heila sort of paints herself surprised at the way in which Olsen and Davey were eliminated. Heila acts surprised while she simultaneously says that "corporate America does this stuff all the time" (restructures offices in order to eliminate long standing employees without adequate compensation, Which cooperate America doesn't actually stoop that low, because they would be sued). Also it is important to remember that she has already stated (in writing) that the Moab City Council voted unanimously to restructure the City Offices and eliminate both Olsen and Daveys Jobs. Heila (and the City Council) either eliminated the two positions without just compensation or, Davidson acted without the Councils directions and should be reprimanded and dismissed immediately. It is clear to me that the council directed the restructure but rather than admitting a wrong doing and apologizing for it, Heila is slandering her new employee and fraudulently representing herself to her constituents.

**Janet Buckingham
February 9, 2016 at 10:23 pm**

I can't say that I am surprised that Ms. Ershadi mischaracterized her conversation with me and is now backing away the decision to terminate Ken and David. Do know that when she spoke with me she was using all her efforts to justify the decision and her own personal reasoning for the restructure. I think you can find some comments regarding this in the two small local news articles that were written about a month after the restructure. In those articles she was quoted as saying something to the effect that it was good for the community, time for a change and fiscally necessary, etc. (Not a direct quote.) The same is true regarding the manner in which they were dismissed; she seemed very confident that a) they were given notice and/or b) it was a perfectly normal, ethical thing to do to throw someone with decades of service out on the street with a cardboard box full of achievements. And to Will....Donna Metzler's situation was VERY, VERY different than today's situation. The city was changing from mayor/council authority to city manager/mayor/council. Donna did not come to Moab with lawsuits and scandal on her tail and to my knowledge never became embroiled in such things while City Manager. Don't even try to use that situation as a comparison because it doesn't fly!

**Rusty
February 17, 2016 at 3:48 pm**

I was shocked to learn that Ken and Dave were fired. They were two of Moab City's best, and everyone behind this, whether implicitly or not, should be ashamed. That includes YOU Mayor Dave, who I've always supported. Davidson sounds like a total lunatic and it also seems like she's been able to con a group of people who should know better. People with personality disorders can be extremely charismatic and thus extremely dangerous. Get rid of her while you can, Moab.



**Joseph Day
March 5, 2016 at 10:19 pm**

What I'd like to know is how many of these comments are from folks in Moab and how many of these folks from Moab are doing something other than going, "good job, stiles", tsk tsk, and reposting this on Facebook? Who's writing to the local newspapers which mention only "innuendo and rumor on social media" and calling them out on not mentioning this fine piece of investigative journalism and the troublesome issues it raises? Who in Moab is going to city council meetings and holding the local government's feet to the fire? Who in Moab is asking the hard questions and not settling for easy answers? Who in Moab is doing the hard work of organizing a political opposition to the people responsible for this travesty? I live 250 miles away and even I can smell the stink from this.

**John Marsh
March 14, 2016 at 5:11 pm**

I'm a bit late here perhaps, but with the publishing of Mr. Stiles recent column in the Sun News, perhaps this is just getting started.

I was surprised to hear that Moab City money was used to silence city employees, as the clause reads, "Employee and City hereby mutually agree not to make disparaging or defamatory comments or statements about one another, or any person or entity associated or affiliated with City, following the execution of this agreement."

As a small point, I don't see anything in there about statements of fact, but more to the point, I don't see anything in there that prevents the city from releasing the employee from the agreement. This agreement is after all between the City of Moab and the employee, not the City Manager Davidson. If Moab truly wants to air this laundry, they can with the employees consent.

Second, it is clear, or at least claimed, that the employees knew this was coming. We are all also convinced from the need for the above agreement that something terribly unsettling was going on to warrant the spending of tens of thousands of citizens tax money to silence it.

This second point is what bothers me especially. I say, especially, because Davidson has a documented history of leveling criminal accusations at people. Lets dissect this. It appears to me that the City Council was completely and totally convinced that these employees were to be terminated, but on what evidence for what reasons?

If it was simply reorganization, why the signed statement? If these employees are as good as everyone acknowledges, why not reassign them to the new posts with new responsibilities? If it was for declining job performance or malfeasance there would be no need for the agreement. No, there was definitely something going on that convinced the Council they had to go, and go Fast, with no hearing. Wait, no hearing? No comment from the council that they are reviewing matters? No second thoughts?

When people are tried and convicted in secret, terrible injustices always occur.

The first thing the City Council needs to do is dismiss as unsubstantiated anything Davidson has ever told them and go there.

From The Zephyr Archives

“MY OLD MAN...THE ‘URANIUM KING’”*The Story of CHARLIE STEEN*

By Mark Steen



My father, Charlie Steen, has always maintained that the truth about his discovery of the Mi Vida mine and its consequences is a much better story than the fiction and half-truths that people insist on perpetuating. Despite the fact that his uranium discovery is one of the most publicized and well documented mineral discoveries in history, people can't seem to resist the impulse to distort and rewrite history.

Unfortunately, this isn't confined to bar-room reminiscences and tales told by old miners in rest homes. Articles about other peoples' roles in my father's discovery and observations by individuals who never met any of the players involved in the events of fifty years ago are now finding their way into print in historical publications. These accounts range from hard-luck stories about people who staked the Mi Vida ore

body before my father, but couldn't raise the money to drill where they knew a fortune was awaiting them, to lies about grubstakers being cheated out of millions because they couldn't prove they had financed Charlie Steen's prospecting activities.

Perhaps the most absurd of all of these revisionist discovery stories is the one that has my father's jeep-mounted drill breaking down two or three miles from his intended destination; and, since he couldn't go any further, he supposedly decided to drill for uranium where his rig had come to a halt. In this patently false version, Utah's premier uranium mining area owes its discovery more to mechanical failure than to human endeavor.

Although the Mi Vida uranium mine is recognized by mining historians and members of the mineral exploration business as one of the most important ore deposits found during the last century, most of the new residents of the area that felt the full impact of the Uranium Boom probably were not around when the rags to riches saga of Charlie Steen's successful search for a fortune in uranium touched off one of the greatest rushes in mining history. No town on the Colorado Plateau was more changed by one man's mine than Moab, Utah. Nothing has ever been the same as it was before Charlie Steen drilled into the Mi Vida uranium ore deposit and unlocked the location of over one-billion dollars worth of one of the most sought-after minerals in history.

Are the facts about Charlie Steen's discovery of the Mi Vida mine actually better than the fiction? After fifty years does anybody care to sort out the truth from the legend? Now that Moab is dependent on tourism and mountain bikers for its seasonal injection of economic life sustaining lucre, does anyone want to remember the decade of 1950s when Moab was the "Uranium Capital of the World?" Can Moabites today even imagine that people were once drawn to the Canyonlands Country in order to make money mining radioactive mineral deposits?

After all of these years, should more credit or blame be assessed against the man whose single-minded determination caused all those tons of tailings to be placed at the entrance of a town that now wants to be rid of them. Are the tailings just an unsightly reminder of its history when Moab relied on mining rather than its scenery? Do people really care anymore about how my father found fame and fortune and earned his rightful place in history, or would they prefer to believe the last thing they read or heard from someone who wishes it had happened differently?

To me, it matters. Here's the way I remember it.

Do people really care anymore about how my father found fame and fortune and earned his rightful place in history, or would they prefer to believe the last thing they read or heard from someone who wishes it had happened differently?

The Early Days

My father's journey to the fortune that he found beneath the Mi Vida claim group in San Juan County, Utah started in Texas, where he grew up amid the wildcatters who transformed the state.

Charlie Steen was born in 1919. His father was an oil prospector who made and lost a small fortune during the few years that he was married to my grandmother, Rosalie. According to my Dad, the only two things he got from his father were his name, Charles Augustus Steen, and a Dalmatian dog. My father and his sister, Maxine, were raised by a succession of stepfathers during the years when the Great Depression dampened the financial excitement of the oil booms, but he never forgot the years when prospecting paid the way.

Growing up dirt poor toughened my father and strengthened his independence. Determined to succeed, he worked his way through college with a series of odd jobs. During the summer months, he worked for the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company in Houston. After attending Tarleton College in Stephenville, Texas where he met my mother, Minnie Lee Holland (who preferred to go by her initials, M.L.), he transferred to the Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy in El Paso and received his degree in geology in 1943.

Poor eyesight and a slight frame prevented him from serving in the war, and he spent the next three years working for a major oil company as a petroleum geologist looking

for possible oil structures in the jungle headwaters of the Amazon Basin in Peru.

After returning to this country, he married my mother and worked as a field geologist for the Stanolind Oil Company, until he was fired for insubordination after he argued with two of his bosses over the way they were directing his work. Their conclusion that "he was innately rebellious against authority" got him blackballed by the tightly managed oil companies.

It was the best thing that could have happened to him, because it freed him to go prospecting on his own account. My mother, who had also grown up poor in Sweetwater, Texas, but in a very strict household, was eager to share in his prospecting adventures.



Dad spent two years trying to raise enough money to drill some oil and gas properties he believed in, but he needed at least \$100,000 in order to wildcat for oil. He supported his growing family as a small-scale building contractor in Houston, remodeling kitchens, adding bedrooms and bath-savings money for a grubstake while he tried to interest people in backing his oil play.

Uranium and the Germ**of an Idea**

Since he couldn't raise the money to go wildcatting for oil, he cast about for some mineral that was in demand and that a man on a mighty slim shoestring might prospect for with a hope of big returns. He read an article in the "Engineering & Mining Journal" about the still-young uranium mining industry that was centered on the Four Corners area of the Colorado Plateau, and my father began to read everything he could find about the rare element. Uranium had literally burst upon the world with the detonation of three atomic bombs at the end of World War II.

Prior to the development of the atomic bomb, uranium was considered a pretty worthless element, with few uses aside from being a costly source of radium. The discovery of high-grade pitchblende, the primary uranium ore, in the Belgian Congo in the 1920s made the lower-grade, yellow carnotite ores of the Colorado Plateau uneconomic. Because these ores also contained vanadium, which is used to harden steel, there were several periods when the need for vanadium revived the region's small-scale mining industry. Uranium that was separated from the vanadium and discarded during the milling process was later used to make the first atomic bombs. With the advent of the atomic age and the subsequent arms race with the Soviet Union, the United States was forced to buy ninety percent of its radioactive materials from the Belgian Congo and Canada.

The country's need for uranium for national defense was so urgent that the government decided it had to stimulate domestic prospecting and production through an incentive program of guaranteed prices, discovery bonuses and development loans.



The Atomic Energy Act of 1946 created the Atomic Energy Commission (the AEC), and the government initiated an extensive exploration program to find domestic sources of uranium.

The Atomic Energy Act of 1946 created the Atomic Energy Commission (the AEC), and the government initiated an extensive exploration program to find domestic sources of uranium. The AEC encouraged individuals and companies to increase production by more than doubling the price per pound for high-grade uranium ore to \$31 and with a \$10,000 bonus for the first man to produce 20 tons of ore assaying at least 20% uranium in the United States.

Hundreds of government geologists and mining engineers scoured the Western States, searching for enough uranium ore to feed the two uranium processing plants that were being operated under strict security and behind highly guarded enclosures. While this resulted in an increase in uranium production, almost all of the mines on the Colorado Plateau were located in the Morrison Formation and were relatively small-sized, shallow, and low-grade.

In decades of searching on the Plateau, prospectors had uncovered only three ore deposits amounting to as much as 100,000 tons of this much lower-grade ore, and there were scores of small mines that had been worked out and abandoned. Since few of these smaller ore deposits held more than 10,000 tons of ore rich enough to be mined at a profit, the outlook for a large-scale uranium industry seemed pretty bleak. These geologic and economic conditions discouraged most of the larger, well-established mining companies from even looking for uranium deposits. And, while there were dozens of local prospectors and miners in southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah who were making a living off these smaller mines, nobody was making a fortune and no one had discovered a major ore body. Most of these prospectors were part-time uranium seekers

who had gained their practical knowledge working in these small mines, or cowboys and shepherders who were just about the only people who had penetrated one of the most desolate, unsurveyed areas left in the country.

Even though you could stake a mining claim on public land with four claim posts and a dollar, it cost real money to prospect and explore for ore. My grandmother, Rosalie Shumaker, mortgaged her home in Houston and contributed a thousand dollars to buy a small portable drill; and my mother's sister, Tera, talked her husband into loaning my father enough money for a second-hand jeep. By the time that my father set off on his quest for uranium in the summer of 1950, my parents were already raising my three older brothers and I was on the way. Dad drove the jeep and a 20 foot trailer to Dove Creek, Colorado; and a few weeks after I was born, my mother and brothers and I traveled with my grandmother to join my father while he searched for the uranium that would change all of our lives.

A Grubstake, a Dream, and a Theory

Charlie Steen began his search by studying the geology of the uranium deposits of the area. He couldn't afford to buy a Geiger counter, but Dad figured that unless he used his education and training as a geologist, he had no better chance than the other prospectors who spent their time walking the rim rocks looking for uranium outcroppings on the surface. Because most of the readily accessible uranium deposits that outcropped were already staked by the time Dad arrived on the scene, he began to look for the geologic conditions that would cause uranium to collect and concentrate in certain favorable locations where it could be discovered with a drilling rig.

During the time we lived near Dove Creek, my father became friends with Bob Barrett, a slightly prosperous pinto bean farmer who had a pretty strong case of uranium fever. He also became well acquainted with William R. McCormick, the owner of the Dove Creek Mercantile Store. Bill McCormick's honest, generous nature was combined with a very shrewd business sense, but he had a weakness for uranium prospectors and a fondness for the mining game.

The Steens lived on rice, beans, oatmeal, rabbit stew and venison from the deer that my father shot regardless of the season while he prospected and examined other people's properties for McCormick and Barrett.

On Christmas Day, we moved to the Yellow Cat Wash area south of Cisco, where Dad staked some claims and drilled out a small uranium deposit on the promise of an interest in anything he found from a mining engineer who later reneged on his agreement. Somehow my parents managed to get by with small advances from my grandmother and loans from friends that didn't average \$70 a month.

Early in 1951, Bill McCormick introduced Dad to Dan Hayes and Donald Adams, two local prospectors and mine owners who had been involved in uranium mining for many years. Hayes and Adams owned the 14 Big Buck claims that had been staked in 1948 to cover a meager exposure of oxidized uranium in the Cutler Formation on the southwestern flank of the faulted Lisbon Valley anticline in the Big Indian mining district of San



On Christmas Day, we moved to the Yellow Cat Wash area south of Cisco, where Dad staked some claims and drilled out a small uranium deposit on the promise of an interest in anything he found from a mining engineer who later reneged on his agreement.

Juan County, Utah. The Morrison Formation had been eroded off this upthrown portion of the anticline, and there were only three small uranium mines located in the entire district. These mines had produced a little more than 2,000 tons of low-grade uranium ore from host rocks in the Cutler Formation. The nearest producing uranium mine was more than twenty miles away from the Big Buck claim group.

All of the AEC and company geologists who had examined the area had written off the Big Indian mining district as an important potential source of uranium by the time Charles Augustus Steen was attracted to the area. There were simply too many better places to explore for uranium on the Colorado Plateau than a mining district that was missing the most important host rocks (the Morrison Formation) to waste much time or any money on the Big Indian mining district.

After examining the geology of the uranium bearing formation that Hayes and Adams had exposed with four short mine adits and bulldozer cuts along the rim, my father hiked above the Big Buck mine and began his geologic reconnaissance. As he walked and climbed over the rock formations, he began to formulate a theory that the lower grade exposures of uranium in the Cutler Formation would be enriched or concentrated down dip from the outcrops along the escarpment overlooking Big Indian Wash. The terrain was very rugged and without a single road into the country behind the Big Buck claims.

Dad noticed that the crest of the Lisbon Valley anticline was situated just about the same spot where he had hiked in above the rim, and he figured that any uranium that

was concentrated down dip would be found in thicker deposits on this part of the anticlinal structure. He also saw that a large section of the upper rock formations had been removed by erosion, and knew that he would not have to drill through more than three hundred feet of the Wingate sandstone in order to prove his geologic theory.

After spending less than a day examining the rock formations and considering the geology of the area, Dad decided to stake the ground back of the Big Buck claims. Because of the rough nature of the ground and the fact that there were areas with hundreds of feet of air between the places where my father was marking the boundaries of his claims it was very slow going. Working alone, using his Brunton compass and pacing off the 600 by 1500 foot claims, Dad didn't encounter any signs that the ground had ever been staked by anyone else.

After this ground became some of the most valuable land in the county, there were several extensive title searches completed for legal reasons, and they didn't disclose any prior locations. At the end of several weeks, Charlie Steen had staked 11 mining claims: the Mi Vida, Linda Mujer, Mi Amorcita, Mi Alma, Bacardi, Te Quiero, Fundadoro, Pisco, Besame Mucho, Mi Corozan, and the Mujer Sin Verguena. Another claim, the Ann, was staked later. Most of these mining claims were named after Spanish expressions contained in popular songs that Dad had heard in Peru. The Mi Vida claim literally means "My Life" in Spanish, but it actually means much more when it is used in the context of expressing one's feelings towards a woman. Never was a mining claim more aptly named than the Mi Vida.

Charlie Steen filed his claims with the County Recorder in Monticello on March 7, 1951. Now that he had located his prospect, Dad had to convince someone to back his belief that uranium could be found beneath his claims, because the ore horizon was at least 200 feet below the surface and his portable drill could barely penetrate 50 feet. His theory was ridiculed and criticized by AEC geologists who were familiar with the country, and company geologists figured that they knew more about uranium ore deposits than some newcomer from Texas. The fact all the experts unanimously agreed on, that the Big Indian country was worthless, only stiffened my father's determination to prove them all wrong.

Dead Broke and The Dream on Hold (for a moment)



By this time the Steens were dead broke, so we moved to Tucson, where Dad worked as a carpenter and scraped together a small grubstake for another shot at prospecting. All the time he was in Arizona, Dad knew that he had to do his assessment work on his Big Indian claims or lose them by default. With my mother's encouragement, Dad turned down a job offer to work as a petroleum geologist, sold the trailer for \$375, piled everything we owned on top of the jeep and headed back to Cisco, where we moved into a \$15 a month tarpaper shack.

Bill McCormick came through with a beat-up, second-hand drilling rig and enough money to bulldoze four miles of rough road into the heart of the Mi Vida claim. Rosalie Shumaker sold her furniture for \$1700 and came to Utah with a friend named Douglas Hoot to help her son find his fortune. Dad set the drill up as far down dip as possible and began drilling on July 3, 1952. After three days of drilling, at a depth of 73 feet, they started bringing up a grayish-black core that resembled coal. Dad and Hoot drilled through 14 feet of this unusual formation and my father set it aside to examine later. Three weeks later, on July 27, the drill bit suddenly broke off the drill stem at a depth of 197 feet---only three feet short of my father's goal. No yellow carnotite had been encountered.

Just about beaten from frustration, Dad drove the 100 miles to Cisco with the intention of going directly on to Grand Junction to get some tools to fish out the broken bit. He remembered to bring along several samples of the grayish-black core, and when he got to Cisco he drove straight to Buddy Cowger's service station to gas up on credit. Buddy was also a prospector and a good friend. Like practically every uranium prospector on the Colorado Plateau except for Charlie Steen, Buddy owned a Geiger counter; and he was examining some samples when Dad pulled up. Impatient to be on his way, my father said, "Hell, I've got some stuff that'll do better than yours." When my Dad placed a piece of the grayish-black core next to the Geiger counter the needle leaped out of sight and the counter went crazy.

In a flash Charlie Steen realized that he had cored through 14 feet of pitchblende, one of the primary ores of uranium. Until July 6, 1952, nobody had ever found pitchblende on the Colorado Plateau, and my Dad had only seen specimens in museums, but he knew that the hole had finally come in for the Steen family. Dad whirled around and started running towards the shack where Mom was waiting for news from the Big Indian. After hitting her clothesline, he burst in the shack yelling: "We've hit it! We've hit it! It's a million dollar lick!" My father grabbed my mother and together they celebrated the discovery of the Mi Vida mine without knowing how profoundly their lives were about to change.

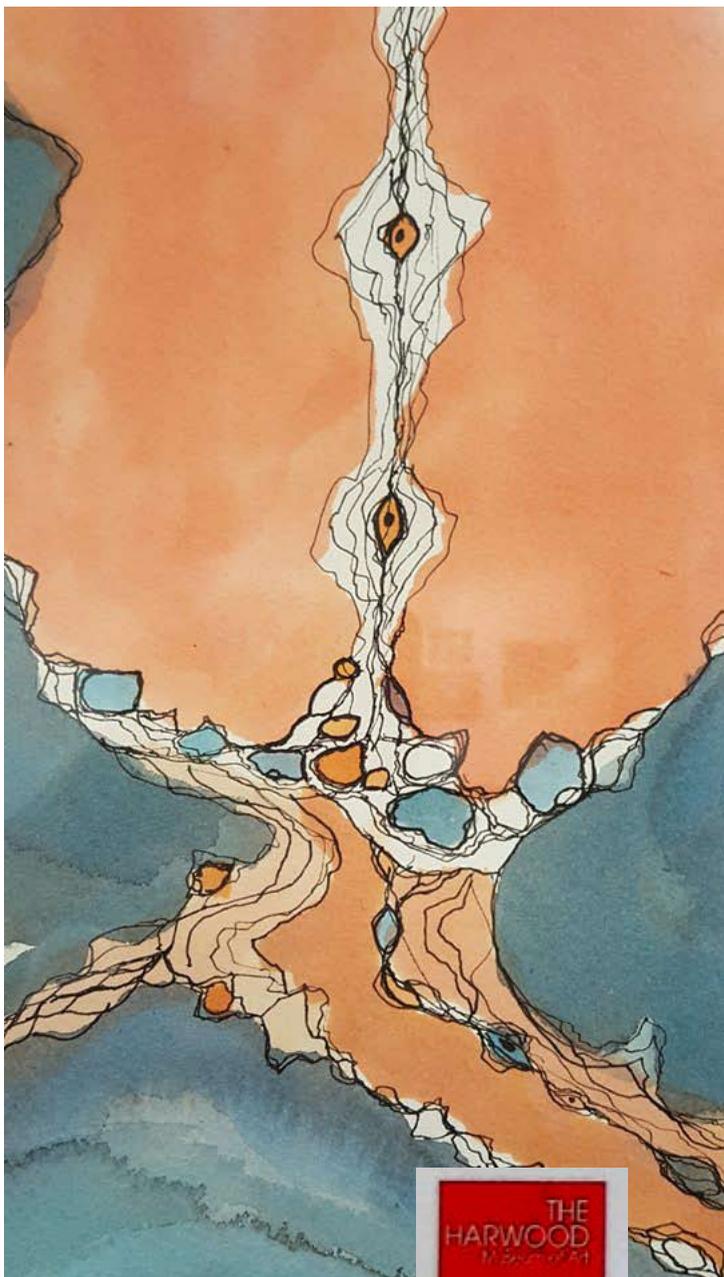
In the next installments of this series, I'll relate the history of the Mi Vida mine's development, the formation of Utex Exploration Company and Standard Uranium, the exploration and exploitation of the Big Indian mining district, the disputes, the claim jumpers, the million dollar lawsuits and the struggle to construct the Uranium Reduction Company mill in boomtown Moab, the "Uranium Capital of the World." MS

DE PUY!!

The Harwood Museum of Art is honored to present the expressionist paintings of drawings of artist John De Puy. The exhibition features work from the artist's long career, revealing a life spent striving to capture the spiritual in art.

John De Puy has many stories of encounters and friendships with artists who influence his path, such as Emil Nolde, Mark Rothko, Hans Hoffman, and in Taos, Clay Spohn, Michio Takayama, Beatrice Mandelman and Louis Ribak. In the 1950s and 60s, De Puy was included in the first exhibitions of Taos Moderns. The vital artistic community followed no particular collective agenda or style, but rather sought to create a new meaningful movement in art. Despite these many artistic relationships, perhaps the most meaningful was that with his best friend, writer and conservation activist Edward Abbey. The two vowed to devote their lives to documenting and protecting the landscapes of the Southwest. The Harwood exhibition shows the artist's persistent devotion to land, abstract forms and expressionist painting

--Liz Neely
Curator, Harwood Museum of Art



Don't miss this rare opportunity

The Life Work of JOHN DEPUY

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The high desert landscape of the Colorado Plateau has been the life-long inspiration for reclusive and mystic artist John De Puy. During his daily hikes, the landscape forms of arroyos, canyons, mesas, natural bridges, pinnacles and monoliths have become blended with his sub-conscious.

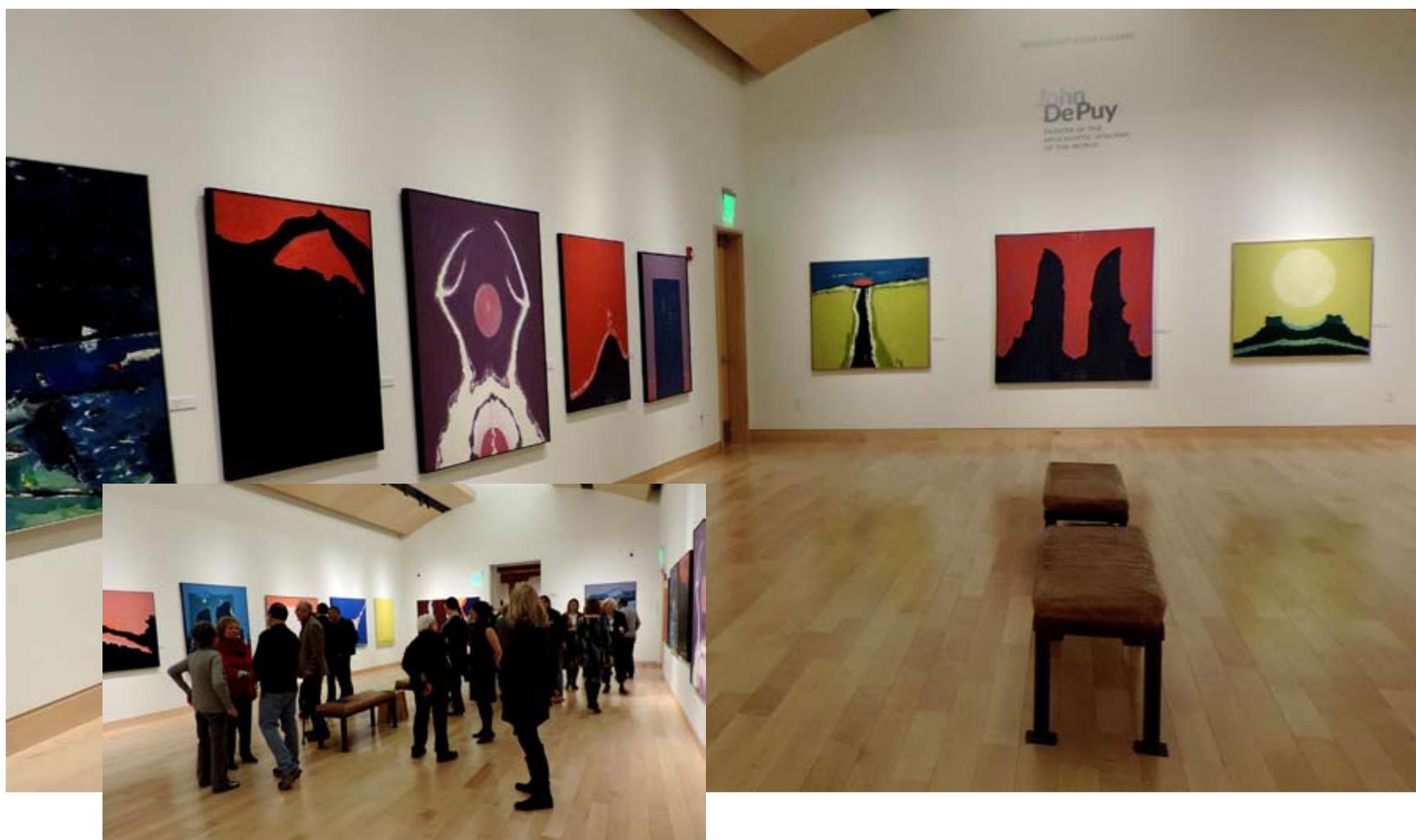
For over 60 years, John has 'documented' the unseen underlying reality of this landscape in thousands of pen and ink drawings—some eventually to be used to prepare watercolors and then paintings. Hiking in a kind of continuous walking meditation, he has relied on his Zen training, which stresses a 'mindfulness before the subject matter and disengagement from active thinking,' and which permits access to a spiritual essence.

John has traveled extensively—sketching the landscapes of Morocco, Crete and Rhodes, the Sea of Cortez, the gulf coast islands of British Columbia and Washington State. Along his path, John had the extreme good fortune to have met writer and conservationist Edward Abbey. Abbey and John were kindred souls, partners-in-crime, fellow rabble-rousers and life-long friends who shared a deep love for the land and a determination to not only bear witness to its beauty, but to also try to protect it.

Describing his friend's work, Abbey has written: "De Puy's landscape is not the landscape we see with routine eyes. He paints a hallucinated, magical, and sometimes fearful world—not the one we think we see, but the one he claims is really there. A world of terror as well as beauty—the terrible beauty that lies beyond the ordinary limits of human experience, that forms the basis of experience, the ground of being. His paintings have a liberating quality, they make a window in the wall of our modern techno-industrial workhouse—a window that leads the eye and the heart and the mind through the wall and far out into the freedom of the old and the original world and they take us back to where we came from long ago. They take us back to where we took the wrong fork in the road.

Charles C. Gurd

Abbey source: Abbey, Edward. *The Journey Home: Some Words in Defense of the American West*. New York: Dutton, 1977. Print.



FROM THE 2004 ZEPHYR ARCHIVES

LAST DAYS OF GLEN CANYON

AND THE 'GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD'

TONY VAN RENTERGHEM

When Tony van Renterghem sent me this story in 2004, I was eager to print it. But I never had the chance to know Tony better and that's a regret I'll carry to my own grave. Only later did I discover what a remarkable man he was. As I was searching for this story in our archives, I Googled Tony, only to sadly discover he had passed away in 2009, at the age of 90. His obituary left me speechless. Here is just a paragraph from it...

Raised in Amsterdam, he was trained as one of the last mounted cavalry officers. He served eight years in the Netherlands Armed Forces, (including combat against the German paratroopers during the Blitz), and five years in the Dutch Resistance during the German World War II occupation of Holland. He was condemned to death by the Nazis, but was never caught. He worked extensively in high-level espionage, helped hide those fleeing Nazi persecution and initiated and ran the film and photo units of the Dutch Resistance (known as the "Underground Camera"). For his wartime activities, he received numerous awards from the Dutch government, and the Israeli Yad Vashem "Righteous Among the Nations" Honor for his efforts in saving Jewish lives.

He never mentioned any of this to me, of course, as we corresponded in 2004 about his Glen Canyon story, and it figures that he wouldn't. Now I find myself grateful that we were able to publish his account (and re-post it now), but regretful that I didn't take the time to know him better. JS

I'm 84 and an old man now, but forty-two years ago I stood in the Holy Land at the edge of the river Jordan, looking out at its slow-moving, muddy waters. Any kid could have easily tossed a baseball to the opposite, reed-lined shore. Movie director, George Stevens, Sr., took one look at it, then turned around. "Forget it," he said, walking off, "it's not dramatic. I'll shoot it in the Grand Canyon. It looks like the river Jordan ought to look."

work clothes, instead of the standard white garments.) My tasks also included hosting religious celebrity guests, such as Billy Graham and Martin Luther King Jr.

"The Greatest Story Ever Told" was a beautifully photographed movie, but, in spite of its enormous budget and all the talent and research, it never was a "great" movie. Why? I think because Stevens, who in his earlier movies had so brilliantly captured the spirit and grandeur of the American West, here lacked a similar understanding of the poetic, mystical culture of the Middle East and its people.

Our movie company ended up near Page (where Wahweep Lodge now stands), in a huge camp of prefab cabins and big circus tents used as dining halls, stables, and makeup/wardrobe areas. Hundreds of vehicles, a helicopter, camels, donkeys, horses and cattle crowded the area, hundreds of extras milling around. Navajo Indians, cast as Herodian cavalry, rubbed shoulders with Yemenite dancers (flown in from Israel), and sturdy Christian football players from neighboring colleges, cast as Roman infantry.

In 1963, Page still had a solid Wild West feel about it, what with the hundred or so rugged, young construction workers rappelling from ropes down the steep canyon walls, dynamiting the rocks. They worked night and day shifts to finish the enormous Glen Canyon Dam on time, while their bored wives and girlfriends tried to get hired as extras on "the movie." They hung out at night at Page's only dance hall, flirting with our, equally rugged, Hollywood stuntmen. Except for women and booze, there was just nothing in Page on which these macho young males, brimming with testosterone, could spend their paychecks. It led to some rather explosive situations.

One Sunday morning, we were awakened by the noisy arrival of a pickup full of shotgun-wielding dam builders, looking for one of our stuntmen. Seems he'd gotten himself somewhat over-involved with the eager young wife of one of the dam builders. We hid him just in time, under a heap of biblical costumes in the wardrobe tent, and finally managed to convince them that he was on leave in Los Angeles. As soon as they took off, we helicoptered him to the Page airstrip, hustling him off to Hollywood in our company plane, never again to set foot in Page.



That's how, in 1962 and '63, we ended up in Glen Canyon near Page, Arizona, shooting exteriors for the \$30 million movie, "The Greatest Story Ever Told," featuring Swedish actor Max von Sydow as Jesus of Nazareth. We were shooting against the clock, challenged by the rising waters of the future Lake Powell.



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Northern Arizona had long been one of Hollywood's most popular locations for the filming of grand old Westerns, such as "Covered

Wagon," "Rio Grande," "Red River," and George Stevens Sr.'s classics "Shane" and "Giant." The beauty of Glen Canyon had, however, remained largely undiscovered. Now, our production marked the end of this era, sadly coinciding with the end of Glen Canyon itself, for soon the incredible, primeval beauty of this magnificent desert, with its ancient petroglyphs, would be forever lost, drowned in stagnant, polluted waters. Never again would a camera crew record these sacred sights. We were the last.

For five years I worked on this one movie as assistant and biblical-historical research advisor to director/producer George Stevens, Sr. I organized and led their four-week research trip through the Middle East, recorded Aramaic and Yemenite songs, and later helped the poet/writer Carl Sandburg with his early version of the script (rejected as too liberal, because Sandburg's Jesus had been a dusty, sweaty, young carpenter in

More important problems plagued the production. The massive size of the project resulted in our being not only grossly over-budget, but three months behind schedule, causing major logistical headaches. Shooting simple scenes like, "Behold, the lilies of the field," now forced director Stevens to have acres and acres of desert bushes spray-painted a bright pink to simulate wild flowers. Also, by now, "Mary Magdalene" (British actress Joanna Dunham) had become noticeably pregnant, and exterior shots portraying summer scenes, where the interior shots had already established the actors as going barefoot, had to be shot barefoot outdoors at 20o!

Meanwhile, George Stevens tried to maintain some sense of religious dignity among his "cast of thousands." Many older, devoutly Christian and Mormon local ladies had eagerly signed up as extras and, draped in their Biblical robes, stared in awe at the six-foot-four Max von Sydow as though he were the genuine Savior. They all hoped to be the ones to be "baptized" by Charlton Heston (John the Baptist), a baptism in the—by now icy—waters of the Colorado. Heston, of course, wore a warm wetsuit under his robes.

After three months in Page, boredom had set in and some of the younger actors had to be reprimanded for whooping it up and dropping out of character a bit too often in the presence of the conservative Page ladies who had taken on jobs as waitresses with our caterer, so as to be able to serve dinner to the "stars." The worst offences were the funny antics and table conversation of the comedy actors Roddy McDowall and Jamie Farr (of later "M.A.S.H." cross-dressing fame), as well as the rude, foulmouthed Robert Blake. All three had, for some obscure reason, been cast as Apostles.

Other problems arose. Due to all the delays, some actors' contracts ran out, John Wayne's, for instance. He played the Centurion of the Crucifixion and had to leave us before his remaining, lesser, scenes could be shot. The "Duke" hated to be doubled. So what to do? Simple. Just call in the screenwriters and have them write in a second—si-

lent—"Night Centurion," one who'd look just like Wayne: same uniform, same size, same shape, same gait, but with his face hidden by his Roman helmet. The audience would never realize it wasn't the Duke. But who could be found here at this remote location on such short notice? George Stevens looked at me from across the conference table. "Tony," he said, "you've got the same build and walk as Wayne." I protested that I was a researcher, not an actor! Stevens replied, "Neither is Wayne." So, my mother ended up admiring the back of my helmet as the Night Centurion, dragging Jesus in front of Pontius Pilate (played by Telly Savalas, the lollipop detective, "Kojak," of later T.V. fame).



More important problems plagued the production. The massive size of the project resulted in our being not only grossly over-budget, but three months behind schedule, causing major logistical headaches.

We had the day off on Thanksgiving and my friend, Max von Sydow, and I accepted an invitation by the local Mormon missionaries, who acted as "agents" for our Navajo extras, to share a Thanksgiving dinner with these same Navajo. The Mormons had also invited our Israeli Yemenite dancers. After a slow, bumpy, three-hour drive over unpaved trails we arrived at the mission station in the heart of the reservation. Accustomed as we were to the American opulence of such feasts, the tiny sweet potato, thin slice of tough turkey, and meager portion of mashed potatoes reflected only too well the generosity, bitter poverty, and harsh living conditions of the Navajo. We felt touched and honored that they had wanted to share this meal with us.

The Mormon missionaries were quite exited about having the Israelis meet the Navajo. After all, weren't Indians the Lost Tribe of Israel? So would they be able to understand each other's language and shared traditions, such as that the world had been created a mere 5,000 years ago? They didn't. The Israelis left the party totally bewildered.

Production proceeded slowly as we moved into winter and as the available hours of sunshine for photography got shorter and shorter. The filming took place against the



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majestic setting of Glen Canyon, at times interrupted by some of the most spectacular thunderstorms I've ever witnessed, until, finally, a fierce blizzard forced the production to a grinding halt. Resumption of shooting would have to be postponed until spring, but...the waters of the Colorado were starting to rise behind the new dam and time was running out. Refusing to be stopped by a mere snowstorm, Stevens grabbed a shovel and ordered each and every one of us to follow his example and start shoveling to clear the snow off the sets. No sooner had the press had taken his picture, or he disappeared

inside his warm office, leaving of us dutifully shoveling the hillside for the next four hours. That night it snowed again, but at that evening's production meeting Stevens still insisted that he'd continue shooting through Christmas till we finished, come Hell or high water! This was ridiculous, it just couldn't be done, but no one spoke up. That's when I decided to plant a rumor to force his hand and get us home for Christmas. I quietly leaked to the press, "Not to tell, but Stevens plans a surprise." That he would fly us home, since--this being a religious movie-- he wanted to make sure we could all celebrate Christmas with our families in our churches. The next morning, everything was covered with a fresh foot of snow, and my "leaked" story was all over the papers. Stevens was left with no choice but to fly everybody home for the Holidays.

When we returned, having finished all our interiors in Los Angeles, the snow was gone and the smell of spring was in the air. We managed to finish filming just as the slow, rising water reached our area. We'd made it, and had celebrated Christmas at home with our families.

As we prepared to leave Page, I looked back at the Glen Canyon desert where I had frozen at dawn, roasted at noon, choked on dust, been drenched by rain, and blinded by snow. But, oh... what incredible cerulean skies and endless panoramic sights; vistas of such immense proportion as to reduce men to the size of ants. Above all, I'd never forget the awesome silence, the nights of brightest moons and distant howling of coyotes, or the black-velvet, star-studded skies, enlivened by the flash of shooting stars.

It was my last look at Glen Canyon, now gone forever.

Tony van Renterghem died in 2009. Click on his photograph to follow a link to his obituary and his remarkable life.



http://azdailysun.com/news/local/obituaries/tony-van-renterghem/article_01acaeb6-569c-5aba-93e6-55722e8ee59c.html

For more photographs check out the home page version of this story.



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Latigo Wind Project: Terminal Pragmatism Writ Large

By Scott Thompson

Where there is no vision, the people perish. – Proverbs 29:18

The ancient pueblo ruins at the Lowry archeological site are about nine miles due west of Pleasant View, Colorado, and they go back to 1060 C.E. They lie on the edge of the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument atop a low, spreading hilltop on the Great Sage Plain. The Plain once served as an expanse of contoured, high elevation farmland for numerous ancient pueblos. A fertile, favored place, it nurtured the ancient pueblo Indians, the Hisatsinom, even during rain-scarce decades.

The 40 room pueblo at the Lowry site was inhabited for about 165 years and includes an extraordinary Great Kiva. These ruins sit among sagebrush, rabbitbrush, and Utah Juniper, and are dotted with Pinyon pine and a hardy species of prickly-pear cactus. And the site enjoys a sharp, splendid view of the Abajo Mountains about 35 miles to the northwest.

Standing within the circumference of that enormous kiva is humbling.

A plenitude of these ancient Hisatsinom pueblo sites have been massively pored over and studied by archeologists. Beyond that, the Hisatsinom are clearly related to the contemporary pueblo tribes of New Mexico and the Hopi in Arizona. Nevertheless, we in the mainstream culture may never discover what the worldview of the Hisatsinom actually was. We may never have more than a fragmentary understanding.

Yet something we have been able to share with them, despite the passage of eight or more centuries, at least in certain locales, is their profound love of landscapes. When I stood out at the western edge of the Lowry pueblo, gazing at the sharp relief of the Abajo Mountains, I understood on a sensory level at least one of the reasons they chose this site. You could feel that that they took joy in walking those few steps away from the pueblo's masonry to join with the long, open sky and the untrammelled mountains. And while it certainly took me a lot longer to travel to that very spot, on this day I shared that particular happiness which they knew.

But no more. That thread of connection with the Hisatsinom; the subtle way every visitor to the site has had of knowing them, has been severed by the massive Latigo Wind Project.

Which consists of 27 gigantic wind turbines, now under final construction just north of the town of Monticello, Utah, and abutting the northern slope of the Abajo Mountains. Given the site's base elevation of up to 7,800 feet, it stands above vast stretches of lower ground running far to the southeast, east, and northeast in Western Colorado, certainly including the Lowry site and the nearby town of Pleasant View.



The Latigo Wind Farm, from Pleasant View, Colorado, 40 miles east

Compare the photograph of the many wind turbines readily visible from the village of Pleasant View with the two photographs of the Abajo Mountains that I took from the Lowry site in 2012, bearing in mind that the latter is actually closer to the turbines than Pleasant View itself. Those wind turbines are visible from where the Hisatsinom once stood.



In fact, these gargantuan turbines are likely visible as far away as Mesa Verde National Park, nearly 60 miles from Latigo to the southeast. See the photograph of one of the turbines under early construction with Wetherill Mesa in the background, much of which is inside Mesa Verde National Park. Also see my 2012 photograph from an overlook at the far northwestern edge

of the Park looking across much of the vast Great Sage Plain angling to the northwest. If those wind turbines are not now visible from this overlook – well, it'll be a surprise to me.

Nor are we just talking about them being visible in the daytime: a significant number will be strung with flashing red lights, like a perverse Christmas tree, to warn airplanes of their looming presence at night. These are lights that will be visible at enormous geographic distances.

As Jim Stiles has said, "When completed, this wind farm may be the most visually

intrusive wind turbine cluster in the United States."

Yet many will shrug and say, "So what?" And add that what we need more than anything else is renewable energy on a large enough scale to replace fossil fuels, which makes the Latigo Wind Project not only acceptable in their minds, but the beginning of a far more intrusive presence. The underlying premise of such a response is that when it comes to a choice between prosperity as we've known it and mere "scenery," the latter is expendable. "It's just common sense," they'll add with a nod.



...marring the solitude of the land by systematically pocking it with large-scale wind farms and solar plants is no different in principle than paving it over with roads that invade nearly every wild place.

But the assumption that mass renewable energy can support the untrammelled consumerism we've known is based on the further assumption that continuing our relentless economic growth is both feasible, even with the phasing out of fossil fuels, and ultimately beneficial to the public as a whole. Over the last century these assumptions have become so ingrained within the mainstream psyche that they are more like religious dogma than an informed system of belief.

And not only is their falsity evident now, it was evident by the late 1960s to none other than Edward Abbey: who at that time challenged the relentless expansion of paved roads in national parks and monuments. Questioning the viability of the massive expansion of renewable energy at this time is in every way parallel.

Abbey challenged the impact of unremitting economic expansion on the spiritual solitude of wild lands in his brilliant chapter, "Polemic: Industrial Tourism and the National Parks" in *Desert Solitaire*, published in 1968. Let me summarize the key scene in this chapter. In the late 1950s Ed was serving as a park ranger in the then isolated Arches National Monument when he encountered a three-man crew surveying for a paved road. He knew that snaking a paved road through the heart of Arches would destroy the precious solitude that the place offered; its true value. He also knew that the automobile and commercial tourism industries were aiming such paved roads at the heart of virtually every national park and national monument in the country, and that the same loss of wildness would likely follow each paved road. The rationale for them all, of course, was giving the public access and the motivation for them all, of course, was making piles of money.

He realized, as so many didn't, that those who were bound to profit didn't give two hoots about the public's well-being.

As they don't now.

Let me quote what Ed had to say first about the road crew's chief and then some of his comments following: "He was a pleasant-mannered, soft-spoken civil engineer with an unquestioning dedication to his work. A very dangerous man...look, he said, when this road is built you'll get ten, twenty, thirty times as many tourists in here as you get now. His men nodded in solemn agreement, and he stared at me intently, waiting to see what possible answer I could have to that.

"Have some more water," I said. I had an answer all right but I was saving it for later. I knew that I was dealing with a madman."

...

"There may be some among the readers of this book, like the earnest engineer, who believe without question that any and all forms of construction and development are intrinsic goods, in the national parks as well as anywhere else, who virtually identify quantity with quality...There are some who frankly and boldly advocate the eradication of the last remnants of wilderness and the complete subjugation of nature to the requirements of – not man – but industry. This is a courageous view, admirable in its simplicity and power, and with the weight of all modern history behind it. It is also quite insane...." (pp. 44, 47, *Touchstone*, Simon & Schuster).

Ed's use of the word "insane" here makes sense insofar as he is describing a profoundly destructive frame of reference that isn't perceived as such. My own hopefully respectful expression for it is "terminal pragmatism." For me the mild-mannered civil engineer he called a madman was a terminal pragmatist – and how.

What I mean is this. Such a person is typically a professional, executive, or politician, or the like, who as a result of her or his skills exercises a significant degree of influence or authority, is well enculturated into the society, represents its thinking and values, and who is a solid, sensible decision maker. And typically is damn good at getting things accomplished that are seen as significant.

And who is as blind as a sonar deprived bat to the advent of a new paradigm and, more importantly, to the need for and inevitability of one.

Let me be careful to add that I'm not trying to knock their considerable skills and abilities as such. The problem instead is a self-reinforcing imbalance within our culture

that as individuals they are unable to see through. It was a cumulative lack of vision that sent our mild mannered civil engineer into Arches National Monument to do that job in the first place. As well as his own blindness to its implications.

I think it's likely that a significant number of terminal pragmatists are hugely ambitious people and addicted to power, money, and the like; which of course amplifies their unwillingness to see. But to be fair, many, many others are modest and kind-hearted, happy enough with being a competent professional or skilled at a job and the comfortable lifestyle which goes with that. Probably our mild mannered civil engineer was one of the latter.

My conclusion is that marring the solitude of the land by systematically pocking it with large-scale wind farms and solar plants is no different in principle than paving it over with roads that invade nearly every wild place. I believe they're congruent symptoms of the same malady. And that this is precisely what terminal pragmatists, even those who perceive themselves as environmentalists, cannot or will not see.

It's my best guestimate that the investors, engineers, and builders of the Latigo Wind Project, as well as its many supporters, are basically terminal pragmatists. As are, for that matter, the politicians who negotiated the 2009 Copenhagen and 2015 Paris climate agreements, with their toothless, upbeat goal statements and unwillingness to envision the best climate science unfettered by the typical – and immensely profitable to some – political and economic assumptions.

Visionaries in the best and necessary sense, as Ed Abbey was, are not so much rare in our culture as they are unheard - and unseen. Meanwhile the terminal pragmatists are, frequently with the best of intentions, running us aground as efficiently as their considerable skills allow.



The Great Sage Plain from atop Wetherill Mesa.

A final thought. Our relationship with the landscapes that surround us is as much emotional, poetic, and spiritual as it is rational and economic. That is why the so often disparaged "tree huggers," those nature lovin' intuitive goofballs, may be the most emotionally and spiritually healthy among us. And it is likely that the way they look at the world, perhaps I should say envision it, is crucial for the ultimate survival of our species. Yet the dominant society, utterly in sync with global economic power systems and staffed to the gills with good terminal pragmatists, regards only the latter two, the rational and economic aspects, with any level of seriousness.

Meanwhile numberless thousands of people are and will be stuck with watching those huge, twirling Latigo wind turbines ruin some of the loveliest landscapes in our country.

Note: actually, bats are not blind: they use echolocation, analogous to sonar, to hunt insects in the dark. See <http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/echolocation.html>

From the DESERT RAT COMMANDO



IT'S THE END OF
THE WORLD!

"I can see mass unemployment on the horizon as the robotics revolution takes hold," said Noel Sharkey, a professor emeritus of robotics and artificial intelligence at the University of Sheffield in the UK. Sharkey recently started the Foundation for Responsible Robotics to help us avoid the "potential societal and ethical hazards" from the widespread application of autonomous robots.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-future-of-the-machine-worker-is-here-2016-3>



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'THE MONKEY WRENCH GANG' MOVIE?

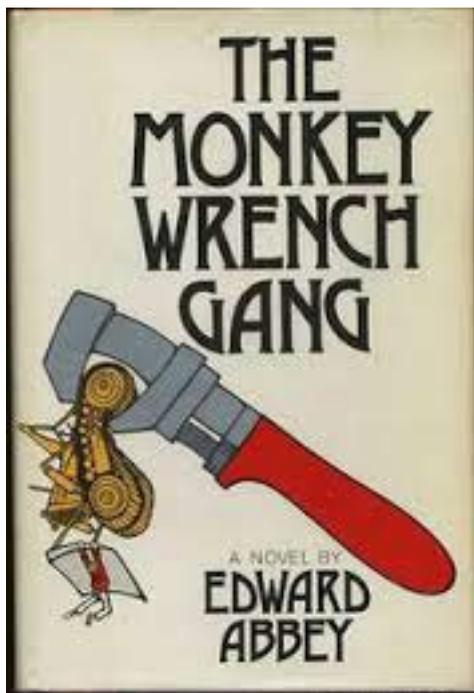
Forty Years Later, Would the 'New West' of 2016 even 'get' Ed Abbey's Classic Novel?

Jim Stiles

There's a new "Monkey Wrench Gang" MOVIE rumor circulating on the internet. A web site called "NewWorldOdor.com" reports that Leonardo DiCaprio is secretly producing the film version of Edward Abbey's 1975 masterpiece, somewhere in Arizona. Leo himself is reportedly playing the role of 'Seldom Seen' Smith.

According to the web site, DiCaprio's project takes his "environmental activism to a new level advocating for direct action and monkey-wrenching to protect the planet from climate change related disaster." They also include this alleged direct quote from DiCaprio:

"I've been working with many of the big environmental groups for a long time. I realize now the NGOs are worthless..The only option left is direct action and militant underground tactics. I hope my movie plays a part in promoting that level of resistance."



The first trade paperback version of 'The Monkey Wrench Gang' carried its share of glowing testimonials and I still recall one reviewer who warned, "Don't wait for the movie. Read the book." It wasn't, we thought, a question of *if*; it was a matter of *when*.

But nothing happened.

NewWorldOdor claims that actress Olivia Munn will play Bonnie Abzug and Jack Black is cast as Hayduke. The story has not been picked up anywhere else in the media and friends close to the late Edward Abbey--he died in 1989--have not heard a word about secret film productions with Mr. DiCaprio.

<https://newworldodor.info/rumors-swirl-leo-dicaprio-secretly-filming-monkey-wrench-gang-movie/>

After 40 years of speculation, it's difficult to take this seriously. And yet, almost from the day it was published, making the transition from the page to film seemed inevitable. The first trade paperback version of MWG carried its share of glowing testimonials and I still recall one reviewer who warned, "Don't wait for the movie. Read the book." It wasn't, we thought, a question of *if*; it was a matter of *when*.

But nothing happened.

Some said the book was too controversial to ever become a movie---that corporate America would never tolerate a film that advocated blowing up its assets, but rumors, nonetheless, ran rampant.

At one time or another, Robert Redford was going to produce the film and play Seldom Seen. Later gossip claimed he wanted to play Bishop Love...Shortly after Abbey's death in 1989, it was rumored that Carroll Ballard, the director of the acclaimed film, "Never Cry Wolf," was set to direct. But it went nowhere. Over the years and decades, tales of other productions came and went.

Then in 2007, something more substantial than gossip made the local headlines. Even *The Deseret News* in Salt Lake City, reported that at long last, Abbey's novel was coming to the screen. The film would star Matthew McConaughey, Jack Nicholson, Richard Dreyfuss, John Goodman, and Elizabeth Shue, and would be directed by Catherine Hardwicke, then noted for her work with the film series, "Twilight."

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/655191418/Adventure-set-in-Utah-heading-to-big-screen.html?pg=all>



That winter, Moab's then-economic development director Ken Davey invited me to meet Hardwicke as she scouted film locations in southeast Utah. We met at the Center Cafe in Moab, along with Larry Campbell of the Moab Film Commission and other members of Hardwicke's staff. It was an enlightening evening. The food, as always, was excellent and by the time I headed home, I was convinced that making a movie version of Abbey's novel would be an unqualified disaster.

Whether Hardwicke's planned film interpretation of the MWG was a consequence of studio pressures and corporate demands, or if she was just *that* politically correct, I'll never know. But the 'Monkey Wrench Gang' movie was going to be a much tamer critter. I could feel Abbey starting to rustle uncomfortably in his unmarked

desert grave.

Oddly, much of the "eco-tage" described in the book survived the edits; it was a handful of social issues that gave her pause. For starters, according to Hardwicke, Seldom Seen's days as a Mormon polygamist were over. He could maintain his LDS faith, of course, but multiple wives was not going to fly. He'd have one wife, one set of kids and why he'd continue to be called "Seldom Seen" by his sole surviving spouse was not clear.

And there was the Hayduke problem. First his use of the F-word had to go. Apparently, a PG film can only use the F-word once; this must have been Hardwicke's motivation when she explained that in the film version, Hayduke would be roundly criticized by other members of "The Gang" for his vulgarity and that peer pressure would subsequently result in a less profane Hayduke. A kinder, gentler Hayduke? ("Oh Flip YOU!") I couldn't quite get my head around it.

By now I was almost afraid to ask, but I did anyway. "What about the beer cans? Does he still chuck his cans out the window? Does Hayduke keep littering in the movie?"

Hardwicke, a classic role model for today's New West Environmentalist, smiled benevolently. "We really don't think that's appropriate either. It doesn't set a good example at all." She explained that again, Hayduke would be allowed to exhibit bad littering behavior once. Just once. But after another on-screen scolding from Doc, Seldom and Bonnie, Hayduke grudgingly sees the error of his ways and places his empties in a proper receptacle.

A sanitized Hayduke. A monogamous Seldom. After 30 years of anticipating an honest 'Monkey Wrench Gang Movie,' my personal wait was finally over; now I hoped the idea of a movie would just go away, though media reports of Hardwicke's film continued for months. One article reported the movie would be shot entirely in New Mexico, where the film commission offered advantages and perks unavailable in Utah.

But slowly, for reasons unknown, Hardwicke's connection to the MWG faded and finally vanished, and in 2012, the media reported that young directors, Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman, of "Paranormal Activity" fame, would "write and direct an adaptation" of Abbey's novel.

<http://deadline.com/2012/05/catfish-team-henry-joost-ariel-schulman-to-write-and-helm-the-monkey-wrench-gang-267788/>

That was four years ago. Now, in the Spring of 2016, are Joost and Schulman secretly collaborating with Leonardo DiCaprio, somewhere in the Arizona desert, finally bringing Abbey's characters to the screen? Or is this yet another incarnation? Who knows?

But does it really matter anymore? Forty years after the novel was published, is it too late to make a 'Monkey Wrench Gang' movie? Is it relevant in today's white-breaded politically correct environmentalist environment? Would anybody even 'get' it?

To see how far we've come since 1975, consider this recent post by The Grand Canyon Trust. On what would have been his 89th birthday, GCT Communications Associate Ellen Heyn wrote:

"In honor of Edward Abbey's birthday, we're celebrating his cult classic book *The Monkey Wrench Gang*—not as a guide to sabotage, but as a guide to some of the Colorado Plateau's most spectacular places. Here we retrace the steps of George Hayduke, Seldom Seen Smith, Doc Sarvis, and Bonnie Abzug in their crazy chase around the plateau."

<http://www.grandcanyontrust.org/blog/ed-abbey-travel-guide>



Fearful the Grand Canyon Trust might look too radical, but still wanting to "honor" Abbey, they chose to take one of his most controversial and highly respected works and turn it into---god help us all---a travel guide.

What could be more dis-honoring than that?

Fearful the Trust might look too radical, but still wanting to "honor" Abbey, they chose to take one of his most controversial and highly respected works and turn it into---god help us all---a travel guide. What could be more *dis-honoring* than that?

The writer highlights some scenic wonders of the Colorado Plateau and introduces a variety of trails, at or near locations mentioned in the novel, then rates their accessibility and difficulty, and promotes nearby natural features. The Grand Canyon Trust thrills us with the knowledge that these hikes will "lure adventurers of all stripes." And admonishes the reader, "Start planning your trip now!"

Is this what the Grand Canyon Trust thinks Edward Abbey was all about?

Abbey believed in solitude and open space and wilderness for its own sake. He wanted wild, untamed wilderness, not packaged wilderness by reservation. He once selflessly suggested, "We need wilderness whether or not we ever set foot in it." He didn't give a damn about wilderness for its recreational value or its economic component. Abbey didn't give a damn about "amenities." He once wrote, "We don't go into the wilderness to exhibit our skills at gourmet cooking. We go into the wilderness to get away from the kind of people who think gourmet cooking is important."

He was one of the first to warn against the evils of "Industrial Tourism." And he certainly didn't pen the MWG to see it transmogrified into an embarrassing tour guide.

In 'Desert Solitaire,' Abbey offered this unique proposal: "The wilderness should be preserved for political reasons. We may need it someday...as a refuge from authoritarian government, from political oppression. The Grand Canyon...may be required to function as a base for guerrilla warfare against tyranny."

And years later, when he wrote 'The Monkey Wrench Gang,' it was into that wilderness that his heroes sought escape and refuge. Whether revolutionary guerrillas could find common ground with BASE jumpers, mountain bikes, 'adventure companies,' and zip-liners is not even debatable. It's an absurdity.

The idea that today's environmentalists might find themselves at odds with the Monkey Wrench Gang, fearful that attacks on their shared Enemy might also damage their fundraising success would bewilder Edward Abbey in 2016.

The commodification of Nature that he feared has been more pervasive and overwhelming than even Ed could have imagined, despite his own early warnings. Abbey's radical notions of wilderness would perplex most 21st century wilderness advocates who insist that its commercial exploitation via a "tourist/amenities" economy will generate untold revenues for the Rural West.

Many of us wonder, 'What would Cactus Ed do?' as we race through the second decade of the 21st Century. I am constantly struck by the stubborn refusal of so many latter day Abbeyphiles to consider how he might react to the New West we face in 2016. Had he lived to see it, and I'm almost grateful he didn't, I'm convinced he would have reserved a special place in hell for the two-faced enviropreneurs who embrace wilderness and all things natural, as long as a buck can be made along the way.

Had Abbey written MWG in 2016, would the Gang's targets have changed? In addition to oil wells and coal trains and bridges, would he have expanded his list to include trophy homes and elevated bikeways and luxury tour companies?

Would Hayduke have needed to modify his monkey wrenching behavior in addition to his language? Before setting fire to an oil rig, would he need to check the ownership? Forgive my stealing Ed's intellectual property for just a minute or two, but imagine this conversation, in a 2016 world (and in it, other than Seldom and Hayduke, the names and companies are real)...

Almost dawn on the Great Sage Plain, in San Juan County, Utah. The early hour is marked by a thousand crimson streaks of light and the coo of a mourning dove. Nothing else. George Hayduke and Seldom Seen Smith survey the scene. Hayduke ponders the one intrusion in his otherwise perfect morning...

"Look at that goddamn oil rig Seldom...just waiting to be blown. Not a soul out there at five o'clock in the morning."

"You're right, George. Real sweet. Like the mornin' itself. Why it oughta be easy to just slide in there and...wait a minute."

"What is it?" Hayduke asked. "Do you see somebody?"

Seldom adjusted his binocs and squinted hard at the platform.

"Damn," he replied, finally. He scratched his chin whiskers and handed the glasses to Hayduke. "We got a problem."

Hayduke adjusted the lens to his own eyes. "What is it we're looking at?"

"Read the sign on the side of the rig."

"Let's see....'P-e-t...'Petro Harvester...'Petro Harvester? What's that?"

"Big oil and gas exploration company." Seldom explained. "They been doing a lot of fracking up in North Dakota. In fact, a couple years back they caused the biggest brine spill in the state's history. But I think they just got a slap on the hands...nobody gives a shit."

"Okay...all the more reason to mess with them." Hayduke reached for his pack.

"Well...slow down George." Seldom cautioned. "Petro's just a subsidiary of a big ol' monster called TPG Capital...far as I can tell, they own or control or have a thumb in just about ever'thing you can imagine. Hell, George they frack, they own power plants and they sell real estate. They make chemicals and even throw in with Monsanto. In the past they've also sold cheeseburgers and run airlines and own casinos...they're all over Vegas, George."

Hayduke growled. "Goddamn it. What're we waiting for? Gimme that box of caps and some C-4. I'm gonna blow that rig to hell..."

"But ALSO George," Seldom interrupted. "ALSO...And you're not gonna believe this, but the guy who runs TPG, his name is Mr. David Bonderman...he likes to be called 'Bondo.' He gives tons of money to the environmentalists. You know our pals in Moab and Flagstaff and Salt Lake? All those, what do you call 'em...'grass roots' groups that are always out there trying to save the world and filing law suits? Well he and his pals pump millions into those groups."

"Like who?" Hayduke demanded.

"Well...let's see. There's The Wilderness Society and the Grand Canyon Trust. He's on their board of directors too. And he gives money to SUWA. That Salt Lake paper called him a "major financier" for 'em. And not just the Greenies...Hell, he seeds his chump

change all over Moab...Hell, they all LOVE Bondo over there in Moab. He's a goddamn beloved figure."

Hayduke scowled. "Well that's bullshit. He builds power plants and fracks and drills and then he gives a bit of his money back to his adversaries? He's just paying people off...It's like fucking hush money. Are you kidding me? And now we're supposed to give this guy a pass?"

Hayduke paused for reflection and snapped the top on another Schlitz. After all the sun had been up more than 30 minutes. "I don't give a shit," Hayduke proclaimed finally. "I'm taking out that rig."

Seldom touched his shoulder. "You got friends over there in Moab, George, working for those same organizations that get funded by Bonderman. You get ol' Bondo mad and he pulls his money out of those groups and they start laying off their staff. If I recall, you had a thing for one of those gals over there in the Moab office...you wanna put her out of work too?"

Hayduke fumed. "Well shit, Seldom. I hate these fucking moral dilemmas." "Me too, George. Me too."

The idea that today's environmentalists might find themselves at odds with the Gang, fearful that attacks on their shared Enemy might also damage their fundraising success would bewilder Edward Abbey in 2016. The fact that they have more in common with the "adventure companies" that Abbey would surely have loathed, than with Abbey himself would have been unthinkable. THAT's how far the 'movement' has descended in 40 years.

It is painfully accurate to admit that since the publication of 'The Monkey Wrench Gang,' saving wilderness for its solitude, remoteness, and as a base camp for revolutionary warfare, is not high on anyone's agenda. After all, where's the "Return On Investment?" Where's the profit? Otherwise...what's the point?

In 2016, the message of 'The Monkey Wrench Gang' is as simple as it was four decades ago---leave the land alone. As Hayduke pleaded, "Leave it like it was." Today's profit-driven environmentalist doesn't get *that* idea at all.



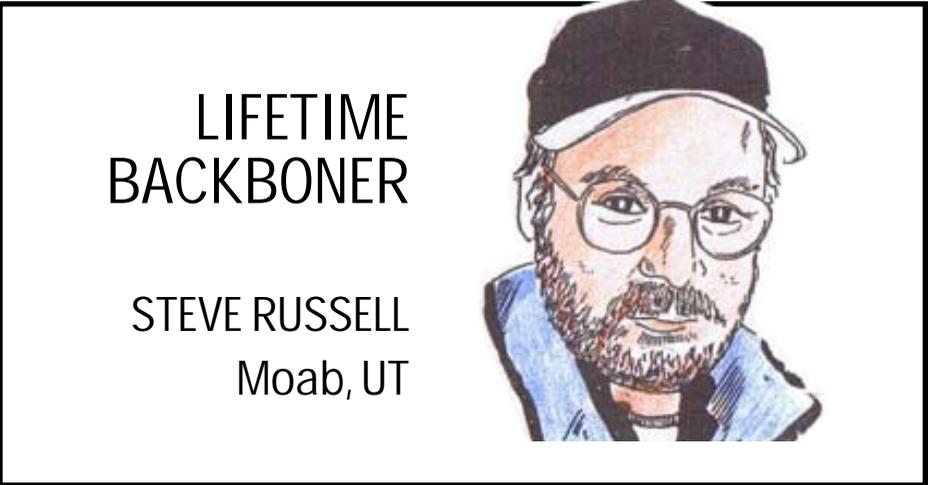
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LIFETIME BACKBONER

STEVE RUSSELL
 Moab, UT

A STORY OF TWO PRAIRIE GRAVES

JIM STILES

One frenzied afternoon in Moab, more than 20 years ago, the crush of tourists, the asphalt-enhanced desert heat, and the already disturbing first hints of a “New West” future driven by an ‘amenities economy’ got the better of me. I loaded the car, grabbed my camping gear and scurried out of town as fast as my ‘63 Volvo would carry me. I drove north to Crescent Junction and paused for reflection. I needed a change of scenery.

Left or right? I couldn’t decide. Maybe north to Jackson, I considered, but the tourist onslaught up there made our own invasion look mild. And then there was all that damn traffic. Or I could go west to the basin and range country, to the emptiness of eastern Nevada.

But as I stared at the map, I felt irresistibly drawn by the call of the prairie—the high plains of eastern Colorado and west Kansas. The thought of that vast wide-open country appealed to me on some level I couldn’t explain. I’d

always loved the lonely expanse of the plains, the domed sky with its magnificent late afternoon thunderheads. I loved its remoteness.

For me, the prairie has never been, as it is for most, a place to simply get through—to endure—on the way to someplace else. I decided to find a quiet corner and linger for a while. And so I spent a week wandering its straight-arrow back roads and appreciating its limitless views and unpredictable weather and its sun-bleached history of abandoned farms and rusted out tractors and broken dreams. I’ve come back again and again, to the place so many want to avoid. Maybe that’s what appeals to me.

It’s a hard place to live or at least it used to be. Maybe the difference between Great Plains residents and the rest of the country is that they still remember how tough Life could be. As a result, they bear a deep respect for its fragile and temperamental nature—even its violent unforgiving side. They seem to take it in stoic stride.



On the far eastern side of the cemetery lay the ‘have nots.’ A row of flat markers separated the poor from the more prosperous, even in death. One small marker only read, “Mrs. McCready.” She may have worked as a servant, or a nanny. She may have been entrusted with the care of a child. And yet, apparently, no one even knew her first name.

This year’s weather has been brutal, from coast to coast. From the tornados in Alabama and Missouri, to the floods along the Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, to record setting temperatures across two-thirds of the nation. On the plains, drought and unrelenting heat have persisted for months. Crops are in jeopardy of being lost, cattle are dying, but you’d be hard pressed to find someone complaining about it. They all remember the Dust Bowl or stories about those “worst hard times,” passed down from generation to generation. Whatever we are suffering through now, with the heat and the tornados and the flooding, most people of the Plains know that, no matter how bad it gets, it’s nothing compared to what it once was.

One day last summer, we were headed to the plains on a blistering hot July day. On the way, the air conditioning quit on my car, but we pushed on, somehow tolerating the 100+ degree weather. By the second day, the heat was intense but luckily, we found a mechanic in Clayton, New Mexico who quickly spotted the problem. Lorenzo replaced the belt in 30 minutes and we were on our way again. Now we could once again appreciate the grandeur of the prairie from inside our little all-wheel-drive, air cooled cocoon.

We were exploring back roads on the High Plains, looking for nothing in particular, when Tonya said, “Turn right up here; let’s see where it goes.” The road shrank to two tracks and meandered a bit over a dry creek bed and into the sunburnt prairie. We followed it, just as the sun was starting to set. At 9 PM, it was still over 95 degrees.

We found a cemetery. Although we were miles from nowhere, it was still being cared for. A fence kept out the cattle and what passed for grass had been recently mowed. As we wandered among the gravestones, we were hard pressed to find anyone who had been buried here more recently than 40 years ago. Yet somebody still remembered this place enough to maintain it.

Like all cemeteries, the markers told us a story. We came to recognize the prominent families, both by the number of stones and the quality of the monuments. Even now, it was clear to see who were the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots.’ We could see who had managed to live long enough to become the patriarchs and matriarchs and whose lives had been cut short.

On the far eastern side of the cemetery lay the ‘have nots.’ A row of flat markers separated the poor from the more prosperous, even in death. One small marker only read, “Mrs. McCready.” She may have worked as a servant, or a nanny. She may have been entrusted with the care of a child. And yet, apparently, no one even knew her first name.

And we found many children’s graves. One small marker was especially moving. It said:

*ERNEST ALEXANDER, JR
FEB. 4, 1925 – FEB. 9, 1927*

*ERNEST ALEXANDER, JR.
DEC. 4, 1927 – DEC. 7, 1927*

At first we were puzzled by the two shared names. But then, as we examined the dates more closely, it became painfully apparent what had happened. Ernest Alexander and his wife had given birth to young Ernest, Jr. during the cold winter of 1925. He had only managed to live two years and the Alexanders had buried their infant son out here on this wide lonely plain. Barely a month later, Mrs. Alexander became pregnant again. She gave birth to another son on December 4, 1927, and they named him Ernest Jr. as well. He lived three days. He was buried beside his brother and a common stone was placed over them both.

We searched in vain for the grave-stones of the parents but could find neither—perhaps the pain of losing two sons in ten months was more than they could endure and they left the country. I guess we will never know.

As we walked through the dry grass and closed the cemetery gate, we could barely imagine the hardships these people had endured; the land still looks much as it did then, but to imagine living there without the conveniences of the 21st Century, when we were truly honest with ourselves, was a sobering proposition.

Many of us talk about getting “back to the Land,” or of living a pastoral life we seek only for its gentle simplicity. We refer to ‘wilderness’ in such poetic, grand terms, but we never fully appreciate the brutal unforgiving wildness—the nature of Nature—and the burdens and hardships and tragedies our ancestors faced and accepted along the way.

I remember the lines from T.K. Whipple. He wrote:

“Our forefathers had civilization inside themselves, the wild outside. We live in the civilization they created, but within us the wilderness still lingers. What they dreamed, we live, and what they lived, we dream.”

We turned back onto the main gravel road, cranked up the air conditioning, and headed north.






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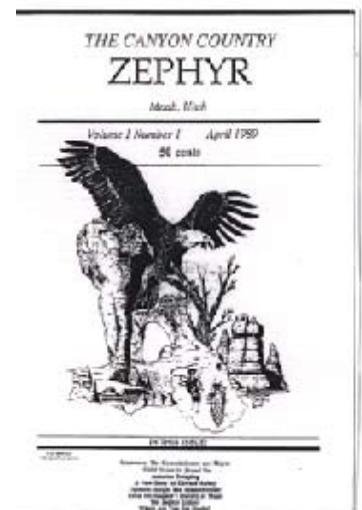
who, each issue, manages to move The Zephyr into cyber-space, without causing the editor to have a nervous breakdown.



The first issue of THE CANYON COUNTRY ZEPHYR went to press on March 14, 1989. It contained Ed Abbey's last original story.

We have a small cache of that first issue available for purchase.

\$55 including postage.



Arth Chaffin & Cass Hite

The Adventures of Two Colorado River Pioneers

By Barry Scholl

In the annals of southern Utah history, September 17, 1946 was a day to be remembered. With proper pomp and circumstance—even the San Juan County High School Band—the Hite Ferry was dedicated. With the completion of the ferry it was now possible to travel by automobile all the way from Hanksville, across the Colorado River to White Canyon and onward to Blanding. The opening of Arth Chaffin's homemade ferry represented the first vehicle crossing between Greenriver, Utah (for years, the name was generally written as a single word) and Lee's Ferry, Arizona.

Pioneer riverman Harry Aleson was the first speaker of the day. Before a crowd of 400, including Bishop E.P. Pectol of Torrey, southeastern Utah pioneer Zeke Johnson, Utah State Roads Commissioner K.C. Wright, and Utah Governor Herbert Maw, Aleson described the effort that had gone into making the ceremony possible.

"For years Arthur Chaffin's ranch was unquestionably the most isolated in the United States. He lived 120 miles from the nearest railroad and his nearest neighbor downstream on the Colorado was at Lee's Ferry, 162 miles distant. The next neighbor on the river was the Bright Angel Trail, 251 miles away in the bottom of the Grand Canyon. His third nearest neighbor was my father's son, who lived at MY HOME, Arizona, 442 miles away in the bottom of the mile-deep Grand Canyon.

"Arthur Chaffin's ranch is still isolated—it is 70 miles from the nearest community—but today automobiles can reach the region, cross the river on the ferry, and continue on through Utah's most colorful and primeval region, thanks to Governor Herbert B. Maw and the Utah State Department of Publicity."

Hard as it is to believe today, only 50 years ago one-tenth of Utah was cut off from automobile traffic, a region of scenic wonders known to only a few prospectors, adventurers and cattlemen. After years of what historian/journalist Barbara Ekker described as "construction work, sleepless nights, borrowed equipment, begged funds and sheer hard work," Chaffin managed to almost single-handedly improve the road from Hanksville down North Wash to Glen Canyon, thereby opening the area to vehicles and tourists.



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Historical Hite

Long before that day, Hite was already a popular river ford, its gravel bottom and relatively broad banks providing the best—and, at times of high water, the only—crossing between Moab and Lee's Ferry, a distance of 300 river miles.

In 1883, prospector Cass Hite—a colorful, romantic figure known as Hosteen Pish-la-keen, or "Mr. Silver Hunter" to his Navajo friends, crossed the Colorado here and carved his name on a nearby cliff face to record his arrival. Hite's reputation as a tough character was already widespread, and stories circulated throughout the river community that he had been a former member of Quantrill's Civil War Raiders, or at the very least a cattle and horse thief on the run from his crimes.

In hindsight, it seems more likely that Cass Hite was simply a larger-than-life figure who enjoyed his notoriety and did nothing to discourage others from spreading his legend. Thirty-five years old when he arrived in the Colorado River country, Hite was already a veteran prospector who had roamed all over the West in search of riches. In 1879, his travels landed

him in Monument Valley, where two silver hunters, Merrick and Mitchell, had recently been killed while seeking a fabled Navajo silver mine. Undaunted, Hite befriended the



renowned but notoriously touchy Navajo chief Hoskaninni.

Hite spent the next several years pressing Hoskaninni to reveal the location of the mine. Hoskaninni, who had defied the government's attempts to force his people into exile had, in 1863, led a small band of followers and relatives into exile on rugged Navajo Mountain. Despite the almost complete absence of wild game and the constant fears of recapture, Hoskaninni refused to give in to Kit Carson and the U.S. Army. It wasn't until the government finally allowed the Navajo to return home from New Mexico's Bosque Redondo in 1868 that Hoskaninni and his followers finally left their refuge.

So it's not terribly surprising that Hite was unsuccessful in attempting to pry the secret from his friend. Hoskaninni undoubtedly understood what would happen to his people if prospectors began flooding into the country. He also had good reason to fear what his fellow

Navajos would do to him if he spoke too freely with this obsessive character. With his recent years of furtive living undoubtedly still fresh in his memory, he strongly suggested Hite go elsewhere—in fact, he offered to show him a place where gold was deposited in abundance.

Sensing that this was the best and likely the only offer he was going to get, Hite agreed. The two left Monument Valley, forded the San Juan River, went down White Canyon past today's Natural Bridges National Monument, and ended at the Colorado River.

"There," Hoskaninni said, motioning toward the oxbow bend in the river below. "That's where you'll find your riches."

When Cass Hite arrived on September 19, 1883, the Dandy Crossing area had a population of one, Joshua Swett, a horse thief whose activities antedated the heyday of Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch, who also made use of the canyon, by almost two decades. But Hite thought Swett's illicit activities would draw too much attention to the area and perhaps bring unwanted competition from other miners, so Swett was invited to take his activities elsewhere. Such was Hite's burgeoning reputation that Swett apparently complied with only mild protestations. Not wanting to waste materials, Hite promptly moved Swett's small (9'x12') cabin downriver from Tracheyte Creek and reassembled it closer to the river, where the three-building "town" of Hite would soon spring up. The notched-leg cabin remained at that site until the waters of Lake Powell inundated the site in the 1960s.



When Cass Hite arrived on September 19, 1883, the Dandy Crossing area had a population of one, Joshua Swett, a horse thief whose activities antedated the heyday of Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch, who also made use of the canyon, by almost two decades.

After only two years, word of Hite's activities began to spread to the outside world, and Dandy Crossing, so known because it was a dandy place to cross the river, became the unlikely center of a mining boom. Hundreds of prospectors began seeking the fine flour gold of the Colorado River and in July, 1889 a post office was established at Hite, with John Hite, Cass's brother, named the first postmaster, a position he held until 1914 when waning interest (and lack of success) doomed the mining boom, and the post office was shuttered. As recently as the 1950s, the stone foundation of the Hite post office was still visible.

Even while the boom was going strong, Glen Canyon and the Colorado River presented unique difficulties. The nearest town on a railroad line was Greenriver, 120 miles away, which meant that a week was required to haul equipment in with a wagon and a

team of horses. The roads in and out were kidney-busters, even by the standards of the time; and capital was always in short supply.

This last point was a particular problem for Cass Hite. There was gold in the bars above the river deposited there by ice-age gravels, but in order to wash it out, it was first necessary to construct ditches, a flume and a 50-foot-high trestle to convey water to his workings. In 1891, he formed the Good Hope Mining Company and sold stock in Denver to raise needed funds for his workings at Ticaboo Canyon. Alfred Kohler, a competing prospector who seemed to have spent most of his time loafing in Greenriver, formed his own company with a similar name, apparently hoping to fool investors. But Hite traveled to Denver and took out newspaper ads exposing the hoax, a response that infuriated Kohler.

Cass Hite had a town cabin near the Gammage Rooming House in Greenriver, and it was almost inevitable that he and Kohler would cross paths. In September, 1891, when Hite returned from Denver, he was met at the Greenriver railway station by two friends who warned him that Kohler was lying for him. Disregarding their pleas, he strolled over to the Gammage Rooming House, where Kohler, armed with a rifle, sat on the porch with two friends.

Hite and Kohler exchanged angry words, and Kohler snapped off a shot from his Winchester, narrowly missing Hite's head. In a 1966 interview with P.T. Reilly, Arthur Chaffin, who later knew Hite well when both were on the Colorado, described the scene that ensued:

Hite's reputation as a badman was not totally unfounded, according to Chaffin; prospectors Bill Kimball and Alonzo Turner had reported witnessing him shoot a pistol from a man's hand, Hollywood-style, in an earlier altercation. Sitting on the porch across from Kohler, Hite's aim was more direct. According to Chaffin, he wore a seven-inch holster with a modified .45 whose barrel had been sawed down to one inch; all Hite had to do was swing his belt holster up and fire through the bottom.

According to one account, both Hite and Kohler fired five times, but this seems unlikely given Hite's skill as a marksman and the close quarters; more likely only two or three shots were exchanged before Kohler tumbled out of his chair mortally wounded and his two accomplices fled the scene, one of them wounded in the buttock by a hurry-up shot from Hite's pistol. Following the shooting, Hite walked back to his cabin, where he was soon picked up by the sheriff.

Hite and his two friends were tried for murder, beginning February 27, 1892. On March 10, a hung jury was dismissed as Hite's companions were exonerated. On October 13, Hite was re-tried in Provo before an all-Mormon jury. He was sentenced to 12 years in the state penitentiary on October 15, 1892. Less than a year into his sentence, he was diagnosed with what was considered a terminal case of tuberculosis. Through the efforts of his brother, he was pardoned on November 29, 1893 by Governor Caleb W. West.

Cass Hite was transported to Hanksville by a freighter, where friends nursed him back to health. According to local stories, the formerly stocky man weighed little more than 100 pounds when he began his convalescence.

Hite never forgot the treatment he had received at the hands of the justice system, and he vowed he would remain for the rest of his life in the canyons of the Colorado. A second mining boom, coinciding roughly with the national depression of 1893, brought in yet another wave of gold hunters. Uncomfortable with the growing crowds, Hite left behind his namesake settlement and moved 14 miles downriver to Ticaboo, where he built a cabin a mile or so upriver. There he cultivated Concord grapes and watermelons, as well as other crops, on his three-acre plot.

Hite remained true to his word and never again left his ranch at Ticaboo for more than a few days. He died in 1914 and was buried near his cabin by fellow river men Bert Loper, Alonzo Turner and his brother John. By then, the second gold boom was over with only rusting mining relics, abandoned cabins and inscriptions carved by lonely prospectors on the rock walls to remind the few river visitors about what had transpired only a few years before. All of these relics were inundated by Glen Canyon dam. Today, Hite's gravesite is under several hundred feet of water.



A modern-day pioneer

For a few years after Hite's death, the "Dandy Crossing" environs was virtually deserted. Prospector Frank Lawler held the property for a few years, then sold it to Tom Humphries. In 1924, Humphries sold the Hite ranch to the Snow Brothers of Richfield. Oren Snow sold the property to Arthur L. Chaffin of Wayne County in 1934.

Chaffin may well have known the upper end of Glen Canyon better than any other single explorer. In 1902-03, he had operated a trading post at Camp Stone, 45 miles below Hite, where he became acquainted with Chief Hoskaninni, who was by then reputedly more than one hundred years old. During this period, Chaffin devoted much of his time to exploring slot canyons, building small boats from whatever material he found at abandoned mining sites, and trying to devise new methods of placer mining for gold.

After he left the trading post, Chaffin prospected with his brothers and the legendary William "Billy"

Hay, an Irish immigrant who had reputedly run with the Wild Bunch before being afflicted with gold fever. After none of the group's prospects panned out, he moved to Nevada and tried his luck gold mining there. In 1933, with gold prices on the rise, he returned to his beloved stone canyons and tried his hand once again at extracting the elusive Colorado River riches.

The few visitors who found themselves at this "end-of-the-road" site in those years described Hite as an "oasis in the desert." On their comfortable ranch, Arth and his first wife, Phoebe, cultivated wine grapes, peaches, watermelons, figs, pears, almonds, peanuts, pomegranates and dates. Because Hite was located at a relatively low altitude (3300') and sheltered by cliffs, the ranch boasted a nine-month growing season, something unheard of in that part of southern Utah.

By the mid-1940's, Chaffin's crazy idea of opening a tourist route into the Natural

Bridges National Monument and from there onward to Monument Valley and the communities of far southeastern Utah had begun to seem just a little less delusional. His repeated visits to the Governor's office and the Utah Department of Publicity and Industrial Development (PID), which at first seemed an exercise in futility, had begun to pay off with officials. Where formerly Hite had been considered little more than an historical footnote (the 1941 edition of the WPA-funded *Utah: A Guide to the State* devoted a single dismissive paragraph to the site and its single inhabitant, Arthur Chaffin,) the state of Utah now began to take a little more active interest in "opening up" the remote and scenic White Canyon country. Chaffin had found one firm ally in Ora Bundy, then-head of the state publicity department, who allocated the initial \$10,000 for the automobile route that would eventually become Utah State Highway 95.

On that September morning in 1946, with the surrounding cliffs glowing in the late-summer sun and the sounds of speakers occasionally drowned out by the calls of Chaffin's nearby flock of peahens, the assembled dignitaries focused much of their speechmaking on Utah's rush to attract throngs of tourists and their much-desired dollars. The comments of Arthur Crawford, of the State Commission of Publicity and Industrial Development, were typical:

"Utah with its rich lore of pioneer background is at last emerging from what President Roosevelt called the 'horse and buggy days,' to claim its share of tourists and of world travelers who seek out the lands of legend and of story—the quiet beauty spots of the world, the last frontiers of loneliness."

Governor Maw was even more direct in his push for what later became known as Industrial Tourism (some things in Utah never change):

"Ever since I can remember I have heard men and women talk as we have talked here on the stand today about the beauties of Utah, and some day it was going to be the one spot where the tourists would come from all over the world. I've heard them tell about the foresight of Brigham Young stopping up there at the top of Immigration (sic) Canyon and saying, 'This is the Place,' and the more I see, the more I am convinced that all those statements are true. But what chance has a tourist got to see any of it? Now when you come right down to it, so far as I am able to see, neither the state nor our counties nor our cities have down anything up to date to make it possible for tourists to see anything that we actually have."

"It has been necessary for the state government and the county governments and the city governments to put their road building money into highways to get from town to town. They have never had an opportunity to develop these scenic areas. The only places a tourist could really visit in Utah now if they come here are the Temple Square in Salt Lake City, which is well advertised and was built up by the church that most of us belong to; and Bryce Canyon and Zion Canyon, which were built up by the Federal Government and the Union Pacific Railroad Company. But where else can a tourist go who comes to Utah unless he gets on a horse and goes into the wilds?"

Maw's final point is an interesting one even today, but unfortunately the country has been so transformed by his beloved improvements that few of us will have an opportunity to experience the country of southern Utah as it was only a few years ago—wild and unimproved.

At two p.m., when the speechmakers were at last exhausted and the cold drinks dispensed, Governor Maw's car was tugged across the river to the San Juan County side on the ferry Chaffin had constructed from the engine and chassis of a Model A Ford, as well as a wooden platform and a steel guide cable. On the return trip, a "wedding ceremony" was conducted with Chaffin, Zeke Johnson and E.P. Pectol pledging their continued cooperation in pursuit of "further development of roads through the scenic wonders of Utah and the building up of the glorious state of Utah."

Today, one can only speculate about how the three would feel, now that Utah has been "built up" beyond their wildest dreams.

Chaffin sold his ferry in 1956, disgusted by the Bureau of Reclamation's plan to build a giant reservoir and flood out his holdings. In 1965, he filed suit against the federal government, which had taken several of his patented claims in Glen Canyon under the law of Eminent Domain. On January 7, 1966, a jury awarded Arthur and Della Chaffin \$8,000 recompensation for their lost holdings on Good Hope Bar—about four times what the government had initially offered. With court costs, however, the settlement was eaten up, and the Chaffins were, by all accounts, disgusted with their treatment at the hands of the justice system.

The Chaffin Ferry, which for 18 years had capably provided vehicle transportation at Hite, made its last official run on June 5, 1964. Four days earlier, the elevation at Lake Powell had stood at 3435.8 feet. The reservoir (it's not a lake and should never be referred to as such, except when absolutely necessary) had been rising between 2 and 3.5 feet per day during the first week in June. The elevation at the Hite Ferry was 3447 feet. According to the official Bureau of Reclamation report, "The still water of Lake Powell is expected to reach Hite Ferry sometime after the fifth of June."

Today, the ferry site lies under 250 feet of stagnant water.

The parallels between Arthur Chaffin and Cass Hite are fascinating. Both men worked to develop the country they loved and then found themselves displaced by growing crowds. Both were described as outgoing and generous with close friends, but retiring and somewhat shy in public. Both were, at heart, loners who preferred solitary pursuits in the canyons of the Colorado River to the company of strangers. Both considered themselves victims of the legal system and came to distrust lawyers and courts. Both saw their dreams disappear; Hite never fully recovered from his debilitating bout with tuberculosis, and Chaffin watched with increasing apprehension as the river he had loved and dreamed of sharing with fellow desert rats disappeared beneath the waters of Powell Reservoir.

But at one time, both men found happiness at the Dandy Crossing on the Colorado.

BARRY SCHOLL lives in Salt Lake City.

VLACHOS' VIEWS

America through the lens of PAUL VLACHOS

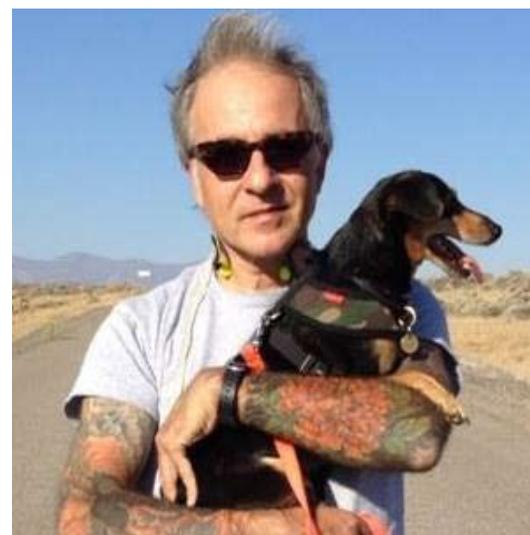


Cars get dirty everywhere in different ways. This is a drive-through car wash in Coney Island, New York City. Coney Island is not just a waterfront amusement park, which is rapidly disappearing, by the way. It's also a neighborhood on the Lower Bay of New York City. A lot of hardworking people live there, including many Russians. I believe that this place is run by Russians, but I'm not sure. Whoever owns it needs to hire a spellchecker. I'm also of the mind that, whenever you see a sign like this, it's a reflection of every past possible disaster that could have happened, hence the liability list printed here AFTER you make the turn into it, but BEFORE you pay for your wash. I went through at night and paid what they refer to in another sign as "Night Prices." A nice touch



This is my kind of car wash. Self-serve. No muss, no fuss, nobody bothering me, nobody to talk with unless you want to take your chances and talk to the person in the next bay, at your own risk. I like the satisfaction of hosing down my own vehicle. I like the concept of a "foaming brush" and I like to wield it. I like the whole experience, except for one thing - I always seem to get my shoes wet. I must be too impulsive and sloppy in my technique. Before my faithful canine, Elko, died this past October, I'd always shut the windows and leave him in the truck while I washed it. I'd peep in and see him sitting in there, watching everything I did. I actually did not use this particular wash-it-yourself car wash, but I hope to the next time I happen to pass through Paso Robles, California.

This is a detail - a large one, but still a detail - from the sign for a diner near what used to be called the Yonkers Raceway, from my home town, just 14 miles and a billion light years north of Midtown Manhattan. I'm not into dog or pony races, so I never went there but, whenever I told someone I was from Yonkers, they would - without fail - say "Oh? The Raceway, right?" at which I would say "Yup" and move on, brushing off the psychic debris that always manages to linger in the creases of my wardrobe. Not a bad place to grow up, Yonkers, but I don't often return to visit. Let's just put it that way. anyway, I like this sign. What else, really, do you need in life? I could answer that, but I won't right now.

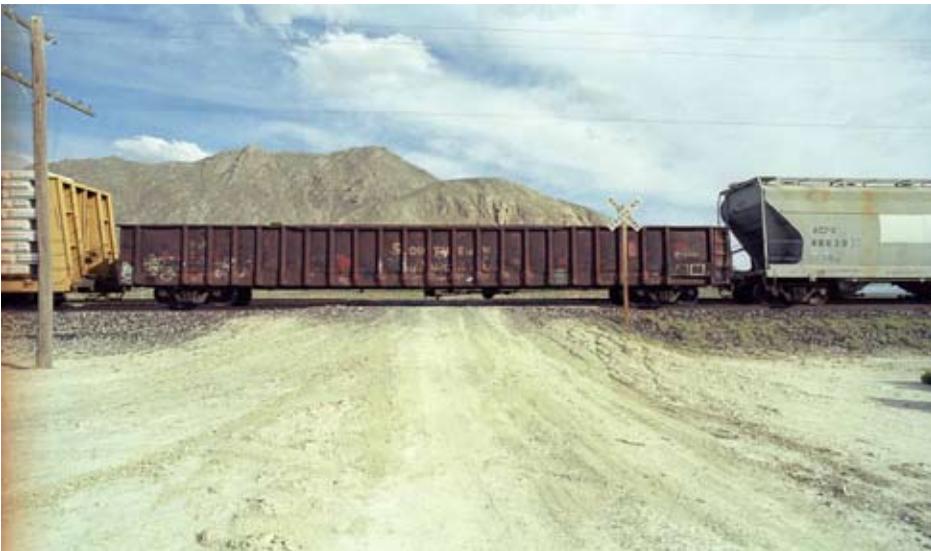


PAUL VLACHOS
lives in
New York City

JOIN THE ZEPHYR BACKBONE...
(Before It's Too Late.)



West Texas two-lane road. A broken down drive-in liquor store. A car parked in front for what appears to have been decades, doing the majestic super-slow rust dance, and weeds, weeds, weeds. Tall Texas weeds to go with the rest of the tableau.



On the one side of this photo - the side I took this photo from, you have the edge of the Black Rock Desert playa, circa 1999. I have never gone to Burning Man, nor do I care to go, but I do like to visit the playa and commune with the unseen, buried mastodon bones which occasionally rise up from the playa muck during the wet season. I like getting that fine playa dust in my vehicle because it never leaves and then, 2 years later, sitting in New York City traffic, I'll brush my pinky finger in the seam of a car seat and get a little bead of that white dust, then be mentally transported back to this, one of my favorite places on earth. Why I like it so much? Because of a few things. First, the playa, itself, in all it's silent glory. Second, the promise of either going up towards Soldier Meadow or over the mountain to Denio, or possibly up to Cedarville, California and points north, in Eastern Oregon. The playa is a cosmic transportation hub if you're into nature, history or hot springs. And finally, I'm into it for what's on the other side of this busy freight line - a narrow, tire-busting road that leads to an abandoned town called Sulphur. But, more to the point, and about 300 years from the tracks, a ditch filled with bentonite clay and hot water, beautiful hot water that you can soak in and forget about the rest of the world. It's a nice place.



We were actually heading for The Maze, Peggy and I but, given my spiritual bond to Hanksville, I could not pass up an opportunity to take a photo of this sign, along with The Mighty Wagoneer, which had a bent

belt pulley at this point in our travels. I think I had more gas in the tank, also, at this point, than at any other time in my history. You could have stuck your finger in the filler tube and felt it. 30 miles down the track to Hans Flat, I dumped my 5 gallon reserve can down there. We were ready for an intergalactic



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ALSO JOINING THE BACKBONE!
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 and thanks to John Zarndt, Bozeman WI...
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HELP? We REALLY need your support. PLEASE Join the BACKBONE

THE BACKBONE...Aug/Sept. 2015

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Ellensburg WA

THANKS ALSO TO...
 Timothy Hurley...Rio Rancho NM
 Ginette Ethier...Montreal Quebec

THE ZEPHYR BACKBONE DECEMBER '15...JANUARY 2016

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The WATCHERS

POKING THROUGH THE RUINS #1 THE THOMPSON SPRINGS DEPOT

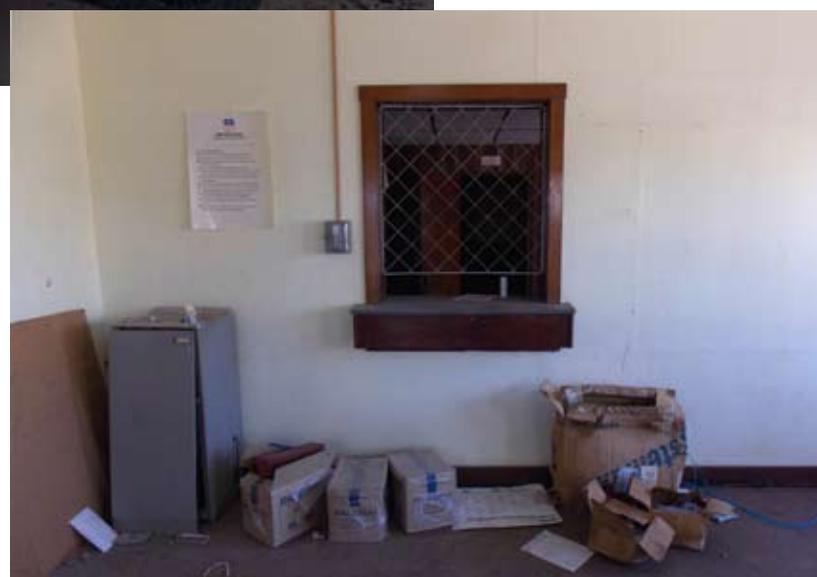


Without fanfare, it was reported recently that the Union Pacific railroad had torn down the old depot in Thompson Springs, Utah, 35 miles north of Moab. The station hadn't been used in years and had fallen into disrepair, though it still seemed structurally sound when I wandered into the old station and took these photographs in June 2014. Thompson Springs was the last 'flagstop' on the Amtrak line. In the late 1990s, the station was shut down and passengers were required to catch the train in Green River.

In mid-January crews started removing asbestos and demolishing the old station. By February, it was just another pile of debris...JS



Exterior and Interior views of the Thompson Springs Railroad Depot in June 2014.



Longtime Moabite TERRY KNOUFF was on the Amtrak Zephyr, hoping to take a few photographs of the old depot. This is what he found instead

