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**Outsiders in Red Rock Country: The Kaiparowits Project
and the Reputation of American Environmentalism**

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

CENTRE FOR AMERICAN STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF KENT

JUNE 2018

Abstract

This dissertation interrogates the ways in which a series of critical newspapers, federal agencies, and private industries sought to re-shape and negatively frame the public image of post-war conservation and environmental groups in Utah and the Intermountain West. It traces, through a series of environmental-energy conflicts located around southern Utah's Kaiparowits Plateau, how commentators employed attacks on public image to de-legitimise and contain what was seen as the escalating spread of a political and cultural force: environmentalism. Beginning in the early 1950s and proceeding through much of the United States' 'environmental decade,' I detail the mutating nature and variable efficacy of these attacks as environmentalists were alternately associated with Communism, Middle Eastern oil cartels, and the counterculture. Recognising environmental groups as co-producers in this shifting public image, I also account for their counter-attempts at defending their reputations using advertising, photography, and promotional materials. This project offers a revisionist approach to standard narratives of the ascendancy of environmental organisations. Historical accounts have typically focused on the increasing competency, professionalism, and popularity of these advocacy groups. However, few explorations have focused on the way public understandings of the movement were shaped by a range of hostile critics that constructed environmentalists in a series of decidedly pejorative frames. I argue that even as several environmental organisations achieved increased political access and potency in the years 1950-1980, their reputations in the same period experienced a comparable decline. This resultant divisive reputation in the Intermountain states would come to play a central factor in the movement's subsequent loss of political and cultural agency in the region in the 1980s.

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Introduction:

“Did you know that the Devil is an environmentalist?”

The Spectre of Environmentalism

In March 1976, Jim Carrico was being interviewed for the magazine *New Times* about the impact of the 1973 energy crisis on southern Utah’s rural communities. Carrico was flipping hamburgers at his restaurant, the Circle Drive-in, on the edge of the small Utah town of Kanab. He and his friends had recently established a local protest group, A.L.I.V.E. - the American League for Industry and Vital Energy - to promote the construction of further coal-fired power plants in southern Utah and the southwestern United States. As he detailed his plans for the revival of the ailing American energy industry, Carrico made repeated digressions in which he charged a set of national environmental groups with conspiring to keep the United States dependent upon Middle Eastern oil. Carrico was particularly angered by a recent gathering of environmental organisations near Kanab. The environmental summit, spearheaded by

Californian conservationists the Sierra Club, had excluded locals but openly welcomed Hollywood celebrities Dennis Hopper and Robert Redford. Carrico was planning to sue two participating organisations, the Club and the Environmental Defense Fund, believing a lawsuit would alert the wider public about the *true* agenda of the environmental movement. He planned to raise money for his legal challenge through local raffles and quilt sales.¹

Eighteen months after Carrico made his remarks to the *New Times*, future poet and conservationist Terry Tempest Williams was starting her career as a teacher at the strictly religious Carden School in Salt Lake City. Williams, embracing the decade's drive for cetacean protection, was brought in for a disciplinary meeting. Mr. and Mrs. Jeffs, the school's owners, were not enthused that Williams had encouraged her primary school children to listen to the calls of humpbacks and mimic their movements in the classroom. Ushered into the small headmistress' office, Mrs. Jeffs quietly stated, "Mrs. Williams, we have one question for you, and you had better think hard before you answer it." After a long pause came the drawn-out question: "Are you an e n v i r o n m e n t a l i s t?" to which Williams affirmatively responded. The young Williams had not been prepared for that question, nor did she anticipate the next. Mr. Jeffs leaned in and asked, "Did you know that the Devil is an environmentalist?" This was no joke. The merest association with organised expressions of environmental sympathy was apparently enough to see Williams fired, if only temporarily. Her rehiring was contingent upon the subsequent agreement: she never let her children know what she was, and never used the word 'environmentalism' in her lessons.²

¹ Michael Parfit, 'Showdown at Kaiparowits', *New Times*, 2 April 1976, pp. 51-52. Press clipping. Frank E. Moss Papers, Ms 146, Box 617. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

² The spaced emphasis on the word "environmentalist" here is Williams's own. See: Terry Tempest Williams, *When Women Were Birds: Fifty-four Variations on Voice* (New York: Picador, 2013), pp. 82-83.

The following work is concerned with stories like these, tales that suggest identifying with one of many organised 'environmental' labels in parts of Utah and the Intermountain West had, by the mid-1970s, become a precarious practice. Exploring anxieties similar to those expressed by the Jeffs and Jim Carrico, the thesis traces the ways in which Intermountain residents promoted new images of environmental groups, presenting them as dangerous outsiders and subversive forces. References to environmentalism as a culturally corrupting power would proliferate between 1950 and 1980, appearing in editorials and letters in the Intermountain press, in newspaper headlines, in corporate pamphlets, in questionnaires, and in private correspondence to the region's political class. In southern Utah, children were taken on trips into the dense, corrugated canyons and warned about the misguided policies of the Sierra Club. Critics invaded environmental conferences screaming threats at senior environmental leaders. Effigies of environmental orators were constructed and burned in protest for cheering crowds.

Even as environmentalists and their organisational agendas remained poorly understood by vocal critics, growing public discourse about the movement ensured 'environmentalism' in Utah would become a hotly debated, distorted construct. In a manner that recalled the anti-Communist hysteria of the late 1950s, the image of the environmental movement in the state was embellished and reshaped. It became in the eyes of many something considerably stronger, more culturally threatening, and politically potent than it truly was. Often, accusations failed to consider – or were simply unaware of – the movement's messier realities and contradictions. The complex internal politics of environmental groups, and the way members often strained against their own organisations' evolving agendas and existing policies saw little reference. The widely disparate core concerns, professional specialties, and

historical and geographical foci of individual environmental organisations were often missed, misinterpreted, or ignored.

In 1982, Intermountain anxieties would graduate to the national stage when Republicans in the House of Representatives published an internal report entitled 'The Specter of Environmentalism.'¹ Incorporating environmental identity into the initial salvos of the culture war, contemporary environmentalists were characterised as 'extremists.'¹ Their intentions were framed as only tangentially interested in environmental matters. The report argued that environmental organisations housed the increasingly radicalised remains of the 1960s counterculture.³ It also claimed these groups contained the last remnants of America's protest decade, and charged them with an ill-defined set of nefarious objectives.⁴ Although written following the emergence of radical environmental group Earth First!, 'The Specter of Environmentalism' placed longstanding, mainstream organisations under its critical gaze. Both the National Wildlife Federation and National Audubon Society caught its attention, although the report singled out the Sierra Club, branding the Californians as a 'crypto-political outfit,' and the predominant threat to public order. The sole dissenting voice from within the party over the report came from Republican representative Robert E. Badham of California. Badham only expressed doubts because he felt the authors had debased themselves by stooping to the same level of 'nasty rhetoric as the environmentalists.'⁵

³ James Morton Turner, *The Promise of Wilderness: American Environmental Politics since 1964* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), p. 223; John Wills, *Conservation Fallout: Nuclear Protest at Diablo Canyon* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006), p. 10.

⁴ James Morton Turner, "'The Specter of Environmentalism': Wilderness, Environmental Politics, and the New Right', *Journal of American History*, 96 (2009), 123-148 (p. 123).

⁵ 'GOP group warns of "specter of environmentalism"', *Arizona Republic*, 8 March 1982, p. A10; 'GOP report labels environmentalists as selfish extremists', *Arizona Republic*, 8 April 1982, p. A19.

Whilst fear helped instigate these characterisations, it was not the sole catalyst. Creating a negative image of environmental groups and individuals was just as frequently driven by economic or political rationales. Conservationists, through their critiques of the widely accepted post-war commitments to 'growth' and 'progress' threatened the belief that an increasingly prosperous, bountiful existence was on the horizon. In doing so, they pitched their own reputations against a series of powerful federal, corporate, and private interests. These institutions had long represented themselves as the agents of positive social and cultural change through the deployment of a variety of technologies. From the hydrological stewards in the Bureau of Reclamation (1902) to the gatekeepers of electric living in the utility industry, environmental groups challenged the knowledge and foresight of such entities. Moreover, they challenged an increasingly central tenet of American cultural life: the desirability and necessity of material consumption and expansion.

It is 'reputation' that is the key word here. As sociologist Gary Alan Fine argues in his formative work on the concept, reputation is 'a socially recognized persona,' an organising principle that links the actions of a person, organisation, or institution together in a manner that appears logical.⁶ Reputation is not the opinion of any single individual but the product of many, becoming an image that is a socially shared, entrenched and established belief. Reputations become embedded in all social relationships and behaviour. Although tracing their precise impact in a way that is tangible and linear can be difficult to demonstrate, reputations have influence beyond the symbolic, representational realm. They possess economic and socio-cultural power. To possess a negative reputation is to experience curtailed social

⁶ Gary Alan Fine, *Difficult Reputations: Collective Memories of the Evil, Inept, and Controversial* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 2-3.

manoeuvrability, or in the case of an organisation, reduced ability to enact agenda.⁷ The Bureau of Reclamation promoted itself as an agency helping Westerners transcend the economic stasis imposed by environmental aridity to gain further funding and maintain influence after 1950.⁸ Southwestern electric utility executives relied on their image as the catalysts of twentieth century growth to further industry deregulation and promote corporate profit. Environmental groups have themselves had to become increasingly image conscious to maintain membership levels and organisational funding.⁹

In historical study, reputation is a noun casually employed; in sociology, it is a fully-fledged concept. I employ it here with more specificity than many historians, although my aims are distinctive from Fine's. As he notes, sociologists explore historical reputation in the pursuit of 'generalized knowledge.'¹⁰ Fine interrogates the concept hoping to discover a set of broad functions that govern the social and political manoeuvrability of public figures. From the historian's perspective, however, the hunt for commonplace rules compromises a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between period, place, and historical change. To the historian, Fine's initial work in this area, *Difficult Reputations*, appears at points to be arbitrary in its selections, jumping between centuries and spaces with abandon. A second work that explores reputation in the context of America's mid-century political landscape rectifies the former issue but retains Fine's disinterest in geography and place.¹¹

⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

⁸ See: Andrew H. Gahan and William D. Rowley, *The Bureau of Reclamation: From Developing to Managing Water, 1945-2000*, 2 vols (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2006-2012), II (2012), pp. 905-998.

⁹ This is explored in: Mark Dowie, *Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the Close of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 40-45.

¹⁰ Fine, *Difficult Reputations*, p. 3.

¹¹ See: Gary Alan Fine, *Sticky Reputations: The Politics of Collective Memory in Midcentury America* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

Several elements of this work distinguish it from research into reputation. Earlier studies into the topic of reputations have expressed scant interest in environmental politics as a sphere in which individual and organisational image is contestable, and thus vulnerable to attack.¹² This is because Fine and his peers have primarily chosen to analyse single historical figures. Their work seeks to understand how reputation functions and is created by dissecting the public trajectories of individual politicians and celebrities, but this has come at the expense of social causes and political movements.¹³ In contrast to these texts, the regional reputation of ‘environmentalism’ as an emergent political and cultural force is the central unit of analysis here. Whilst I also focus on several environmental speakers such as David Brower, Edward Abbey, and Robert Redford, dwelling exclusively upon the reputation of individual environmentalists in the Intermountain West would prove difficult. A common theme throughout the following chapters is that offering controversial environmental commentary in Utah and Arizona gave no guarantee of individual renown or infamy. All too often, critics considered the vague term ‘environmentalist’ to be a sufficient epithet, a collective label that evoked a broad constellation of negative character traits and motivations. Either through ignorance, antipathy, or perhaps even as a strategy, environmentalists seldom merited being named by their critics. The result was the deindividuation of prominent environmental speakers in both public discourse and private correspondence.

¹² Note there is extensive literature on how corporations can construct and maintain their own environmental identity, but these texts do not refer to public interest/non-profit environmental protest groups.

¹³ For the way in which reputational studies has overly relied on individuals, see: *Reconstructing Fame: Sport, Race, and Evolving Reputations*, ed. by David C. Ogden and Joel Nathan Rosen (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008); Marianne Wheeldon, *Debussy’s Legacy and the Construction of Reputation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Robert E. Kapsis, *Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Annette J. Saddik, *The Politics of Reputation: The Critical Reception of Tennessee Williams’ Later Plays* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999). Many additional sociologists who explored individual reputation had their work incorporated into Fine’s *Difficult Reputations*. Work on reputation that concerns specific social groups or organisations is few and far between. For one example, see: Timothy R. Lauger, *Real Gangstas: Legitimacy, Reputation, and Violence in the Intergang Environment* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012).

Although my work concentrates on a far greater number of individuals branded with the 'environmentalist' label, my critics are strictly drawn from Utah and northern Arizona between 1950 and 1980. Whilst this study also periodically includes the evolving national reputation of environmental groups, this second image is deployed to clarify the distinctive qualities of the regional perspective. As environmentalism achieved its national apotheosis between 1950 and the 1970s, a comparable *decline* in the image and prestige of environmental activism is evident throughout much of Utah and northern Arizona.

Even as geographic and political boundaries provide one form of definition throughout, culture lends another. One factor that influenced environmentalism's image and reputation in Utah especially was the dominance of Mormon culture. Scholars concerned with the nation's environmental decline have certainly reflected on the contentious end-point of environmentalist-Mormon encounter, although few have historicised the relationship. By the end of the twentieth century, Utah had gained its own reputation for being the state most hostile to environmental speech. In 2001, Mormon scholar George B. Handley worried that the gulf between the mainstream environmental movement and the LDS church had become so wide as to shut down even the 'possibility of dialogue.'¹⁴ Executive Director of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, Larry Young, admitted in 2003 that the Mormon Church provided no space for discourse on environmental issues.¹⁵ Two years later, conservationist and author Terry Tempest Williams extended her own analysis beyond the institutional boundaries of the church's silence, recognizing that for most Utahns, Mormonism and environmentalism had

¹⁴ George B. Handley, 'The Environmental Ethics of Mormon Belief', *Brigham Young University Studies*, 40 (2001), 187-211 (p. 187).

¹⁵ Rosemary Winters, *Being Green in the Land of the Saints* [online]. High Country News, updated May 2016 [cited 3 May 2016]. Available from: <https://www.hcn.org/issues/265/14450>.

become seen as paradoxical concepts. Williams remarked that 'many people would say that "Mormon environmentalist" is an oxymoron.'¹⁶

Discontent toward environmentalism in Utah did possess its own local peculiarities because of the region's Mormon history, but Mormonism manifests intermittently in the following investigations. The aspects of Mormonism that most influenced the reception of environmentalism and its reshaping in the region relate to two interrelated facets of Latter-day Saint society. This is prominently seen where the Mormon historical experience of persecution and exodus collides in the present over contested visions of place. There was a salient difference between a people who felt they had been forced West to subsist and carve out a workable society from the inhospitable desert, and the environmentalists who later visited only temporarily for recreation.¹⁷

While Mormon history and cultural perspectives on the purpose of landscape play a recurrent role, it is worth stating that religion has less of an obvious influence here. As noted above, the default position of the LDS church toward environmentalism has been silence, not hostility. That institutional position is mirrored in the Intermountain public's rhetoric in the post-war period; attacks against environmentalism were almost never overtly religious in their

¹⁶ *Voice in the Wilderness: Conversations with Terry Tempest Williams*, ed. by Michael Austin (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2006), p. 95. More complex theological discussions divorced from environmental politics are beyond the scope of this thesis. For commentary see: Handley, 'The Environmental Ethics', pp. 187-211 (pp. 189-196); George B. Handley, 'Faith and the Ethics of Climate Change', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 44 (2011), 6-35 (p.14); Richard C. Foltz, 'Mormon Values and the Utah Environment', *Worldviews*, 4 (2000), 1-19, (pp. 5-6, 15); Hugh Nibley, 'Brigham Young on the Environment', in *To the Glory of God: Mormon Essays on Great Issues: Environment, Commitment, Love, Peace, Youth, Man*, ed. by Truman G. Madsen and Charles D. Tate, Jr., (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), pp. 3-29.

¹⁷ See: Luke Perry and Christopher Cronin, *Mormon Politics: From Persecution to Power* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2012), p. 81; Richard V. Francaviglia, *The Mormon Landscape: Existence, Creation, and Perception of a Unique Image in the American West* (New York: AMS Press, 1978). A forthcoming monograph that looks to push forward conceptions of Mormon landscape in the context of environmental politics is: Betsy Gaines Quammen, *American Zion: Mormon Perspectives on Landscape, from Zion National Park to the Bundy Family War* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Montana State University, 2017).

expression, and critical rhetoric was rarely linked with theological justification. This is unsurprising given the period under investigation; whilst Mormons retained certain distinctive practices in the 1950s, few nationally considered the Latter-day Saints an alien people defined by bizarre beliefs. Indeed, most Mormons saw their own differences with the wider nation now largely historical, rather than contemporaneous. The notion that they were a separate 'people' had faded, and most considered themselves a part of the American mainstream.¹⁸

It is this oppositional language of separateness and the mainstream, of existing on the fringe and inhabiting the orthodoxy that provides the consistent and connective thread throughout this study. It illuminates the most persistent characterisation of environmental groups in the Intermountain region across the post-war period: that of outsiders. Environmental groups were frequently theorised by their detractors to be agents of a revolving set of regional (and later national) villains: Californian water barons, eastern industrialists, Arabic oil cartels, and the international forces of socialism. The commitment to deindividuation of environmentalists in Intermountain discourse encouraged rhetoric that was often non-specific and indulged in conspiratorial inference. Yet however nebulous and contradictory the antagonistic benefactors behind environmentalism were seen to be, they all shared the trait of being hostile, *external forces*.

Characterising environmentalists as 'outsiders' links environmentalism's initial post-war critics to other conservative intellectual and political movements resistant to societal change. The most prominent parallel example is the southerners involved in Massive Resistance in the

¹⁸ See: Jan Shippo, *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years Among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), pp. 99-100.

1950s and 1960s, who charged that civil rights campaigners were foreign and federal agitators unjustly interfering with local politics and culture.¹⁹ Equally, Intermountain rhetoric anticipates neoconservative criticism of the environmental movement that would emerge nationally in the late-1970s, as recently highlighted by historian Alex Boynton.²⁰ Such similarities not only link commentary about environmentalism in Utah and Arizona to lateral debates in other regions and at the national level. The same contours also connect events to an ongoing, more fundamental discourse about what it means to belong in America. Namely, what traits, characteristics, ethics, and beliefs constitute inclusion in the country's social, cultural, and political life. Moreover, the thesis looks at how people and communities respond when they feel this sense of belonging is threatened.

As R. Laurence Moore has noted, the writing of American historical narratives has relied, to an unusual degree, on the application of insider and outsider labels.²¹ That does not however mean that regional stories forming this ongoing discourse are all identical. The specifics of the Mormon culture region amplified anxieties about being dislodged from the mainstream. Whilst Mormon distinctiveness was fading, the LDS sense of national belonging felt hard won and comparatively recent to that of many Americans. Mormons had belatedly, and quite literally, had to change their laws and beliefs to achieve national belonging. Many felt their continued acceptance partially contingent on land-use and development practices

¹⁹ For outsider rhetoric in connection to massive resistance, see: Kevin M. Kruse, 'The Fight for "Freedom of Association": Segregationist Rights and Resistance in Atlanta', in *Massive Resistance: Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction*, ed. by Clive Webb (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 99-112 (pp. 110-111); Robbins L. Gates, *The Making of Massive Resistance: Virginia's Politics of Public School Desegregation, 1954-1965* (New York: Van Rees Press, 1964), pp. 15-16; George Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006).

²⁰ See: Alex Boynton, 'Formulating an Anti-environmental Opposition: Neoconservative Intellectuals During the Environmental Decade', *The Sixties*, 8 (2015), 1-26.

²¹ R. Laurence Moore, 'Insiders and Outsiders in American Historical Narrative and American History', *The American Historical Review*, 87 (1982) 390-412 (p. 391).

environmental groups now openly questioned.²² That these organisations possessed no public profile in 1950, but had achieved something approaching national acceptance by the late 1960s no doubt amplified Intermountain anxieties that their own insider status was being eroded by environmentalism's ascendancy.

Environmental History and Environmental Reputation

The negative reputation of environmentalism constructed by Intermountain residents in the post-war period diverges sharply from the one shaped by many environmental historians. As historian Finis Dunaway has noted, narratives of the environmental movement tend to 'emphasize the growth of local and national organizations, the contributions of key thinkers and activists, or the impact of environmentalism.'²³ Dunaway makes this statement whilst rhetorically questioning why a discussion of twentieth century environmental imagery – primarily photojournalism - has not seen equal research attention. Unfortunately, Dunaway never explicitly addresses this reflection, but the reasons for the exclusion are clear. The complicated and often contradictory messages expressed by environmental photojournalism have not easily conformed to the progressive narratives presented by early historians of US environmentalism.²⁴

US environmental histories that interrogate the emergence of the post-war environmental movement have frequently stressed evolution as the central theme. Many early canonical

²² The obvious major change here is, of course, the removal of polygamy. Chapter two of this thesis more thoroughly interrogates the ways in which Mormon mining and agricultural practices can be viewed as a reason for LDS acceptance, particularly in the context of the 1930s.

²³ Finis Dunaway, *Seeing Green: The Use and Abuse of American Environmental Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 1.

²⁴ Namely, that these images de-emphasised corporate and industrial responsibility for the United States' environmental crisis, instead placing blame on individual citizens. See: Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, p. 4.

texts on the subject focus upon the philosophical growth, escalating organisational strength, and progressively more sophisticated agenda of these groups.²⁵ North American environmental history has long grappled with the accusation it offers only declensionist narratives, but histories that concern environmental groups tend to be more hopeful, and do not neatly fit this pessimistic lens.²⁶ They stress that these organisations were enlightened. Members who initially hoped to awaken the public to the beauty of nature later sought to warn them of emergent environmental threats to the human and non-human alike. This is especially true for texts that look to the 'mainstream' conservation groups established before 1950. These organisations have typically been presented as homogenous hiking, hunting, and birdwatching clubs that transitioned away from recreational concerns toward a broadened, more overtly political agenda that incorporated concerns about human health and survival. The resultant position of these groups is what has become termed 'environmentalism.' Modernization, evolution, professionalization, and transformation provide this body of scholarship its own metanarrative. One needs only look at the subtitles of literature concerned with the movement to see the ways in which a more hopeful, progressive curve is expressed.²⁷ Environmental historians have seldom engaged with reputation as a concept

²⁵ See: Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 13-39; Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981); Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*, Revised and Updated edn. (Washington: Island Press, 2005).

²⁶ For accusations US environmental history has too simplistically presented a metanarrative of decline, see: Ted Steinberg, 'Down, Down, Down No More: Environmental History Moves Beyond Declension', *Journal of the Early Republic*, 24 (2004), 260-266; Strother E. Roberts, 'Changes in the Genre: A Brief Survey of Early Mid-Atlantic Environmental Histories', *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, 79 (2012), 345-356 (p. 346); Susan Rhoades Neel, 'A Place of Extremes: Nature, History, and the American West', *Western Historical Quarterly*, 25 (1994), 488-505 (pp. 494-495).

²⁷ See, for example: J. Brooks Flippen, *Conservative Conservationist: Russell E. Train and the Emergence of American Environmentalism* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2006); Paul S. Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); Robert W. Righter, *The Battle Over Hetch Hetchy: America's Most Controversial Dam and the Birth of Modern Environmentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Gottlieb; Char Miller, *Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism* (Washington: Island Press, 2001); Robert Lifset, *Power on the Hudson:*

directly, but collectively their works constitute an exercise in reputation building, and they have provided American environmentalism an especially positive image.²⁸

The contrast between Intermountain anti-environmental rhetoric and environmental history's treatment of *individual* environmentalists and their character is even more pronounced. Where the anti-environmental critics of Utah and Arizona frequently relied upon the idea of anonymous outsiders and deindividuation as a means of delegitimization, many environmental historians remain guilty of veering too closely toward hero worship. When environmental historian Jennifer Price began sifting through the vast historiography on Rachel Carson, the writer and biologist who warned the American public about the threat of unrestricted pesticide usage, she found it 'almost relentlessly hagiographic.' Noting Carson's own reputations cemented by more critical constituencies: hysteric, spinster, and communist, Price argued that environmental historians could still only narrowly conceive of her as a 'hero.'²⁹

These observations are in no way made to discount this body of literature, much of which is pathbreaking and makes for enlightening reading. Additionally, some scholars within this corpus have been more successful incorporating more critical responses against longstanding environmental groups into their investigations.³⁰ I do however feel the hagiographical

Storm King and the Emergence of Modern American Environmentalism (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014).

²⁸ A more recent text that refers to the evolutionary metanarrative of American environmentalism in its title, but in practice seeks to subvert the meaning behind it is Dorceta E. Taylor's monograph that explores the connections between conservation and a host of social problems, such as racism, nativism, and sexism. See: Dorceta E. Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

²⁹ Jennifer Price, 'Stop Saving the Planet! – and Other Tips via Rachel Carson for Twenty-first-Century Environmentalists', Keynote address at the plenary session of the American Society of Environmental History, 29 March 2012, Madison, Wisconsin.

³⁰ The two texts I would note for dedicating more time to this critical response would be: Mark W. T. Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement*, Weyerhaeuser Environmental

treatment of individual environmentalists and groups that comprise the movement has caused historians to ignore some important questions. For example, if the evolutionary trajectory of these groups was *internally* as painful, dramatic, and rapid as historians have suggested, then why has no one asked how *external* observers interpreted this change? Scholars have not comprehensively considered how a wary public responded to the explosive arrival of groups that outwardly positioned themselves as the vanguard of seismic social change. This omission is particularly pressing when considering how certain communities found themselves resistant to post-war conservation even before associated groups furthered their political engagement and tactics. How did more critical constituencies respond when previously recreational clubs leant toward the comparatively radical practice of environmental protest?

The reason why such questions have yet to be comprehensively asked is not altogether unclear. Many scholars of environmentalism are members of environmental groups or identify as environmentalists themselves. As such, they have – perhaps subconsciously – focused too closely upon what mainstream environmental organisations maintained an interest in and less upon how their messages were received. As scholar Ramachandra Guha notes, the ‘hitching of the scholarly cart to the movement wagon has come at a cost. Activist historians are prone only to see what the activists themselves do. Or they tend to take partisan sides on behalf of one ideologue or another.’³¹ When Jennifer Price gave her keynote address to the American Society of Environmental History (ASEH) in 2012, she remarked ‘my

Classic edn. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000) and: Andrew Needham, *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

³¹ Ramachandra Guha, ‘Movement Scholarship’, *Environmental History*, 10 (2005), 40-41 (p. 40). See also; Ramachandra Guha, *How Much Should a Person Consume? Environmentalism in India and the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

guess is that almost everyone in this room is both an historian and an environmentalist.³² But it should give us pause that so much of the history of these organisations has been written by those who count themselves as movement supporters, or are even card-carrying members of certain groups. Doubly surprising is that so few people beyond Guha have pointed out the problems inherent in this relationship. In any other historical subdiscipline, such intense sympathies would, I hope, be more thoroughly questioned. Historians so often balk at the use of company histories and caution the use of corporate archives. Yet many of the environmental groups detailed in the above literature – and this thesis – today exist as transnational corporate entities that continue to receive glowing historical appraisals.³³

As an Indian historian, Guha's writings about the limitations of movement scholarship are rooted in a transnational perspective on US culture. Coming from a country where environmentalism had deeply rural roots and was driven by agricultural labourers, the class biases imposed by the urban, elitist origins of the American environmental movement were cast in stark relief. Yet transnational perspective does not always guarantee more critical inquiry. In my own experience as a foreign observer, and not growing up near vast canyons, arid deserts, or tall peaks, I found myself *more* susceptible to woefully romanticising the people who defended these landscapes. I was all too eager to invest individual environmentalists with mystical qualities. It was hard not to be awed by the distant spiritualism of John Muir, the peripatetic commitment of Everett Ruess, the quiet pragmatism of Howard Zahniser, the frontier affectations of Ansel Adams, the dignified endurance of

³² Jennifer Price, 'Stop Saving the Planet!'

³³ There is some limited scholarship on the corporatization of environmentalism, but this tends to exist outside environmental history. Most texts typically treat "corporate environmentalism" as the take-over of something pure. For an objective treatment on the notion that longstanding environmental groups have themselves become corporate entities, see: Andrew J. Hoffman, *From Heresy to Dogma: An Institutional History of Corporate Environmentalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

Rachel Carson, and the acerbic fury of David Brower. Many North American environmentalists simply appeared more vibrant, more contentious, and often more heroic than their quieter British counterparts.

The above list however represents a narrow slice of American identity. More than half these individuals are inextricably linked to California, most were born into middle-class families, all but one is male, and every single person is white. Environmentalists between the fifties and mid-seventies were a provincial bunch that comprised a narrow subsection of America's diverse social strata. Inevitably, their respective organisations' interests and concerns were limited by their narrow demographic compositions.

Scholars beyond Guha have certainly recognised the limited demographics represented in texts that deal with conservation and early environmentalism. In response, they have sought to highlight the contributions of other strands of environmental thought. Ecofeminism, environmental justice, and radical environmentalism have all seen sustained scholarly interest.³⁴ More recently still, there have been growing attempts to revise the accepted trajectory of conservation's development into environmentalism. Works like Karl Boyd Brooks's *Before Earth Day* and Frank Uekotter's *The Age of Smoke* place the origins of

³⁴ None of these threads of environmental thought play much of a role throughout this work. For a small selection of the more influential texts in a US context, for ecofeminism, see: Greta Gaard, *Ecological Politics: Ecofeminism and the Greens* (Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1998) and: Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (HarperCollins: New York, 1990). For radical environmentalism, see: Derek Wall, *Earth First! And the Anti-Roads Movement: Radical Environmentalism and Comparative Social Movements* (Oxon: Routledge, 1999); Martha Frances Lee, *Earth First!: Environmental Apocalypse* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995). Environmental justice has seen even more scholarly attention, but the most influential writer in the field is undoubtedly the prolific sociologist Robert D. Bullard. See: *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution*, ed. by Robert D. Bullard (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2005); *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots*, ed. By Robert D. Bullard (Boston: South End Press, 1992).

concerns about pollution far earlier than previous research.³⁵ Meanwhile, Brian Allen Drake argues that conservation and environmentalism have never divided predictably down political lines in *Loving Nature, Fearing the State*, which includes an extended comparison between the environmental sympathies of Edward Abbey and Barry Goldwater.³⁶ These monographs revise environmentalism's accepted point of emergence, its ideological sympathies, and its demographic makeup.

These publications do not however represent a sufficient break from the way in which environmental historians remain in the thrall of environmentalism. They do a fine job of inscribing that environmentalism was not as exclusive or elitist as has been assumed, but they still hitch their perspectives to the interests of environmentalists – they simply expand who qualifies as one. Their texts also give the impression that environmentalism appealed to a far greater cross-section of Americans much sooner than earlier scholarship suggested. Ultimately, this presents environmentalism as something that has a greater allure than previously assumed, a social cause that attracted a wider range of Americans and as such was not received as especially threatening. But the idea that environmental sympathies and concerns ranged far and wide across the twentieth century do little to explain the backlash the movement would face in the mid-1970s.

In certain respects, scholarship on anti-environmentalism in the Intermountain West is the body of literature to which my thesis is most closely situated. My work shares with this corpus an interest in the response to environmental groups over a focus on the development of

³⁵ See: Karl Boyd Brooks, *Before Earth Day: The Origins of American Environmental Law* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009); Frank Uekotter, *The Age of Smoke: Environmental Policy in Germany and the United States* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).

³⁶ See: Brian Allen Drake, *Loving Nature, Fearing the State: Environmentalism and Antigovernment Politics Before Reagan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), pp. 19-51, 80-113.

environmental thought. Still, there are some notable distinctions worth making. Whilst there is a reasonably specific, shared geographical interest between my study and Western anti-environmental scholarship, there is little overlap in terms of historical period. I conclude by connecting negative representations of environmentalism to the grassroots uprising of Western ranching and agricultural interests known as the Sagebrush Rebellion in the mid-to-late 1970s. This is where the most prominent texts that detail American anti-environmentalism begin, and indeed one limitation of the field is that few have looked too closely at anti-environmental sentiment prior to 1976.³⁷

This literature also has other issues that further illustrate the need for a work that engages with struggles of media representation. Unlike scholarship on the environmental movement, work on anti-environmental groups in the trans-Mississippi West is far smaller, and there have been few sustained approaches for some time.³⁸ As such, major texts that were groundbreaking at the time, such as R. Gregg Cawley's *Federal Land, Western Anger* and Jacqueline Vaughn Switzer's *Green Backlash* now feel outdated. They offer no engagement with newer work that has offered a revisionist stance on environmentalism's point of emergence, membership, and ideological positioning. Brian Allen Drake's work on environmentalists who were also anti-statist poses a particularly significant challenge to the few longer works on anti-environmentalism. His text complicates the view that anti-

³⁷ The three major mediations that look to the grassroots uprising are: R. Gregg Cawley, *Federal Land Western Anger: The Sagebrush Rebellion and Environmental Politics* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993) and; Jacqueline Vaughn Switzer, *Green Backlash: The History and Politics of the Environmental Opposition in the U.S.* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997). For a text that combines discussion of grassroots US uprisings with the local picture, see: Andrew Rowell, *Green Backlash: Global Subversion of the Environment Movement* (London: Routledge, 1996).

³⁸ This is likely a legacy of what Guha terms 'movement scholarship,' and the notion that many environmental historians have too thoroughly followed the interests of environmental groups in their writing, as discussed above.

federalism and the Sagebrush Rebellion's brand of anti-environmentalism was essentially synonymous.³⁹

The limited and rather outdated field on anti-environmentalism in the Western states also means that existing treatments of what falls under the banner of 'anti-environmentalism' are rather narrow. Cawley and Switzer centre predominantly on the Sagebrush Rebellion in the late 1970s and the emergence of the Wise Use movement a decade later. Furthermore, they offer a largely bureaucratic recounting of events, presenting grassroots uprisings in the Intermountain West as a response to an increasingly claustrophobic and burdensome set of federal land use policies. Certainly, major legislative additions played no small role in local discontent, but by presenting them as the sole determining factor, these studies discount the role played by the media in the emergence of anti-environmentalism. Ex-Secretary of the Interior under Ronald Reagan James Watt praised Cawley's book because it 'goes beyond [...] shallow media coverage.' But this statement simultaneously dismisses the role of press representations even as it expresses exasperation with their power to influence the political process.⁴⁰ Ultimately, these texts make similar mistakes to literature concerned with the development of the environmental movement. They consider a complex and diverse social cause to be intrinsically understood by an external public, and never seem to consider that the perceived character and intentions of those controlling the Western landscape influenced

³⁹ See: Drake, p. 22. For another recent challenge to earlier characterisations of anti-environmentalism, one I discuss in the conclusion of the thesis, see: Peter J. Jacques, *Environmentalism and Skepticism: Ecology, Power, and Public Life* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 40, 43. For the connections between anti-environmentalism in the West and the role of the federal government during the Sagebrush Rebellion, see: Cawley, pp. 71-91; Switzer, pp. 172-173; Courtney White, *Revolution on the Range: The Rise of a New Ranch in the American West* (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2008), pp. 69-72. For similar connective themes in the context of the Wise Use movement, see: James McCarthy and Euan Hague, 'Race, Nation, and Nature: The Cultural Politics of "Celtic" Identification in the American West', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 94 (2004), 387-408 (pp. 394-397); Richard White, 'The Current Weirdness in the West', *Western Historical Quarterly*, 28 (1997), 4-16 (pp. 14-15).

⁴⁰ Quote found on the back cover of the edition of Cawley's *Federal Land, Western Anger* that is cited throughout.

the public reaction. They discount the role reputation and representation played in further exacerbating tensions.

A key piece of feedback I received following the final draft of this study was that I needed to do more to connect years of negative characterisations of environmentalism's character and aspersions cast against its members' reputation to the Sagebrush Rebellion. This was (and remains) valuable advice and was something I promised the thesis would lead up to. I still think showing how early anti-environmental rhetoric in Utah contributed to later grassroots uprisings is an important goal. That said, I also think the shared belief that this connection is necessary exposes some interesting assumptions about what constitutes anti-environmentalism, and who qualifies as an anti-environmentalist. Namely, that the label 'anti-environmentalism' only applies when resistance is visible, physical, and organised.

What I believe decades of critical rhetoric in Utah and Arizona against environmentalism contribute to our understanding is that 'anti-environmentalism' has existed for far longer, and in more forms than has previously been recognised. The anti-environmentalists of the West are not just the Sagebrush Rebels, the members of the Wise Use movement, or the Bundy family. If one of the persistent features of recent literature on environmentalism is to apply the term 'environmentalist' to an ever-widening number of individuals who contributed to the movement, then anti-environmentalism deserves a similar treatment. Anti-environmentalism has never found consistent political organisation, but this thesis shows how anti-environmentalist sentiment and belief has been a consistent background feature of Utah and Arizona since the early 1950s. The Sagebrush Rebellion and Wise Use movement represent notable upswells of rage, but they are merely the most visible instances of a continually shifting pattern of discontent. The failure of these protests to sustain themselves

or gain greater purchase has not represented a successful release of anger against environmentalists, nor its reduction. In the Intermountain West, resentment bubbles just beneath the surface, driven in part by the fictional construct of American environmentalism.

Seeking Discontent

Go looking for the most keenly felt discontent toward environmental groups in the American West and you'll find yourself drawn toward the Intermountain states of Nevada, Utah, Idaho, and Arizona. Look for a place where rage remains as contemporary as it is historical, and the emotional aftershocks still echo keenly, and you'll find yourself drawn inexorably toward Utah's southern extremes. Eventually, you will reach a vast upland region known as the Kaiparowits Plateau in the state's Red Rock Country. Part of the last region in the lower forty-eight states to be formally mapped, the landscape is, for lack of a better word, fiendish. To hear those who love it most deeply describe it, Red Rock Country is 'the geological wreckage of southern Utah,' a region where, 'the earth is a scarred, bent, cracked, and agitated [...] place.' It is a 'land so tortured and remote,' that, 'it took men quite a while to learn about it, even to discover it all. For that matter, they're still at it.'⁴¹ Pioneering nineteenth century geologist Clarence Dutton, upon witnessing Red Rock Country, described it best when he remarked 'everything visible tells of ruin and decay.'⁴²

⁴¹ T. H. Watkins, *The Redrock Chronicles: Saving Wild Utah* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 10, 42; Dean L. May, 'A Human History' in *Visions of the Grand Escalante: Examining Utah's Newest National Monument*, ed. by Robert B. Keiter, Sarah B. George, and Joro Walker (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1998), pp. 43-52 (p. 43); C. Gregory Crampton, *Standing Up Country: The Canyon Lands of Utah and Arizona* (Gibbs M. Smith, Inc.: Salt Lake City, 1983), p. 40.

⁴² C. E. Dutton, *Geology of the High Plateaus of Utah, With Atlas* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), p. 287.

Red Rock Country is an informal title, and its geographic barriers shift based on who is being asked. For modern boosters and the tourist industry, Red Rock Country encompasses the two counties of south-central Utah, Kane and Garfield, but extends west to Zion National Park, east over the Colorado River into San Juan County, and down past Glen Canyon Dam into northern Arizona and the terrain north of the Grand Canyon. Ask locals not sustained by tourism, and those boundaries would contract rapidly, leaving only the predominantly Mormon communities of Kane and Garfield; the towns of Kanab and Panguitch, Cedar City, and smaller groupings along what is now Utah's Scenic Byway 12. Zion, the Grand Canyon, and numerous other points of scenic interest shaped to be of convenience for casual observers would be excised from the perimeter.

With respect to the physical contours of Red Rock Country, Kaiparowits has lain at the centre for millennia, but the plateau has also been the region's emotionally fraught epicentre for more than fifty years. The tableland contains one of the largest coal fields in North America. Residential energy demand resulting from the sprawling growth experienced by Los Angeles, Phoenix, and other western centres in the post-war period meant Kaiparowits was finally pulled awkwardly into the orbit of the modern, urban west in 1962. A consortium of electric utilities, led by Southern California Edison (SCE), gave the plateau a new purpose. The vast coal reserves would be mined, and the extracted material burnt on-site, within a generating station situated upon the plateau itself. The plant would add to the other large coal-fired plants either operating or already under construction in the Four Corners region by the early 1970s, although the Kaiparowits plant's final installed capacity for electricity generation would be greater. Greater, in fact, than any other coal-fired power plant operating on the planet at that time.

Architects claimed the Kaiparowits Power Plant offered transformative regional potential. Promises of the number of jobs the plant and its associated townsite would provide fluctuated over the years, but planners stressed the amount of business generated would offer more employment than the counties' combined populations. Once a largely unused, virtually inaccessible tableland, Kaiparowits became a symbol of hope for a set of deprived communities that had, like much of the rural West, suffered in part because of trends toward urban concentration.⁴³ Inevitably, the scale of these designs attracted resistance. Edison's interest generated opposition from environmental groups who claimed the plant would ruin the aesthetics of a vast expanse of the southwest.

When I first set out to write about the Kaiparowits conflict, I had expected to write a bureaucratic or material environmental history of the long planning process behind the plant, its delay, and eventual failure. Given the plateau's proximity – less than twenty miles – to Glen Canyon Dam, itself a place of contested environmental visions, I found it surprising that more than forty years later, the Kaiparowits story had yet to be sufficiently told. And whilst it might be possible to claim the Kaiparowits Generating Station's journey is notable through its proposed material dimensions alone, I am not convinced that is where its historical significance is ultimately found. Although architects envisioned a project of unparalleled size, a combination of technological delays and bureaucratic webs meant Edison's vision persisted in successive forms of stasis before its final death. For the limited attention the plant has received, it is this sense of continual postponement that has come to define the conflict. As

⁴³ The scholarship here is significant. For a small sample on the impacts of urbanization, see: Carl Abbott, *The Metropolitan Frontier: Cities in the Modern American West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), pp. 53-78; Nathan F. Sayre, *Ranching, Endangered Species, and the Urbanization of the Southwest* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005), pp. 105-125; William Riebsame Travis, *New Geographies of the American West: Land Use and the Changing Patterns of Place* (Washington D. C.: Island Press, 2007), pp. 89-130.

historian M. Guy Bishop notes, the Kaiparowits Project was a ‘paper power plant,’ a vision that never graduated from its planners’ blueprints.⁴⁴ When one young pro-plant protestor in 1976 held aloft a placard declaring ‘Kaiparowits studies began before I was born,’ the claim was believable.⁴⁵ When the project was finally abandoned by Edison in April 1976, people felt they knew the idea of the Kaiparowits Plant well enough that they wrote obituaries for it.⁴⁶ For many people in Kane and Garfield County, the undeveloped Kaiparowits Plateau remains a wound that has never properly healed.

Why then, use Kaiparowits as the chief case study in an exploration of environmentalism’s regional reputation? The project itself offers little unique insight into the geography of power generation in the American West, much of which is bound up in the movement scholarship of environmental politics. Yet Kaiparowits remains a conflict with several virtues for the goal of tracing the environmental movement’s reputational decline. The first reason is not explicitly the project’s stasis, but what that stasis created. The project survived through successive phases of environmental consciousness, opposition, and identity. It began before Lake Powell was even a puddle lapping at the concrete wall of Glen Canyon Dam. It survived well beyond Earth Day; it outlasted the Vietnam War. The project and its long endurance meant it had to confront and rebuff aesthetic, ecological, health, and social arguments against its existence. The Kaiparowits Project’s long period in limbo created a discursive space in which Utahns, and to a lesser extent southern Californians and northern Arizonans, could debate, discuss, and shape the image of the environmentalists they saw as responsible for its multiple deferrals.

⁴⁴ See: M. Guy Bishop, ‘The Paper Power Plant: Utah’s Kaiparowits Project and the Politics of Environmentalism’, *Journal of the West*, 35 (1996), 26-35.

⁴⁵ Mr. & Mrs. Roger Holland to Frank E. Moss, 4 February 1976, Ms 146, Box 616.

⁴⁶ See: John Hamlin, ‘Kaiparowits Obituary’, *Deseret News*, 16 April 1976. Press clipping. Ms 146, Box 617.

Secondly, the fifteen years the proposal existed (1962-1976) provides the valuable connective thread that links unease over the post-war emergence of preservation groups at Echo Park on Utah's eastern border in the early 1950s to the beginning strains of anti-environmentalism that sounded during the Sagebrush Rebellion in the late 1970s. The critical responses to what were then 'preservation' groups during the land use conflicts of the 1950s were as respectable as the actions of the movement; often strongly worded but constrained to the textual realm. All the stranger examples cited above – threats, direct confrontations, and effigy burnings – arose from the Kaiparowits conflict. Although the Sagebrush Rebellion is only dealt with in the conclusion, readers will be able to recognise Kaiparowits as a major emotional tributary that feeds into this more organised instance of discontent.

That said, reputations are collective constructs, and they require public controversy and visibility to develop. The Kaiparowits Generating Station existed as an idea for fifteen years, but its long lifespan as little more than an idea ensured it did not experience omnipresent press attention. Whilst the thesis never fully moves away from the Kaiparowits Project, I use lulls in media coverage to interrogate several parallel reputational conflicts that contribute to an understanding of environmentalism's regional representation. In keeping with this approach, I do suspect that anyone looking at this thesis for a bureaucratic history or accounting of institutional actions over the course of the plant's fifteen-year period in regulatory limbo will find themselves disappointed. That is decidedly not my aim here. Nor is there any historical actor that is continually present throughout; Californian conservationists in the Sierra Club attain a dominant role in the second and third chapters of the thesis, but receive diminished attention after. The consistent thread here is the declining reputation of

environmentalism itself, its associated individuals and groups, and of tracing a region's raw emotional responses to an emergent social movement.

Chapter Outlines

Conflict over the Kaiparowits Plateau continues to cast a pall over southern Utah and northern Arizona. Yet few scholars have looked at the history of the plateau. Chapter 1 seeks to rectify Kaiparowits' absence in the historical record through a more comprehensive recounting. It builds an early image of the tableland before Euro-American arrival, and later resource and representational struggles converged over it in the 1960s and 1970s. It follows the narratives of several explorers, surveyors, and natives, and their impressions of the landscape. Here, the region's pre-conflict history is recounted with an explicit focus on the way understandings of the purpose of place connect to reputation. I argue that the failure of narratives about the plateau to coalesce into a larger, synergistic construct meant Kaiparowits remained a landmass – part of the continual, unremarkable landscape – rather than becoming a 'place.' I then connect this idea of placelessness to reputation, arguing environmentalists that have achieved widely celebrated public images have obtained these in part because the landscapes they speak for are seen as valuable, often before they offer impassioned defences. As Kaiparowits failed to achieve a sense of intrinsic meaning for any specific community, those that sought to defend it were more vulnerable to being negatively characterised.

Chapter 2 then turns to the 1950s. It is, of all the chapters here, the one that engages with the Kaiparowits controversy the most sporadically, seeking instead to establish the foundational images and reception of post-war conservation groups. To do this it looks

toward Utah's fringes, its eastern and southern borders and the idea of outsider forces intruding into the state through two of the most famous land-use controversies in American environmental history: the battles for Echo Park and Glen Canyon. In contrast to bureaucratic and institutional accountings of these conflicts, I explore the Intermountain and national press' at-best tepid response to the emergence of a series of preservation groups after a long period of movement dormancy. The chapter looks at the shaping of two contradictory reputations for private conservation groups and figures as they were framed as simultaneously sinister and dangerously adept agents of Californian water politics and comically cloistered 'nature lovers' unable to leave their houses. The chapter also dedicates space to assessing two texts and one film published by the Sierra Club between 1953 and 1963: *Wilderness River Trail*, *This is Dinosaur*, and *The Place No One Knew*. Previous analyses of these texts have used them as vehicles to explore how the Sierra Club thought about and constructed nature. My own approach, conversely, contends that these texts can also be read as an early example of the environmental movement's public relations apparatus. I look to how these documents presented conservationists rather than how they depicted nature, looking to the humans at the centre of their celluloid explorations, and the ways the Club sought to promote an image of competency and respectability.

Chapter 3 moves closer to southern Utah and into the latter half of the 1960s, whilst also making geographic detours into southern California and northern Arizona. Its core focus is contrasting the celebrated reputation of Kaiparowits Project architects, electric utility Southern California Edison, with the increasingly radical image of Californian conservation group the Sierra Club. Focusing on how their respective images changed as the nation began to debate the limits of growth at the end of the decade, I argue that *both* Edison and the

Sierra Club presented two narratives: one stressing imminent crisis, one underlining the role of technological solutions. The chapter explores how Edison was adept at shaping their image through early experiments with corporate greenwashing and offering different narratives to distinctive audiences. I argue this allowed them to perpetuate a reputation that translated into tangible operational freedom. I then explore the inverse scenario. Looking once more to the Sierra Club, I explore their often unmentioned mid-1960s support of coal power plants and attempts to shape an energy policy in a bid for public legitimacy. I also interrogate why this advocacy was unsuccessful and failed to temper the growing public perception of the group as an irrational, emotional collective.

Whilst journalistic coverage of environmental protest was given much space in the Utahn, Californian, and Arizonan press between the end of the war and the middle of the 1970s, major regional press outlets often failed to present the perspectives of pro-development locals. Chapter 4 seeks to correct that and turns to the way Red Rock Country residents began framing the environmental movement in the period between 1970 and 1975. It is at this point Kaiparowits achieves further prominence in the study, as the first energy crisis impacted the nation in late 1973. I also explore the shifting terrain of reputational attacks in the period. I question the ability to conduct critiques on the moral character of environmentalism after 1970, when ownership of the environmental ethic was seen to transcend the confines of a select few groups, becoming a societal ethic cognitively embedded in the American mainstream.

Finally, my fifth chapter concerns the arrival of a final set of contentious environmental spokespeople who offered very little appeal for a rural, working class audience seeking industrial employment: American celebrities. It focuses on celebrated Hollywood star Robert

Redford's last-minute protest against the Kaiparowits Project in its final year, from the autumn of 1975 to the spring of 1976. The chapter explores where the actor fit within both the emergent celebrity protest culture of the 1970s, and how his own public image both intersected and diverged from Utah's existing constructions of environmental movement members. A Californian elite at the zenith of his professional career, Redford at the time had rejected his West coast identity and considered himself a Utah insider; Red Rock Country's populace would strenuously disagree. As conservationist critiques of the Kaiparowits plant shifted toward exploiting southern Utah's anxieties over how the Kaiparowits boomtown would impact their regional culture and identity, Redford was constructing his own Sundance Ranch in northern Utah. The thesis compares both, contrasting the industrial model of growth promised by the Kaiparowits town site versus the notion of Sundance as a form of 'ecological boomtown.'

With respect to my approach and rationale, there are a few developments over the course of the thesis that warrant initial mention here. The first would be the decision to focus on certain environmental groups over others, something that becomes apparent from the second chapter. Although my work here includes as many conservation, preservation, and environmental organisations as possible to enforce my tracing of a devolutional pattern through the Mormon culture region, Californian preservationist group the Sierra Club does gain disproportionate prominence, particularly in the middle sections of the work. Part of the reason for this is purely logistical; the Club provides easier access, and keeps more extensive archival material, than other groups, particularly post-1970s organisations that maintain a more explicit concern with environmental law. But a greater reason for the Club's prominence is directly relevant to the study's focus itself. The Club offers researchers more material to

work with because the organisation has long been more interested in pursuing and manipulating media attention. Indeed, the group has done more than any other to manipulate – for better and for worse – the reputation of environmentalism in the Intermountain region.

I would also note that I study the image of environmental groups in the Intermountain mind primarily through letters, correspondence, pamphlets, and press coverage. The focus throughout is decidedly on textual documents and those that lack illustrations, over those that seek to visually deconstruct environmentalism's reputation. This is not to deny the vibrant and powerful role that graphic arts, cartoons, political caricature, and photography played in the fifties and sixties as agents of propaganda.⁴⁷ It is simply that the cartoonists of the period typically favoured domestic or foreign politicians as their objects of exaggeration. As Ilan Danjoux has noted, cartoonists often rounded on prominent political individuals because the grotesque dimensions of caricature were seen to 'undermine the legitimacy of rulers, leaving an indelible stain on their public image.'⁴⁸ And whilst that description would ostensibly reinforce the relevance of visuals as a valuable avenue of attack against environmental groups, their most consistent framing throughout the two decades in question was as an outsider force. Either because their invisibility conformed to the way they were characterised in rhetoric, or because newspaper cartoonists simply favoured national and international politics, absence rather than presence is the constant here.

Finally, I would make a note about several terminological choices. Toward the end of chapter 3 I shift toward using 'environmental movement' to signify the broadened agenda embraced

⁴⁷ See: John McMillan, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 83.

⁴⁸ Ilan Danjoux, 'Reconsidering the Decline of the Editorial Cartoon', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 40 (2007), 245-248 (p. 246).

by these groups, but I have elected *not* to distinguish between ‘preservation group’ and ‘conservation group’ in the chapters prior. These identifiers are treated as interchangeable. Whilst I recognise ‘preservation’ and ‘conservation’ have potentially different associations that are suggestive of aesthetic or utilitarian biases, the organisations I look at in the initial chapters are all aesthetically focused in their concerns. The central reason I use these terms interchangeably is simple: to avoid a sense of repetition in writing. Whilst I do offer a commentary on the public image of Gifford Pinchot in chapter 3, I there make efforts to delineate between ‘utilitarian’ and ‘aesthetic’ approaches to conservation.

Chapter 1

In the Canyon's Shadow:

How the Plateau Became Nothing

Two Plateaus, Two Canyons

In December 1975, central Utah newspaper the *Payson Chronicle* published a letter from a resident who claimed to have discovered supernatural occurrences in a remote southern region of the state. The letter's author, John Serfustini, had been researching the plans of electric utility Southern California Edison to construct a coal-fired power plant on an elevated stretch of land straddling Kane and Garfield County. Serfustini wrote that during his investigation, he had come to the conclusion that this remote upland region was home to a series of unexplained disappearances. The only analogue that the *Payson Chronicle's* readership might be familiar with, he suggested, was the treacherous stretch of ocean off Florida's eastern coastline, the Bermuda Triangle. Southern Utah, he proclaimed 'has its own counterpart to this infamous area,' the imagined boundaries of which ran between three

points: the ghost town of Paria, the Mormon settlement of Escalante, and the remote peak of Navajo Mountain. Serfustini proposed this mysterious space take its name from the vast landform that dominated the wedge-shaped boundary lines' extensive interior, the Kaiparowits Plateau. What Serfustini would call the 'Kaiparowitz Triangle' was born.¹

Serfustini's claims were outlandish, but he was more satirist than mystery seeker. The idea of the 'Kaiparowitz Triangle' served to educate readers about what Serfustini felt was the environmental callousness of Utah's political elite as they supported Edison's plans for a gargantuan generating station. Where the Bermuda Triangle consumed ships and planes, the extensive coal seams beneath the plateau were seen to swallow the conservation sympathies of politicians Jake Garn, Frank Moss, and Ted Wilson. In this way, the plateau worked 'its effect of deviant behavior among persons of responsibility,' but it was simple greed, rather than any supernatural force, that explained the politicians' behaviour. Serfustini reported 'businessmen and politicians being lured to the area and then returning home in a daze,' before remarking that 'the area does indeed cloud men's minds and rob them of common sense.' In his concluding remarks, Serfustini veered from using the paranormal as a vehicle for satire to employing the mythical to deliver an ominous warning. 'The centaurs,' the piece sombrely reminded readers, 'threw caution to the winds at the smell of cheap wine.'²

No other letter or article during the Kaiparowits power controversy had combined Floridian urban legend and bacchanalian myth to protest the project's development. Certainly, the letter's penchant for bizarre tales and its negligible visibility as a short commentary in a local paper limited the impact of its message. Yet Serfustini's stories of human disappearance and

¹ John Serfustini, 'The Kaiparowitz Triangle', *Payson Chronicle*, 11 December 1975. Press clipping. Ms 146, Box 617.

² Ibid.

mysterious activity, even delivered as satire, were noteworthy in how they produced a kind of proto-folklore for the plateau. Through his incisive mystery narrative, Serfustini began to shape for readers the plateau's identity, to provide a sense of how the mesa might be framed in terms that were not purely geomorphic or ecological. In viewing Kaiparowits as more than physical landform, the letter considered how the plateau might be seen as part of the perceptual landscape.³

As a physical landform, the Kaiparowits Plateau dominates much of central southern Utah. When Serfustini wrote to the *Payson Chronicle* in 1975, Kaiparowits was remote from the communities of the region by virtue of topography rather than distance, another vast geomorphic barrier in an already deeply dissected landscape. From some angles, the corrugated surface of the region means the plateau is difficult to make out. Looking toward the plateau from the west, only the southern terminus is visible. The plateau's vast mass is obscured by a series of similarly immense pink, grey, white, vermilion and chocolate coloured sedimentary rock layers that gives the intervening landscape an illusion of progressive ascension, and grant that part of the region its name, the Grand Staircase. Similarly, looking toward Kaiparowits from the north, it is difficult to grasp its scale, as the Aquarius Plateau blocks views, and much of Kaiparowits' surface is a concave depression. From other angles, the plateau's scale is harder to elide. From the south, it rises above Lake Powell, Glen Canyon Dam, and on a clear day, it can be seen from the Grand Canyon's north rim. Its topographic immensity is reinforced by its Mormon-given name, Fifty Mile Mountain, referencing its eastern escarpment, which runs in an almost unnaturally straight line from southeast to

³ A number of my thoughts on the idea of the perceptual landscape are indebted to Jared Farmer's discussion of landmarks in northern Utah. See: Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormon's, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 5.

northwest. For hikers south of Escalante, or observers in northern Arizona, the plateau is a constant feature of the horizon; it looms, seemingly omnipresent. Yet sheer physical presence of landscape does not always translate to the perceptual realm. Monumentalism - the quality of the spectacular and the grandiose - in isolation offers no guarantee that a space will come to find any kind of cultural resonance, or that people will look toward a landscape and see anything but physical form.⁴

Over time, different parts of the landscape can accrue distinctive, specific meanings for different communities. Meaning, like water, begins to pool in certain spaces, producing impressions of landscape that cannot be neatly or explicitly connected to aesthetic or economic dimensions any more than they can to geomorphic or ecological ones. The Intermountain region offers numerous examples of places where the perceptual landscape is more evident, sites that have come to hold significance for specific local or state groups. For example, citizens of the Provo-Orem metropolitan area along the Wasatch Front have long looked to Mount Timpanogos and found it emblematic of home.⁵ Patriotic Mormons visiting Zion National Park after its establishment in 1919 saw in its vertical formations evidence of Utah's contribution to the nation. Conscious of their historic outsider status, visitors found Zion National Park synonymous with national belonging.⁶ On a broader scale still, many Americans looked to the Grand Canyon and frequently found it evoked a complex constellation of meanings about the cultural heritage of the United States, most notably its exploratory and frontier traditions, and symbolized the nation's capacity to compete with

⁴ See: Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), pp. 33-47.

⁵ Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, p. 7.

⁶ See: Matthew Baker, 'Selling a State to the Nation: Boosterism and Utah's First National Park', *Journalism History*, 36 (2010) 169-176; Matthew Baker, *Environmental Journalism and Utah's National Parks, 1919-1971* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Utah, 2008), pp. 70-73.

European architecture.⁷ The collective experience of these groups has helped shape areas like Mount Timpanogos, Zion, and the Grand Canyon into 'landmarks,' what historian Jared Farmer has defined as points in the landscape 'where meaning is concentrated.'⁸

Spaces that achieve their own perceptual identity inevitably evolve. As a collective or shared social construct, the perceptual landscape changes over time. Two interrelated instances of this were evident just to the south of Kaiparowits, in northern Arizona. The mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw intellectuals and explorers successfully re-shape how the public imagined the Colorado River and its surrounding lands. By 1960, the river, once a place of hazards, had become a place for adventure.⁹ The Grand Canyon became a place of panoramic wonder, not an inconvenience to be bridged.¹⁰ At the canyon, observers could place themselves within the rich, interwoven histories that had played out around where they stood. Tourists could visualize John Wesley Powell's trips down the Colorado River below them. Visitors to the canyon's Dutton Point could look southeast to see where Captain Garcia Lopez Cardenas first peered over the South Rim. Reorienting slightly to the west, they could see where Francisco Hermenegildo Tomás Garcés entered the gorge through Cataract Canyon.¹¹ The Grand Canyon dominates the physical landscape, but it has come to dominate the perceptual one also, a monolith in both realms. It has become a place of many meanings,

⁷ Runte, *National Parks*, p. 34.

⁸ Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, p. 6. It is worth noting that Farmer does not consider the Grand Canyon as a landmark in his own work, which adopts a number of additional limitations to his definition given here.

⁹ Some of the best examples of the Colorado's perceptual evolution have come from Western writers and naturalists. The most seismic reframing of the river in the nineteenth century emerged from: J. W. Powell, *The Exploration of the Colorado River and Its Canyons* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1961). For an overview of other literature that has had an impact on perceptions of the Colorado, see: Robert W. Adler, *Restoring Colorado Ecosystems: A Troubled Sense of Immensity* (Washington: Island Press, 2007), p. xix; Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 194-197. Conservation groups began to stress a more recreational identity for the river starting in 1950. See: Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Fourth edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 227-230.

¹⁰ Stephen J. Pyne, *How the Canyon Became Grand: A Short History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p. xiii.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

where nature met with art and literature, with explorative quest, with scientific endeavour, with philosophical epiphany, and with recreation and industry.

The perceptual landscape, however, is a competitive one. Citizens that look to Mount Timpanogos and think of home are unlikely to share that same strength of connection or depth of feeling with another place. Physically, the Grand Canyon is negative space; to see the canyon in all its geomorphic glory, you must go to the rim and look down. But the canyon as a perceptual space looms above all others in the West, and much is caught in its shadow. For every Grand Canyon, there are numerous other landforms that go unnoticed, that remain ignored, that do not enter the public imagination. Kaiparowits as a geomorphic space is gigantic. Kaiparowits as a perceptual space is close to non-existent. Over the first seven decades of the twentieth century, the Grand Canyon journeyed to become an indelible feature of the perceptual landscape of the post-war southwest, the star attraction of the region's 'Golden Circle' of landmarks.¹² The Kaiparowits Plateau remained a blank spot on tourist maps. In December 1975, when Serfustini wrote his narrative about the plateau's character, he was forced to borrow from the myths of ancient Greece and transplant an urban legend from the east coast. Drawing upon foreign examples became a necessity, an act of place-making bricolage in the absence of established stories that conveyed any sense of the plateau's perceptual prominence.¹³ Kaiparowits, whilst as much a product of geologic forces

¹² Arthur R. Gomez, *Quest for the Golden Circle: The Four Corners and the Metropolitan West, 1945-1970* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), p. 121.

¹³ The 'unexplained' mystery of the Bermuda Triangle can be traced back to a 1950 article from the *Miami Herald*. As with the Kaiparowitz Triangle, the article engaged with the theme of disappearance in a stylized narrative in which any reference to physical space was incidental. The alleged vanishing of planes and ships in that region of ocean allowed the article's author, E. V. W. Jones, to counter claims that much of the planet had been explored and assessed by the start of the post-war period as a way of critiquing the post-war reputation of science. Additionally, the Bermuda Triangle became a way to reify the terror and wonder of the natural sublime. See: E. V. W. Jones, 'Same Big World: Sea's Puzzles Still Baffle Men in Pushbutton Age', *Miami Herald*, 17 September 1950, p. 6F.

as innumerable other spaces in the American southwest, possessed few well known historical or cultural footprints.

Land-use conflict in the southwest has often been a potent catalyst for propelling unknown spaces into the perceptual landscape. In the mid-1950s, the federal government had attempted to build a dam at Echo Park, within Dinosaur National Monument on the Utah-Colorado border. Historian Mark Harvey has argued that following the collapse of project plans after 1955, Echo Park became seen as a 'symbol of wilderness,' a metonym for the post-war United States' remaining enclaves of remote nature.¹⁴ Similarly, when the Lake Powell reservoir slowly submerged Glen Canyon in southern Utah after 1963, it anchored two new communities of perception.¹⁵ Environmentalists looked at Lake Powell and saw only a desecrated space and symbol of their failures.¹⁶ For other groups – namely upper-middle class boaters and spring breakers seeking relaxation and exhilaration – Lake Powell became shorthand for a recreational oasis in the desert.¹⁷

The Kaiparowits conflict lasted far longer than the struggle to save Echo Park and the failure to preserve Glen Canyon. Edison had initiated exploratory drilling between 1962 and 1964, and did not fully abandon the project until April 1976.¹⁸ Despite the length and furor of southern Utah's largest power controversy, the plateau has remained almost stubbornly

¹⁴ See: Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, p. 205, 258.

¹⁵ Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, p. 6.

¹⁶ The literature on the conservationist and environmentalist response to the loss of Glen Canyon is vast. For the best examples, see: Jared Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed: Inventing Lake Powell and the Canyon Country* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), pp. 144-146; Russell Martin, *A Story that Stands Like a Dam: Glen Canyon and the Struggle for the Soul of the West* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), pp. 176-179; Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and its Disappearing Water*, Revised and Updated edn. (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), pp. 283-285.

¹⁷ Jared Farmer, 'Glen Canyon and the Persistence of Wilderness', *Western Historical Quarterly*, 27 (1996), 210-222 (p. 212, 219).

¹⁸ Melanie L. Simo, *Literature of Place: Dwelling on the Land before Earth Day 1970* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), pp. 97-98; Wallace Stegner, 'Glen Canyon Submersus', in *The Glen Canyon Reader*, ed. by Matthew Barrett Gross (Tucson: Arizona University Press, 2003), pp. 137-145 (p. 145).

anonymous in discussions about environmental politics and protest in the southwest. It has resisted acquiring any symbolic meaning beyond its immediate surrounding communities, who since the project's terminus have come to view the plateau as a symbol of what they felt was an unwelcome mainstreaming of a radical form of environmentalism and federal control. To the immediate communities of Kane and Garfield County, Kaiparowits remains 'a fighting word.'¹⁹

People who would write about place and protest have been drawn to the monoliths of the perceptual landscape, to Zion, Bryce Canyon, Glen Canyon, and Echo Park. As Stephen Pyne noted in his history of the Grand Canyon, he became fascinated by what peculiar hybrid convergences allowed the Grand Canyon to supersede 'hundreds of other, competing landscapes' vying for public attention.²⁰ Kaiparowits looks unlikely to ever ascend to the prominent status of the places that comprise the pantheon of natural space in the American West. Letters written by Utahns for and against the power plant between 1970 and 1975 could not even agree on how to spell the plateau's name, alternately identifying it as 'Kaiparowits,' 'Kaiparowitz,' 'Fifty Mile Mountain,' and even 'Karpowitz.' When the Kaiparowits Plateau attained National Monument status in 1996, following another battle with another coal interest, it shared protection with two adjacent natural areas. It was joined by the Grand Staircase, to the west, and the Canyons of the Escalante, to the northeast. Yet the protected region's new name - Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument - excluded Kaiparowits from its title. On newly updated maps of the state 'Kaiparowits' was no longer displayed. The plateau had conducted a cartographic vanishing act.

¹⁹ Grace Lichtenstein, 'Kaiparowits Has Become a Fighting Word in Utah', *New York Times*, 23 November 1975, p. E3

²⁰ Pyne, p. xii.

When Jared Farmer discusses the formation of Utah's landmarks, he refers to a largely unconscious, long term process, performed by groups in close proximity to well-defined locations. When Stephen Pyne talks about how the Grand Canyon assumed its preeminent status in the perceptual landscape, he speaks of shaping place through significant texts by visitors; beacons of intellectual and romantic thought producing a more sudden change in perspective. In concert, Farmer and Pyne underline how everyone, subconsciously or consciously, has chance to shape the perceptual landscape, to make landmass into landmark, to make space into place. The progression of Kaiparowits from contested landscape to invisible one shows how this process does not however guarantee success, and that not all landscapes come to possess widely known identities. Kaiparowits had the same human ingredients for success the Grand Canyon had. It had writers and explorers of the West who were known prior to, and beyond their association with the plateau, just like the canyon. It had adjacent settlement and human land-use, just like the canyon. It had a long history of native presence also. What follows concerns the failure of placemaking; a chronology of two plateaus, the physical and perceptual, focusing on those who have written on or perceived the space in both forms. It looks to their experiences in the Kaiparowits region, but focuses on how these experiences failed to construct a perceptually significant space from the plateau's physical landscape, and the ultimate debates this lack of place would foreshadow when Edison turned their gaze toward the plateau.

Perceptual Foundations I: Mountain Home of the People

Kaiparowits has a history of physical use that long pre-dates European narratives of exploration, but it is with Spanish entry into the region that the first known interpretation of

the plateau as more than a landform begins. The Franciscan priests, Fathers Atanasio Dominguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante, arrived in southern Utah in 1776 trying to find overland passage to their mission in Monterey, California from Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Dominguez-Escalante expedition sought expediency rather than adventure, and so wisely gave the tangled canyons of south and southeastern Utah a wide berth. Their long excursion just missed the fringes of Kaiparowits, but did skirt the southern extremity of the Grand Staircase, bringing the priests into contact with the indigenous peoples of the region. The expedition made contact with the Southern Paiute, who occupied much of the region of south and southwestern Utah. They were also the only group of natives to become associated, although tenuously, with the Kaiparowits Plateau as both physical and perceptual landscape.²¹

'Kaiparowits' is a word that originates with the Southern Paiute, speakers of the Southern Numic branch of Native American languages. When Dominguez and Escalante passed the Grand Staircase, the Southern Paiute were widely dispersed across much of the southwest, inhabiting parts of the Colorado River Basin and Mohave Desert. The Kaiparowits Plateau formed a likely northern boundary for the bands that ranged across south and southwestern Utah, although the antipodal terminus of Southern Paiute territory was six hundred miles distant, reaching to the Palo Verde Canyon in southern California. One translation for 'Kaiparowits' refers to a place of significant centrality for northern groups of Southern Paiute.

²¹ Steven H. Heath, 'A Historical Sketch of the Scientific Exploration of the Region Containing the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument', in *Learning from the Land: Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Science Symposium Proceedings*, ed. by Linda M. Hill (Washington: US Department of the Interior, 1997), pp. 435-446 (pp. 437-438).

The widely accepted Anglicization remains 'mountain home of the people,' or, 'home of our people,' although others exist.²²

The naming suggests that, for the Southern Paiute, Kaiparowits loomed much larger in the perceptual landscape than it did for the Mormons, given their decision to later name the plateau after its eastern escarpment, Fifty Mile Mountain. The latter name frames Kaiparowits as a site considered - at best - an inconvenience to Mormon settlement. The title is typical for the naming schema employed on the plateau by locals and surveyors. Atop Kaiparowits, points of interest have been named in direct reference to what was found there, such as Willow Creek, Willow Gulch, and Wild Horse Bench, or that refer to the plateau as a purely physical or even quantitative landscape, in the cases of the Straight Cliffs, Fourmile Bench, and Long Canyon.²³ The Southern Paiute translation shrouded the plateau in a hybrid lore of the human and natural. The Mormon approach to naming demystified the region.

The Southern Paiute certainly understood the importance of place. Roving groups and bands were known to have developed their own landmarks; territory was typically anchored around prominent geologic features such as 'ridgelines, mountains, buttes, or washes.' Such spaces were more than merely physical objects of orientation in the honeycombed landscape of southern Utah; each landmark possessed its own social and cultural significance also.²⁴ Later,

²² John W. Van Cott, *Utah Place Names: A Comprehensive Guide to the Origins of Geographic Names* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1990), p. 211; one other major translation from Paiute has been offered, even though 'mountain home of the people' remains the most common. This second translation is 'Big Mountain's Little Brother,' likely in reference to Navajo Mountain in Utah's San Juan County, now divided from Kaiparowits by Lake Powell. The name reinforces the idea of Kaiparowits as an underdog landscape, consistently compared with nearby landmarks. 'Kaiparowits' has also been theorized as originating from the Navajo, although this is less likely given tribal locations, defined as, 'rock descending jagged,' or, mountain lying down.' See: Sandy Nestor, *Indian Placenames in America Volume I: Cities, Towns and Villages* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2005), p. 160.

²³ There are a few exceptions to this schema, although more evocative names are limited and their origins are either lost, such as in the case of Cigar Creek Canyon, or provide a sense of place by referencing other significant locales, for example Canaan Peak.

²⁴ Ronald L. Holt, *Beneath These Red Cliffs: An Ethnohistory of the Southern Paiute* (Logan: Utah State University, 2006), pp. 4-5.

the Paiutes would adopt place-naming and placemaking strategies as a way of navigating colonial forces in early twentieth century California.²⁵ They were conscious contributors to the formation of the perceptual landscape, first by imbuing landforms with cultural meaning, and later aware of the role naming played in the colonial appropriation of place.²⁶

Despite the fluency of the Southern Paiute in placemaking practices, whether Kaiparowits ever embodied the 'home of our people' in either the physical or perceptual sense is more questionable. The idea of a physical space of sanctuary expressed by the name - a grand central gathering hub atop the plateau that the Southern Paiute could return to - has little supporting evidence. The largest concentrations of Southern Paiute bands were scattered around the Santa Clara River in southwestern Utah and the Muddy River in southeastern Nevada, a considerable remove from Utah's canyon country in the other southern corner of the state. Whilst certain bands of Southern Paiute were acquainted with using south-central Utah as a horticultural base to support foraging, archaeological surveys at the top of Kaiparowits have concluded that Paiute presence on the plateau only ever extended to several temporary residential sites. Conclusions point to the Kaiparowits Paiute as 'single families who moved frequently and rarely created debris,' rather than a band systematically using the land in any sustained capacity.²⁷ When compared with evidence of other Paiute and Native American settlement in regions of the southwest that surround Kaiparowits, the lodgings on and around the plateau are poorly built. They appear as temporary dwellings,

²⁵ William J. Bauer, *California Through Native Eyes: Reclaiming History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), pp. 39-40.

²⁶ See: Robert W. Preucel and Frank G. Matero, 'Placemaking on the Northern Rio Grande: A View from Kuaua Pueblo', in *Archaeologies of Placemaking: Monuments, Memories, and Engagement in Native North America*, ed. by Patricia E. Rubertone (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 81-100 (p. 85).

²⁷ Kimberly Spurr, Phil R. Geib, and Jim H. Collette, Patterns of Human Activity in "The Heart of the Desert Wild": Archaeological Survey and Testing on the Kaiparowits Plateau, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument', in *The Colorado Plateau: Cultural, Biological, and Physical Research*, ed. by Charles Van Riper, Kenneth L. Cole (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), pp. 19-39 (p. 31).

watchtowers, or the homes of refugees or exiles driven out from other bands.²⁸ Even if the plateau played a role in the Southern Paiute's physical landscape, these studies point to Kaiparowits as a marginal space of last resort.

The lack of physical remnants on the plateau calls into question the naming of Kaiparowits as 'mountain home of the people,' but doubt also surrounds the idea that the plateau was a place of perceptual significance. Admittedly 'home' with its constellation of associative meanings does not inherently specify a fixed residence. In the Southern Paiute case, it may have denoted a favoured region in which to roam, with Kaiparowits as an orienting monolith anchoring hunting and foraging in the maze of surrounding canyons, particularly to its southeast. The more fundamental question is whether the early Paiute specific to southern Utah had been able to conceive of any collective identity for the plateau given their limited social structure. Unlike other Paiute tribes closer to California, anthropologist Ronald Holt points to uncertainty concerning whether or not the Southern Paiute in the region ever developed ties beyond basic family allegiance.²⁹ From this basis, it is difficult to conceive how the plateau could have ever coalesced into a landmark or place of significance, if no community of perception or even plurality of bands existed to construct it. The region was, after all, an unfriendly, isolating space on the northern fringe of Paiute territory, unlikely to be the 'centre' of any shared cultural vision of landscape.

Any theories as to why Kaiparowits might have meant 'mountain home of the people,' today remain relegated to the realm of conjecture. By 1934 only one Southern Paiute woman identifying as part of a Kaiparowits band could be found, living amongst the Kaibab Paiute.

²⁸ Herbert E. Gregory and Raymond C. Moore, *Professional Paper 164: The Kaiparowits Region: A Geographic and Geologic Reconnaissance of Parts of Utah and Arizona* (Washington: United States Department of the Interior, 1931), p. 27

²⁹ Holt, p. 11.

Archaeologists continued to point to some limited and sporadic Southern Paiute presence on the plateau until just before 1900, but other surveys of the tribal group in Utah in the early 1930s differed on whether or not there were any Kaiparowits-based Paiute population remaining by the point when Mormon settlement of northern Utah began.³⁰ The advent of Mormon settlers into Utah predictably hastened the decline of native presence in the south and southwest reaches of the territory. A diminished Paiute people, displaced from their traditional sources of water, managed to maintain decent relationships with the new occupiers of their land, but were nevertheless forced to adapt to a new set of circumstances. A headcount in 1873 concluded that only 528 Paiute remained in all of Utah.³¹ This assessment failed to distinguish between the Paiute and Southern Paiute, but by this point any division seemed unnecessary to the study's authors. All evidence pointed to a diminished sense of individual culture and customs between Paiute bands and groups, replaced with a form of political organizing under a single leader and talk of a Paiute confederacy. Increasingly, observers reasoned, the Paiute wanted to become farmers and ranchers. With relations between the remaining groups and the new settlers essentially cordial, most accepted to be relocated to the Moapa Valley in Nevada.³²

That only one member of the Southern Paiute was alive and identifying as from the Kaiparowits band by the 1930s was a fact that came as no shock to anthropologist Isabel Kelly. Rather than European and Mormon entry into the region being the root cause of Southern

³⁰ Joel C. Janetski, and others, 'Deep Human History in Escalante Valley and Southern Utah', *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 79 (2011), 204-223 (p. 205).

³¹ J. W. Powell and G. W. Ingalls, *Report of Special Commissioners J. W. Powell and G. W. Ingalls on the Condition of the Ute Indians of Utah, the Pai-Utes of Utah, Northern Arizona, Southern Nevada, and Southeastern California; the Go-si-Utes of Utah and Nevada; the Northwestern Shoshones of Idaho and Utah; and the Western Shoshones of Nevada* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1873), p. 13.

³² *Ibid*, pp. 13-14; Martha C. Knack, *Boundaries Between: The Southern Paiutes, 1775-1995* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), pp. 116-119.

Paiute decline in Utah, Kelly argued the problem was Kaiparowits itself. The plateau was 'a deeply dissected district where subsistence for even a small non-agricultural population must have been an acute problem.'³³ Simple geology was seen to hasten the end Kaiparowits' last native occupants. If Kaiparowits had once held any perceptual significance to the Southern Paiute, its meaning had already been lost by this point. Later federal studies argued that the Southern Paiute looked to another site of central spiritual and cosmological significance, just to the south of the plateau. This was the Grand Canyon, or what the Southern Paiute called 'Big River Canyon.' It was a place one study argued groups believed they had been given a 'supernatural responsibility' to protect as significant above all others.³⁴ The idea that the Southern Paiute, regardless of group, would all look to protecting the Grand Canyon anchored the ravine as an early space of perceptual significance. Yet this perspective was written a decade before Holt's research that noted individual bands possessed no wider allegiances or meta-community beyond language, and that family units often placed significance in their own landmarks rather than a single unifying site.

Perceptual Foundations II: "One Arm" and the Surveyors

As native presence on Kaiparowits continued its gradual decline, the plateau became of more interest to Euro-American settlers, although not until the latter half of the nineteenth century. While in the 1820s and 1830s trappers and fur traders breached the Colorado Plateau and much of Utah, their explorations were largely limited to the northern and southwestern

³³ William R. Palmer, 'Pahute Indian Homelands,' *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 6 (1933), 88-102 (pp. 96-97, 101); Isabel T. Kelly, 'Southern Paiute Bands,' *American Anthropologist*, 36 (1934), 548-560 (pp. 550-551).

³⁴ Richard W. Stoffle, and others, 'Piapaxa 'Uipi (Big River Canyon)', (Tucson: University of Arizona Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, 1994), p. 1.

portions of the state. Their closest incursion to the Grand Staircase-Escalante region was a journey to the Virgin River, but southern and southeastern Utah remained largely unknown and out of reach.³⁵ It was not until after the tentative roots of Mormon settlement had been planted that the potential resources of the Grand Staircase-Escalante region and the Kaiparowits Plateau became deemed of interest to the wider public. The entry of surveyors and geologists into the area in the second half of the nineteenth century signalled the beginnings of more detailed interpretations of the plateau. Yet those accounts would be overlooked when the same authors published lucrative adventure narratives of their experiences in the Grand Canyon.

Between 1867 and 1869 John Wesley Powell was involved in the scientific survey of western Colorado and eastern Utah for the Smithsonian Institution. Although Powell would not encounter Kaiparowits in these initial years, he successfully saw much of southeastern Utah that trappers and traders had seldom visited. He travelled to the mouth of the Fremont and Dirty Devil rivers that meandered through land that would become Wayne and Garfield County, before joining with the Colorado. Powell's party of surveyors also explored sections of the San Juan and reached the mouth of the Virgin River, located just west of the Grand Staircase. The pace was frantic.³⁶ Yet Powell was not content with his first exploration of southeastern Utah, noting 'our last trip was so hurried, owing to the loss of rations, and the scientific instruments were so badly damaged, that we are not satisfied with the results obtained.'³⁷

³⁵ Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West: A History of the Pioneer Companies of the Missouri Valley and the Rocky Mountains and of the Overland Commerce with Santa Fe*, 3 vols (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1902), II (1902), p. 782.

³⁶ Gregory and Moore, p. 7.

³⁷ Powell, *The Exploration of the Colorado*, p. 289.

Again, the Grand Canyon intrudes into the Kaiparowits narrative, functioning once more as a shadowing force. Powell's rather frantic first experience down the Colorado would become instrumental in charting the remaining course of his life; the 900-mile trip became 'one of the epic adventures of American history [...] the main source of Powell's future fame.'³⁸ After the initial trip to the Grand Canyon, Powell would make return expeditions, progressing further into southern Utah's Red Rock Country. His explorations following those in the Grand Canyon were not received with the same broad public interest. Powell's tales of the Colorado River and Grand Canyon intrigued the American public, but it was here their attention became stuck. The exciting qualities of Powell's first expedition west meant much of southern and southeastern Utah that Powell went on to visit remained overshadowed by his original exploits, including his journey across Kaiparowits. Powell's first trip had entered the public imagination as an audacious dance with danger down a river that had attained legendary status in the national consciousness as fraught with fantastical perils.³⁹ It was a singular feat of exploration that granted him celebrity status.⁴⁰

That first Grand Canyon trip endured in the public consciousness not for its scientific achievements, which were meagre, but as an adventure narrative.⁴¹ Following the conclusion of his survey work, the explorer was quick to release a series of accounts in the spring of 1875 for *Scribner's Monthly* under the title 'The Canons of the Colorado.' A longer account for the

³⁸ *Seeing Things Whole: The Essential John Wesley Powell*, ed. by William DeBuys (Washington: Island Press, 2001), p. 13.

³⁹ These included vast whirlpools, sudden abysses, and the notion that the Colorado River could be ridden underground for several hundred miles. See: Powell, *The Exploration of the Colorado River*, p. 35.

⁴⁰ Powell's status as an early Western 'celebrity' is discussed, albeit briefly, by: Patricia Nelson Limerick and Jason L. Hanson, *Ditch in Time: The City, the West, and Water* (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2012), pp. 85-86; Donald Worster, *A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. x-xii; David Gessner, *All the Wild That Remains: Edward Abbey, Wallace Stegner, and the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2015), pp. 127-129.

⁴¹ Herbert E. Gregory, 'Introduction', in *Diary of Almon Harris Thompson: Explorations of the Colorado River of the West and its Tributaries, 1871-1875*, ed. by Herbert E. Gregory (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2009), pp. 6-10 (p. 8).

Smithsonian Institution followed later that year, published under the title *Explorations of the Colorado of the West and its Tributaries*. Powell, conscious of what his 1869 journey had done for his public profile, placed almost all emphasis on the initial river trip. Recounting the survey work conducted in aid of creating a topographic map of southern and southeastern Utah between 1871 and 1875 appears but is only sparsely interwoven. Separately, Powell's later work constituted a disappointing sequel; repetitive and monotonous canyon treks could not match the excitement of the rapids of the Colorado, and contained less of the man versus nature mastery narrative conveyed through the Powell party's struggle with the great river. The Smithsonian report opened with a large illustration of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado, and Powell's focus ensured the canyons and plateaus just north of the river saw comparatively limited recognition in the text.⁴²

Powell has become a part of the pantheon of explorers of the American West, and his image remains inextricably tied to the Grand Canyon mythos, a figure synonymous with both the canyon and the river.⁴³ But Powell also travelled across part of the Kaiparowits Region, as part of his later adventures, at a time the plateau was similarly uncharted. His account of these experiences presents an alternate - if questionable - origin for the plateau's name. Yet this second account does not easily co-exist with the native naming of the plateau. To believe the Grand Canyon's most famous explorer is to reject that 'Kaiparowits' was ever a perceptual landmark or mountain home for the Southern Paiute.

The number of contemporary readers looking for any references to Kaiparowits in Powell's 1875 report on the Grand Canyon the explorer could likely count on his only arm. It was this

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Worster, *A River Running West*, p. 379, 571; Gessner, pp. 128-129.

lone upper limb that formed the crux of the alternate tale. When Powell returned in 1870 to explore the canyons of the Virgin River and the Uinkaret Plateau, he stayed briefly with a band of Shivwits, a group of Southern Paiute from southwestern Utah. The Shivwits had difficulty in understanding the explorer's presence in the region. Powell's entrance did not herald any commercial endeavour, as he wanted to neither conduct trade nor purchase Paiute land. According to Powell, the Southern Paiute conferred upon him the name 'Ka-pu-rats,' which Powell understood to mean 'Arm Off,' or 'One Arm.' He took the moniker as a signal that friendship had been broached between the two parties.⁴⁴

The intonation of the name given to Powell also suggested a link with the yet to be surveyed Kaiparowits. The Shivwits had contact with the Kaiparowits Paiute, strengthening the connection, but more startling is the precise topographical awareness the comparison suggests. The southeastern vertex of Kaiparowits' vaguely triangular form tapers into a bold point, the end of which aims across the Colorado directly to Navajo Mountain in San Juan County. The gradual narrowing of this portion of the plateau creates the illusory image of a single arm outstretched, with the Aquarius Plateau to the north forming the shoulder. The juniper and pinion trees that heavily blanket the eastern portion of Kaiparowits in a sea of chartreuse - but none of the lower terrain surrounding the plateau - accentuate this effect. Today, satellite imagery shows how the greener portion of the landscape becomes silhouetted against the reds and yellows of canyon country, and the contrast creates a rudimentary thumb and index finger that point ominously southeast, toward Navajo Mountain.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ J. W. Powell, *Exploration of the Colorado River of the West and Its Tributaries. Explored in 1869, 1870, 1871, and 1872, Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875), p. 130; Worster, *A River Running West*, p. 213.

⁴⁵ See Appendix: Image 1.

Powell alludes to Kaiparowits in his 1875 report, but the landform had yet to be named when he was in the region. Not that there is there any definitive proof that Powell had any role in naming the plateau after what he believed was his Paiute title; his story only provides another potential origin for the name 'Kaiparowits.' More than a coincidence of shape connects Powell with the plateau's name; when the explorer's party ran into trouble in late 1871 trying to reach the mouth of the Dirty Devil River, they abandoned one of their boats in attempts to reach their cached supplies near the Crossing of the Fathers on the Utah-Arizona border. While the rest of the party made their way to Kanab to bed down for winter, Powell would follow a Ute trail to the town of Paria, and then on to Salt Lake City to arrange future supplies and send letters from his party to their families.⁴⁶ The route took him across the southwest base of the Kaiparowits Plateau, making him the first geologist, and potentially first Euro-American, to traverse it.⁴⁷

Despite the apt nature of the comparisons between Powell and Kaiparowits, the surveyor's explorations of the plateau were swift and largely unimportant. With a long trek to Salt Lake City ahead of him, Powell had little time to make extended observations, and the reactions he later noted down do not point to the plateau making a lasting impression on him. Powell, by no means immune to being awed by the sublime monumentalism of western geography, simply saw Kaiparowits as a natural observation deck. The plateau was valuable in that it provided an 'instructive' view of the surrounding areas; it was topographically useful, but not a place that exhibited any kind of romantic lure on the explorer.⁴⁸ To Powell, Kaiparowits was

⁴⁶ Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, *A Canyon Voyage: The Narrative of the Second Powell Expedition Down the Green-Colorado River from Wyoming, and the Explorations on Land, in the Years 1871 and 1872* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 144.

⁴⁷ Gregory and Moore, p. 7.

⁴⁸ Powell, *The Exploration of the Colorado*, p. 83.

a point from which other parts of the Intermountain West could be more fully appreciated; a landmass upon which other landmarks could be shaped.

Powell's indifference to the plateau typified the response of subsequent surveyors who would work atop it. The following year, in a reverse of Powell's trip, Lieutenant Marshall of the Wheeler Survey travelled from the town of Paria to the Crossing of the Fathers.⁴⁹ This trip should have taken the Lieutenant across western portions of Kaiparowits, but while Marshall's work from 1872 suggests that he managed to map substantial areas of southern Utah and northern Arizona, there is no evidence that the Wheeler survey wrote about the plateau.⁵⁰ As 1872 came to a close, neither the Powell nor the Wheeler Survey had given any inclination that suggested they had seen Kaiparowits as particularly noteworthy.

Still, Powell's awareness of Kaiparowits functioned as an aid for further geological survey work. Initial explorations grounded the later discovery of coal beneath the plateau. Powell left much of the geological studies and survey work of the plateau to his brother-in-law, Almon Harris Thompson. Thompson ultimately deserves more credit than Powell for first mapping Kaiparowits and the wider surrounding region, making four expeditions into the region across much of the 1880s. At least one text has credited Thompson with giving the plateau its name, and given Thompson's familial connection to Powell, reinforces the notion that Kaiparowits is named after the one-armed river runner.⁵¹ In 1872, Thompson charted the eastern slopes of Kaiparowits and the Escalante River, originally mistaken for the Dirty Devil, but during his third excursion, in the summer of 1875, he ascended Kaiparowits with Grove

⁴⁹ George M. Wheeler, *Report Upon United States Geographical Surveys West of the One Hundredth Meridian*, 7 vols (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1871-1879), I (1871), p. 52.

⁵⁰ Gregory and Moore, p. 8.

⁵¹ Jedediah S. Rogers, *Roads in the Wilderness: Conflict in Canyon Country* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2013), p. 27.

Karl Gilbert of the Wheeler Survey. As with Powell, Thompson saw Kaiparowits as a geologic tool, a platform from which he could obtain a generalized view of the geology surrounding the Henry Mountains, which formed part of the horizon line to the northeast of the plateau.⁵² Given Thompson's reason for ascending the plateau, it is likely that it was during this trip that coal was found. Thompson gives no exact date, but his diary references Gilbert and himself conducting geodetic and topographical research on the plateau from August 2-4, and Thompson only spent eight days total surveying all of Kaiparowits and the adjoining Escalante Valley.⁵³ Two years later, Gilbert referenced the comparative economic viability of the Kaiparowits coal reserves in a published report on the Henry Mountains, based on notes from the summer of 1875.⁵⁴

Thompson and Gilbert wrote on Kaiparowits far more than Powell, but neither could write like the man who braved the Grand Canyon in 1869. Powell had consciously written for a wider audience; Gilbert's work was designed for consumption by geological experts, and his stilted writing style offered few romantic or lyrical thoughts on the plateau. For Gilbert, Kaiparowits was a purely physical space, its value limited to its economic potential, and that potential was severely limited. Gilbert expressed scepticism that any of the natural resources of southern Utah could ever be effectively mined. In the case of coal, the resource was still plentiful elsewhere, and even if extraction could be achieved, there was little substantial market in the largely deserted surrounding region. Coal to the north, in Castle Valley, was abundant and easily accessible in the 1870s. Taking the Kaiparowits coal to western Utah or eastern Nevada made it similarly uncompetitive due to other, more attractive sources in

⁵² Heath, pp. 435-446 (p. 440); Grove K. Gilbert references this in: Grove K. Gilbert, *Report on the Geology of the Henry Mountains* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1877), p. vii.

⁵³ Gregory, *Diary of Almon Harris Thompson*, p. 124; Gregory and Moore, p. 9.

⁵⁴ Gilbert, p. 151.

those regions. Taking it south or east was simply impossible; getting it out through a labyrinth of canyons would prove to be a nightmare. Thompson and Gilbert's appraisal of the plateau killed any nineteenth century interest in the plateau as an economic or energy landscape. After the end of the Wheeler and Powell surveys of the Colorado region, there was no geologic study of the plateau for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Clarence E. Dutton wrote about it sporadically in his own works on Utah's geology, but betrayed no specific interest, and references to the coal reserves near Kaiparowits remained similarly slim throughout the initial decades of the new century.⁵⁵

John Van Cott, tracing the potential origins behind many of Utah's place names for the University of Utah, has recognized the contested meaning of 'Kaiparowits.' Cott writes that the plateau's meaning is dependent 'upon who is interpreting.'⁵⁶ When anthropologists and ethnologists look to the plateau, they see a place shrouded in the folklore of Southern Paiute bands. When geologists look to the plateau, they see a landform named in honour of Powell, not a lost home of the mountain people.⁵⁷ Not that this contestation makes Kaiparowits in any sense unique; the geographic process of mapping the nation has produced a number of cases in which indigenous geographies collide with Euro-American conceptions of significance in landscape. In South Dakota and Wyoming, American Indian Rights groups have gone to court over Gutzon Borglum's Mount Rushmore sculpture. For one community of perception,

⁵⁵ C. E. Dutton, *Geology of the High Plateaus of Utah* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), p. 22, 291, 298; C. E. Dutton, *Tertiary History of the Grand Canon District* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1882), pp. 33-39; Heath, pp. 435-446 (p. 440). Only one geologic study appears to make reference to coal reserves in the first two decades of the 20th century, and even this concerns the adjacent town of Escalante rather than Kaiparowits proper. See: Andrew C. Lawson, 'The Gold of the Shinarump at Paria', *Economic Geology*, 8 (1913), 434-448.

⁵⁶ Cott, p. 211.

⁵⁷ William T. Parry, *Geology of Utah's Mountains and Plateaus* (Victoria: Friesen Press, 2016), p. 47; Melanie Schleeter McCalmont, *A Wilderness of Rocks: The Impact of Relief Models on Data Science* (Victoria: Friesen Press, 2015), p. 53.

the sculpture reflects a proud history writ in the very fabric of the continent. For another, it symbolizes the arrogance of conquerors and the cultural acquisition of landscape.⁵⁸ Such conflicts have, however, typically arisen over established landmarks, where dramatically different meanings have already concentrated for different groups. Neither narrative surrounding the plateau's name gives much space in which meaning might begin to coalesce. The name is contested, but there exists no perceptual landscape to contest. Landmarks cannot form without initial resonance, and neither of the plateau's naming stories provide that. If the plateau was ever a landmark for the Southern Paiute, it had long since lost that status by the time of Mormon entry to the region, and most of the Kaiparowits Paiute were gone shortly after. If Kaiparowits is named for Powell's exploits, it is not for his traversal of the plateau itself, but a name given in reference to the American Civil War, a conflict with themes and tensions that seldom appear in the popular imagination of the American West.

The Plateau and the Canyon I: Clyde Kluckhohn

Far from the last word on the lands surrounding the Colorado River, the popularity of John Wesley Powell's adventure through the Grand Canyon became an invitation for others to visit and offer their own interpretations of the dissected landscape. The identity of the Grand Canyon as established by Powell was a particularly lyrical foundation for placemaking. Powell's canyon, full of scope and mystery, became a character that compelled further response. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the canyon began to amass a distinguished crowd of writers and intellectuals who came to view the grandiose space of

⁵⁸ Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, p. 10.

earlier missives and to further shape the canyon as a site of national significance. Those figures came to include noted travel writer Charles Dudley Warner, novelist George Wharton James, conservationist John Muir, Pulitzer Prize winner Hamlin Garland, and President Theodore Roosevelt. By the early twentieth century, the canyon's perceptual stature had grown tall.

Kaiparowits, just to the north, saw few pages written on it for the remainder of the nineteenth century. The dry writings of Almon Harris Thompson and Grove Karl Gilbert recounted with business-like precision Kaiparowits' physical resources, but these works created little fertile soil from which any spiritual or affective dimensions could be cultivated. Kaiparowits as little more than a series of taxonomical observations persisted for decades. Two more surveyors followed Thompson and Gilbert, Herbert Gregory and Raymond Moore, but they would not breach the plateau until 1918, and their mission remained one of geological cataloguing. Whilst their resultant report offered a more comprehensive overview of what they termed the 'Kaiparowits Region,' it was still a mapping of resources – mostly physical – that offered little popular appeal. It would not be until the late 1920s and 1930s that more effusive, reflective impressions of the plateau were written.

Two figures superseded all others in their early twentieth century connection with attempts to craft the plateau as a perceptual space: anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn and popular western author Zane Grey. In contrast to the surveyors in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Kluckhohn and Grey both came to Kaiparowits unattached from any professional bodies or agendas. They arrived and explored within a similar time span. Although they only passed on the trail once, their contemplative narratives entangled both men and the

Kaiparowits Plateau in illuminating and inextricable ways.⁵⁹ Kluckhohn and Grey were acutely aware of the monolithic project being undertaken to the south, the building of the perceptual Grand Canyon. Each author had decidedly mixed thoughts about the construction of such a behemoth in the mental landscape. Their own narratives would consciously attempt to compare the plateau with the canyon, and drag the former out of the latter's shadow.

As environmental historian Jedediah Rogers notes, the few figures that travelled to deepest southern Utah in the initial decades of the twentieth century went predisposed to the idea of landscape as spiritually rejuvenative. They 'sought, as many have since, in the deep canyons and high mesas [...] a retreat from modern culture,' one that in the period had become a matter of some concern.⁶⁰ Unlike those who wrote on the character of the Grand Canyon, who felt pulled to northern Arizona by stories of its magnificence, authors heading to southern Utah were often compelled to travel *away* from events back home, rather than to any specific or fixed point of meaning. Those who found themselves in the region were often fleeing what they saw as the empty material excess of the urban culture of the 1920s or the crippling economic exigencies of the 1930s, seeking some alternative message in the landscape. This flight from urban culture coloured the nascent meaning of southern Utah's canyonlands. Even before reaching Red Rock Country, authors sought from the region's dominant geomorphic structures a place of therapeutic retreat from the conditions wracking modern civilization.⁶¹ This was equally true for Kluckhohn and Grey. Each man's story is about

⁵⁹ Thomas J. Harvey, *Rainbow Bridge to Monument Valley: Making the Modern Old West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), p. 6.

⁶⁰ Rogers, *Roads in the Wilderness*, p. 27.

⁶¹ Although other writers in the period have written on southern Utah, the most notable author who mediated on the character of the canyon wilds who I later reference but do not deal with as extensively here was young poet and traveller Everett Ruess. Ruess wrote on southern Utah extensively, and ultimately disappeared in the Canyons of the Escalante. For Ruess's view of southern Utah as an enclave or retreat, see: Don Scheese, *Mountains of Memory: A Fire Lookout's Life in the River of No Return Wilderness* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2001), p. 203; David Roberts, *Finding Everett Ruess: The Life and Unsolved Disappearance of a Legendary*

withdrawal from contemporary living more than it is about natural pilgrimage. These underlying motivations would frequently see Kaiparowits framed as a landscape that symbolized escape. This hardly made the plateau perceptually unique in the southwest, and each author's tale would borrow heavily from the kaleidoscope of patterns that comprised the popular image of the nineteenth century American West.⁶² Yet as frequently as Kluckhohn and Grey's narratives would refer back to well-trammelled components of an idealized past, each author also contained within their own accounts of Kaiparowits surprising and unexpectedly divergent paths from established frontier-writing norms.

Clyde Kluckhohn was born in the small, northwestern Iowan town of Le Mars in the initial years of the twentieth century. Drawn toward academia from an early age, his subsequent career as an anthropologist with an interest in the Navajo tongue and culture remains the primary reason for his position in the historical record.⁶³ Not that this path to success initially ran smoothly; stricken ill as an undergraduate at Princeton, Kluckhohn fled the academic environment, temporarily relocating to an Uncle's ranch in New Mexico to recuperate. Here came his initial introduction to the Navajo people and other native cultures that would determine his future career. For the young Kluckhohn, however, it was the arid landscapes of northern Arizona and southern Utah that would leave the most immediate impression.

Wilderness Explorer (New York: Broadway Books, 2011), p. 270; John P. O'Grady, *Pilgrims to the Wild: Everett Ruess, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Clarence King, Mary Austin* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), p. 18.

⁶² The most famous essay to deal with the idea of wild nature and wilderness as a form of escape is undoubtedly: William Cronon, 'The Trouble with Wilderness; or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature', in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. by William Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1996), pp. 69-90.

⁶³ Based on Kluckhohn's obituaries. See: Talcott Parsons, 'Clyde Kluckhohn, Anthropologist', *Science*, 133 (1961), 1584; Melville J. Herskovits, *Clyde Kay Maben Kluckhohn, 1905-1960: A Biographical Memoir* (Washington: National Academy of Sciences, 1964).

Beyond his later, more studious pursuits, Kluckhohn retains pre-eminent association with the Kaiparowits Plateau as both a geomorphic space and a potential site of meaning. Illness and flight made escape and restoration powerful foundational themes of his early writings on the southwest canyon country. Kluckhohn had not heard of Kaiparowits when he first travelled to New Mexico to recuperate. Although he had read about the American West and seen it in early films, the arid landscape of the southwest presented itself as an alien space for someone who had grown up in Iowa and just aborted studies in New Jersey.⁶⁴ Not that those feelings of being out of place lasted. Determined to make the best of his new surroundings, Kluckhohn went on a summer-long backpacking trip across the southwest in June 1923, when he was just eighteen.⁶⁵ Starting from the Zuni Reservation in western New Mexico, Kluckhohn travelled a haphazard route that included stops in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Taos, Mesa Verde, the future Rainbow Bridge National Monument, and finally the Grand Canyon. On a map, Kluckhohn's journey appears to meander, seemingly at random across the desert southwest, but in practice his budding interest in anthropology led him to sites of perceptual importance for Euro-Americans and Natives alike. Of all his destinations on this vaguely circular tour of the Four Corners region, Kluckhohn's favourite spot was Rainbow Bridge, a rock arch with particular significance to the Navajo and other native groups.⁶⁶ It was not the visuals of the bridge that most keenly resonated with Kluckhohn, who found himself somewhat resistant to the aesthetics that appealed foremost to other tourists. It was the grand arches inaccessibility that made it so alluring.⁶⁷ Kluckhohn was keenly aware remoteness was why he had been

⁶⁴ Harvey, *Rainbow Bridge to Monument Valley*, p. 6.

⁶⁵ Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, p. 87.

⁶⁶ Harvey, *Rainbow Bridge to Monument Valley*, p. 10. For an overview of the perceptual significance of Rainbow Bridge to tribal groups, see: Stephen C. Jett, 'Testimony of the Sacredness of Rainbow Bridge to Puebloans, Navajos, and Paiutes', *Plateau*, 4 (1973), 133-142.

⁶⁷ Clyde Kluckhohn, *To the Foot of the Rainbow: A Tale of Twenty-Five Hundred Miles of Wandering on Horseback Through the Southwest Enchanted Land* (Glorieta: The Rio Grande Press, Inc., 1967), pp. 14-16.

drawn toward Rainbow Bridge at the start of his expedition, and this recognition would help him chart his future adventures in the southwest.

On his route back to more permanent lodgings at the end of that summer's long trip, Kluckhohn visited the Grand Canyon. The whole trip had built up to this, a chance to see the most brilliant jewel of the southwest.⁶⁸ Kluckhohn's emotional response to the canyon was not quite the untarnished experience he had expected, and the visitation ultimately sparked mixed emotions. Kluckhohn admitted the deep gouges that characterized the Grand Canyon region were undeniably beautiful, but he wondered about the seemingly rapturous dimensions conferred upon it by those who had shaped and were continuing to shape its popular reputation. Kluckhohn recalled seeing the canyon and dubiously thinking:

More has been written about the Grand Canon of the Colorado than any other one piece of scenery in America; countless authors and noted men have said that the canon was indescribable and have then proceeded [...] writing a few thousand words about it.⁶⁹

Kluckhohn recognized how the perceptual landscape of the Grand Canyon cast a shadow on all other landscapes on the continent, but 'it was with strange and mingled feelings that we beheld [...] the Grand Canon settlement in general.'⁷⁰ If so many people saw the canyon as significant, Kluckhohn reasoned, how could it ever be a space that would mean something deeply personal to *him*. Part of that question related to the difficulty of landscape and the distance he had just travelled to reach the southwest's points of isolation. The shaping of the canyon as a perceptual space had produced vastly increased physical accessibility, and made

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 56.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 252

⁷⁰ Ibid.

the canyon, in Kluckhohn's eyes, all too simple to visit. In essence, the Grand Canyon had become too easy to access to be worthy of such high praise. To Kluckhohn, natural pilgrimage on some level implied an element of toil, and he found himself 'bewildered' by the 'fashionably dressed people hurrying about in an effort to see the most sublime sight in America in twelve hours.'⁷¹ He drew a clear line between what he saw as the ease of modern tourism and the hardship experienced by explorers.⁷²

Kluckhohn, reinvigorated after the chronic illness that had driven him west, wanted something more challenging. He didn't want to tour the landscape, he wanted to negotiate it. Looking at the Grand Canyon, he wished he had visited it a hundred years earlier, as he and his party 'were unused to having our contemplation of the wonders of nature spoiled by crowds of chattering tourists.'⁷³ It was not even the canyon itself that made the biggest impression on Kluckhohn, but the structures that had grown around its fringes. Where tourists came to the canyon for its symbolic significance as a place of wilderness and monumental nature, for Kluckhohn, the region represented something quite different. 'When we came upon the automobile road which the Harvey company had recently constructed, that their patrons may view the Painted Desert with a minimum of inconvenience and discomfort,' he noted, 'we knew the beginning of the end had come.'⁷⁴ For Kluckhohn, the Grand Canyon was not a symbol of wild nature, but its extirpation, a sign that the landscape he linked with his liberation from illness was being eroded and colonized by the same forces he had originally fled.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, p. 88.

⁷³ Kluckhohn, *To the Foot*, p. 255.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 248.

During that 1923 summer of roaming, Kluckhohn had visited parts of the southwest that felt dramatically more isolated than the Grand Canyon. He had reached Navajo Mountain, a great peak in Utah's San Juan County, to the southeast of Rainbow Bridge. Navajo Mountain was already considerably difficult to reach, surrounded by some of the most inhospitable terrain in North America, but it was still not sufficient for Kluckhohn. The crowds at the Grand Canyon bothered him, but Kluckhohn also chafed at the idea that any white explorer might have beaten him to an area. In this respect he was a remarkably late to the region; a brief gold rush had brought miners to the confluence of the San Juan and Colorado Rivers, just to the north of the peak, in 1893.⁷⁵ Rainbow Bridge, to the northwest of Navajo Mountain was even further removed from settlement, but it too had been 'discovered' by Euro-American explorers in 1909, and sporadically attracted wealthy tourists willing to brave the trek in the intervening period.⁷⁶ By the time Kluckhohn reached Rainbow Bridge in 1923, a number of frontier celebrities had already made the trek, including Teddy Roosevelt and Zane Grey, the latter having branded a slab near the arch with his initials.⁷⁷

Where the Kaiparowits Plateau exists in the shadow of the Grand Canyon, Clyde Kluckhohn must have felt he was constantly in the shadow of Zane Grey. There is a persistent sense in Kluckhohn's adventure narrative that he was perpetually, unconsciously following in Grey's footsteps. Grey had beaten him to Rainbow Bridge, and even marked his name nearby it. Kluckhohn had heard Grey's name on the trail, too, even at the most remote part of his journey, when skirting the hills surrounding Navajo Peak. Then, the popular author's name

⁷⁵ Robert S. McPherson, *Navajo Land, Navajo Culture: The Utah Experience in the Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), p. 17; Robert S. McPherson, *Life in a Corner: Cultural Episodes in Southeastern Utah, 1880-1950* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), p. 31.

⁷⁶ For the discovery of Rainbow Bridge, see: Harvey, *Rainbow Bridge to Monument Valley*, pp. 29-55.

⁷⁷ David Roberts, *In Search of the Old Ones: Exploring the Anasazi World of the Southwest* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 117.

appeared in conjunction with a distant plateau that had loomed over the land on the Utah side of the Colorado River – one that Kluckhohn's guide had told him Grey had never managed to conquer:

It's way over across the San Juan and Colorado, way beyond Rainbow Bridge, and they say no white man's ever been on it. Zane Grey tried to get there this last year, but the river was too high, and he didn't make it. Some people say he believes there's Mormon villages of 'sealed wives' on top of it, but I can tell you there ain't nothing to that. Nobody could ever get on top of that mesa.⁷⁸

The guide described a great plateau, reaching toward Kluckhohn like a single arm, pointing toward his position on Navajo Mountain. The name Kluckhohn's narrator gave him was 'Wild Horse Mesa,' a title western naturalist Wallace Stegner would later identify as Zane Grey's name for Kaiparowits.⁷⁹ No description could have been more enticing to Kluckhohn. A place no one else had yet explored, that was virtually impossible to breach, Kaiparowits appeared to offer isolation from the forces of modernity and invite irresistible challenge. To hear that Grey, who had already marked Kluckhohn's most distant destination as his own, had failed to ascend to the top of the vast tableland only added to the appeal. No other landscape, not even the Grand Canyon would ever grip Kluckhohn's imagination like the Kaiparowits Plateau.⁸⁰

As much as the guide dismissed the rumours as he spoke them, his words offered Kluckhohn and his party something approaching a mythos for Kaiparowits; whispers of a secret Mormon enclave of polygamists above the plateau's eastern cliffs. That was an unlikely reality, but the

⁷⁸ Clyde Kluckhohn, *Beyond the Rainbow* (Boston: Christopher, 1993), pp. 13-14.

⁷⁹ Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, p. 88.

⁸⁰ Rogers, *Roads in the Wilderness*, p. 20.

assertion that the rumour had originated with Zane Grey was believable. Ever since Grey had released *Riders of the Purple Sage* in 1912, he had developed a reputation for being paranoid that there was some kind of secret or insidious purpose behind the innocuous front of Mormon belief.⁸¹ More likely than Grey's theory of community of Mormon wives cloistered away atop the plateau was that such rumours were simply an early twentieth century repackaging of much older legends of the American southwest. Whispers of a secret community recalled the Southern Paiute origin for Kaiparowits' name, a 'mountain home of the people' hidden away atop the plateau. It also recalled even older western narratives of lost civilizations, most notably the mythical Seven Cities of Gold pursued by the Spanish conquistadors in the southwest in the sixteenth century. The idea of hidden cities atop Kaiparowits was the one romantic myth the plateau had been able to perpetuate, albeit in a faltering manner.

The persistence of this myth did not necessarily connect to some form of faded historical instance of native occupation in Kaiparowits' distant past; it more likely arose in connection with the geomorphic shape of plateaus more generally. Unlike mountains, and later canyons, there was – and is - no established American aesthetic for plateaus. In the North American tradition of landscape appreciation, mountains most commonly became religious symbols of God's hand in nature or challenges in masculine narratives of nature's conquest.⁸² Conversely, flat land was a distinct space, reserved for human agriculture, sustenance, and profit. The geomorphic shape of plateaus often combined the sublime, untamed dimensions of the

⁸¹ Michael Austin, 'The Function of Mormon Literary Criticism at the Present Time', *Dialogue*, 28 (1994), 131-144 (p. 141); Gary Topping, 'Zane Grey in Zion: An Examination of His Supposed Anti-Mormonism', *Brigham Young University Studies*, 18 (1978), 483-490.

⁸² Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), pp. 34-35; David I. Spanagel, *DeWitt Clinton and Amos Eaton: Geology and Power in Early New York* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014), pp. 185-186.

mountain's appeal with the lowlands promise of arable production; they were hybrid topographies. A plateau's elevated sides offered wild nature's challenge of ascent and mastery. The plateau's (often assumed) flat summit hinted at a landscape orderly enough to cultivate a society. To ascend a plateau was not to reach for the sublime realm to glimpse the handiwork of God, it was to conquer more modest slopes in hope of human discoveries.

Kluckhohn did eventually reach the summit of the plateau, but it took him six years of intermittent attempts with a group of friends that came to call themselves the 'Kaiparowits Reconnaissance Expedition,' also known amongst themselves as the 'Filthy Five.' Since his initial glimpse earlier in the decade, he led several trips between 1927 and 1931, although it was 1928 that saw his first ascent, and he found it difficult to repeat this initial success. He found evidence of ancient human passage atop the plateau, but no secret society, Mormon or otherwise. Kluckhohn had assumed the plateau's summit was uniformly flat – but he was instead confronted by a rain and windswept shallow amphitheatre further dissected by irregular canyons. Whilst this was not a landscape that could have supported much in the way of anything but a miserable existence for the hardest folk, Kluckhohn also discovered evidence of more recent human passage. Two ranchers had inscribed their names on rocks atop the plateau, and cattle trails were sporadically evident.⁸³

The discovery of white presence on Kaiparowits dampened Kluckhohn's spirits slightly. Kluckhohn was never all that interested in disproving Grey's beliefs about the plateau's hidden society, but his relationship with Kaiparowits was heavily connected to the desire for social escape and a drive to master the plateau before others. Kluckhohn had had six years to create his own perceptual Kaiparowits, but he became enthralled by a version of the plateau

⁸³ Rogers, *Roads in the Wilderness*, p. 25.

that had little basis in reality. Whilst Kluckhohn still noted that Kaiparowits was a 'quiet valley shut off from all the noise and dirt of the world,' he also had to concede that his image of the mesa as western wilderness' final bastion against human presence was little more than a personal assumption.⁸⁴ It was not, as he had thought for so long, 'the real item, The Last Frontier, the place Rainbow Bridge was no more.'⁸⁵

The Kaiparowits of Kluckhohn's imagination was a largely Arizonan view of the plateau. More interested in Zuni and Navajo customs than Mormon society, the young anthropologist never appeared to consider that Kaiparowits was far more easily accessible for those prepared to make the still strenuous but relatively linear *descent* down onto Kaiparowits from the Aquarius Plateau in central Utah. Furthermore, Kluckhohn in the exuberance of youth imagined his flight from modernity to be more unique than it actually was. As with visitation to Rainbow Bridge in the early nineteenth century, wealthy and adventurous tourists avoiding crowds could hire guides willing to penetrate deeper and deeper into the canyonlands. These guides were themselves fleeing the incremental encroachment of roads and other infrastructural developments gradually pressing into southern Utah. Famous tour operators like the Mormon guide John Wetherill were offering such services at the start of the 1920s.⁸⁶ In 1922, guide Dave Rust took wealthy eastern lawyer George Corning Fraser and his young daughter Jane across Kaiparowits, with none of the difficulty Kluckhohn experienced in breaching the tableland from its Arizonan side.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Kluckhohn, quoted in Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, p. 88.

⁸⁶ George Corning Fraser, *Journeys in the Canyon Lands of Utah and Arizona, 1914-1916* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005), p. xxx.

⁸⁷ Frederick H. Swanson, *Dave Rust: A Life in the Canyons* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2007), pp. 171-172.

Kluckhohn did briefly reflect upon the potential of federal protection for Kaiparowits as he sat atop the tableland, victorious but somewhat deflated. The young anthropologist found himself in a similar position to John Wesley Powell after he had travelled through the Grand Canyon; an able writer with ample enthusiasm for the landscape he had committed years of his life exploring. Yet on the plateau, Kluckhohn's thoughts turned to what had become of the canyon. Aesthetically, he noted that 'Wild Horse Mesa surpasses even Grand Canyon.'⁸⁸ But he could not think of a worse fate for Kaiparowits than for it to become the canyon, with its hive of tourist activity and infrastructural tendrils.⁸⁹

Kluckhohn anticipated a key concern of conservationists at mid-century; that places could just be as easily loved to death by tourists as much as they could be damaged by industrial development. He went on to publish two books concerning his youthful itinerancy. The first, *To the Foot of the Rainbow* offered accounts of his patchwork route across the majority of the southwest. His sequel – *Beyond the Rainbow* – largely focused on Kaiparowits and offered a more introspective approach. Reflecting a general lack of public interest in the plateau, Kluckhohn's first book has seen several reprints and remains at least semi-widely available; his lengthy mediation on Kaiparowits has long been out of print and is hard to find, being neither reprinted nor attaining status as collector's item. In this respect, Kluckhohn's early literary career followed that hewed by Powell; he became disproportionately known as southwestern explorer, whilst his adventures north of the Grand Canyon found little public purchase.

⁸⁸ Kluckhohn, quoted in Rogers, *Roads in the Wilderness*, p. 26.

⁸⁹ Kluckhohn, *Beyond the Rainbow*, pp. 207-209.

Making Kaiparowits II: Zane Grey

Even if Clyde Kluckhohn beat Zane Grey to the top of Kaiparowits, he did not outpace his rival in writing a book on the plateau. *Beyond the Rainbow* was released in 1933; Grey's *Wild Horse Mesa*, a schlocky fictional western based on and around the plateau's great cliffs first appeared in 1928, the same year Kluckhohn and his Filthy Five finally reached Kaiparowits' summit. Whether or not Zane Grey ever conquered Kaiparowits is not definitively known, but it is unlikely. As Kluckhohn's guide noted, Grey had failed to cross the Colorado River due to its ferocity on his first attempt in the early 1920s, and he did not possess the same perseverance as Kluckhohn to make any return trip. Still, Grey left his mark upon the plateau in a way Kluckhohn had not; he reinvented Kaiparowits under the romantic moniker 'Wild Horse Mesa,' a title that Kluckhohn ended up using and a name that became popular enough to become yet another accepted alternate signifier for the region.⁹⁰ Grey never used any of the existing English translations for Kaiparowits in his fiction, nor did he ever call it by its Southern Paiute name. Where Kluckhohn had ultimately elected against actively promoting the aesthetic and atmospheric dimensions of the plateau, Grey would treat Kaiparowits as another western resource to be strip-mined for his literary pursuits.

Born as Pearl Zane Gray to a tenuously middle-class family with deep ties to the town of Zanesville, Ohio in 1872, he dropped his forename for its perceived femininity.⁹¹ A change of surname came later in childhood, when his father altered the spelling of the family surname to Grey, and moved Zane, his mother, and his brother to an adjacent town following an

⁹⁰ John Van Cott credits Grey directly in his guide on the origins of Utah's place names. See: Cott, p. 211.

⁹¹ *The Best of Zane Grey, Outdoorsman*, ed. by George Reiger (Mechanicsburg: Pennsylvania, 1993), p. xvii; Thomas H. Pauly, *Zane Grey: His Life, His Adventures, His Women* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), p. 13; Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 158.

unwise financial investment. These early examples of personal transformation and spatial rootlessness became recurrent themes in Grey's personal and professional pursuits. Prior to his career as a popular author, Grey exhibited an inability to focus on a single career or task. He bounced between a variety of pursuits and experiences, giving little indication of any sustained interest. Originally studying at the University of Pennsylvania and planning on a career in professional baseball, Grey ultimately travelled to New York where he followed his father's footsteps into dentistry, before dropping that in turn.⁹² In part these decisions were due to a strong impulse to roam. Grey felt a deep sense of tedium in the more sedentary phases of his life. Marriage only appeared to exacerbate this. After Grey and his wife Dolly had their first son, he spent extended stretches of time away from the family home. Just before he married, Grey warned his soon-to-be wife:

I love to be free. I cannot change my spots. The ordinary man is satisfied with a moderate income, a home, wife, children, and all that. That is all right and just what a man ought to be. But I am a million miles from being that man and no amount of trying will ever do any good.⁹³

Indeed, it was only in 1920, when Grey and his wife settled in Altadena, California, that he remarked that he had found at last a place he liked well enough to remain, even as he continued to write far ranging narratives of western expansion.⁹⁴ Grey roamed emotionally as much as he did geographically; a short attention span and his generally itinerant nature pushed Grey to conduct several affairs and have more than several mistresses over the course

⁹² Pauly, pp. 31-39.

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 52-53.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 184. A fine account of Zane Grey as an 'elegist of conquest' is given by: Susan L. Mizruchi, *The Rise of Multicultural America: Economy and Print Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), pp. 129-137.

of his life.⁹⁵ His only persistent obsession was writing literature. Given Grey's character, it was unsurprising that he was drawn to a genre that celebrated explicitly male peripatetic impulses.⁹⁶ A youthful interest with such freedoms and the popular, morally simplified image of the frontier communicated by dime novels later gave way to a transfexion with Owen Wister's landmark western novel *The Virginian*.⁹⁷

Like Kluckhohn, Grey embraced the desert southwest as a sanctuary against the urban culture of the 1920s, a landscape in which one could evade the present.⁹⁸ He wrote in *American Magazine* in 1924 that the 'loneliness and silence and solitude,' of the southwest, 'awake the instincts of the primitive age of man.'⁹⁹ His trip to Rainbow Bridge has been characterized by scholars as a formative moment in his life.¹⁰⁰ Yet there is less evidence that Grey could maintain the singular obsession with an individual landform in the way that Kluckhohn could. Whilst the young anthropologist became consumed by Kaiparowits, Grey was typically enthralled with the American West in its broadest scope. That broadness came at the cost of deeper knowledge. Grey's work has never conveyed much in the way of ability to forge a sense of place, and his narratives frequently thrive on extensive travel and a wide variety of locales. This curbed Grey's potential as a placemaker, a trait further limited by his alignment to an ideological viewpoint well suited to knowing landscape widely rather than deeply. Childhood adherence to the more imaginative and fanciful narrative enterprises of the

⁹⁵ Pauly, p. 10.

⁹⁶ Judy Alter, 'Symposium', in *Texas Women Writers: A Tradition of Their Own*, ed. by Sylvia Ann Grider, Lou Halsell Rodenberger (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), pp.345-347 (p. 346).

⁹⁷ Tompkins, p. 159; Pauly, p. 92-94.

⁹⁸ Kerwin L. Klein, 'Tourism, Consumerism, and the Southwestern Public Lands, 1890-1900', *Pacific Historical Review*, 62 (1993) 39-71 (p. 49); Joseph E. Taylor III, 'The Many Lives of the New West', *Western Historical Quarterly*, 35 (2004), 141-165 (p. 148).

⁹⁹ Zane Grey, 'What the Desert Means to Me', *American Magazine*, 98 (1924), p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ *Dolly & Zane Grey: Letters from a Marriage*, ed. by Kandace C. Kant (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2008), pp. 92-93; McPherson, *Navajo Land, Navajo Culture*, p. 126; Pauly, pp. 127-132.

Western made Grey an eager, lifelong ally of the Turnerian conception of the nineteenth century west that conceived of it as a process, not a place.¹⁰¹ He remained a strong believer in the existence and ending of the frontier, and his texts continually express the idea that nineteenth century westward conquest had been a fundamentally restorative, even redemptive mission.¹⁰²

Grey's commitment to the Turnerian conception of western expansion has also effectively barred his entry into the American pantheon of literary placemakers. His Turnerian commitments and migratory personality meant any attempts throughout his novels to convincingly illustrate the specifics of any more condensed space fall flat. Indeed, if the entire Grey corpus has anything to teach about placemaking, it is that deep and persistent experience of region is necessary to write about terrain with any authority. Placemaking requires the kind of enduring, singular obsession embodied by Kluckhohn. Communicating the specific character of landscape requires an attunement to the small particularities that define it. This means repeat visitation; it means pilgrimage in all seasons, at all hours of the day, both alone and with others.¹⁰³ Grey instead sustained a commitment to linking his fictional tales back to the broad, fading themes of the closing frontier and Manifest Destiny,

¹⁰¹ This idea was expressed in Turner's most famous work. See: Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* [online]. University of Virginia, updated September 2015 [cited 14 September 2015]. Available from: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/turner/chapter1.html>. However, it is worth noting that while Turner's reputation ultimately became attached to his 'frontier thesis,' much of his academic career was actually spent writing about the West as place, not process. Most criticism and defence of Turner has come to centre around if Turner continued to consider the nineteenth century West as process, and only believed the twentieth made it place. The literature here is vast, but for a small sample, see: Michael C. Steiner, 'Frederick Jackson Turner and Western Regionalism', in *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*, ed. by Richard W. Etulain (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002), pp. 103-136; Gary J. Hausladen, 'Introduction', in *Western Places, American Myths: How We Think About the West*, ed. by Gary J. Hausladen (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003), pp. 1-20 (pp. 1-8).

¹⁰² Gary Topping, 'Zane Grey: A Literary Reassessment', *Western American Literature*, 13 (1978), 51-64 (p. 53).

¹⁰³ Robert MacFarlane, *Landmarks*, Reprint edn. (London: Penguin Books, 2016), p. 57.

each of which ran too wide to account for the minute, nuanced evolutions of place. As such, the posthumous Grey has become a storyteller of the American West, but he retains only cursory connection to any specific part of it. Grey has no strength of attachment to any area in the way that John Muir has been linked with the Sierra Nevada, how Henry David Thoreau is today synonymous with the woodlands of eastern Massachusetts, or how John Wesley Powell remains the first figure associated with the Grand Canyon. Whilst Grey is the origin of a commonly used alternative name for Kaiparowits, he is often relegated in accounts of southern Utah to little more than a historical footnote. His own work on Kaiparowits has been largely forgotten.

Grey's limited knowledge of the Kaiparowits Region is displayed throughout *Wild Horse Mesa*. When Grey set about centring a novel on the plateau, he had already written extensively on Utah's canyon country and Mormon culture in broad weft, notably in what is seen as his most popular work, 1912s *Riders of the Purple Sage*. Geographical accuracy in *Wild Horse Mesa*, as with much of Grey's work, remains a distinctly secondary concern. For example, the way the book describes the orientation of Kaiparowits in relation to Garfield County's Henry Mountains reveals that Grey is unaware of the plateau's fundamental shape. Furthermore, he characterizes the landscape below the plateau's eastern escarpment as the densest, most nightmarish space, but that area remains one of the only easily navigable strips of land in the region. The text also offers a contradictory presentation of travel possibilities in southern Utah more generally. Characters repeatedly underline the convoluted nature of the Utah canyon country, yet one foreigner to the region successfully travels from the southern bank of the Colorado in the Grand Canyon to the eastern terminus of Kaiparowits in less than two days.

It is unclear how long Grey spent researching and writing his Kaiparowits adventure, but *Wild Horse Mesa* appeared roughly in the middle of his prolific career as author of the popular west. Originally serialized in agricultural periodical *The American Gentleman* in 1924, it found enough purchase to spawn a first film in 1925, release as a full novel in 1928, and a second film in 1932.¹⁰⁴ The novel's story is told with a split focus on the perspectives of down on his luck horse wrangler Chane Weymer and Sue Melberne, daughter of a wealthy Texan businessman. It is likely given the Melberne's geographical trajectory in the novel that their story is based on what Grey had heard about George Corning Fraser and his daughter Jane's early 1920s journey across the plateau. *Wild Horse Mesa* chronicles the story of the Melberne family's attempts to homestead in southeastern Utah. The novel contains many of the elements that have caused critics to dismiss Grey's work as too commercially orientated, and to derisively brand his books as sub-literary.¹⁰⁵ Certainly, the common criticism that the average Zane Grey novel is rigidly formulaic or structurally predictable is easily levelled at the 1928 edition of *Wild Horse Mesa*.¹⁰⁶ Even by the mass-produced, identikit standards of the popular action western of the 1920s, the book is a plodding, predictable affair. The eventual romantic union of Sue and Chane has a sense of weary inevitability, and the influence of Owen Wister's *The Virginian* remains writ large on Grey's work, only without the same depth of characterization. Furthermore, *Wild Horse Mesa* mechanically proceeds through a number of common tropes of the western genre as if Grey were fulfilling a checklist. These include the savage but paradoxically noble nature of the Southern Paiute, outrage against the evils of

¹⁰⁴ Victor Carl Friesen, *Zane Grey's Wild West: A Study of 31 Novels* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2014), p. 132.

¹⁰⁵ Pauly, pp. 198-199; Thomas King Whipple, *Study Out the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943), pp. 62-64; Catherine Turner, *Marketing Modernism Between the Two World Wars* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁶ Topping, 'Zane Grey: A Literary Reassessment', 51-64 (p. 53).

missionary schools, and the idea that communally focused protagonists will always win out over those driven to serve their own self-interest. Characters fall into and out of love within the space of a few pages, and *Wild Horse Mesa* does little to conclude the debate concerning whether or not Grey was anti-Mormon.¹⁰⁷

The novel's pacing issues denote that with *Wild Horse Mesa*, in contrast to much of his work, Grey was more interested in longingly describing Utah's Red Rock Country than he was in crafting a coherent human narrative. Whilst the book fails to overcome Grey's limitations as a placemaker, *Wild Horse Mesa* is a text decidedly concerned with the act of placemaking, and the plateau takes a central stage in this attempt. The Kaiparowits Plateau of Zane Grey bears little similarity to Clyde Kluckhohn's. Grey's plateau is a regionally famous rather than virtually unknown, with *Wild Horse Mesa* informing readers that 'every wandering rider had a strange story to tell about this vast tableland.'¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Grey's plateau represents an outlying interpretation of Kaiparowits more generally; it forms a sharp contrast not only with Kluckhohn's image of the plateau, but with post-war interpretations of the landmass's post-war perceptual significance. Grey offers repeat descriptions of Wild Horse Mesa throughout, but certain commonalities emerge in his character's observations. When Sue Melberne looks toward the plateau, she notes:

It was the canyon country of Utah. Long had she heard of it, and now it seemed to spread out before her, a vast shadowy region of rock – domes, spurs, peaks, bluffs, reaching escarpments, lines of cleavage, endless scalloped marching rocks, and rising grandly out of that chaos of colored rock the red-walled, black-tipped, flat-topped mountain that was Wild Horse Mesa. Here Sue could see a

¹⁰⁷ The villain of *Wild Horse Mesa* is a horse rustler known as Manerube, 'a man, and likely a Mormon who has power over women.' Grey alludes throughout the text to the notion that male Mormons' ability to oppress the opposite sex may have dark, ritualistic roots, although Manerube's main character failings in the text relate to his indifference to the sublime nature of southern Utah and his clear predilection for animal cruelty. See: Zane Grey, *Wild Horse Mesa* (Thorndike: Thorndike Press, 1993), p. 165.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

magnificent panorama of the canyon country, above which the great mesa towered a sentinel.¹⁰⁹

The west seemed all closed by the bulk of Wild Horse Mesa. It ranged away, an unscalable wall, for many miles, regular and clear-cut at a single glance [...] this mesa rose from a tableland that in itself towered above the canyon country. The far end of Wild Horse Mesa stood up in supreme isolation and grandeur, bright-walled in the morning sun.¹¹⁰

Similarly, when Chane Weymer explores the land surrounding the plateau, he notes:

What a baffling country was that eastern lower escarpment of the mesa. It appeared endless. To the right stretched the sea of carved rock, lined by its canyon rims, and ending only in the dim rise of the purple upland. All on the other side of Chane, the towering fluted wall of red wandered northward [...] fifty miles and more, Wild Horse Mesa stretched its level, black-fringed horizon line toward the Henry Mountains.¹¹¹

Kluckhohn had imbued the plateau with a mysterious, ethereal quality; Kaiparowits was a literal place beyond the rainbow. Later authors like Serfustini and Southern California Edison extended that idea, furthering the amorphous, remote qualities of the plateau into a more fundamental idea of blankness. The plateau became a void on the map, nestled between some of the most spectacular landmarks of America. The characters in *Wild Horse Mesa* express the inversion of this argument. Throughout Grey's novel, the plateau is a concrete, orienting force whilst the surrounding landscape assumes the role of more nebulous space. Grey's Kaiparowits is a 'sentinel' that roots the characters amidst the confusion of southern Utah's branching canyonlands, a bulwark against being lost in the 'vast shadowy region' and 'chaos of colored rock.' In this respect, the monolithic Kaiparowits of *Wild Horse Mesa* finds

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 92.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 366-367.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 161.

some connection with Southern Piute translations of Kaiparowits; as titles 'Big Mountain's Little Brother' and 'Mountain Home of the People' similarly stitch together the confusion of Utah's southern landscape. The mesa also functions as a landmark in the manner used by the southern Utah Paiute; it is a point of central meaning that gives Grey's morally upstanding, nomadic characters a directional referent.

Nowhere is this dichotomy of landscape more obvious than in the comparison between Grey's version of Kaiparowits and the southwest's most famous natural landmark, the Grand Canyon. The great gorge plays a diminished role in the tale comparative to Wild Horse Mesa. When hero Chayne Weymer makes it to the Grand Canyon, his reaction is immediate, but likely unexpected for lovers of the natural southwest's most visible landmark:

It held him mute, this scene of the grandeur of rocks, the desolation of the denuded surfaces, the manifestation of the ruin and decay of millions of years. He did not see a patch of green in all that area of barrenness.¹¹²

Later in the novel, Sue Melberne looks down upon the Grand Canyon from half way up Fifty Mile Mountain. Again, the reaction is similarly negative:

Sue did not need to be told that the first terrible gap in the terraced stone was the Grand Canyon. She saw the granite walls, almost black, and under them the swirling red river. Dark and menacing, this canyon wound in rugged sweeps through the leagues of bare stone, meeting lines of cleavage that were other canyons, and emptying into it.¹¹³

The canyon is magnificent, but similar to Kluckhohn's commentary, Grey underlines it cannot equal Kaiparowits as an aesthetic or biotic landscape. The Grand Canyon is all 'ruin and decay,'

¹¹² Ibid., p. 133.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 365.

and forms a stark contrast to Kaiparowits' sea of juniper and pinon pines. Furthermore, *Wild Horse Mesa* conveyed that the perceptual significance of Kaiparowits and the Grand Canyon mirror the simplistic moral dualities of Grey's characters. Where the plateau serves as a symbol of orientation, a sentinel watching over the protagonists, the Grand Canyon is a deep defile that typifies the emotional and geographical purgatory of the southwest canyon country. Never the most subtle writer, Grey chose to underline this by making the Grand Canyon a home of thieves and bandits in the novel.

There were several reasons why *Wild Horse Mesa* failed to achieve wider reach. Even though Grey's popular appeal and plentiful publications have cemented a reputation that emphasizes the quantity rather than quality of his writings, *Wild Horse Mesa's* full release came in the most productive year of his career, when he published five books, four of which were in the western genre. Although the original film version of *Wild Horse Mesa* was popular enough to spawn a remake, Grey's inability to move beyond certain Western tropes have ensured the more he wrote, the less distinctive his work in an already crowded genre became. While his earlier works – such as *Riders of the Purple Sage* and *The Rainbow Trail* – remain in print, his later works have not experienced the same cultural endurance. Further compounding the novel's difficulties in reaching a wider audience was the decline of the Western genre itself. *Wild Horse Mesa* was released in 1928; the economic turmoil unleashed the following year exposed the progressive dream of the frontier to be a mythical construct, if only for a time. Between 1929 and 1935, it seemed that 'vision of history was invalid, or no longer useful.'¹¹⁴ Even though some Western novels and films continued to be produced through this period, popular pieces increasingly internalized the introspection, frustration, and turmoil fostered

¹¹⁴ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), p. 256.

by the depression; Grey found his style wildly out of favour.¹¹⁵ And then there was the fundamental problem of terminology; Grey repeatedly underlined the idea of Kaiparowits as the last frontier, the sole remaining space in Utah free from Mormon control. Yet even as he did this, he sought to impress himself upon the landscape, to imprint himself upon the West by using the name *Wild Horse Mesa*, a title seemingly of his own creation.

Conclusion: Kaiparowits as *Terra Nullius*

Grey's final commentary on Kaiparowits was one in which ebullience and wistful regret commingled. As Chane and Sue, united at last, look one final time toward the plateau, they promise to never inform the coming Mormon settlers how to breach the vast tableland.

Chane ruefully remarks:

It may be long before another rider, or an Indian, happens upon this secret. Maybe never. Some distant day airships might land on Wild Horse Mesa. But what if they do? An hour of curiosity, an achievement to boast of – then gone! Wild Horse Mesa rises even above this world of rock. It was meant for eagles, wild horses – and for lonely souls like mine.¹¹⁶

The notion that Kaiparowits' unique emotional and moral dimensions would fail to protect it from industrial development was a safe guess for those familiar with Western expansion. Yet initial attempts would see entrepreneurial settlers look not to the ascendant clouds and Grey's secret passage to the top of the tableland, but to crack the side of the plateau and find the coal buried deep beneath the earth. When Southern California Edison's vice president was asked to recount the plateau's history in 1970, he did not mention the Paiute, Powell,

¹¹⁵ Paul Reddin, *Wild West Shows* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 210.

¹¹⁶ Grey, p. 444.

Gregory, Grey, or Kluckhohn. Instead, he focused on early attempts to extract coal from a long-abandoned mine at Warm Creek between 1910 and 1913. That operation could hardly be called successful. The scant coal locals could extract from the plateau was taken by steam-powered river boat down to placer miners near one of the region's only known Colorado crossings, at Lee's Ferry. But to hear Gould tell the story, the boat itself used all the coal that could be extracted from the mine simply making the round trip.¹¹⁷

Kaiparowits and success were not synonymous. Following Grey and Kluckhohn's last accounts of Kaiparowits in 1928 and 1933, the landform disappeared almost entirely from the historical record. When Edison began exploratory surveys to assess the coal seams beneath the plateau in the mid-1960s, there was a dearth of resistance, or indeed any sense of desire to preserve Kaiparowits. Few knew about its existence. Early accounts of the Southern Paiute that pointed to the plateau as a site of central significance had long been displaced. Their tribal bands were increasingly connected to the Grand Canyon, or seen as more geographically diffuse. Little hope existed that any surviving material might shed light on the plateau as the Mountain Home of the People. John Wesley Powell's peers similarly had their narratives obscured by public excitement surrounding the Grand Canyon, and neither Grove Karl Gilbert nor Almon Harris Thompson had written for popular audiences. As such, they could not anchor any perceptual community of sufficient size to popularize the plateau. Clyde Kluckhohn's late-1920s obsession with Kaiparowits was displaced by his own earlier adventure narratives and later by a celebrated academic career that focused attention on the native inhabitants of Arizona, not the empty forms of Utah's Red Rock Country.

¹¹⁷ William R. Gould, 'Kaiparowits Power Project', 18 April 1970, 11th Annual Engineering Symposium, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Ms 619, Box 40. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

This non-significance of landscape is important. As the Chinese-American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan has noted, the idea of place and human connection to it only ever comes alive through the artistry of individuals who are able to combine detailed narrative with discerning vignettes of description.¹¹⁸ A key lesson of environmental conflicts is that if you fight to preserve something the public recognises as a *place* – an area of the landscape people feel a sympathetic connection to, or feel they understand – then support will be forthcoming. This relationship between environmental voices and public allegiance found its apex when Californian preservationist group the Sierra Club and other conservation advocacy groups converged to protect the Grand Canyon from two dams in between 1964 and 1967. Public support for this vanguard of voices was swift, broad, and favourable. Submerging the canyon was an unconscionable act to a plurality of Americans, and perceptions of the canyon – a seemingly irreplaceable space linked to so many successive phases of U.S. history – made any such action tantamount to desecration. ‘Yes, that’s right, *Grand Canyon!*’ adverts declared with shock. ‘This time it’s the Grand Canyon they want to flood. *The Grand Canyon.*’¹¹⁹

It was only a little over three years later that the Environmental Defense Fund, Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth and other environmental groups began to speak out in opposition against the Kaiparowits Power Plant. They came armed with a different set of arguments, born of the new geography of post-1970 environmental concern, but there was no comparable groundswell of grassroots support to protect Kaiparowits. By that point, the plateau had become seen as *terra nullius*, a vast and dead place. Its eastern face could match, at points, the physical immensity of parts of the Grand Canyon, but the public had no knowledge of

¹¹⁸ See: Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1979), pp. 387-402.

¹¹⁹ *Now Only You Can Save the Grand Canyon From Being Flooded...For Profit* [online] Sierra Club [cited 5 May 2016]. Available from: http://vault.sierraclub.org/timeline/brower/ads/gc_ad_1966-1.pdf.

Kaiparowits' intersecting histories and its mythos. As Robert MacFarlane notes 'once a landscape goes undescribed and therefore unregarded, it becomes vulnerable to unwise use or improper action.' His own solution to such vulnerabilities focuses on the idea of re-enchantment 'to salvage [...] accounts - narrative, lexical, poetic, painterly, photographic, historical, cartographical - which, taken in sum or interleaved, might restore both particularity and mystery.'¹²⁰ What historical paraphernalia could Kaiparowits' defenders draw upon? An out of print book by an anthropologist connected with Arizona and Harvard, the as-yet unpublished diaries of Almon Harris Thompson, a collection of survey data, and an unpopular genre novel by an author who was known for his potentially contentious views of the region's unique faith. Without stories, without identity, the plateau did not seem worthy of defence. It was a space, not a place.

But that was not the only impact of Kaiparowits being viewed as an aesthetic and ecological emptiness. Even though place and placemaking have become increasingly popular topics in environmental history, far less has been said about how public feelings toward a landmark will influence how the people who then speak out in its defence might come to be viewed in turn. Making the claim that a place is worth saving when people already feel sympathetic toward it means reaching out for a constituency of like-minded people eager to give their support. Making the claim that an unknown, seemingly unremarkable space needs to remain 'pristine' is a risk for personal and organisational reputation. When the public fails to see the logic in statements favouring environmental protection, they will instead begin to characterise the motives, identity, and moral character of the presenters.

¹²⁰ MacFarlane, pp. 29-30.

Initial and subsequent framings of Clyde Kluckhohn and Zane Grey provide lessons in this context. Of all the figures who wrote on the vast tableland in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Grey and Kluckhohn came much closer to creating a potential foundation for future sympathetic identification with Kaiparowits than any other writers. Historiographical trends suggest there is an increasing impulse to look further back into the past to expand our conception of who was an ‘environmentalist’, and Grey and Kluckhohn have both seen mention. And not just as men who took a casual interest in a more expansive frame of nonhuman sympathy. Jedediah Rogers has framed Kluckhohn as a kind of proto-environmentalist because of his epiphany atop Kaiparowits.¹²¹ In a similar vein, Grey has been identified as being a ‘wilderness devotee,’ ‘committed conservationist,’ and, ‘an environmentalist ahead of his time,’ largely due to a single article he wrote for the Izaak Walton League in 1922.¹²²

But both men wrote at a time when speaking for nature had not become such an inherently contentious practice, and their own claims for Kaiparowits’ value provoked little response because they were not seen to be speaking against any established consensus. That was perhaps for the best; if Kluckhohn and Grey were proto-environmentalists, they were also vulnerable to association with a less reputable label, one that would come to be a common complaint against environmental interests in southern Utah: outsiders. Both Grey and Kluckhohn were wealthy, foreign individuals pulled to Utah by their own romantic imaginings of an untethered, peripatetic, masculine adventure lifestyle. The time in which they wrote meant their meditations about Kaiparowits went largely unnoticed, but it also meant that

¹²¹ Rogers, *Roads in the Wilderness*, p.26.

¹²² See: Mizruchi, p. 133; Pauly, p. 236; Roger Dorband, *The Rogue: Portrait of a River* (Astoria: Raven Studios, 2005), p. 35. For Grey’s work for the Izaak Walton League, see: Zane Grey, ‘Vanishing America’, *Izaak Walton League Monthly*, September 1922, p. 22.

such anonymity shielded their own individual characters from public judgment. That would not be the experience of those who followed.

Chapter 2

Reception and Presentation:

The Conservationist Image at Mid-Century

Introduction: Organised Emergence

Neither Zane Grey nor Clyde Kluckhohn saw any public response to their romantic pleas for the protection of the Kaiparowits landscape. The absence of response was not surprising. In Kluckhohn's case, concerns about development were contained in an autobiography written by a man who was not famous, and Grey's sentiments were even more easily dismissed; *Wild Horse Mesa* was a work of fiction. Furthermore, even as Grey and Kluckhohn expressed desires to prevent development of the plateau, they weren't resisting any specific incursion. The shared fear that remote Kaiparowits would one day be consumed by developers revealed anxieties about the never-ending drive of American industry to cannibalise the West, but that day still seemed distant and nebulous to both men. There was no Western developer to place themselves in opposition to, no encroaching threat to cast off. Grey and Kluckhohn

represented only themselves. There was no indication either sought to turn personal commentary about a place few had heard of into a political cause for others to follow.

Of course, the most obvious reason for the absence of criticism about the proposals contained in *Wild Horse Mesa* and *Beyond the Rainbow* is that very few people read either text. But even if they had, such claims were hardly that inflammatory at their time of publication in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The country already had already developed a number of legal frameworks for the protection of natural spaces, boasting thirty-seven national monuments and twenty national parks by 1930, two of which were in Utah.¹ Those were Zion and Bryce Canyon, and whilst their passage into law was not without resistance, each saw their designations celebrated within the state when they were finalised in 1919 and 1928. Even before Utah received national parks of its own, railroad interests and Salt Lake City councillors had joined forces to aggressively rebrand the state's capital as the 'gateway to Yellowstone' during the 1910s and 1920s.² Though the national park system had few supporters that could be considered genuinely ardent in Utah, the prospect of further areas of natural protection did not generate any extensive resistance.

Salt Lake City as the 'gateway to Yellowstone' was born of the Mormon belief that industry, profit, and conservation were fundamentally complimentary.³ Far more anomalous in the inter-war period was the idea that private citizens would willingly rise and resist utilitarian

¹ Although given the history of national parks, it seems unlikely that Kaiparowits, with its vast mineral wealth, would have seen many calls for inclusion. See: Runte, *National Parks*, pp. 48-64.

² There are too many examples to list here. For a sample, see: 'City Should Boast Herself as "Gateway to Yellowstone"', *Salt Lake Telegram*, 25 May 1912; 'Salt Lake gateway to Yellowstone is most popular route', *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, 23 September 1913, p. 2; 'Unprecedented Freight Traffic Big Feature of Railroad Development', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 31 December 1916, p. 38; 'New Train to Salt Lake on Gould Line', *Salt Lake Telegram*, 2 June 1914, p. 16; 'West entrance to Yellowstone holds to record', *Salt Lake Telegram*, 3 July 1924, p. 2.

³ This relationship primarily linked railroad profits with access to sublime nature. For an overview, see: Alfred Runte, *Trains of Discovery: Railroads and the Legacy of Our National Parks*, 5th edn. (Lanham: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 2001), pp. 1-22.

developments that promised to improve the habitability of the West. Utahns concerned with events in the natural West may have read about a Californian hiking group called the Sierra Club attempting to prevent the construction of a dam near Yosemite National Park in the early 1910s. Yet this event hardly seemed to provide a practicable blueprint for the successful prevention of development. A cursory observer of events could see that the Club had failed, the dam was built, and their ringleader John Muir had died shortly after.

Nor did this early instance of conservation protest seem to foreshadow a potent new force in the American political landscape. The Sierra Club largely returned to their recreational focus following the end of the conflict. Two decades later, when *Beyond the Rainbow* and *Wild Horse Mesa* were released, economic and international issues dominated American public life and policy, not environmental concerns. In the early 1930s, land erosion was a key issue not because of ecological fears, but because it displaced American farmers in the agricultural torment that became known as the Dust Bowl.⁴ The following decade, Americans embraced thrift and recycling, but largely because this was seen as a way for the average citizen to support the war effort.⁵

If anything, the Club's resistance to the development of Hetch Hetchy Valley in the 1910s was because it impacted their recreational possibilities. This seemed more exclusionary than many early expressions of conservation and land preservation. It also felt anomalous to the examples that followed; both concern for American agricultural practice and the necessity of recycling were framed as being in the national interest. By 1950, the Club had grown, but they

⁴ The two most influential (and antipodal) readings of the Dust Bowl's significance are: Paul Bonnifield, *Dust Bowl: Men, Dirt, and Depression* (Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 1980), and: Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*, 25th Anniversary edn. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁵ Paul Conkin, *The State of the Earth: Environmental Challenges on the Road to 2100* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), p. 231.

had no real interests beyond California. Whilst similar groups were beginning to emerge, these were smaller still. The Wilderness Society was founded in 1935, but only had several hundred members by the end of the Second World War.⁶

This chapter explores the shock of the Intermountain press as this politically inert and previously innocuous collection of conservation interests rapidly adopted far more active, contentious positions following years of little controversy and public engagement. The case studies in this chapter concern the Sierra Club and other longstanding preservation groups' attempts to hinder the post-war industrial development of the Colorado River in Utah and Arizona at Echo Park and Glen Canyon. Whilst these instances of conservation protest are well-trammelled scholarly terrain, this chapter moves beyond the environmental heroics and evolutionary movement trajectory presented in existing literature. Instead, it seeks to interrogate the relationship between the *reception* of post-war conservationism in Utah, and the specific ways conservationists *presented* themselves in the wake of the backlash that accompanied their post-war emergence.

Of all the chapters in this thesis, this is the section in which the Kaiparowits Plateau plays the most minimal role. Yet the chapter is key to an overall understanding of resistance to environmental thought in Utah. The Kaiparowits Project poisoned the reputation of environmentalism in the Intermountain region, but it did not *create* post-war representations of environmentalists and their associated groups. This chapter seeks to discover the genesis of these images, and the motivations that animated their creation. The core concern here is tracing the way in which Intermountain observers made judgments about the moral

⁶ Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, pp. 15-16.

character, identity, and 'real' agenda of movement members, and the impact of these characterisations.

It also provides insight into American environmentalism before it truly embodied that label. Most of the concerns expressed here are made by what I term conservationists or preservationists, who make anthropocentric pleas about natural aesthetics. This establishes debates that will be returned to in subsequent chapters. For example, whether the Intermountain region was more accepting of environmentalism than preservationism, and whether one philosophy was more publicly contestable. Whilst the former appeared more radical, expansive, and politically pugnacious, it also expressed a greater interest in the collective health of the nation that branded it as more scientific, rational, and less elitist than its precursor.

This chapter also provides a shorter, initial section on John Muir's time in Utah in the nineteenth century. Whilst it is less connected to the remainder of the thesis in terms of historical period, it is very much in keeping with the intent of the section: to trace environmentalism's reputational decline back to its deepest possible roots.

First Impressions

'The spirit of Mormonism is intensely exclusive and un-American.' These were the vitriolic words that greeted *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin* readers on May 22, 1877.⁷ In a series

⁷ John Muir, *The City of the Saints* [online]. Sierra Club, updated May 2016 [cited 8 May 2016]. Available from: https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings/steep_trails/chapter_6.aspx; Donald Worster, "Encountering Mormon Country: John Wesley Powell, John Muir, and the Nature of Utah" (2002). *Arrington Annual Lecture*. Paper 7. p. 10.

of four missives published in late May and June, the *Bulletin* catered for a Californian readership that expectantly clamoured for stories of the bizarre people establishing a separate theocratic society in the heart of the arid west. Delivered several months after the execution of John D. Lee for his role in the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and with rumours of imminent conflict between the Mormon Nauvoo Legion and federal troops, the articles reflected a broader set of suspicions toward Mormonism in the latter half of the 1870s.

Yet this particular set of articles was noteworthy because of the way in which they entirely eschewed political conflicts as a dominant topic. Instead, the May series in the *Bulletin* framed Mormon culture as an environmental rather than a social evil, taking aim at the developmental mission of settlers in the Utah territory that showed little signs of stalling. Given the author of all four articles, that particular framing was unsurprising - they were written by John Muir, future founder of Californian conservation group, the Sierra Club.

Muir was the first preservationist to establish a relationship with the Latter-day Saints, but his own perceptions of Mormon culture anticipated the decidedly rocky relationship that would later develop. The bulk of the *Evening Bulletin* articles reinforce the image of John of the Mountains as more interested in the natural world than human settlement. Astounded by the natural scenery and awesome storms of northern Utah, Muir's articles took every opportunity to indulge in the natural sublime of the Wasatch and Oquirrh mountain ranges but expressed dismay at the Mormon communities thriving within the Salt Lake Valley. Although Muir mustered some positive comments after his trip - he found LDS children delightful - he was staunchly critical of a number of aspects of the Mormon community. Polygamy, the Mormon convention that branded the LDS as curiosities and the central element of the Californian public's interest, Muir said little about. When he did, it was not the

practice itself that he found unnerving. Using an industrial metaphor, Muir worried that Mormon women were each being transformed into 'a factory' to create new throngs of people, and expressed concern at how these future crowds might burden the immediate and surrounding landscape.⁸

As he worried about wild Utah's future, Muir had little positive to say about the urban landscape created by the Saints. Whilst Muir's articles composed large Mormon family units as human life given an industrial tempo, he believed that the environment of Salt Lake City, with its planned grid system that produced broad, stark streets, promised a more rigid, mechanized form of living. Elsewhere, the planning and beautification of the settlement that had seen much attention from city fathers also failed to raise Muir's opinion. Wide streets, with their attendant irrigation ditches running parallel had become 'a standard item for commentary from travellers' visiting.⁹ Muir too noted the communal irrigation of Salt Lake City, but found that the sparkling waters were quickly sullied 'the consequence of contact with civilization.' Viewing them less as a vital sustaining force in the desert, Muir saw the infrastructural peculiarity as a set of open 'sewers,' noting, 'little Saints not over particular may be seen drinking from them everywhere.'¹⁰ For Muir, the Mormon city was a place that converted the purity of nature into disease.¹¹ Even when he was able to muster more positive comments - he believed the growth of the railroad and telegraph poles prefaced increased cultural interaction - he saw only local resistance. The Mormon character produced 'a more withdrawn, compact, sealed-up body of people,' which, 'could hardly be found on the face of

⁸ Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 231.

⁹ Thomas G. Alexander and James B. Allen, *Mormons and Gentiles: A History of Salt Lake City* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing, 1984), p. 56; Craig D. Galli, 'Building Zion: The Latter-day Saint Legacy of Urban Planning', *Brigham Young University Studies*, 44 (2005), 111-136 (pp. 116-117).

¹⁰ Muir, *The City of the Saints*.

¹¹ Benjamin Michael Cater, 'Health, Medicine, and Power in the Salt Lake Valley, Utah, 1869-1945' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Utah, 2012), p. 26.

the earth.¹² For Muir, the Mormon cultural mission was interpreted, as Donald Worster has noted, as seeking to 'defy the tides of progress, resisting the outside forces of technology and cultural change.'¹³

Seeking relief from what he believed was the deplorability of Salt Lake City, Muir went looking for solace in the Oquirrh Mountains to the west to investigate and document the wildflowers, but this too was interrupted. Encountering an elderly LDS man whom he had previously spoken with concerning Mormon theology as he descended the mountains, Muir stridently shook his collected specimens at the traveller declaring, "Here are the true saints, ancient and Latter-day, enduring forever!"¹⁴ The LDS faith was no less problematic for Muir than their presence on the land. He felt the Latter-day Saints, despite their lowland settlements, had elevated themselves above the natural world they were dependent upon. In Muir's private diary, he noted that 'true saints are not latter or former day saints at all [...] the sun is a saint, so is the snow & the glaciers & every virgin river.'¹⁵

Beyond the pressures of an expectant Californian public looking for tales of the curio of Deseret, Muir's private writings contained more positive thoughts on community in Utah, even if his overall impressions remained decidedly mixed. The criticism of social relations in Salt Lake City fell away once Muir reached the village of Nephi, ninety miles to the south, where he neglected to write about the nearby San Pitch Mountains in favour of his interactions with the local people.¹⁶ However, when Muir's Utah commentary was

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Worster, *A Passion for Nature*, p. 229. It is unlikely, given the conservationist critiques of 'progress,' technology, and science in the 1960s that Muir's rhetoric here would have retained much of its resonance.

¹⁴ John Muir, *Mormon Lilies* [online]. Sierra Club, updated May 2016 [cited 8 May 2016]. Available from: https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings/steep_trails/chapter_9.aspx.

¹⁵ John Muir, *May-July 1877 Travels in Utah Etc.*, Holt-Atherton Special Collections, University of the Pacific Library, John Muir Papers, MSS 048, image 18.

¹⁶ Worster, *A Passion for Nature*, p. 229.

posthumously published in *Steep Trails* in 1918, it presented a rather selective characterisation of Mormon settlement that reveals as much about Muir himself as it does about LDS presence within the state. The Muir in Deseret was still the young man who had yet to fully develop a public voice - or, given the recounting of his sole human interaction in his chapter on Mormon lilies, much of a public filter. Indeed, it remains hard to reconcile how the Muir who had written of tourists as the 'blank fleshly apathy' being 'poured into' Yosemite seven years earlier justified that elitism yet found the 'exclusive' nature of Mormon settlement to be contrary to core American values.

As the first interaction between a preservationist spokesman and a newly emergent society in a landscape never particularly welcoming to human presence, Muir's 1877 trip to Utah presents a number of missed opportunities and realisations. Ultimately, Muir found his personal desire for solitude perfectly acceptable, but discounted the validity of communal seclusion that Mormon believers sought following their recent history of persecution. For Muir, the denizens of Salt Lake City had elevated themselves above nature, his own personal divinity, but he failed to see that for himself and the LDS alike, a central component of the western landscape's appeal was its function as refuge from wider society.¹⁷ Here, Muir had the same luxury available to Grey, Kluckhohn, and Powell, but that many of the LDS members in the Utah territory lacked; his wild sojourns could be temporary jaunts before he returned home to the Alhambra Valley in California. Mormon exodus west, a product of violence, persecution, and expulsion, rendered permanent settlement, rather than fleeting visitation, a necessity rather than an option. A keenly shared appreciation of the Utah territory's isolationist qualities failed to forge any sense of sympathy on Muir's part, and he fled back to

¹⁷ Thomas R. Dunlap, *Faith in Nature: Environmentalism as Religious Quest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), p. 51.

California in June, a short month after his initial arrival, away from the 'repressive toil' he saw as inherent to Mormon community life.¹⁸ Muir would not return until 1913. The Mormon settlers, with no other home to return to, endured in the Salt Lake Valley.

John Muir and the Utah Frontier Press

Even though Muir's 1877 trip to Utah has been largely ignored by scholars, it constituted a formative experience that produced some of his earliest thoughts on the idea that the Intermountain West had strict environmental limits. Yet the more acerbic, ecological dimensions of Muir's commentary passed with little mention in the Utah press. In one of the only responses to the articles' publication back in San Francisco, the *Salt Lake Herald* ran a selective piece reiterating the most positive of Muir's commentary on the nearby community of Lake Point, but elided any of his more negative remarks. The paper, a small four-page morning daily, noted Muir had found Mormons to be 'as rich in human kindness as any people in our broad land' but excluded his commentary on the 'intensely exclusive' Mormon character or the repression of LDS women.¹⁹ Muir had stopped temporarily at Lake Point on his flight south, eager to get away from Salt Lake City, where he wrote 'I fortunately found myself alone. The hotel and bathhouse [...] were sleeping in winter silence.'²⁰ The *Herald* removed these comments also. Instead, Muir's trip became a pilgrimage to experience the cleansing waters of the area, which left him 'braced and salted and clean as a saint.'²¹ This repurposing of message not only omitted his concerns about Utah's burgeoning population,

¹⁸ Muir, *Mormon Lilies*.

¹⁹ 'Great Salt Lake', *Salt Lake Herald*, 27 June 1877, p. 3.

²⁰ John Muir, *Bathing in Salt Lake* [online]. Sierra Club, updated May 2016 [cited 8 May 2016]. Available from: http://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings/steep_trails/chapter_8.aspx.

²¹ *Ibid*.

it inverted them. Muir's rhetorical flourish for the religious dimensions of the natural found a powerful intersection with local hydrological boosterism. His comments, isolated from more condemnatory remarks, functioned as an advertisement to visit or settle near the rejuvenating waters of Lake Point.

As manipulations on preservationist image and agenda went, the *Salt Lake Herald's* entry into warping Muir's words was relatively innocuous. Indeed, despite the none too altruistic motivations behind the article, the report and its subtitle - 'Prof. Muir's Bath at Lake Point' - typified the smaller Utah press' fast fascination toward Muir's actions that persisted from his initial visit in 1877 to the end of his life. Ignoring Muir's mixed impressions of Mormon culture, the *Herald* and other newspapers quickly adopted a reverential tone toward the writer that embraced his varying endeavours. Such fascination was not limited to more serious political engagements, as the press embraced Muir's life down to the more frivolous minutiae. Muir rapidly became the first environmental celebrity in a range of more tenuously sustained county papers, who maintained a consistent interest in him following his first trip. Articles were content to report on his mental health, his opinions on other natural wonders of the west, including the California sequoias and the Grand Canyon, his role as Presidential advisor, to tout his ability as a master mountaineer, and even to comment on his sleeping patterns.²² Although not every journalistic outlet would be so enamoured with Muir's ventures, the *Herald* alone would run over thirty articles on him. An impressive tally for an individual who would spend a total of less than two months in the state over the course of his life.

²² 'Local and Other News', *Deseret News*, 6 November 1878, p. 5; 'The Giant Trees of California', *Ogden Standard*, 22 April 1892, p. 7; 'A Natural Wonder', *Salt Lake Herald*, 23 January 1898, p. 2; 'John Muir III', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 25 August 1905, p. 4; John Elfreth Watkins, 'Mountain Climbing Laurels', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 7 November 1909, p. 21.

Part of this receptivity related to the social function of many of the smaller Utah newspapers, which developed a slightly altered role from much of the nineteenth century, trans-Mississippi frontier press. This sometimes-divergent approach was influenced by three interrelated factors: Utah's geographical isolation, Mormon cultural insularity, and the role of the LDS church in early journalism. The *Deseret News*, Utah's first major paper, in its early years represented both the institutional voice of the LDS church, but also the major outlet through which outside events could percolate into the Mormon consciousness.²³ The initial issues of the paper illustrated how Utah's insularity transformed the territory's news production into a communal practice. In an early issue in November 1850, the *Deseret News* editor made a plea for readers to send in rags with which to produce paper until a local mill could be established, as no other way to source the materials existed.²⁴ Smaller Mormon newspapers established prior to 1896 echoed the approach of being run by and for the immediate community. However, with a church-sanctioned paper delivering news of regional and national events, any impulse to act as defenders of the faith or report broader developments were rendered at least partially redundant.²⁵

As such, it was not uncommon for local papers reporting on nationally recognised figures to adjust their style. Articles embraced what would later become known as the 'human interest' story, which served a dual purpose. They emphasised the identity or emotion of an individual and provided stories that sparked community entertainment, and newspaper editors could

²³ Richard L. Saunders, *Printing in Deseret: Mormons, Economy, Politics, and Utah's Incunabula, 1849-1851: A History and Descriptive Bibliography* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2000), pp. 89-90; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nothing Like it in the World: The Transcontinental Railroad, 1863-1869* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), p. 281.

²⁴ Virgil V. Peterson, 'Early Mormon Journalism', *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 35 (1949), 627-638 (p. 634).

²⁵ Barbara Cloud, *The Coming of the Frontier Press: How the West was Really Won* (Evanston: Northwest University Press, 2007), p. 6.

achieve their own local celebrity through their publishing efforts.²⁶ Equally, loquacious pieces on lone figures allowed some degree of creative prose, if not embellishment. This also served a pragmatic purpose in simply filling up page space, where actually gathering news in the initial decades of Mormon settlement when Utah retained some degree of geographical and cultural insularity proved more difficult.²⁷ Frontier newspapers would acquire their own reputation for indulging in tall tales, including wondrous stories of fantastic animals, great feats of hunting prowess, and unlikely weather.²⁸ In Utah, these heightened narratives applied to individual human figures as much as they did the natural landscape. John Muir was by no means exempt from this.

The initial veneration of Muir's public image in the Utah press came at a time when Muir himself was beginning to think about the ways in which reputation could translate into concrete legislative protection for his most valued stomping ground, Yosemite Valley. In much of his writing in the 1870s, as historian Michael P. Cohen notes, Muir 'put great value on his own experience, but did not wish to share it with any but a select group which would make the effort to understand him.' Muir's more academic figure of the 1870s meant his words wouldn't attract hordes of careless pleasure seekers to the spaces he wrote about, but they equally failed to mobilise a larger public against industrial incursions into wild America.²⁹ With a sparse style, his early work often felt anomalous in the pages of *Harper's* and *Scribner's*

²⁶ Cloud, p. 6; *Encyclopaedia of American Journalism*, ed. by Stephen L. Vaughn (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 186.

²⁷ J. Michael Hunter, 'Starting a Frontier Newspaper: The Deseret News', *Frontier*, 58 (2006) 8-18 (p. 9).

²⁸ Dee Brown, *Wondrous Times on the Frontier* (Little Rock: August House Publishers Inc., 1991), p. 94.

²⁹ Michael P. Cohen, 'John Muir's Public Voice', *Western American Literature*, 10 (1975), 177-187 (p. 178). A number of conservationists would begin to recognize the tension between protection and promotion in the 1950s, notably Wallace Stegner. See: Wallace Stegner, 'We Are Destroying Our National Parks', *Sports Illustrated*, June 1954, p. 45; Philip Hyde, quoted in Stephen Trimble, *Lasting Light – 125 Years of Grand Canyon Photography* (China: Northland Books, 2006), p. 36.

Monthly, which embraced the purple inclinations of contemporary prose.³⁰ The subsequent transformation of Muir's writing from more staid scientific work into a style that contained a degree of populist sentimentality came at the end of the 1880s. That transition, following his temporary retirement is frequently credited to *Scribner's* associate editor and fellow conservationist Robert Underwood Johnson. Without discounting Muir's evolving talent for more passionate appeals on behalf of nature, Johnson's success in returning Muir to public life relied more upon crafting and promoting a new public image for his friend. The Muir who re-emerged into the public eye in the 1890s came reborn as a figure with newly emphasised spiritual dimensions. This new figure came in the mould of John the Baptist, the New Adam of the American Far West, whose 'personality eclipsed the work and recognition of others who had forged a foothold in Yosemite Valley.'³¹

The new Muir became more protective of his public image in the 1890s, particularly after the publication of *The Mountains of California* in 1894, and upon his return to Utah in 1913, local news outlets appeared unsure how to frame this new identity.³² There was a distinct difference between Muir the reporter and the scientist, who had been presented as a largely apolitical promoter of the western landscape, and the now more visible Muir who was then politically engaged in saving Hetch Hetchy Valley, near San Francisco in California. Two Muirs subsequently emerged in the Utah press in the final five years of his life. One Muir was an emotional prophet indulging in the unknowns of the natural world. Another was a rational

³⁰ Mark Neuzil, *The Environment and the Press: From Adventure Writing to Advocacy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008), p. 113.

³¹ Cohen, 'John Muir's Public Voice', 177-187 (p. 184); Bonnie Johanna Gisel, "'Those Who Walk Apart but Ever Together Are True Companions': Jeanne Carr and John Muir in the High Sierra', in *John Muir: Family, Friends, and Adventures*, ed. by Sally M. Miller, Daryl Morrison (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), pp. 215-234 (p. 219).

³² Ronald H. Limbaugh, *John Muir's "Stickeen" and the Lessons of Nature* (Anchorage: University of Alaska Press, 1996), p. 30; John Muir, *Letters from Alaska*, ed. by Robert Engberg and Bruce Merrell (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p. xxi.

scientist seeking to dissect it. The two reputations broadly recalled the polarised camps of the 'nature fakers' controversy that had sporadically erupted between 1903 and 1910. Then, Muir's genre of naturalist literature had become wrought with tensions between work that embodied sentimental compassion and anthropomorphising tendencies, and other texts that were viewed as being written in a more objective, scientific mode.³³

In the Utah press in 1913, Muir came to occupy a fundamentally liminal image that positioned him as a man still retaining his prominent scientific authority whilst simultaneously being an individual newly steeped in romanticism and mysticism. Such a presentation was not seen as inherently contradictory or schizophrenic, but small signs of unease with the latter elements of Muir's public image could be perceived. Rather than the romantic Muir being an intrinsically valuable figure, efforts were made to use his post-*The Mountains of California* love of sublime nature to reify his scientific prestige and achievements. The *Salt Lake Herald*, as enthusiastic about Muir as ever when he returned to Salt Lake for one night in 1913, framed him as a 'noted scientist' who had become good friends with Mormon luminaries Brigham Young and George Q. Cannon.³⁴ Three days later, the *Salt Lake Telegram*, the city's cheapest populist paper, and perpetual Muir supporter, noted the preservationist's deep spiritual commitment to the natural world. However, it argued this quest for the sublime only augmented his ability as a scientist. The paper reasoned that 'A man who will undertake to cross one of Alaska's stormiest trails in midwinter in the hope of finding a new variety of the beech tree must love science for science's own sake.' Equally 'a man who, in the mid-Sierra, upon hearing a winter storm on the march, will go out to meet it and climb a tree that he

³³ See: Ralph H. Lutts, *The Nature Fakers: Wildlife, Science & Sentiment* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia).

³⁴ 'Noted Scientist Visits Salt Lake', *Salt Lake Herald*, 17 August 1913, p. 5.

more carefully can measure its oscillations and estimate the forces that bear it on their mighty wings.' This all contributed to the reputation of a singular individual, the *Telegram* noted, who was 'a character apart from ordinary mortals.' However, it was unclear if it was love of nature that made the new Muir so special, or if it was how he repurposed this love for epistemological advantage.³⁵

To what degree the idea of Muir as a man who treated nature as a religion played in his continuing popularity in the Utah frontier press is less clear. Muir's strict Calvinist upbringing as part of a large family likely influenced his own downcast outlook on Mormon culture in 1877, but there's little evidence that shows his Calvinist roots played a significant role in his own reception in the Beehive State. The Mormon press were aware of Muir's Scottish roots, but had little investment in the idea of Calvinism. Indeed, Mormonism's swift development from its embryonic state in Scotland had much to do with Calvinism's gloomy outlook and the idea that it limited God's love and redemption to a select elite.³⁶ Mormonism, despite its hierarchical and insular impulses, appeared comparatively democratic, and carried with it the idea that God's chosen could be ordinary people.

In this respect, there was at least tenuous common ground between the new image of Muir and the sympathies of Latter-day Saints. The idea of Muir as a prophet for nature was already taking shape in 1913 when he returned to Utah, aided by his newly discovered canny sense for self-promotion.³⁷ Fascinated by Muir's presentation, his 'tall figure [...] his long, flowing beard,' crowds gathered to listen to him sermonise about Brigham Young's environmental

³⁵ 'John Muir', *Salt Lake Telegram*, 20 August 1913, p. 4.

³⁶ Frederick S. Buchanan, 'The Ebb and Flow of Mormonism in Scotland, 1840-1900', *Brigham Young University Studies*, 27 (1987), 27-52 (p. 29).

³⁷ Mark Stoll, *Protestantism, Capitalism, and Nature in America* (Albuquerque: New Mexico Press, 1997), p. 151; James C. McCuisik, *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 172.

wisdom.³⁸ As Catherine Albanese notes, Muir's later writing and speech craft 'operates in a realm that [...] is best described as religious.'³⁹ This newly spiritual image equally transformed Muir's trips into nature as more than recreational jaunts. They were pilgrimages of baptism and rebirth. Although any inference of spiritual belief wasn't inherently appealing to a Mormon readership, elements of Muir's public image in his final years clearly resonated. Utahns already valued the view of nature-as-refuge in a similar manner. Muir had not recognised that during his first trip to the territory in 1877, but the way in which he began to emphasise the spiritual dimensions of retreating into the landscape now won him some new fans.

Disparities did admittedly exist here. Muir's belief dictated that God's 'love and generosity' was found in the wild.⁴⁰ The idea that revelation was best found in nature, not in the written word certainly distanced him from the Latter-day Saints original prophet Joseph Smith. Smith had found divine inspiration in nature, but in the more literal sense through the supposed discovery of a set of golden plates needing translation. However, the written work Muir left behind attained that function in his absence. *Goodwin's Weekly*, a Mormon literary journal that ran for the first two decades of the twentieth century, encouraged their Salt Lake City readers to think, following Muir's death, that his work 'is intoned with the love of God.'⁴¹

The potential for Muir to also find sympathy as a form of persecuted outsider or martyr of sacred space arose through his involvement in the Hetch Hetchy conflict. After a major earthquake and subsequent fire devastated much of San Francisco in 1906, the city began a seven-year struggle to construct a dam in one of the remote glacial valleys to the east. Muir

³⁸ 'Zion's Beauty Not Excelled in World', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 August 1913, p. 1.

³⁹ Catherine L. Albanese, *Reconsidering Nature Religion* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002), p. 29.

⁴⁰ Worster, "Encountering Mormon Country", p. 14.

⁴¹ 'Muir's Work', *Goodwin's Weekly*, 24 July 1915, p. 1.

and the Sierra Club, the hiking organisation he had helped found in 1892, vigorously opposed the plans.

It was over the Hetch Hetchy conflict, however, that the limits of Utahn sympathy for Muir were found, although shifts in both journalistic practice in the Beehive State and Mormon identity played a role. Utahn's identity as outsiders had begun to fade since their acquisition of statehood in 1896, and declining insularity and regional development meant reverential, human interest pieces about Muir were replaced by more identifiably events-based coverage, particularly after 1912. Another problem was the *Salt Lake Tribune*, which at the time of Muir's final battle had become Utah's second major paper. Established by three excommunicated LDS members, the *Tribune* had for a long time been viciously critical of the Mormon faith and anything sympathetic to it. This did slowly begin to change, but in the 1910s, the paper was acquired by railroad and mining magnate Thomas Kearns, and the publication was both suspicious of spiritualism and vehemently pro-development.⁴²

What had endeared Muir to the frontier press worked against him in the *Tribune*. This was illustrated in early December 1913 when the paper criticized Muir for 'desires to keep the masses out of the striking beauty spots, so that only the few who have the proper respect for Nature shall be attracted to the sacred inner shrines.'⁴³ When it first looked like the preservationist argument against the dam had been finally quashed four days later, the *Tribune* published a letter congratulating the people of San Francisco. The felicitations were not in anticipation of the reservoir itself, which was barely mentioned. Instead, the paper

⁴² As O. N. Malmquist outlines, Kearns's control of the *Tribune* perpetuated its anti-Mormon position in the 1910s. The paper's position on development is harder to explicitly demonstrate, as Malmquist is more interested in outlining the political relationships behind the *Tribune*'s operation than its editorial direction. For how Kearns's ownership affected reporting in the period, see: O. N. Malmquist, *The First 100 Years: A History of the Salt Lake Tribune 1871-1971* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1971), pp. 219-224.

⁴³ 'Nature Sentimentalists', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 5 December 1913, p. 6.

applauded the victory over 'the agitation of impractical idealists who placed esthetic sentiment above human necessity.' The *Tribune* went on to warn that 'From the ranks of such sentimentalists the ultra-cautious conservationists of this country obtain many recruits,' noting that a love of nature had its place, but those enthusiasms over Hetch Hetchy had devolved into 'deplorable superstition.'⁴⁴ The article would set the tone for the following two conflicts with the Sierra Club in the twentieth century, where the *Tribune* would find itself not haranguing the group for its actions in a distant western state, but in Utah itself.

Nature Lovers I: Armchair Enthusiasts

The conflict over Hetch Hetchy was easily framed by Sierra Club members following Muir's death as an anomalous political engagement, and in his wake the group remained predominantly interested in hiking and other recreational pursuits for the next several decades.⁴⁵ Yet external threats arising as a result of economic growth following the Second World War would increasingly force the Club to reconsider their identity and methods.⁴⁶ A vibrant United States economy after 1950 meant adhering to the old rhythms of the

⁴⁴ 'Hetch Hetchy Victory', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 December 1913, p. 6.

⁴⁵ Michael P. Cohen, *The History of the Sierra Club, 1892-1970* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), pp. 57-84; Susan R. Schrepfer, *The Fight to Save the Redwoods: A History of Environmental Reform, 1917-1978* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), p. 230.

⁴⁶ It is worth noting that some scholarship has challenged the notion of that the interwar years were a period of dormancy for private nature advocacy groups more broadly. See: Philip Garone, 'Rethinking Reclamation: How an Alliance of Duck Hunters and Cattle Ranchers Brought Wetland Conservation to California's Central Valley Project', in *Natural Protest: Essays on the History of American Environmentalism*, ed. by Michael Egan, Jeff Crane (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 137-162; Sutter, *Driven Wild*. However, these studies do little to dispute the idea that conservation or preservation groups had very little public presence, or were the subject of media attention in this period.

organisation would become increasingly untenable. Certain Club members began to chafe against a purely recreational agenda.

Just after mid-century, one place would come to symbolise renewed conflict between the needs of a growing nation and its wild spaces: Echo Park, within Dinosaur National Monument on the Utah-Colorado border. A proposed 525-foot dam within Dinosaur would create a lake of 43,000 acres and generate hydroelectric power for the burgeoning population of the Intermountain West. The conflict would come to be viewed as a pivotal moment in the evolution of a number of conservation groups by historians.⁴⁷ That same conflict would also form a major public space in which the American people were introduced to the figure of the post-war conservationist, at a time when conceptions of what that label meant to conservationists themselves was rapidly changing.

In a late July 1950 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*, Utah writer Bernard DeVoto sounded the alarm that Dinosaur National Monument was threatened by US Bureau of Reclamation plans. Few conservationists were aware of Echo Park's existence, but DeVoto's vivid prose forced readers to take notice. Envisioning what a dam at Echo Park would do to the entirety of the Colorado River, DeVoto warned that 'the tempestuous, pulse-stirring river, of John Wesley Powell, would become a mere millpond.' Connecting the inundation of a swathe of Dinosaur to the abrogation of democratic choice, DeVoto warned within his inflammatory article that 'No one has asked the American people whether they want their sovereign rights, and those of their descendants [...] wiped out.'⁴⁸

⁴⁷ David Brower, "Environmental Activist, Publicist, and Prophet," an oral history conducted 1974-1978 by Susan Schrepfer, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, p. 156.

⁴⁸ Bernard DeVoto, 'Shall We Let Them Ruin Out National Parks?', *Saturday Evening Post*, 22 July 1950, p. 17, 42.

In Utah, it was hard to imagine a more divisive figure to act as the initial public face of resistance to the project than DeVoto. Born to a Mormon mother and Catholic father a year after Utah had won statehood, DeVoto hated his home town of Ogden, just north of Salt Lake City, and had escaped as soon as possible to study at Harvard.⁴⁹ As a writer, he had alienated his fair share of Utahns in his *Harper's Magazine* column 'The Easy Chair,' having attacked targets such as the Bureau of Land Management and Mormon and Intermountain culture in equal measure. DeVoto's 'chief delight,' one outlet noted, 'has been running down his native state and all its institutions.'⁵⁰ Not genuinely anti-Mormon, DeVoto was a talented yet cantankerous and outspoken individual who had inherited a misanthropic streak from his father.⁵¹ Despite a certain expectation by 1950 that any article with DeVoto's name on it would seek to polarise, his Echo Park piece caused a surprisingly vociferous critical response, even by his own standards. The *Dinosaur* piece would be his last article for the *Post*; one journalist later asserted that western water interests had encouraged the editors to blacklist any further DeVoto pieces from reaching publication.⁵²

Attacks on DeVoto appeared in the most remarkable places; newspaper columnist Sandy Saunderson, writing about the joys of reading Mark Twain, advised readers 'if you insist on comment and criticism try Van Wyck Brooks and Bernard DeVoto (he knows his Twain, if not his Echo Park).'⁵³ More serious responses quickly followed. The *Salt Lake Tribune* complained that 'the purple prose of Bernard DeVoto has been added to the long, bitter invective of

⁴⁹ Wallace Stegner, 'Bernard DeVoto', *Western American Literature*, 20 (1985) 151-164 (pp. 153-154).

⁵⁰ A. Pratt Kesler and Milton L. Weilenmann, 'GOP Scans Water Record; Demo Bows to Opponent', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 October 1952, p. 6.

⁵¹ James Lawrence Powell, *Dead Pool: Lake Powell, Global Warming, and the Future of Water in the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 106.

⁵² Neuzil, *The Environment*, p. 147.

⁵³ Sandy Saunderson, 'In Which a Scholar Attempts to Prove Mark Twain's Literary Consciousness', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 August 1950, p. 31.

eastern wilderness lovers,' whilst the *Denver Post* and *Ogden Standard-Examiner* also took him to task.⁵⁴ Most notable amongst DeVoto's individual critics was ex-newspaperman and head of the Bureau of Reclamation Michael Straus. The precise content of Straus's verbal assault has changed across different historical retellings, but the common elements always express that DeVoto was representative of a new model of post-war conservationist. These individuals were the 'self-constituted long-distance protectors of Dinosaur National Monument.' Like DeVoto, they waged war on western interests 'From their air-conditioned caves overlooking the undeveloped wilderness areas of Central Park in New York, Lincoln Park in Chicago, and Boston Commons.'⁵⁵

Having been mobilised by DeVoto, conservation groups involved themselves in the congressional hearings phase of the project in late January 1954. The Sierra Club, National Parks Association, and Wilderness Society collectively worked for one month in preparation of the debates. Over the course of that initial period in 1954, it became increasingly obvious to those allied against construction that new Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay had made the dam's success hinge upon its low surface evaporation rates. During the hearings, and against the advice of allies Luna Leopold and Walter Huber, recently appointed Sierra Club executive director David Brower would challenge the Bureau over this set of statistics for Echo Park Dam. Brower's argument was simple enough; the data featured a significant multiplication error. As such, Echo Park was not quite the attractive prospect it had been

⁵⁴ 'Shall We Keep "Unmarred Natural Spectacle" Of Echo Park Hidden Away from the Public?', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 July 1950, p. 10; "'Smart-Alec" DeVoto Nips at Utah Aims, Jones Says', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 22 October 1950, p.10A; Powell, *Dead Pool*, p. 106.

⁵⁵ Straus's words were pieced together from: Powell, *Dead Pool*, p. 107; Joseph L. Sax, 'Parks, Wilderness, and Recreation', in *Government and Environmental Politics: Essays on Historical Developments Since World War Two*, ed. by Michael J. Lacey (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1991), pp. 115-140 (p. 130); Philip L. Fradkin, *Sagebrush Country: Land and the American West* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 2004), p. 247.

advertised as. An alternate site, already part of the broader CRSP, on the Utah-Arizona border at a place called Glen Canyon, was a preferable site for a high dam.⁵⁶

Brower, with only a high school education in mathematics, had caught a mistake that Bureau of Reclamation engineers had failed to notice. Although the victor during those initial exchanges would prove ambiguous - the Bureau wheeled out more technical experts to dispute Brower's claim - the damage of the initial accusation persisted. Months of further pestering congressional subcommittees on the issue followed, conducted by Brower and another Club member, Richard Bradley. The persistent attempt to annoy worked; in April 1954, Bradley received a letter from Floyd Dominy, the acting assistant commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. The letter contained revised evaporation estimates. In providing the re-assessed statistics, Dominy implicitly recognised the Bureau's error, and in doing so recast Echo Park as an entirely optional parcel within the wider CRSP if the 'high' Glen Canyon Dam was built.⁵⁷ When the *New York Times*, which had already editorialised against Echo Park, heard of the admission, they rapidly popularised the issue.⁵⁸

Brower's successful stand against the Bureau was seen as a triumphant act. When the tale was later recounted by Brower biographer Robert Wyss, he echoed Wilderness Society leader Howard Zahniser's own Biblical references in his analysis of the evaporation controversy - retold as a story in which a literal David contended with a veritable Goliath.⁵⁹ The increasing emphasis on Brower helped the Sierra Club, and the executive director gained a powerful

⁵⁶ Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, pp. 193-195; Philip L. Fradkin, *River No More: The Colorado River and the West*, Expanded and Updated edn. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996), p. 194.

⁵⁷ Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, p. 201.

⁵⁸ John B. Oakes, 'Conservation: Echo Park Project', *New York Times*, 4 July 1954, p. 149.

⁵⁹ Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, p. 196; Robert Wyss, *The Man Who Built the Sierra Club: A Life of David Brower* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 19. See also: David Brower and David Sive, 'Two Davids, One Goliath', *Sierra Club Bulletin*, February 1966, p. 2.

reputation within the organisation. Where Muir had died failing to save Hetch Hetchy, Brower had become instrumental in the fight to preserve Echo Park, and by extension Dinosaur National Monument and the entirety of the National Park System. Brower's image as a heroic figure lent the Sierra Club 'an important new place in the pantheon of conservation organisations.'⁶⁰

Whilst Brower became shrouded in lore within the Sierra Club, a number of Utah and Intermountain newspapers took notice of Michael Straus's comments about the temperament and allegiances of those who claimed to be part of the post-war conservation movement. Straus's remarks became the foundation of a new derogatory construct for those who would seek to discredit American conservationism. This was aided by the way in which the journalistic geography of Utah had further mutated in the period between Muir's 1913 visit and the Echo Park conflict.

The frontier presses of Utah that had embraced Muir after 1877 had always been tenuously tethered to the readership of their central northern communities in the late nineteenth century. However, a more insurmountable set of conditions following the 1930s had caused a large number to collapse. The Great Depression had led to declines in circulation and advertising, eliminating a slew of smaller local papers. The subsequent emergence of competing news media such as television and radio compounded circulation issues, and an increased variety of leisure activities in the post-war period further reduced the average reading time of most Americans.⁶¹ The two greatest supporters of Muir's conservation efforts in Utah had collapsed by the time the Echo Park controversy peaked. The *Salt Lake Herald*

⁶⁰ Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, p. 291.

⁶¹ Cloud, pp. 169-170.

had folded in 1920. The *Telegram* had endured till 1952, but its membership had dwindled for a long-time prior. Other publications sympathetic to Muir's conservation commentary had either similarly disappeared or subsisted in a sporadic and greatly diminished state. In the Beehive State, the two major newspapers with the highest circulations were the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret News*. The latter remained frequently silent on conservation or environmental issues, reflecting its old institutional connections to the Mormon church. The *Tribune*, meanwhile, although it had long left its anti-LDS baggage behind, had maintained its position as one of the western press' most rigid proponents of industrial development since its acquisition by Thomas Kearns.

The Club were well aware of attempts to cast them in a negative light in parts of the press. When the *Sierra Club Bulletin* reflected upon the Echo Park conflict in 1964, it noted a curiously significant benefit to the conflict's outcome. Rather than pointing to increased professional competency, lobbying experience, or even briefly giving the Bureau of Reclamation a bloody nose, the *Bulletin* pointed to how success following the evaporation statistics furore gave the Club a newfound ability to transcend existing conservationist stereotypes. These were represented in the nicknames 'nature lovers, bird watchers, wildlifers, self-appointed dogooders, so-called conservationists, [and] fuzzy-headed thinkers.'⁶² Those portraits had certainly played a role in criticism of conservationists in two of the United States' largest magazines as the controversy gathered pace in 1954. An article in *Life* had characterised those against the dam as 'nature lovers' a month after the congressional hearings began, although the tone remained hard to parse.⁶³ *Time* magazine

⁶² See: Richard C. Bradley, 'Damming the Colorado River', in *Voices for the Earth: A Treasury of the Sierra Club Bulletin, 1893-1977*, ed. by Ann Gillam (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1979), pp. 337-341 (p. 340).

⁶³ 'Sounds of Anguish from Echo Park', *Life*, 22 February 1954, p. 49.

was less kind when summarising the Echo Park conflict later in the year, when it had referred to conservationist forces as 'professional nature lovers [...] all of whom wear shoes and live in houses while writing about the great outdoors.'⁶⁴

Of all the terms used to negatively brand conservationists during exchanges between 1950 and 1955 over Echo Park 'nature lovers' became the predominant invocation, and the idea of the conservationist sitting at home in his or her armchair the major image. The denigrating connotation of the phrase 'nature lovers,' Harvey notes, signified 'the difficulty of challenging a water project in the era of economic expansion in the United States following the second world war.'⁶⁵ Equally, it illustrated how elements of the press and other groups sympathetic to the development of the Upper Colorado River Basin sought to frame conservationists to their reader base. There were of course political reasons for the invention of this image. The strength of the conservation coalition had come as a surprise to the Bureau and congressional delegations of Utah and Colorado. Just as frustrating to those forces was the seeming efficacy of the aesthetic argument in inspiring public support for preservation. Given national purchase in the Echo Park conflict, pleas for securing aesthetic nature would retain their vitality in public hearings against industrial developments for the remainder of the 1950s and for much of the following decade. Pro-development interests were therefore confronted with abstract cultural ideals of American wilderness and the natural sublime they were uncertain how to contest. Undermining the image of conservation groups espousing these values was a pragmatic route to discrediting dam opposition.

⁶⁴ 'The Old Car Peddler', *Time*, 23 August 1954, p. 16.

⁶⁵ Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, p. 4.

The idea of what precise criticism was being levelled at conservationists when they were branded 'nature lovers' was difficult to define. As a phrase, it was neither new, nor uniquely American, and had seen frequent usage since at least the late nineteenth century. Before and after Echo Park, the term continued to be used sporadically, often with entirely innocuous or even positive contexts.⁶⁶ Beyond the *Time* and *Life* articles, it would also be used by one of the most critical individuals of Brower during the evaporation debates, Utah congressman William A. Dawson, who fumed that the 'nature lovers' had the temerity to contest the designs of the Bureau's thousands of engineers.⁶⁷ In 1962, Joseph Wood Krutch, a western naturalist, conservation ally, and frequent collaborator with the Sierra Club, would argue the pejorative connotations of the phrase had become more keenly felt after Echo Park, having gone from signifying sneering derision to fully formed 'contemptuous epithet.'⁶⁸ Brower, for his part, always used the term 'wilderness lover' over 'nature lover' when reflecting back on conservation conflicts.⁶⁹

Brower's intentional shift in language denoted one reason conservationists chafed against the term. As slippery a concept as wilderness had always been, it was a more specific way of framing a part of the non-human world than the category of the natural, which was frustratingly broad. The idea that a group of people had set out to just protect 'nature' in its entirety carried with it the idea that any such individuals were unnecessarily obstructionist and naive. Other associations also converged to amplify the negative dimensions of the term. 'Nature lovers' in its derogatory frame had frequently been used in reference to writers of the

⁶⁶ For a brief discussion of 'nature lover' as an epithet in an English context, see: Travis V. Mason, *Ornithologies of Desire, Ecocritical Essays, Avian Poetics, and Don McKay* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2013), p. 74.

⁶⁷ Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, p. 194.

⁶⁸ Joseph Wood Krutch, *More Lives Than One* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1962), p. 338.

⁶⁹ Brower and Schrepfer, pp. 81, 105.

west and southwest, appearing in conjunction with the once-dreaded literary albatross 'regionalist.'⁷⁰ This accusation at the height of its negativity implied an opponent's inability to recognise their provincial perspective, thereby circumscribing the value of their observations. Its transplantation from point of literary attack into anti-conservationist critique did little to change this.⁷¹ The *Time* article combined both these elements in its criticism of conservationists. 'Nature lover' in isolation was at best an ambiguous signifier of vituperative intent. It was the contrast between the broadness of what was proposed as needing protection, and the limited perspective of the spokesman or woman that created the insult.

A particularly amusing tale designed to evoke the limited perspective of conservationists emerged in a February 1954 issue of Colorado's *Greeley Daily Tribune*. The paper ran an article recounting the story of 'angry nature lovers' who had telephoned the Denver public library to protest the flooding of the Dinah Shore Monument by Echo Park Dam. Dinah Shore - the famous female vocalist of the 1940s - would not, the librarian informed the caller, be drowned when the Bureau of Reclamation submerged Echo Park.⁷² As for why conservationists were registering their complaint with the Denver public library, that remained a mystery. The incident was an ultimately comic variation on press coverage suggesting that post-war conservationists were divorced from reality, and too distanced from the Echo Park conflict to understand it in anything more than the broadest possible terms.

⁷⁰ Glen A. Love, 'Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism', in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), pp. 225-240 (p. 232).

⁷¹ Thoughts on the connections between literary accusations of regionalism and reputation were drawn from: Guy Reynolds, 'Willa Cather's Case: Region and Reputation' in *Regionalism and the Humanities*, ed. by Timothy R. Mahoney and Wendy J. Katz (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), pp. 79-94 (pp. 79-80); Donald Davidson, *Regionalism and Nationalism in the United States: The Attack on Leviathan*, new edn. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991), pp. 65-66.

⁷² 'Angry Nature Lovers Protest Flooding of Dinah Shore's Monument', *Greeley Daily Tribune*, 11 February 1954, p. 7.

The specific location of where 'nature lovers' might be levelling their complaints from did have more serious dimensions, but it was here that the term became a more unwieldy, contradictory designation. As much as regionalism had once meant limited perspective, as a pejorative it also implied a specific cultural or political agenda. That remained true in the context of the Echo Park debates. Certain project proponents criticised conservationists by arguing their love of nature was an innocuous front from which they could carry out their region or state's economic interests. That image, of conservationists as adept agents working to undermine the sovereignty of the Intermountain West, formed an awkward contrast with the idea of sentimental, naive and inept 'nature lovers' that had been forwarded by other individuals and parts of the press.

Nature Lovers II: Agents of California

The vagueness of 'nature lovers' as an epithet tended to lump a vast number of diverse conservation groups together. The distinct interests, historical missions, and identities of the organisations bound together in the anti-Echo Park coalition were conflated under a single, anonymising banner. More than presenting the newly emerged conservation movement as more unified than it really was, it also played havoc with critics' ability to maintain a unified argument about which interests conservationists specifically represented. When Straus, a Chicago native, had originally made his own accusations, he had pointed to urban Chicago, New York, and Boston as the location of conservationist allegiance. Western natives, however, pointed to the opposite side of the nation. F. C. Merrell, chief engineer of the Colorado River Water Conservancy District of Grand Junction, hinted toward a culprit in 1954. With a declaration rich in its implications, he stated 'All the nature lovers in the country seem

to have rallied here to defeat the purpose to build the reservoir [...] they appear in force every time Western people want to use some of the natural resources of their own country.¹⁷³ Utah's *Daily Herald*, in their own assessment of conservationists, were more explicit, casting the groups as agents of Lower Colorado Basin states who were using them as a means of protecting their own water interests. In this context, the *Herald* believed that 'the great concern of the California nature lovers becomes readily understood.'¹⁷⁴ Wayne Aspinall, one of the sponsors of the CRSP equally wondered if conservationist and other anti-dam complainants were merely a front for southern California interests who wanted the project to fail. He was not, historian Stephen Sturgeon notes, the only one to allude to a larger conspiracy stemming from the machinations of the Golden State.¹⁷⁵ The idea that these conspiratorial accusations were so prevalent and serious not only underlined that many developers could not conceive that nature appreciation would ever trump industrial progress, but they had very little idea of what a preservationist ideology might actually consist of.

There was a great irony in all these accusations. The attack on the public image of conservationists was a pragmatic response of pro-development forces unsure of how to combat aesthetic arguments that had only recently gained such cultural currency. However, the Sierra Club had partly emphasised Echo Park's aesthetics to begin with because they were sensitive to how their public image might be negatively impacted if they pursued economic arguments against the project. As the Sierra Club's first time in the national spotlight in forty years, president Richard Leonard was deeply concerned that being attached to California might damage the group's position. He noted that:

⁷³ 'Denver Loan Proposal Gets Cold Reception', *Greeley Daily Tribune*, 22 January 1954, p. 7.

⁷⁴ 'California Working Hard to Wreck Utah-Colorado Project', *Daily Herald*, 8 January 1954, p. 14.

⁷⁵ Stephen Craig Sturgeon, *The Politics of Western Water: The Congressional Career of Wayne Aspinall* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2002), p. 38.

The Sierra Club and other conservation groups in California have to be extremely careful not to give the slightest impression that we are fighting the Upper Colorado Project in order to get more water for southern California. That actually is one of the reasons I feel it is not wise to get into the argument over the basic economics of the Colorado River Project as a whole.

The comment had been made privately to fellow Club member Joe Penfold, but the group followed it with a public statement stressing that the organisation had no interest in the Colorado River Water itself.⁷⁶ Furthermore, Leonard underlined that Brower, in his dealings with the central supporter of Echo Park Dam in Utah, senator Watkins, had to be 'absolutely courteous to him all the way through' so as not to damage the Club's public image.⁷⁷

Ostensibly, the image of the post-war conservationist emerging from the critical elements of the Intermountain press was markedly different to the one ascribed to Muir. Muir continued to receive sporadic positive mention in the media, although he had yet to become the widely treasured national figure he would become after the 1960s.⁷⁸ Still, the public image of Muir, particularly post-1890, as a peripatetic wanderer in pursuit of higher ideals had largely inoculated him against accusations of being a statist pawn. His sojourns had been a persistent focus in the press, and this focus allowed him to act as an authority on the landscape. The idea of modern nature lovers as armchair writers like DeVoto seemed to go some way toward robbing contemporary conservationists of the legitimacy Muir had attained, whilst

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Richard M. Leonard, "Mountaineer, Lawyer, Environmentalist," an oral history conducted 1975 by Susan Schrepfer, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, p. 115.

⁷⁸ The way in which Muir's fame and public awareness of him has ebbed and flowed across the twentieth century is hard to precisely trace versus other individuals that became reframed quickly and explicitly around their conservation achievements, like Thoreau. Scholars that have referenced Muir in this context typically do so in a comparative frame, viewing him as enduring more so than other nineteenth century naturalists, rather than suggesting the way in which awareness of Muir grew. See: David Stradling, *Making Mountains: New York City and the Catskills* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), p. xii; Rachel White Scheuering, *Shapers of the Great Debate on Conservation: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 43.

simultaneously separating them from their forefather's legacy in occupying both sentimental and rationally driven spaces.

There was however, one notable connection between the idea of the armchair conservationist over Echo Park and the attacks on Muir during the Hetch Hetchy conflict. In 1909, the *San Francisco Call* had mocked John Muir for his defence the valley with a front-page cartoon depicting him, elaborately clothed in a dress, apron and flowered bonnet fruitlessly sweeping back the flood waters of the valley.⁷⁹ The image rendered Muir 'impotent and feminine' both through his attire and the hilariously fussy, hopeless nature of his actions.⁸⁰ The cartoon went some way to branding the Sierra Club leader as a 'sissy.'⁸¹ Even within the Club during the conflict, this had been an issue. San Francisco City Engineer Marsden Manson, a Club member, found himself annoyed by Muir's writings. He lampooned Muir's writing style, arguing it was full of 'verbal lingerie,' 'downy feathers' and 'embroideries.'⁸² Caring for nature carried with it the risk of appearing unmanly. During the Echo Park conflict, the gendering of conservation as an issue was subtler, but it was still present. The idea of conservationists as armchair enthusiasts repackaged the environment-as-feminine issue of Hetch Hetchy, functioning on the same gendered logic. It once more sought to confine nature advocates to the domestic sphere, it merely did so without relying upon obviously feminine terms. Muir had been largely powerless in fighting such accusations. For the post-war Sierra Club, however, rapidly gaining confidence through their efforts to stop

⁷⁹ See Appendix: Image 2.

⁸⁰ Nancy C. Unger, *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers: American Women in Environmental History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 98

⁸¹ Linda Witt, Karen M. Paget, and Glenna Matthews, *Running as a Woman: Gender and Power in American Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), p. 11.

⁸² Righter, p. 90.

the dam in Echo Park, there were options through which they could present their own image of their members and cause.

Selling the Post-war Conservationist

Two Sierra Club productions pushed back against the construction of the 'nature lover' and armchair conservationist stereotypes during the commentary over Dinosaur. 1953 saw the release of Charles Eggert's film, *Wilderness River Trail*, based on river trips through the monument the Club had organised that summer in the *Bulletin*. It would be the first film created as part of a conservation campaign. Offering both sound and colour images, the film was complemented by organ music composed by Clair Leonard, a professor of music at Bard College.⁸³ The tone of the final product celebrated the beauty of Echo Park and Dinosaur, whilst the score emphasised the ambiguity over its fate. The Club followed it up in 1955 with the text *This is Dinosaur*, edited by ex-Utahn and naturalist Wallace Stegner. *This is Dinosaur* contained a series of essays and a collection of photographs, also detailing conservationist trips through the monument.

David Brower was perhaps uniquely poised to help the Sierra Club transition from a Californian hiking group weathering press attacks to an organisation that could achieve broader public sympathy. With a background as an editor for the University of California Press, Brower understood the power of the written word and photography in shaping the Club's public image. In many respects, Brower's defining achievement during his tenure with the organisation, the Sierra Club publishing program, would transform him into the model of

⁸³ Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, p. 167.

the post-war conservationist propagandized and derided by Straus. Brower went to work every day wearing a suit and tie, travelling to his office in downtown San Francisco, the walls of which would slowly become occupied by large images of distant landscapes that he helped editorialise to protect.⁸⁴ A result of his publisher's roots, Brower has often been rendered as a kind of wilderness salesman. Equally, however, he understood the seductive image of the conservationist as a crusader for the natural world. After joining the Club, Brower had obsessively read back issues of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, looking for the great exploits of his predecessors the way 'one would read the Bible.' He found himself 'taken by the writings of the early contributors to it. That included Muir, Bade, Bradley, David Starr Jordan, many of the early pioneers.'⁸⁵ Where Muir had recognised the necessity of transforming his own public image after the 1870s, Brower had a much bigger task during the Echo Park conflict. Muir had only needed to transform his own image; the new executive director had to construct a positive post-war image of the conservationist, as his own organisation became embroiled in the new arena of water politics.

This is Dinosaur, Wilderness River Trail, and the subsequent Sierra Club publishing program have been praised in recent scholarly literature for evolving American conceptions of the natural world, shifting away from a grandiose sublime toward an increasingly ecologically driven vision. One persistent criticism, however, has been the absence of human figures from their photographic narratives.⁸⁶ Yet the idea that the Club had little interest in depicting other

⁸⁴ Finis Dunaway, *Natural Visions: The Power of Images in American Environmental Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 117-118.

⁸⁵ Brower and Schrepfer, p. 12.

⁸⁶ Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, pp. 162-163; Robin Kelsey, 'Is Landscape Photography?', in *Is Landscape...?: Essays on the Identity of Landscape*, ed. by Gareth Doherty, Charles Waldheim (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 71-92 (p. 86); Suzaan Boettger, 'Within and Beyond the Art World: Environmentalist Criticism of Visual Art', in *Handbook of Ecocriticism and Cultural Ecology*, ed. by Hubert Zapf (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2016), pp. 664-682 (p. 674).

human figures is largely incorrect.⁸⁷ Scholars, in their pursuit to discover what conservationists were interested in, and where they found value in natural spaces, have tended to minimise not only the instances in which conservationists did appear in the images of these earlier publications, but the reasons for their appearance in turn.

Both *Wilderness River Trail* and *This is Dinosaur* recalled the genre of outdoor adventure writing more than the philosophical, reflective treatises on unpopulated nature that the group would publish as part of their 1960s Exhibit Format Series. Outdoor adventure writing had more in common with the literary precursors of the Audubon Society and Izaak Walton League than it did with John Muir's writings.⁸⁸ The genre, long associated with hunting and fishing narratives, gave the Club a larger space to include human figures from which they could dispute their public image. Indeed, Henry Herbert, writing under the name Frank Forester in the latter half of the nineteenth century, has long been credited with using the genre to resuscitate the public image of fishermen and hunters. Once figures of despicable temperament, Forester's writings helped shift 'the public perception of the American sportsman from [...] first cousins to drunkenness and dissipation to something more respectable.'⁸⁹

Outdoor adventure writing as a genre did however come attached with a number of cultural or sectional tensions. Adventure writing had been interpreted in some states, such as Wyoming, as creating its own problematic stereotypes of western settlers as 'the crude, the

⁸⁷ See: Nicholas Blower, "'There are no people in these photographs': Human Scarcity, the Sierra Club Aesthetic, and the Politics of Presence, *European Journal of American Culture*, 36 (2017), 39-55.

⁸⁸ For connections between outdoor adventure writing and the Izaak Walton League and Audubon Society, see: Neuzil, pp. 66-75, 82. For connections to Muir's work, see: George Hart, 'The Discursive Mode: Kenneth Rexroth, the California State Guide, and Nature Poetry in the 1930s', *Western American Literature*, 37 (2002), 4-25 (p. 15); Daniel J. Philippon, *Conserving Words: How American Nature Writers Shaped the Environmental Movement* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), p. 11.

⁸⁹ Neuzil, p. 79.

rough, and the semi-barbarous' for an audience of eastern readers demanding 'authentic' frontier narratives.⁹⁰ Furthermore, they had long been considered 'boys' stories,' segregated from what was considered the more feminised domain of literature.⁹¹ For the Sierra Club, however, these associations were not necessarily undesirable. Branded as sentimental nature lovers writing in distant, domestic spaces, a book and film that would present them as masculine outdoorsmen capable of enduring Dinosaur National Monument's remote environment, whilst simultaneously popularising the idea of conservation itself would be a valuable corrective endeavour.

In seeking to become curators of a public image that charted a course between western masculinity and broader national appeal, the two productions had a difficult job. They had to emphasise the Sierra Club could cope with more perilous wilderness situations whilst simultaneously underlining that Dinosaur National Monument was accessible enough to be worth preserving for more casual recreationalists. Ultimately, both *Wilderness River Trail* and *This is Dinosaur* offered their owners a combination of Sierra Club boaters coping with the violence of the Green and Yampa Rivers and with more relaxed scenes depicting solitary reflection. The film and book also had to balance promoting the monument and promoting the image of the Club. At points, Eggert and Stegner seemed content to show Sierra Club members and river runners drifting down the Green and Yampa Rivers, as if only there for the viewer to have a recognisable reference point in human figures to understand the vast scale of Dinosaur's geology. At other times, however, the film clearly attempted to promote a particular vision, not of conservation, but of the conservationist.

⁹⁰ Frieda Knobloch, 'Creating the Cowboy State: Culture and Underdevelopment in Wyoming since 1867', *Western Historical Quarterly*, 32 (2001), 201-221 (p. 211).

⁹¹ John Dudley, *A Man's Game: Masculinity and the Anti-Aesthetics of American Literary Naturalism* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), p. 12.

Part of this emphasis came in the way Eggert edited the sequence of the film. Before *Wilderness River Trail* showed any of Dinosaur's grand topography, it began with a three-minute segment showing Club and other conservation group members travelling to Dinosaur. 'To know it,' intoned Eggert, 'to really know it, you must get out of your car, your truck, or your bus, and hit the trail.' The physical act of visitation became an integral initial part of the presentation - taking priority even over showcasing the landscape itself. Disputing the idea of conservationists as armchair nature lovers, the film then spent a further two minutes lingering on Club members constructing boats - which the narration underlined they owned, as if to assure the viewer that once left in the wilderness, the group would be able to fend for itself. *Wilderness River Trail* was a short film - under thirty minutes in total - but it spent the first five minutes talking about and depicting conservationists preparing to survive the rigours of wilderness. These initial scenes took place almost exclusively on an unremarkable riverbank, not within the dramatic landscape of Dinosaur National Monument.

Brower later praised Eggert's work, noting 'it was credited by the opposition as being the most important thing we did in offsetting the Bureau of Reclamation's propaganda; it was the hardest thing they had to fight.'⁹² However, the success of the film in shifting the conservationist image was debatable. The Club sent the film out to a number of smaller conservation groups in an effort to publicise Dinosaur and Echo Park. Republican John Saylor, sensitive to the conservationist cause, conducted showings of *Wilderness River Trail* following the congressional hearings, but few committee members involved with the conflict deigned

⁹² Brower and Schrepfer, p. 113.

to attend.⁹³ *This is Dinosaur* became a precursor, however, to the Club's attempt to craft a public image across the following decade.

Foreign Voices

As Wallace Stegner was editing *This is Dinosaur*, he warned David Brower that the dam the Sierra Club had argued for building in place of the one situated at Echo Park, the 'high' variant the Bureau wanted to sit across the Utah-Arizona border, would risk destroying part of south eastern Utah's canyon country, which he considered 'a whole lot more worth saving than Dinosaur.'⁹⁴ At the time, Brower dismissed Stegner's concerns, content to preserve Dinosaur National Monument, which he continued to argue was essential in maintaining the sanctity of the National Park System. Not having visited the region behind the second proposed dam, named after the immediate warren of gorges it would inundate - Glen Canyon - Brower only came to see the place after the remainder of the Colorado River Storage Project had been approved. He would be filled with regret by what he found in the gullies of south eastern Utah. Brower would later term his ignorance about the area 'a horrible mistake.'⁹⁵ Never forgiving himself or the Bureau for Glen Canyon Dam, the executive director spoke about how the superstructure had transformed the most tremendous wilderness area in the United States into, a 'a drag strip for power boats,' in an action comparable to 'urinating in the crypt

⁹³ Thomas Gary Smith, *The Green Republican: John Saylor and the Preservation of America's Wilderness* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), p. 69.

⁹⁴ Philip L. Fradkin, *Wallace Stegner and the American West* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), p. 187; for other comments on Stegner's view of Glen Canyon, see Dan Flores, 'Bioregionalist of the High and Dry: Stegner and Western Environmentalism', in *Wallace Stegner and the Continental Vision: Essays on Literature, History, and Landscape*, ed. by Curt Meine (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1997), pp. 107-120 (p. 112); Jackson J. Benson, *Wallace Stegner: His Life and Work* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), pp. 227-228.

⁹⁵ Brower and Schrepfer, p. 139; David Brower, *For Earth's Sake: The Life and Times of David Brower* (Layton: Gibbs-Smith, 1990), pp. 341-343.

of St. Peter's.⁹⁶ Nor was he alone in this; as historian Jared Farmer has noted, even for the twenty-first-century mainstream environmental movement, Glen Canyon Dam remains 'the masterwork of human arrogance.'⁹⁷

Powerless to stop construction, Brower's response to this second dam project was to grieve through the publication of another book. In May 1963, photographer Eliot Porter, in collaboration with the Sierra Club, released *The Place No One Knew*, a collection of photographic images and reflective quotes taken from a number of trips down Glen Canyon's waterways between 1960 and 1963. The vast reservoir created by Glen Canyon Dam would take seventeen years to reach maximum capacity, but Porter's book offered concerned readers a glimpse into the unique spaces of the canyon that would slowly be engulfed by the floodwaters.

Part of the Sierra Club's Exhibit Format series, large and professionally presented coffee table books for an upper-middle class audience, the style of images within *The Place* mirrored the scale of Porter's previous work on the daily nature of New England.⁹⁸ Rejecting the grandiose vistas associated with long-time Club photographers Ansel Adams and Cedric White, Porter further developed an approach during his trips through Glen Canyon that emphasized nature within reach or underfoot over glimpses at distant and sublime geographies. *The Place* offered a series of portraits of the side pools, lichen encrusted walls, cobbles bifurcating shallow streams, trees and flora flourishing in small canyon nooks, and the natural colours of the canyon walls and amphitheatres presented almost in abstract as stark columns of light from the desert sun threw them into sharp relief. It was the first major Club publication on Utah's

⁹⁶ John McPhee, *Encounters with the Archdruid* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), p. 240.

⁹⁷ Farmer, 'Glen Canyon and the Persistence of Wilderness', 210-222 (p. 212).

⁹⁸ See: Eliot Porter, *In Wilderness is the Preservation of the World: Selections and Photographs by Eliot Porter* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1962).

landscape since Muir's early visitations to the state, a loving and extended portrait of its brilliance and diversity.

Eliot Porter did not fit the image of the conservationist the Sierra Club had sold in *This is Dinosaur* and *Wilderness River Trail*. Born into an upper-middle class suburban family in Chicago, Porter initially embarked upon a career as a medical researcher at Harvard, but discarded the safety of his profession. He turned to photography in an attempt to find some renewed sense of direction and personal meaning in his late thirties. Proving to be a studious artist, he had spent more than twenty-one years diligently developing his craft before heading to Utah's pockmarked gorges and chasms in San Juan, Kane, and Garfield County. On the verge of sixty, Porter cut a casual but smartly dressed figure. Wearing his standard opened collared shirt, cotton jacket, beige chinos, and spectacles, Porter typically appeared in images as a thoughtful, erudite individual. No one would suspect him as ever having left a cloistered life of research. He formed a stark contrast with Ansel Adams, who through his own attire and grizzled face often appeared to embrace a form of shabby homesteader chic and encourage association with popular culture's version of the old west. As images went, Porter closely resembled Bernard DeVoto and the generation of armchair conservationists that Michael Straus had railed against. Where Straus precisely drew upon inspiration for his image of the post-war conservationist was never entirely clear - but Straus had married Porter's sister.⁹⁹

Porter's earlier profession in biological research translated organically into his artistic vision. Divorcing himself from the adventure narratives of *Wilderness River Trail* and *This is Dinosaur*, Porter sought to understand the complex interrelationships that underlay and contributed to Glen Canyon's riparian environment. The way Porter described his journey in *The Place* made

⁹⁹ *The Diary of James Schuyler*, ed. by Nathan Kernan (Boston: Black Sparrow Press, 1997), p. 316.

it clear that the outing was in certain respects a form of research trip. By those standards, however, Porter's first encounter with the landscape was problematic. Unused to the craggy topography of south eastern Utah, he noted his obvious vexation at the start of the book; 'the eye is numbed by vastness and magnificence, and passes over fine details, ignoring them in defense against surfeit.'¹⁰⁰ Reflecting upon the experience in the 1988 edition of *The Place*, these initial difficulties had coalesced into a more concrete sense of frustration. Porter noted 'The monumental structure of the towering walls in variety and color defied comprehension [...] I didn't know where to look, what to focus on, and in my confusion, photographic opportunities slipped by.'¹⁰¹ Framing the sights and sounds of Glen Canyon as elements of great beauty but also academic interest, Porter would forever struggle to see those early photographic trips along the Colorado as anything more than failures.

The Sierra Club had slowly moved away from depicting their own members in their photographic publications after 1962. Club members had made appearances in the first two Exhibit Format books, Ansel Adams's *This is the American Earth* and Cedric Wright's *Words of the Earth*, but the adoption of captioned quotes by naturalists in conjunction with images had replaced physical figures with disembodied voices. Despite this, the idea that Porter was a respectable, objective observer rather than a romantic 'nature lover' was one that many reviewers found noteworthy.

Finis Dunaway has noted the jubilant response to *The Place*, drawing upon a range of appraisals from major publications including *Atlantic Monthly* and the *New York Times* that celebrated its importance. A core commonality to these responses was their belief that

¹⁰⁰ Eliot Porter, *The Place No One Knew: Glen Canyon on the Colorado* ed. by David Brower (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968), p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Eliot Porter, *The Place No One Knew: Glen Canyon on the Colorado*, 25th Anniversary edn. (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1988), p. 6.

Porter, with his scientific background and inquisitive, bespectacled appearance, was more reporter than artist. He had used his camera, Dunaway notes, not only to capture the beauty of nature, but 'as a truth-telling device, as a technology to verify the distinctive features of Glen Canyon.' Dunaway particularly singles out a contemporary critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle* who identified *The Place* as a 'a documentary.'¹⁰² Meanwhile, in Oregon, another reviewer remarked that Porter's images needed little inspection on the grounds that they 'speak for themselves.'¹⁰³ Porter's previous career as a Harvard researcher made him a convincing voice of authority; it wasn't just his artistic ability, compositional approach, or mastery of colour that drove the book's positive response in the national press. His own appearance and background played an equally important role in convincing reviewers that his portrayal of Glen Canyon was presented in an objective fashion, and few seemed eager to suggest seventy-two images for almost two hundred miles of river risked being unrepresentative. If anything, Porter was celebrated nationally on the same grounds that Muir had ultimately been celebrated in Utah. Here was a hybrid narrative that incorporated the spirituality of the modern conservationist with the scientific, taxonomic impulses of the research scientist.

Existing research interested in *The Place No One Knew* has elected to concentrate on reviews from major urban seaboard centres, choosing to ignore reviewers who were more directly geographically connected to the development of the Colorado River and plateau region.¹⁰⁴ That approach, however, is problematic. The idea that Porter's image as a documentarian

¹⁰² Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, pp. 180-181.

¹⁰³ Charles A. Sprague, 'It Seems to Me...', *Oregon Statesman*, 28 July 1963, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ See: Rebecca Solnit, 'Every Corner Is Alive: Eliot Porter as an Environmentalist and an Artist', in *Eliot Porter: The Color of Wildness* (Aperture: New York, 2001), pp. 113-132 (pp. 114-115); Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, pp. 180-181.

remained uncontested and that *The Place* was universally accepted as an objective account of Glen Canyon is incorrect. Though limited, certain papers in the Four Corners region that felt they would benefit most from Glen Canyon Dam expressed doubt about the supposed convergence of art and scientific objectivism. When Porter came to display images from *The Place* in Taos, New Mexico, one newspaper doubtfully remarked that he 'gave up medicine and science for photography.'¹⁰⁵ The seemingly innocuous comment was at odds with the praise Porter had received in the national press. In New Mexico, his past profession, far from furnishing him with a unique perspective, was seen something that had been abandoned or discarded for a bizarre new career.

The lone commentary surrounding the book's publication within Utah was more damning in its criticism, and through its appraisal of Porter. A writer for the Sierra Club's long-time critic, the *Salt Lake Tribune* singled out *The Place No One Knew* as the first salvo by the group against further development in the Beehive State. Rejecting Porter as a documentarian and *The Place* as a vehicle for objective truth, the article argued that it was instead a 'propaganda picture book.'¹⁰⁶ Those who were seen to have blindly accepted Porter simply as a reporter or documentarian were roundly criticized in turn. The *Tribune* attacked the *New York Times* in particular, arguing it had allowed an artist's book of photography to constitute its central point of evidence in an editorial designed to dispute the necessity of Glen Canyon Dam.¹⁰⁷

The *Tribune* article, despite its somewhat indignant tone, was correct in its assertion that the *Times* piece disputing the necessity of Glen Canyon Dam was predominantly driven by Porter's book. The *Tribune* was also one of the only outlets reviewing *The Place No One Knew*

¹⁰⁵ 'Porters to Open Three-Man Show', *Taos News*, 24 September 1964, p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ 'Requiem for Glen Canyon: Lost Cause', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 July 1963, p. 15 A.

¹⁰⁷ See: 'The Glen Canyon Dam', *New York Times*, 5 July 1963, p. 17.

that attempted to engage with some of the more questionable elements of the text. Indeed, Porter's book had led the *Times* to effusively exclaim that 'many who knew the Glen say it was [...] one of the outstanding natural scenic places anywhere in America,' and that, 'Glen Canyon could have been placed beside Yosemite or Yellowstone to inspire future generations with its unsurpassed natural beauty.'¹⁰⁸ Such exuberant praise was evidence of *The Place's* ability to win observers to its cause of disputing the dam. However, it was also lazy reporting. The *New York Times*, in taking the 'many who knew' Glen Canyon from the quotes accompanying the images within *The Place*, had made a rather major editorial mistake.

The problem was particularly evident for those who were familiar with Porter's previous work on the nature of New England, *In Wildness is the Preservation of the World*. In that volume, Porter had combined his lavish colour photography of seasonal change with quotes from Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau was an ideal figure to give contextual voice to Porter's images; a Massachusetts native who had travelled the surrounding countryside widely and spent extensive time musing on the nature of the region and through his taxonomical impulses fulfilling a role as an amateur ecologist. The Thoreau centennial in 1962 saw a re-evaluation of his significance, a shift that placed less emphasis on his contributions to civil protest in exchange for an increased emphasis on his appreciation of the natural world.¹⁰⁹

Conversely, and hinted at by the title *The Place No One Knew*, the Club inferred there was no single figure that could speak about Glen Canyon or southeastern Utah well enough to explicate Porter's images. They implicitly claimed there existed no recognizable voice who could speak for it as convincingly as Thoreau could for the seasonal changes of New England.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, p. 148.

Instead, the book drew upon the quotes of many in an attempt to build some understanding of the canyon's significance. A chorus of voices reinforced the idea that *The Place* was designed to function as a funeral, and Porter drew upon the thoughts of writers such as Henry Beston, Loren Eiseley, Joseph Wood Krutch, and Wallace Stegner to act as the voices of the assembled throng. Yet aside from Stegner, most quotes within *The Place* were drawn from prominent naturalists who had never made a pilgrimage to Glen Canyon and had either little or no connection with Utah or its landscape. Indeed, if *The Place No One Knew* was designed to act as a eulogy, and Glen Canyon took on the role of a deceased body, then many of those the Sierra Club had invited to speak at the funeral had never met or even heard of the victim. This was a volume of outsider voices.

A second, more serious problem would not become evident until sometime after the book's publication. Viewed as a part of a revisionist approach to the natural world that incorporated ecological rather than purely aesthetic concerns, scholars have continued to praise Porter's work in *The Place No One Knew*. Supplanting the panoramic impulses of his landscape photography forebears, Porter's work was easily twinned with Rachel Carson's landmark text *Silent Spring* and its own ecological warnings.¹¹⁰ In the most basic terms, Porter's ecological vision manifested through his propensity for angling his lens down toward the ground around his feet, toward the interrelationships all around him.¹¹¹ That remained true in *The Place*. Porter's approach toward more intimate scenes was seen to enhance public understanding of the natural world more than images that encompassed vast landscapes. The idea that this

¹¹⁰ Rebecca Solnit, 'Every Corner Is Alive', pp. 113-132 (pp. 114-115); Gisela Parak, *Photographs of Environmental Phenomena: Scientific Images in the Wake of Environmental Awareness, USA 1860s-1970s* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), p. 157; Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, pp. 160-164.

¹¹¹ Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, p. 162.

approach carried with it no issues, however, was incorrect in the specific context of Glen Canyon.

The Kaiparowits Plateau, Kaiparowitz, Wild Horse Mesa, or Fifty-Mile Mountain - whichever name it was referred to as, the huge formation loomed prominently over much of Glen Canyon, dominating large portions of the northern skyline. When *The Place* was published in 1963, Southern California Edison were a year into surveying the potential of the coal fields beneath its vast surface. Porter, in adhering to his ecological perspective in the book, took his images from within the depths of Glen Canyon. Turning his camera down toward the Colorado River and to the walls of Glen Canyon's various hidden amphitheatres, Porter removed any evidence of Glen Canyon as part of a broader region facing other industrial threats. In isolation, this would not perhaps have been so damaging, but the perspective conflicted sharply with the moral lesson presented in the book. In the foreword, David Brower argued that by refusing to see any landscapes beyond Echo Park, conservationists had allowed Glen Canyon to 'die.'¹¹² If *The Place* carried any unintentional message, it was that the Sierra Club had not only failed to realise the extent of their tunnel vision at Echo Park, they had also failed to learn the same lesson at Glen Canyon – even as they vocally claimed otherwise. Four years after Glen Canyon Dam finished construction, the Sierra Club would find themselves returning to Utah, fighting to stop the Kaiparowits Power Project.

Conclusion: Divergent Paths

¹¹² Porter, *The Place*, 25th Anniversary edn., p. 7.

The figure of the conservationist had failed to attain much in the way of popular appeal in Utah between the time Muir had visited Salt Lake City in 1877 and the end of the two Colorado River Storage Project dam conflicts in the state. If any change in public perception was visible by the time Glen Canyon completed construction, it was that the Sierra Club and conservationists more broadly had become a more contentious, unwelcome presence lurking at Utah's fringes. Brower and many of the other Club members, disgusted with Glen Canyon Dam, abandoned concerns with southern Utah. With no local chapter in the state in 1963, the Sierra Club would not return to campaign in the region until after the Kaiparowits Project gathered pace in 1970.

Older Utahns had long understood the power and danger of a negative public image, particularly those who had been born at the end of the previous century, when intense suspicions about the persistence of polygamous practices remained, and narratives of Mormon persecution retained larger purchase in Utah's collective memory. However, where the image of the conservationist would continue to chart more radical paths as the 1960s progressed, the idea of the Latter-day Saints as an alien, outsider force would only continue to fade. Earlier facets of Mormon daily life that had been considered strange, for example collective ownership of land and water sources, had long ago diminished in practice. Although the insistence upon Mormon dietary codes endured, this religious mandate had never been a way of branding the LDS faith as idiosyncratic.¹¹³ In practice, the progression of Mormonism's image from fringe cult to accepted and only partly religious regional sub-culture had been contingent upon the same features post-war conservation groups would increasingly set themselves as rigidly against.

¹¹³ Gottlieb, p. 53; Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, pp. 74-83.

Thomas Leiper Kane, a prominent US abolitionist, military officer, and ‘friend of the Mormons,’ believed that the Saints would never achieve a sense of security until their intensely negative public image was corrected.¹¹⁴ The grounds for this initial acceptance into the American mainstream would set the LDS on a crash course with the future environmental movement. Mormon culture had its first major, post-polygamy showing in 1893, where an urban audience found itself more amenable to Mormon models of secularized agricultural and extractive practices than they were to the faith itself.¹¹⁵ The encounter came when the LDS church sought to promote Utah at the World's Columbia Exposition. During the fair, church leaders found their outsider status reified by their exclusion from the World's Parliament of Religions, which outwardly proffered to create a global dialogue between faiths. Instead, it fell to the exhibitions illustrating Mormon attempts at harnessing the Utah landscape to make an impression upon a curious but resistant public. Placed into this arena, the Mormon exhibits were a surprising, roaring success; 'agricultural displays were widely heralded [...] while Utah mining was extolled in superlatives.'¹¹⁶ Industrial development of Utah's remote landscape became the foundation upon which Mormon's first became seen as Americans with some peculiar eccentricities, rather than as a separate people.

¹¹⁴ Matthew J. Grow, *“Liberty to the Downtrodden”: Thomas L. Kane, Romantic Reformer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 71-72.

¹¹⁵ Most perspectives concerning the timeline of Mormon cultural assimilation point to 1890 as the key year in which outside trends and currents flowed more readily into Utah, although not all point to the Manifesto outlawing polygamy as the core reason. See: Seth L. Bryant, and others, 'Conversion and Retention in Mormonism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*, ed. by Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 756-786 (p. 762); Reid Neilson, *Exhibiting Mormonism: The Latter-day Saints and the 1893 Chicago's World Fair* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 46-47. For the role of art and education in assimilation, see: Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 326. For Mormon perspectives on racial diversity and the cultural mainstream, see: Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), p. 151. For the changing role of Mormon women after 1890, see: *Mormon Feminism: Essential Writings*, ed. by Joanna Brooks, Rachel Hunt Steenblik, and Hannah Wheelwright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹¹⁶ J. Spencer Fluhman, *“A Peculiar People”: Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), p. 131.

Muir had cast a withering eye toward the implications of Mormon land use in 1877. Yet despite his increasing western popularity, the enthusiastic response of crowds at the World's Columbia Exposition would supplant Muir's doubts concerning Mormon environmental impact. Celebration of the Mormon's desert revisionism returned in force the 1930s. A range of conservative periodicals, newspapers, and journals, including the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Reader's Digest* began to frame the people of Utah as a prime example of herculean sustainability in the face of a national environmental crisis and widespread economic privation. Rather than the wider Mormon community being perceived as somehow exempt from the United States' economic turmoil, observers pointed to the LDS church's ability to endure the Great Depression through its Church Welfare Plan.¹¹⁷ This view enabled observers to posit Mormons as having created a hard-working farming and mining state out of a barren land. A new image of the Latter-day Saints emerged, a stout people that continued to function under extreme environmental and social duress. For those on the political right, this was more than a sign of the LDS having produced a viable society in the desert. It spoke to a successful avoidance of communal and regional dependency they saw as being an inherent and degrading aspect of the New Deal. Those same Republican-affiliated publications primed their readership to be more receptive to the new image of the Mormon community in the post-war period, as the advancement of communication technology after mid-century due to radio

¹¹⁷ Chiung Hwang Chen and Ethan Yogason, "'Those Amazing Mormons': The Media's Construction of Latter-day Saints as a Model Minority", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 32 (1999), 107-128 (p. 109). It is worth noting that these perceptions were rooted in mistaken information. External observers assumed the LDS church's Church Security Program - typically identified by its later name, the Church Welfare Plan - was a collective Mormon response that allowed Utah to bypass dependency on the New Deal. In actuality, Utah was hit hard by the Great Depression, and the Church Welfare Plan never succeeded in fully extricating its unemployed members from federal handouts, nor did it initially attempt to do so. See: Donald H. Dyal, 'Mormon Pursuit of the Agrarian Ideal', *Agricultural History*, 63 (1989), 19-35 (pp. 31-32); Leonard J. Arrington and Wayne K. Hinton, 'Origin of the Welfare Plan of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints', *Brigham Young University Studies*, 5 (1964), 67-85 (p. 68).

and television adoption accelerated the dissemination of this new portrait.¹¹⁸ By 1960 'it became not at all uncommon to hear,' writes Mormon historian Jan Shipps, 'that Mormons are "more American than the Americans."' ¹¹⁹

The idea of Mormons as a hale, pioneering folk at mid-century formed a stark contrast with the growing Intermountain image of the disruptive and cloistered post-war conservationist. By the time of the Echo Park conflict, Mormon culture and belief alike seemed to have gravitated even further toward national norms, encouraging and celebrating growth in a way not dissimilar to the rest of the country. Elements of this pursuit did admittedly still exist within a more overtly religious framework. Wealth was a sign of being blessed by the Lord, evidence of worthiness, and many Mormon's still believed they were building a Kingdom for God in the desert. Yet their post-war drive to 'fill Zion with suburbs and highways and franchises and ward houses,' was no longer seen as distinctive or bizarre by gentile observers, nor was it perceivably different from broader trends of urbanisation in many western states.¹²⁰ As J. Spencer Fluhman notes, if the abolishment of polygamy was the necessitating factor in allowing tentative bonds of unity between Utah and the remaining states to blossom, then the fulfilment of that acceptance of Mormons by non-Mormons 'resulted from the new ways Americans saw Latter-day Saints as part of a national capitalist or imperial machine.'¹²¹

The transition into this 'machine' was not however without its losses. Acceptance by American journals, periodicals, and news media signalled the end of any remaining vantage point from which the Saints could critique the more problematic aspects of the American experiment.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land*, p. 99.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹²⁰ Stephen Trimble, *Bargaining for Eden: The Fight for the Last Open Spaces in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 204.

¹²¹ Fluhman, p. 144.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

Post-war Utah was no longer the seat of a unique culture when the CRSP conflicts embroiled state media.

To a very real degree, conservationist CRSP criticism and publishing, most notably the Club's *The Place No One Knew*, represented a desire to assume the Saint's abandoned status as cultural critics. Where Utahns had found the promotion of land development to be a potent avenue for societal acceptance, the Sierra Club found attempting to frustrate those goals provided a desirably rapid route to outsider status from where they could critique the path of American society. In historian Finis Dunaway's view, such publications heralded the Sierra Club's desire to intersect with the values expressed by other outsider groups, notably the youth movements of the 1960s, remarking that 'wilderness advocates and countercultural rebels inhabited a similar rhetorical space, each hoping that a political movement could break the grip of the technocracy.'¹²³

Mormons and conservationists therefore found themselves, during the 1950s, as two groups passing on a trail. As one group charted a course to wider acceptance, the other was increasingly presented as seeking a more radical, fringe voice. Yet as alluring as that conceptualisation is, it denies much in the way of further interaction between the two groups. Remaining traces of Mormon peculiarity after World War Two had forged an image of a 'neat, modest, virtuous, family-loving, conservative, and patriotic people.' The Mormon image came to serve as a powerful corrective to the fear that 'the entire nation had not gone the way of the much-maligned, pot-smoking, flag-burning counterculture.'¹²⁴ The LDS were transformed

¹²³ Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, p. 185.

¹²⁴ Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land*, p. 100;

‘from exotic outsider to inordinately wholesome, “squeaky clean” insider.’¹²⁵ And so by the mid-1960s, LDS members, once derided as aberrant interlopers in the American southwest, found themselves assuming the role of cultural bulwark against a set of emergent social threats that sought to subvert entrenched American values. Conservation and environmental movements were core elements intent on attacking the American cultural orthodoxy. Or at least, so their critics would come to claim.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Jan Shippis, ‘Is Mormonism Christian? Reflections on a Complicated Question’, in *Mormons and Mormonism: An Introduction to an American World Religion*, ed. by Eric A. Eliason (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), pp. 76-98 (p. 92).

¹²⁶ Certain Mormon spokespeople would later express their own concerns about total assimilation, although such comments were almost certainly designed to be taken in the context of theological difference rather than a distinct Mormon environmental ethic. See: J. B. Haws, *The Mormon Image in the American Mind: Fifty Years of Public Perception* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 280-281.

Chapter 3

Private Intentions, Public Image:

Southern California Edison, the Sierra Club, and Coal Power, 1964-1970

Introduction: Beyond the Colorado, Toward Environmentalism

On 21 January 1963, the sluice gates of Glen Canyon Dam slammed down on the Colorado River. The dam itself would not be finished for a further three years, and Lake Powell would not reach its intended capacity for another seventeen, but for many conservation groups, the event symbolised the end to a decade of campaigning against development on Utah's rivers. Attempts to contest parts of the Colorado River Storage Project had professionalised the Sierra Club, National Audubon Society, Wilderness Society, and a number of other participating nature advocacy groups, but it had also left some of their members exhausted and embittered. Vocal members of these institutions, particularly senior members of the Club, viewed the creation of Lake Powell with no small degree of emotional intensity. They

could not speak about Glen Canyon's gradual submersion without making reference to biblical devastation and national hubris.¹ In contrast to the voices of environmental complaint, the Bureau of Reclamation's leadership looked at Glen Canyon Dam and felt a great sense of pride. Bureau employees saw the vast structure as their crowning achievement to date, a substantial energy actor that would fulfil the consumptive demands of a rapidly urbanising southwest.²

Although their positions remained inimical, the Bureau and national conservation groups were united in one respect. By 1963, organisations that had been thrust into the spotlight over the battle for Echo Park Dam found that their identities in Utah had become viewed almost exclusively through the prism of the Colorado conflict. Subsequent reclamation plans for the river risked further linking the public's understanding of national preservation groups to the Colorado. The same day the gates of Glen Canyon Dam closed, the Interior Department announced the Pacific Southwest Water Plan (PSWP), of which two dams in the Grand Canyon formed a part. By 1964, new battle lines had emerged in northern Arizona, as another furor over the aesthetics of the Colorado and its canyons erupted.

Preservation's critics would however be dismayed to discover that a number of these groups had no interest in confining their agendas to the Colorado. Instead, the press, corporate bodies, and private commentators gradually became aware that preservation groups were

¹ See: Farmer, 'Glen Canyon', 210-222 (p. 212); Byron E. Pearson, *Still the Wild River Runs: Congress, the Sierra Club, and the Fight to Save the Grand Canyon* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2002), p. 89. Calls to remove the dam were largely limited to the Sierra Club in the 1960s. More widespread calls would only emerge after Edward Abbey published *The Monkey Wrench Gang* in 1975, and when radical environmental group Earth First! publically protested the dam in 1981. At that time, Abbey noted, 'Surely no man-made structure in modern American history has been so hated for so long by so many with such good reason.' See: Rebecca Solnit, *The Encyclopedia of Trouble and Spaciousness* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2014), p.66; Michael L. Johnson, *Hunger for the Wild: America's Obsession with the Untamed West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), p. 274; Lee, pp. 45-57.

² Pearson, pp. 35-36.

simultaneously in the throes of dramatic growth and ideological evolution. For organisations like the Wilderness Society and Sierra Club, the period between 1963 and 1970 marked a transitional journey in which natural beauty remained an important but decentred feature of their campaigning. Aesthetic and recreational concerns remained, but made space for issues that included human health, pollution, and sustainability.³ Accompanying a broader agenda was a diversification of methods; Washington lobbying became a more familiar arena in which different advocacy groups operated. By 1970, many of the groups who had united to defend Echo Park had embraced – to varying degrees – a more expansive philosophy that would later become labelled ‘environmentalism.’ And, in some parts of the country, particularly cosmopolitan areas of the west coast, a plurality of citizens would also begin to embrace thinking through a more environmentally conscious lens. They reflected upon the way their lifestyles were impacting the natural world.⁴

This sudden expansion of concern challenged how Intermountain critics viewed conservation groups. In the 1950s, antagonists had seen the members of these organisations in ways that conferred upon their subjects of critique certain comforting, even comical limitations. Individuals like Bernard DeVoto, David Brower, and Eliot Porter had been alternately portrayed as cloistered eastern elites or overly emotional nature lovers. At worst, they had been accused of being unsuspecting patsies for Californian water interests. The belief that those portraits were accurate became increasingly hard to sustain after 1963. The Sierra Club continued their historic interest in preserving the southwest’s principal river in the sixties, but

³ The full body of literature on the broadening agenda of conservation groups is too vast to cite here. For perhaps the first accounting of this transition, see: Hays, pp. 13-39. For a more recent accounting, see: Gottlieb, pp. 121-147.

⁴ Derek R. Larson, *Keeping Oregon Green: Livability, Stewardship, and the Challenges of Growth, 1960-1980* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2016), p. 184.

also published articles on chemical fertiliser usage, pesticides, and warned the public about overpopulation issues.⁵ The National Parks Association expanded their contestation of mining and logging practices, and by the middle of the decade were also producing commentary on the dangers of air pollution.⁶ Meanwhile, the Wilderness Society headed to the nation's capital and attempted to pass ambitious wilderness legislation that would transform the southwest's public lands. In doing so, they laid the groundwork for the environmental-political clashes of the 1980s.⁷

Utahn and Arizonan critics perceived that conservation groups were experiencing increased social receptivity, more expansive reach, and diversified portfolio, but their understanding of these changes was neither precise, nor was it perfect. A new set of reputational images would begin to form around conservation groups after 1963. Development interests, private citizens, and politicians would begin to sell these organisations and members in a way that discounted earlier, more comical frames and instead emphasised the emergent 'environmentalism' as a perilous, radical force. Critics invited their audiences to view the push for increased environmental caution and control in the region in a manner closer to the way in which Cold War Warriors framed Communist activity in the period.⁸ Conservationists would become depicted as part of a wider criminality, an insidious and expanding threat. These

⁵ See: Wyss, p. 183; Paul R. Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (San Francisco: Sierra Club-Ballantine Books, 1968).

⁶ Uekotter, p. 224.

⁷ For the Wilderness Society's work in passing the Wilderness Act, see: Mark W. T. Harvey, *Wilderness Forever: Howard Zahniser and the Path to the Wilderness Act* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), pp. 186-201; Turner, *The Promise*, pp. 29-42. For the role the Wilderness Act played in the Sagebrush Rebellion see: Jacqueline Vaughn Switzer, *Green Backlash: The History and Politics of the Environmental Opposition in the U.S.* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), pp. 172-188.

⁸ Marc J. Selverstone, *Constructing the Monolith: The United States, Great Britain, and International Communism, 1945-1950* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 2.

groups would become viewed as active aggressors, hostile not only to Utah and Arizona's economic growth, but as thieves warping regional culture.

The sheer diversity of issues national preservation groups would confront and make commentary on during the 1960s does however necessitate a more diffuse approach in tracing their regional reputational decline. No single controversy over a tangible place or territory would impact the public image of these organisations in the way that Echo Park had in the 1950s. Although the battle over the Grand Canyon does represent a prominent, public flaring of tempers, it was largely confined to the years 1964-1967. By the end of the decade coal power plants, not hydroelectric dams, would be the dominant land use debate in Utah and Arizona. As such, this chapter explores the way in which institutional association with infrastructural energy development more broadly impacted proponent and detractor reputation in the period.

This chapter focuses particularly on two Californian organisations that presented their own visions for Utah's energy future. It looks to one institution commonly viewed as an agent of regional growth, electric utility and chief Kaiparowits Project architect Southern California Edison, and another traditionally linked with criticism or resistance to growth: Californian conservation group the Sierra Club. Edison would end the decade a celebrated steward of growth in the Intermountain West, primed to develop the Kaiparowits Plateau. Conversely, the Club would see their own public image measurably decline. Yet in the case of both organisations, there was a widening gulf between how the Intermountain public saw their character, beliefs, and policy intentions, and their internal realities. The dual case of Edison and the Sierra Club helps explore the question of how institutional reputation is formulated in the context of crisis narratives.

The Electric Crisis Narrative

The dam conflicts on Utah's eastern and southern borders had eclipsed all other conservation conflicts in the 1950s, and they continued to show an enduring purchase in the wider American psyche. Their continuing presence was articulated best by *New Yorker* journalist John McPhee when he interviewed David Brower in 1971. 'There is something special about dams, something – as conservation problems go – that is disproportionality and metaphysically sinister' wrote McPhee.⁹ But not everyone felt this way about dams. In the 1950s, vitriolic hyperbole had frequently been the position of conservation advocacy groups, whilst effusive superlatives had flowed from the Bureau of Reclamation and many southwestern residents. There was however a third response to hydrological power: simple indifference. Members of the southwest's electric utility industry would have been bemused by the way McPhee's writing ascribed so much significance to the Colorado River battles. When looking at the geography of southern Utah in 1963, few of these companies saw energy potential in the riparian ravines of Glen Canyon. Instead, they looked to Lake Powell's northern shore, and the coalfields of the Kaiparowits Plateau that loomed over the reservoir. Utility companies and other energy experts not only discounted the role of dams; they held a dim view of the Bureau of Reclamation and its commissioner Floyd Dominy.¹⁰ For electric utility industry engineers, Dominy's interpretation of the southwest's post-war energy needs were seen as at best antiquated, and at worst naïve. Dominy's negative reputation was the product of collective doubts over his professional competency. At hearings in the 1950s, he

⁹ McPhee, p. 158.

¹⁰ Needham, p. 206.

had presented the Glen, Bridge, and Marble Canyon Dams as peaking plants, designed to meet surges in electricity demand at certain points of the day. He reasoned that the closing of one factory after business hours would lift a great burden from any of the Bureau's dams on the river.¹¹ For the lay observer, the supreme size of Glen Canyon Dam, a concrete behemoth straddling the once-untamed Colorado was evidence enough of the commissioner's argument.¹² Yet Dominy's critics felt his assessment was based on optimistically low projections for future energy demand. In urban California and Arizona, particularly around Los Angeles and Phoenix, the idea of spiking electricity usage was a fading phenomenon. The near-constant use of electricity in the home for heat, light, water, and air conditioning had reduced consumptive differentials. Consistently high demand was becoming the uniform reality, one that was better serviced by coal and nuclear options.¹³ One energy executive summarised how laughable they found the Bureau's attempts to meet southwestern energy demands by means of comparative example. They noted that creating 'hydroelectric dams to produce the constant base power needed [...] was akin to asking Ford Motor Company to produce Model-Ts in 1966.'¹⁴

Floyd Dominy was perhaps the last great builder in the Bureau. His tenure came at a time when the agency could see its role as celebrated regional constructor coming to an end, and its role changing to that of hydrological janitor. In the face of this transition, he maintained a

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² For the symbolic significance of Glen Canyon Dam to supporters, see: Theodore Steinberg, "'That World's Fair Feeling': Control of Water in 20th-Century America', *Technology and Culture*, 34 (1993), 401-409 (pp. 402-403). Early lay responses to the dam are too extensive to cite here in full, but for a representative sample of responses from supporters, see: Edna Loveridge, 'Glen Canyon is Thrilling Fun Spot for Vacation', *American Fork Citizen*, 21 April 1966, p. 9; Elizabeth Adair, 'Jewel in River Tiara', *Arizona Republic*, 22 September 1966, p.16; Ben Cole, 'Glen Canyon Dam Dedicated With Praises by First Lady', *Arizona Republic*, 23 September 1966, p. 1.

¹³ For rising energy consumption in the post-war American household through the lens of an environmental historian, see: Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 83-86.

¹⁴ Needham, pp. 206-207.

belief in his career's work: that singular, vast hydroelectric structures were significant contributors to the regional energy mix.¹⁵ Conversely, utility engineers adopted a more complex view of energy systems and the land they occupied. Thinking in a frame that anticipated popular understandings of ecology, they viewed new Western energy projects as only small parts of a complex, interconnected, and interdependent whole.¹⁶ To these analysts, a structure such as Glen Canyon Dam was neither environmental desecration made manifest nor post-war energy saviour. It was simply a woefully inadequate part of a much greater system, obsolete and outmatched before construction had even finished.

In 1964, no place in the southwest more ably demonstrated the dangers of over-reliance upon the Colorado River as grandiose energy agent than southern California. The Supreme Court, following more than ten years of litigation between Arizona and California, handed down a judgment that reduced the Golden State's share of the river's water by twenty percent. That decision stretched Los Angeles' water supplies dangerously thin, and came at a point when California, particularly its southernmost counties, was beginning to feel other growing pains after a decade of prosperity. Following the end of World War II, the southern half of the state had experienced exponential and unprecedented population growth. Southern California, a place that had long lured tourists and retirees began to exert a more substantial magnetic pull on a wider range of demographics.¹⁷ LA would add almost ten million new residents between 1950 and 1970, an increase of 102%. Los Angeles County would add almost two

¹⁵ April R. Summitt, *Contested Waters: An Environmental History of the Colorado River* (Boulder: University of Colorado, 2013), p. 72.

¹⁶ Needham, p. 206.

¹⁷ William H. Frey and Alden Speare, Jr., *Regional and Metropolitan Growth and Decline in the US* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988), p. 206; William H. Frey, *Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics are Remaking America* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2014), p. 116.

million residents in the two decades after 1950, and Orange County ballooned from a mere 216,000 citizens in 1950 to almost 1.5 million in 1970.¹⁸

Southern California Edison, an electric utility provider servicing a majority of California's southern counties found itself struggling to keep pace with the average household's increasing energy consumption. Like many in their industry, SCE held a dim view of hydroelectricity and the Bureau's commitment to it, but they had equally underestimated the rise in energy consumption that would occur in the post-war period.¹⁹ The company had assumed that the wartime industries that had sprung up in their jurisdiction would discontinue operations following the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific, but this had not occurred to the degree they had projected.²⁰ Edison largely catered for residential users over the needs of industry, but the continuation of these businesses meant the dispersal of military personnel to other parts of the state did not occur as expected. Additionally, the post-war baby boom, combined with the G.I. Bill that provided low-interest, low-down payment loans meant the company had to contend with an unprecedented influx of families into their service area.²¹

A generally dour appraisal of Edison's continued ability to meet demand in the face of current projections was evident amongst the executive ranks of the company by the summer of 1964.

Edison Vice President William R. Gould presented a particularly dire picture of the utility's

¹⁸ John F. McDonald, *Postwar Urban America: Demography, Economics, and Social Policies* (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 74-75.

¹⁹ William A. Myers, *Iron Men and Copper Wires: A Centennial History of the Southern California Edison Company*, 2nd edn. (Los Angeles: Trans-Anglo Books, 1986), p. 200.

²⁰ Myers, p. 200; Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: America's Global Cities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 172; Georges Sabagh and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, 'Population Change: Immigration and Ethnic Transformation', in *Ethnic Los Angeles*, ed. By Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), pp. 79-108 (p. 81).

²¹ Lynne P. Doti, *Financing California Real Estate: Spanish Missions to Subprime Mortgages* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. 6.

situation to industry peers. Gould gave his audience ample reason for anxiety; he felt the electric utilities of the southwest were trapped in a losing battle with increasingly rising demand. Speaking to the American Society of Civil Engineers that summer, Gould noted how ‘an unprecedented population growth has created problems of astonishing proportions.’ He then claimed that SCE’s service area had experienced a doubling of demand every seven years since 1950.²² Public relations, in particular shaping a persuasive crisis narrative was one of Gould’s major roles for the company, and by the middle of the decade he had become an effective harbinger of bad tidings. In June 1964, Gould announced before a crowd of Californian developers that the state was facing ‘some of the most challenging problems that our contemporary society has yet encountered.’²³ Mere months later, he even more ominously declared, at a meeting of Edison’s management, that increasing difficulty in meeting energy demands ‘threaten our continued growth and – ultimately, perhaps – our very existence.’²⁴ This was Edison’s private narrative of looming energy crisis.

Edison’s fundamental strategy in the face of doubling demand was a process of aggressive expansion, with a particular focus on brand new infrastructure rather than the addition of generating capacity at existing sites. The utility had recently managed to have a new nuclear plant at San Onofre approved for construction, but their major focus for the decade was building a plant atop the Kaiparowits coal field in southern Utah. In November 1962, Edison had received federal prospecting permits to assess the plateau’s coal seams.²⁵ What they found was far more accessible than the Thompson, Gregory, and Moore surveys had

²² William R. Gould, ‘Fifty Years of Energy Development in Southern California’, 6 May 1964, American Society of Civil Engineers 50th Anniversary, Ms 619, Box 39.

²³ William R. Gould, ‘Water & Energy: Twin Keys to California’s Future’, 11 June 1964, California Development Conference, Ms 619, Box 39.

²⁴ William R. Gould, ‘New Horizons in the Energy Business’, 1964, Edison Management MTGS, Ms 619, Box 39.

²⁵ Kaiparowits Project, Environmental Report, Vol. 1, Fact Sheet, p. 1-7. Series 8, Box 305, Southern California Edison Records, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

suggested in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. SCE had enthusiastically reported that on Kaiparowits ‘the sepia tones of the sandy walls are interrupted by ebony streaks of coal, often as thick as the side of a house.’²⁶ Glen Canyon Dam might not save the southwest from an energy crisis, Edison reasoned, but a Kaiparowits plant would certainly buttress the southwest’s energy systems for more than a decade.²⁷ The utility moved rapidly; as Gould was concluding his summer 1964 speaking tour, SCE was entering into contracts with a number of other energy service providers to construct a plant on or near the plateau.

Technological advancements in transmission line technology made Kaiparowits a far more attractive economic prospect by the middle of the 1960s, although initial plans for the project still cast any potential structure as an arduous undertaking. The project would dwarf any other generating station on the face of the earth, with final estimates sitting between 5,000 and 6,000 megawatts of capacity. Coal would be mined on-site, primarily from underground workings rather than through the controversial practice of strip-mining, and higher estimates suggested the plant would consume as much as 15,000,000 tons of coal annually once fully online.²⁸ The social impact of the plant would utterly transform southern Utah, providing more jobs for Kane and Garfield County than their combined 1969 populations.²⁹

Edison’s partners in the project were a series of other embattled utilities from California and the Intermountain region.³⁰ In California, San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&EC) was

²⁶ William R. Gould, ‘The Kaiparowits Decision’, 20 July 1976, Atomic Industrial Forum: Conference on Land Use, Denver, Colorado, Ms 619, Box 42.

²⁷ Kaiparowits Project, Environmental Report, Vol. 1, p. 1-13.

²⁸ William R. Gould, ‘Kaiparowits Power Project’, 18 April 1969, 11th Annual Engineering Symposium, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, Ms 619, Box 40.

²⁹ See: Kaiparowits Project, Environmental Report, Vol. 2, Appendix F., Martin J. Wistisen and Glen T. Nelson, ‘Kaiparowits Socio-Economic Study,’ Center for Business and Economic Research, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, February 1973, p. 1, Series 8, Box 305.

³⁰ For all intents and purposes, these other utilities were silent partners in the Kaiparowits consortium rather than occupying any larger financing role. At this stage, Kaiparowits’ final capacity was undetermined, but 8.6% was left unsubscribed. See: Kaiparowits Project, Environmental Report, Vol. 1, p. 1-7.

experiencing a similar crisis to SCE as a result of rapid migration and increased domestic energy consumption. In Arizona, the Arizona Public Service Company (APS), catering for the residents of Phoenix, was projecting demand for electricity to double within a decade, due primarily to the rapid expansion of refrigeration in homes. To the east of APS's service area, the Salt River Project (SRP) estimated their own doubling of demand due to increased access to air conditioning units.³¹ Each utility underlined that, to keep up with projected demand into the early 1980s, rapid construction of Edison's planned Kaiparowits plant was paramount, or they would be fundamentally unable to keep pace with consumers' needs.³² Coal that the prospectors of the 1930s had dimly seen as forever economically unviable now seemed a necessity as Gould warned of an energy crisis to Edison and audiences of industry peers. Quietly, Edison began negotiating with Utah and the Department of the Interior to acquire the land and water permits necessary to go forward with a hasty construction.

Crisis and Utility Reputation

In their initial justifications for the Kaiparowits Project's expedient initiation to industry peers, SCE and partners offered a refrain similar to one that national conservation groups would come to preach with increasing regularity in the later years of the decade. Namely, that unthinkingly embracing new technologies was exposing the problems and impacts of societal growth. By the time Gould was quietly offering his sullen assessments of energy supply challenges in 1964, declensionist tales of greater severity were exploding into the national consciousness. 1962 had seen the release of two diatribes against industrial pesticide usage:

³¹ Kaiparowits Project, Environmental Report, Vol. 1, p. 1-5.

³² Ibid., p. 1-5, 1-16.

Murray Bookchin's *Our Synthetic Environment*, and Rachel Carson's ground-breaking bestseller *Silent Spring*. The following year, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall published *The Quiet Crisis*, focusing on the rising problem of pollution and urban sprawl. Further bestsellers arrived in the late 1960s, such as Paul and Anne Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*, which conveyed dire warnings about the way human numbers were overburdening the earth. America's middle-class, riding high off the economic boom of the 1950s, were slowly beginning to question how the culture of consumption they had so gleefully engaged in made them complicit actors in a reported decline in environmental welfare.³³

Despite a shared language of alarmism, Carson, Ehrlich, and Udall all engaged in very public debates about environmental decline, whilst Edison kept their doomsday commentary largely private. The early years of the decade had demonstrated there were severe reputational risks for associating one's image with crisis. When Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, her own reputation was vociferously attacked by the pesticide industry.³⁴ A series of assaults by antagonistic scientists and chemical producers meant Carson found herself the target of critiques that echoed those experienced by advocates of a preservationist ethic in the 1950s. Carson's femininity was used as evidence of scientific limitation and hysteria, whilst her historic penchant for romanticised writings of nature also constituted an arena of attack.³⁵ Speaking for nature had carried reputational risks at Echo Park; speaking about impending

³³ Larson, p. 184.

³⁴ Two parodies of *Silent Spring* were swiftly released by industry supporters. See: 'The Desolate Year', *Monsanto Magazine*, October 1962, pp. 4-9; Thomas Jukes, 'A Town in Harmony', *Chemical Week*, 18 August 1962, p. 5.

³⁵ Although the Carson historiography is vast, two works have focused exclusively on the gendered nature of attacks against her following the release of *Silent Spring*. See: Michael B. Smith, "'Silence, Miss Carson!' Science, Gender, and the Reception of 'Silent Spring'", *Feminist Studies*, 27 (2001), 733-752; Maril Hazlett, "'Woman vs. Man vs. Bugs': Gender and Popular Ecology in Early Reactions to *Silent Spring*", *Environmental History*, 9 (2004), 701-729. Also see: Gottlieb, pp. 125-126; Robert K. Musil, *Rachel Carson and Her Sisters: Extraordinary Women Who Have Shaped America's Environment* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2014), p. 89.

environmental disaster and questioning the ascendant curve of societal ‘progress’ and growth doubly so.

The privacy with which Edison forwarded their own crisis narrative in 1964 ensured no public criticism emerged, although in practice Gould’s speeches weren’t as radical as those of Carson, Ehrlich, and others. Environmental authors increasingly questioned the fundamental desirability of growth and progress as a response to expanding awareness of the way they impacted the natural world.³⁶ Gould questioned not growth’s inherent desirability; he simply pondered if utility executives could continue to achieve it. That assertion alone would still however have been difficult for utility industry audiences to accept, and such claims contained their own controversial dimensions. By the mid-sixties, many utility executives had long held the notion that their industry’s operational freedom was connected not only to their ability to provide growth, but to the public perception that they could.³⁷ Promoting themselves as agents of growth had meant increasing sales of the industry’s sole product – energy, whilst providing industry members with a sense of unity and purpose. Most importantly, the public notion that utilities strenuously pursued this goal helped legitimate the control sought by power company elites.³⁸

There were however signs that the reputational halo surrounding the utility industry as a whole was beginning to crack.³⁹ That was why in the mid-to-late 1960s, as Gould privately preached crisis, Edison conducted an extensive marketing campaign that held the function of

³⁶ Gottlieb, pp. 127-134.

³⁷ Richard F. Hirsch, *Power Loss: The Origins of Deregulation and Restructuring in the American Electric Utility System* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), pp. 50-51.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³⁹ Lifset, *Power on the Hudson*, p. 18; Joseph A. Pratt, ‘Kill-a-Watt: The Greening of Consolidated Edison in the 1970s’, in *Green Capitalism?: Business and the Environment in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Hartmut Berghoff, Adam Rome (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), pp. 187-205 (p. 191).

both stimulating the company's economic fortunes whilst further building a prominent, positive reputation for the utility. This second, far more public narrative strenuously encouraged residential electricity consumption. Edison's public energy narrative was simple: increased domestic electricity usage was the primary post-war conduit to attaining easier, more exciting living. Newspaper ads underlined to potential SCE customers that electricity gave consumers a new world of entertainment, and that it made families happier and more productive.⁴⁰ Edison particularly targeted housewives; one advertisement was delivered as a lyric sheet that extolled the virtues of electricity in the kitchen: 'But there's a new / flameless oven / For you and me. / Cleans itself spotless / With electricity.'⁴¹ Others focused on electricity as a conduit for feminine beauty.⁴²

For Edison, a public narrative stressing consumption and a private narrative announcing crisis were complementary rather than contradictory. Encouraging consumption increased company profits, consumer dependency, and improved corporate reputation. Edison were unlikely to ask their customers to question the ideology of growth; they were seen as gatekeepers and guardians of it, and supportive reports in southern California's press of the company's honorifics were evidence of this.⁴³ But preaching crisis also had its place so long as it wasn't in the public sphere. Gould's speeches to industry members helped entrench a narrative that could be avoided by allowing the industry aggressive infrastructural expansion. Although Edison created their own energy treadmill, they were clear beneficiaries of it. This

⁴⁰ Edison does not seem to have been particularly unique in this regard. See: Richard F. Hirsch, *Technology and Transformation in the American Electric Utility Industry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 48-55; William L. Bird Jr., *"Better Living": Advertising, Media, and the New Vocabulary of Business Leadership, 1935-1955* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), pp. 187-188.

⁴¹ 'On Top of Old Smokey', *Redlands Daily Facts*, 5 June 1968, p. 11.

⁴² 'Chairman, quality control', *San Bernardino County Sun*, 4 March 1964, p. A7; 'Smile, You're on the Network', *Redlands Daily Facts*, 6 April 1965, p. 6.

⁴³ See: 'Redlands pioneered hydroelectric power', *Redlands Daily Facts*, 22 January 1963, p. 9A; 'County Honors Edison Company', *San Bernardino County Sun*, 30 April 1965, p. B12.

scenario is in keeping with historian Richard Hirsch's view of the electric utility industry in the sixties. Hirsch outlines that energy executives had become remarkably adept at aggressively manipulating their corporations' reputations over the first half of the twentieth century – far more so than federal infrastructural entities like the Bureau of Reclamation. This strategy – privately warning of shortages whilst publically encouraging consumption – was more than an implicit but unspoken practice between utility executives. It even had its own, industrywide name: “grow-and-build.”⁴⁴

Industrywide commitment to grow-and-build reflected that utility managers had internalised popular views about the liberating nature of electric living. Emerging environmental dialogues risked undercutting both this and the utility industry's public image as gatekeepers to the 'good life.' Electricity consumption intersected with two core topics of mid-to-late 1960s environmental crisis discourses: questioning the impacts of ubiquitous products, and the problems resulting from the overuse of resources. The threat of this counter-narrative was so worrisome because the industry's reputation was considered by its members to have produced tangible operational benefits that extended beyond symbolic rewards. The idea of utilities as stewards of America's societal and economic wellbeing had allowed the industry to manipulate a path away from more centralised – and thus tighter – forms of regulation by the middle of the twentieth century. The local regulatory structures that were put in place as an alternative were often substantially more limited, and these smaller controlling bodies often possessed inadequate resources with which to challenge the large corporate entities that electric utilities had become.⁴⁵ Not that local regulators tried much in practice anyway; even basking in the reflected glow of the industry's reputation proved seductive. Utilities

⁴⁴ Hirsch, *Technology and Transformation*, p. 83; Hirsch, *Power Loss*, pp. 46-49.

⁴⁵ Hirsch, *Power Loss*, pp. 45-46.

were often seen in such superlative terms it 'made heroes out of anyone associated with the utility system.'⁴⁶

In an effort to waylay the threat presented by dialogues warning the public about overconsumption of resources and the environmental impact of human behaviours, the utility industry quickly began to incorporate the new language of environmental consciousness into its promotional material. Once more, Southern California Edison's example clearly illustrated the disparity between private and public narratives. One late-1960s edition of Edison's company magazine complained that 'ecology swiftly moved from dictionary to every day vocabulary.'⁴⁷ Engaging in an early example of what would later be termed 'greenwashing,' a 1970 copy of industry trade magazine *Electrical World* conversely attempted to brand utilities as not only environmentally conscious, but intrinsically ecological in their fundamental composition.⁴⁸ It noted 'the electric power industry is tightly woven into the seamless web of air, water, and land.' Utilities were, the article boasted 'the nation's nervous system.' They experienced 'deep involvement with the environment,' whilst only accounting for, 'about 12% of the nation's air pollutants.' Most importantly of all, the utility industry was, author Herbert Cavanaugh claimed 'historically committed to opening their lands for public recreation, conservation, and wildlife preservation.'⁴⁹

Edison's own advertising was several years ahead of the wider industry when it came to presenting a façade of environmental receptivity. Company advertising presented SCE as

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 49.

⁴⁷ 'Edison and the Environmental Crisis', Series 13, Box 424.

⁴⁸ For a history of Greenwashing, see: Bart H. Welling, 'Ecoporn: On the Limits of Visualizing the Nonhuman', in *Ecosee: Image, Rhetoric, Nature*, ed. by Sidney I. Dobrin, Sean Morey (Albany: State University of New York Press), pp. 53-58 (pp. 54-55); Patrick Allitt, *A Climate of Crisis: America in the Age of Environmentalism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), p. 72.

⁴⁹ Herbert A. Cavanaugh Jr., 'Nation's First Comprehensive Report on Utilities and the Environment', *Electrical World*, 1 June 1970, p. 53.

environmentally conscious even as it strenuously encouraged consumption in the home. Newspaper promotions in SCE's service area attempted to divorce the act of electricity usage from the new moral geography of environmental sensitivity. In some instances, they even argued electric consumption as an environmental act. Not only was electricity presented as 'the cheapest' form of energy, adverts underlined it was also 'the cleanest, the quietest, the nicest.'⁵⁰ In keeping with their awareness of the importance of both corporate reputation and the public perception of individual utility employees, Edison engineers were reframed in 1966 as 'home modernization counsellors.' These individuals, adverts claimed, were tasked with aiding an environmentally concerned populace bridge the gap toward more efficient, cleaner residences.⁵¹ The company sought to intertwine its operational image as ideologically coherent with the beliefs of environmental groups

Edison's public embrace of the new lexicon of environmental concern did not however mean that the company was sympathetic in private to their aims. Edison's initial response to post-war conservation had simply been more cautious than the Bureau's. Reclamation officials like Floyd Dominy and Michael Straus had reacted, often publically and vociferously, against the actions of specific preservationist groups and individuals seeking to contest their projects. Conversely, SCE kept their reflections and warnings predominantly in-house. Confidentially, perspectives on the resistance of local and national preservation groups to energy infrastructural expansion manifested as dismay. Private belief in an emergent energy crisis converged with the utility industry's dim view of hydroelectricity to amplify this sense of alarm. Edison reasoned that if CRSP opponent groups could have caused such problems for

⁵⁰ 'When you can't rush after any meal', *Pasadena Independent*, 20 February 1967, p. 11.

⁵¹ 'Remodeling? We'll give you the names of some reliable contractors', *Independent Press-Telegram*, 2 October 1966, p. B4; 'We'll help you plan your remodelling from start to finish', *San Bernardino County Sun*, 23 October 1966, p. B16.

the Bureau, then the company might encounter more severe difficulties in siting future coal and nuclear generating stations, which dwarfed the energy potential of dams. Gould was called before the board of SCE in 1964 to brief executives on the subject of potential opposition to expanding the company's electric generating capacity. There, he noted that the greatest threat to keeping pace with post-war power demands was the emergence of the blossoming ethic of environmentalism 'which ultimately would deny us the right to pursue our business.'⁵²

When Gould spoke in 1964, Edison had yet to come into direct conflict with any individual environmental, preservation, or conservation group or coalition, and their San Onofre nuclear plant approval had proceeded with little sign of complaint. Still, whilst there had been no appreciable local or national opposition to this specific project, within a few years SCE could easily look elsewhere in their state to see other energy projects running up against growing waves of discontent. To the north, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) had cancelled nuclear plant construction at Bodega Bay.⁵³ Closer to Edison's service area, there were rumblings of opposition over PG&E's subsequent designs on Diablo Canyon from a series of local anti-nuclear groups, reinforced by the Sierra Club.⁵⁴

Edison would experience more direct troubles with plant siting soon enough. Edison's pamphlet 'Edison and the Environmental Crisis,' made it ultimately ambiguous as to what Edison considered the 'environmental crisis' actually was. Much of the pamphlet catalogued resistance to project plans across the southwest. The utility ran into resistance to siting

⁵² Gould, 'New Horizons in the Energy Business', Ms 619, Box 39.

⁵³ J. Samuel Walker, *Containing the Atom: Nuclear Regulation in a Changing Environment, 1963-1971* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 85-97.

⁵⁴ Gould, 'Fifty Years of Energy Development in Southern California', Ms 619, Box 39; Walker, pp. 85-86; Wills, pp. 53-54.

projects in Ventura, San Bernardino, and Orange County in California, as well as in New Mexico and Nevada.⁵⁵ Between 1968 and 1973, SCE would be unable to site *any* new energy construction.⁵⁶ Although extensive regulatory changes concerning air pollution after 1967 provided a large part of the reasoning for delays, the document spent ample time bemoaning the currents of contemporary environmental thought. Connecting the late-1960s brownouts in the northeast to a rise in ecological thinking, the pamphlet argued that ‘There are ominous signs that the “don’t-put-it-here” syndrome is having potentially dangerous effects.’ Preceding the pamphlet’s content was a quote from Congressman and chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Chet Holifield. It read ‘the antitechnologists and single-minded environmentalists may find themselves conducting their work by the light of a flickering candle.’⁵⁷

Curiously absent from this ledger of local and national resistance were the counties that would benefit from the Kaiparowits Project, Garfield and Kane in southern Utah. As environmental resistance began to narrow Edison’s options across the southwest, the already attractive real estate in Red Rock Country appeared doubly so. Here at least, it seemed new obstructionist forces had failed to take root. Locating a plant on the plateau also synchronised with Edison’s attempt at greenwashing their reputation. By the middle of the 1960s, public opinion polls were beginning to report that a majority of Americans blamed a series of industries, including electric utilities, as the primary antagonists behind the nation’s perceived environmental decline. One poll identified ‘factories and plants’ as the most severe causes of

⁵⁵ ‘Edison and the Environmental Crisis’, Series 13, Box 424; Quentin Foley, ‘Power Companies and Smog Fighters Split Decisions on Week’s Skirmishes’, *San Bernardino County Sun*, 26 October 1969, p. B5; Howard Seelye, ‘Right to Block Larger Edison Plant Claimed’, *Los Angeles Times*, 17 September 1969, p.9.

⁵⁶ William R. Gould, ‘The Role of Energy in the City of the Future’, Technology and the City Seminar Series, University of California Berkeley, College of Engineering, 16 April 1973, Ms 619, Box 41.

⁵⁷ ‘Edison and the Environmental Crisis’, Series 13, Box 424.

air pollution.⁵⁸ The Kaiparowits Plateau, so distant and unloved, could itself be framed as an act borne of environmental concern for the health of clustered, urban populations.

The Sierra Club for Coal Power

Despite Southern California Edison's concerns about the growing obstructionist desires of the conservation movement over energy siting, the company had little reason to enter into a public relations war with any national group identifying under this banner in 1964. Hesitance arose not from concerns about how anti-environmental commentary might stigmatise Edison's own celebrated reputation, but because opposition would have actively conflicted with their developmental interests. Most national conservation outfits with an operational presence in Utah had no identifiable energy policy at the point the company was beginning to survey Kaiparowits. In fact, the group that Utahns had come to consider the most vital, radical proponents of post-war conservation held a position that explicitly conformed to Edison's own expansionist agenda in the Upper Basin.

By the standards of national conservation groups in the mid-1960s, historians have long considered the Sierra Club to be the most outspoken, radical, confrontational organisation. Although this is the dominant collective memory of the Club, they were also the only organisation in the wider conservation movement that possessed something approaching an energy policy that was part of the public record by the middle of the decade. The Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society, National Parks Association and others expressed no

⁵⁸ Joe Greene Conley II, 'Environmentalism Contained: A History of Corporate Responses to the New Environmentalism' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 2006), p. 64.

position.⁵⁹ Despite rising concerns about the distinctive environmental and health impacts of fuel combustion, it was only in the following decade that energy became more explicitly wed to ideas of environmental protection and regulation.⁶⁰ In one respect, the Sierra Club occupied an intellectual frontier in their approach to fuel usage. Historian Richard Grossman contends that the very concept of an energy policy that considered fuel sources in tandem was not an existing socioeconomic or political construct in prior to 1973.⁶¹ That is to say that even as utilities saw energy projects through a frame in which different systems and fuel types formed part of an interdependent whole, few others – including federal government agencies – did. Whilst the Club’s view was not this comprehensive, they increasingly looked toward energy alternatives as more than a way of contesting the dread spectre of hydroelectric development. Indeed, the organisation increasingly sought to present cogent debate on why differing sources were superior ways of stimulating regional growth as means of massaging public opinion.

Following the completion of Glen Canyon Dam, energy policy and public image became closely linked in the mind of several Club members. They reasoned that failure to offer alternatives risked being misinterpreted by a critical public of a staunchly obstructionist stance, an image of a group opposed to the very concept of state or regional growth.⁶² By

⁵⁹ The Audubon Society began to formalise their own energy policy at the start of the 1980s. See: National Audubon Society, *Audubon Energy Plan* (New York: Audubon Society, 1981). Other groups, like the Wilderness Society, did not engage in discussions about energy policy until after the Exxon Valdez disaster. See: Turner, *The Promise*, pp. 291-292. The Izaak Walton League proposed using coal and oil shale in western Colorado in place of Echo Park Dam in November 1950, but they remained otherwise largely silent. See: Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, p. 132.

⁶⁰ Frank N. Laird, *Solar Energy, Technology Policy, and Institutional Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 120.

⁶¹ Peter Z. Grossman, *US Energy Policy and the Pursuit of Failure* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 67. See also: John Garretson Clark, *Energy and the Federal Government: Fossil Fuel Policies, 1900-1946* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

⁶² The Sierra Club oral histories do imply that Club members had been discussing energy policy on a more individual basis for years before more formal attempts were made to form an energy policy. See: Ansel Adams, ‘Conversations with Ansel Adams,’ an oral history conducted 1972, 1974, and 1975 by Ruth Teiser and Catherine

1964, the Sierra Club – and Southern California Edison – had come to consider coal to be the best method of perpetuating the southwest’s growth. The organisations had settled on coal for differing reasons, though the unifying thread was a shared perception that other resources simply came with more problems attached. Despite Edison’s recent investment in the construction of a nuclear facility at San Onofre, the company remained tepid about any major commitment to the atom.⁶³ Edison’s nuclear doubts partly related to growing cultural resistance; by 1964, initial signs were emerging that the once-utopian sheen of the fuel’s domestic application was fading.⁶⁴ When it came to oil, the company had little need to extract domestic reserves, as they had longstanding contracts with Indonesian exporters, which they would strengthen after the closure of the Suez Canal in 1967.⁶⁵ Hydroelectricity was similarly not considered to be a serious alternative. It offered power generation that was simply too limited, and increasing public resistance could be observed here also, as the Grand Canyon dam protests were beginning to gain national media attention.⁶⁶

Harroun, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, pp. 614-617; Philip S. Berry, “Sierra Club Leader, 1960s-1980s: A Broadened Agenda, a Bold Approach,” an oral history conducted 1981, 1984 by Ann Lage, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, pp. 59-61.

⁶³ In 1946, steam generated electric energy accounted for less than 12% of Edison’s annual electrical power production. By 1964, it accounted for almost 90%. See: Gould, ‘Fifty Years of Energy Development in Southern California’, Ms 619, Box 39. For SCE’s thoughts on the limitations of nuclear energy, see: Thomas Raymond Wellock, *Critical Masses: Opposition to Nuclear Power in California, 1958-1978* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pp. 247-249.

⁶⁴ Wills, pp. 69-87. A summation of nuclear resistance in California can be found in: Wellock, p. 129.

⁶⁵ William R. Gould, ‘Planning Process at SCE’, Western States Region Sales Meeting, General Electric Company, April 1, 1968, Ms 619, Box 39.

⁶⁶ SCE certainly felt, by pre-1960 standards, they had a reasonably strong environmental record. The company had a long history of work on what they considered ‘clean’ energy, and they remained particularly proud of their dam building pedigree. They had been the sole provider of workers and contractors in expanding one of the nation’s first major hydroelectricity endeavors, Big Creek Hydroelectric Project in the 1920s, and had also later promoted their contributions to the construction of Hoover Dam. By 1969, SCE was already beginning to reconsider their commitment to nuclear more seriously. That year, they scaled back plans for the San Onofre plant, with Gould citing rising component costs and uncertainty of regulatory control given anti-nuclear protest. For SCE’s history with hydroelectric power, see: Myers, p. 112, 186; Steven D. Harrison and Michael J. Semas, *Shaver, Huntington, and Hume Lakes* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2014), p. 8; Donald C. Jackson, *Building the Ultimate Dam: John S. Eastwood and the Control of Water in the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), p. 81; Donald J. Pisani, *Water and American Government: The Reclamation Bureau, National Water Policy, and the West, 1902-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 231.

For the Club, coal did not possess the apocalyptic potential and devastating environmental risks that a series of anti-atomic groups were beginning to link with nuclear power, but they also supported the fuel source on aesthetic grounds.⁶⁷ Although coal plants required ample terrain to be sited, it was typically easier – and more economically viable – to locate them on vast tracts of flat land. As such, coal projects were unlikely to overlay the topographically distinctive, aesthetically pleasing sites of potential tourist revenue that dams had historically submerged. By no means did coal come unencumbered from issues; the resource was continuing its own long reputational decline by the mid-1960s, both with respect to health and aesthetic impacts.⁶⁸ But certain factors insulated the Club from these concerns. The first was geographic. The impact of coal had historically been of greater worry for Americans in the urban northeast, far from the Club’s heartland.⁶⁹ The Club’s senior leadership remained startlingly parochial in the late 1960s despite the group’s growing national popularity; only one board member was not from California.⁷⁰ The second was demographic; coal burning tended to disproportionately impact lower-income Americans and minorities, and the Club remained homogenous and middle class in their composition in the middle of the decade.⁷¹ Taking precedent over both of these factors, however, was that the Club wasn’t fully ignorant of the problems associated with coal; they just continued to place rising concerns as secondary to the more immediate defence of the Grand Canyon.

⁶⁷ Few preservation groups were publically committed to an anti-nuclear power stance in the mid-1960s. Still, influential purists within some organisations – such as David Brower and Martin Litton in the Sierra Club – had already adopted distinctly rigid postures against atomic development in private. See: Wills, pp. 58-59.

⁶⁸ Richard H. K. Vietor, *Environmental Politics and the Coal Coalition* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1980), p. 127.

⁶⁹ Lifset, *Power on the Hudson*, pp. 13-17.

⁷⁰ Wyss, pp. 182-183.

⁷¹ See: Michael McCloskey, *In the Thick of It* (Washington: Island Press, 2005), p. 222.

The Club's leadership would become increasingly aware in the latter half of the decade that offering cogent energy alternatives was a path to defusing the growing image of their group as the most radical element of the preservation movement. The *Sacramento Bee* in California reported Sierra Club photographer Ansel Adams exclaiming in 1968 that cooperation between Pacific Gas & Electric and the Club over the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant was 'one of the greatest steps ever taken by the Club [...] it shows we're not against everything.' Adams called the accord 'a milestone in the progress of conservation.'⁷² Three years later, Adams's sentiment had seemingly become the basis for a major Club conference, entitled 'Toward an Energy Policy.' The introduction to the printed version of proceedings read:

Assume you're the leader of a large environmental organization. Your members are battling oil refineries in New England, hydroelectric facilities in New York and Idaho, coal burning power plants in New Mexico, Arizona, and Wyoming, the construction of an oil pipeline across Alaska, and strip mining, offshore drilling, and nuclear power plants just about everywhere. They feel the inconsistencies acutely [...] friends and enemies alike constantly ask how you justify these actions, how your policies are consistent, rational, and socially responsible.⁷³

As early as 1964 the Club were making more limited statements that offered power alternatives to hydroelectricity in an embryonic pursuit of building an image as energy rationalists. Conscious of how their staunch resistance to hydroelectricity had encouraged critical attacks in the fifties, the Sierra Club vocally supported coal from the start of the PSWP conflict. The Club's 1964 Exhibit Format book, *Time and the River Flowing*, released in the canyon's defence, saw executive director David Brower make a prolonged appeal in favour of a renewed push for coal production. Unlike the Club's previous work on the Colorado, *The*

⁷² Adams, quoted in Wills, p. 59.

⁷³ Keith Roberts, 'Introduction', in *Toward an Energy Policy*, ed. by Keith Roberts (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1973), pp. 1-17 (p. 1).

Place No One Knew, Time and the River shifted from being an artistic collection of images to offering a more serious, extended exploration of the energy potential of the American southwest. 'The states of the Upper Basin of the Colorado contain a major part of the earth's coal reserves,' Brower wrote. Bemoaning a perceived lack of support for the resource, the executive director argued that coal was 'a much longer lived source of energy than the short lived reservoirs planned for the silty Colorado.'⁷⁴ Francois Leydet, the book's primary author also threw in support for nuclear plants on the Colorado Plateau.⁷⁵ The problem with this missive of compromise was the vehicle of delivery, rather than the message itself. Expressed within one of the Club's Exhibit Format books, it was unlikely Brower's calls for aggressive regional energy development would be read by constituencies that had been historically critical of the post-war push for preservation. As with past releases, the series remained designed for an upper-middle class audience that was already converted to the defence of nature. Their intended audience was not pro-development Utah and Arizona citizens that had already adopted healthy suspicions about the Club's agenda.⁷⁶

Support of coal development from conservationists did however endure, and was given a second vehicle from which to achieve a wider reach. A more formal declaration in favour of the resource was offered less than two years later, during the 1966 PSWP hearings before congressional committee. Those hearings were widely reported in Utah and Arizona, and were a better platform from which the movement's critics could witness the Club offer solutions rather than resistance. David Brower declared in his testimony that the Sierra Club

⁷⁴ Needham, p. 210; Francois Leydet, *Time and the River Flowing: Grand Canyon* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1964), p. 8.

⁷⁵ Leydet, p. 134; Brower reiterated support for coal at the end of the year, at the National Audubon Society's annual convention. See: 'Nature Loses to Civilization', *Arizona Republic*, 11 November 1964, p. 14A.

⁷⁶ The Club made attempts to change this and expand their audience outward later in the decade. See: Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, p. 187.

would support as many coal plants as needed to make PSWP's flagship development, the Central Arizona Project (CAP) viable, so long as it avoided damming the Grand Canyon.⁷⁷ Dr. Stephen Jett, an independent conservationist testifying on behalf of the Navajo Nation, noted that because of a projected rise in 'scenic tourism,' the proposed dam for Marble Canyon should be dropped. He too suggested undeveloped coal deposits be developed in the dam's stead, particularly if it stimulated Navajo employment.⁷⁸

The Intermountain newspapers did note these elements of preservationist testimony, but their coverage of the Club's support for coal was not pervasive given the degree of press space CAP and the Grand Canyon dams received. When the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported on the PSWP sessions in 1967, neither Brower nor Jett's statements in favour of coal development were mentioned.⁷⁹ Similarly, the *Arizona Republic* dedicated a full page of their paper in June to the Club's resistance to the Bridge and Marble Canyon dams, but failed to mention the Club's position on alternatives.⁸⁰ When the *Tribune* did make a brief reference to the Club's early attempts at an energy policy, it was under a headline that read 'Foes oppose more dams on Colorado.'⁸¹ That title was typical of the reporting during the conflict. Headlines focused on the idea of conservation groups as radically opposed to any form of energy development, offering titles such as: 'Moss assails conservation "extremists,"' 'Sierra Club Ads Dishonest,' 'Conservation Group Rips into Plans for Grand Canyon Dams,' 'Canyon Issue Clouded by Emotional Factors,' and 'Sierra Club "Fictions" Debunked.'⁸²

⁷⁷ Needham, p. 210.

⁷⁸ Pearson, p.132.

⁷⁹ 'Utah Urges Safeguards in Arizona Water Project', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 March 1967, p. A5.

⁸⁰ 'Canyon Project Attacks Denounced', *Arizona Republic*, 22 June 1966, p. 38, 'Sierra Club Ads Dishonest, Rep. Udall Says', *Arizona Republic*, 22 June 1966, p. 38.

⁸¹ Frank Hewlett, 'Foes Oppose More Dams on Colorado', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 September 1965, p. 4.

⁸² 'Conservation Group Rips into Plans for Grand Canyon Dams', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 17 May 1966, p. 5A; 'Moss assails conservation "extremists"', *Arizona Republic*, 21 June 1966, p. 1; Harrison Humphries, 'Canyon

Why had the Club's attempt at offering a pro-development stance not been received by the Intermountain press as an olive branch, or taken as evidence that the Club was more capable of compromise? Prior reputation certainly played a role in the press response; the Club already had a public image of being driven by emotion rather than reason following Echo Park and Glen Canyon. However, the central reason was the act of presenting an alternative was not alone sufficient to win too many supporters, and the Club had not given the specifics of their proposals due attention. Brower's declaration in *Time and the River Flowing* had called for the development of coal reserves in the Upper Basin states. That excluded much of Arizona, where the threat to CAP and the Grand Canyon dams received far greater coverage than they did in Utah. Furthermore, it was reported that the Club wanted coal and nuclear power in the Colorado Basin, but they wanted these plants to be run by the Bureau. This quickly attracted the ire of both the utility industry and the Department of the Interior. Electric utility providers, with their dim view of the engineering competency of Dominy's Bureau, not to mention the loss of capital and control this plant represented, were quick to protest. One executive complained to Interior Secretary Udall 'If we let the Bureau go into this business, there will be no stopping place [...] we flatly oppose construction of federal plants, nuclear or coal fired.'⁸³ Udall then publically accused the Club's proposal of 'smacking of socialism.'⁸⁴ Not only did that characterisation reinforce regional suspicions that the Club were driven by hidden forces as earlier critics had claimed, it also spoke to growing suspicions about environmentalism; that it was intent on a more fundamental reshaping of society.⁸⁵

Issue Clouded by Emotional Factors', *Arizona Daily Star*, 19 August 1966, p. A9; Walt Wiley, 'Sierra Club "Fictions" Debunked', *Casa Grande Dispatch*, 6 December 1967, p.1.

⁸³ 'National Magazine Details Southwest's Water Problem', *Casa Grande Dispatch*, 11 January 1967, p. 10.

⁸⁴ 'CAP Raked Over Coals', *Arizona Republic*, 1 September 1965, p. 19.

⁸⁵ One major observer had noted the Club's position toward coal in 1966: Southern California Edison. The Club's second major public declaration in support of the resource came at a time when Edison had moved from assessing the Kaiparowits coal seams to plotting where the plant might be located on terrain they had purchased

The Costs of a Radical Image

David Brower and his followers were also culpable for the failure of their coal development message on another front. The Club had offered two messages throughout the PSWP and CAP controversies. The first was the importance of keeping the Grand Canyon in its natural state. The second was advising planners that coal plants were the Upper Basin's energy answer if they wanted to complete and power CAP. Yet the Club did not give equal attention to these messages; their willingness to support coal was often eclipsed by confrontational publicizing about the importance of the southwest's stupendous aesthetics. On July 25, 1966, the Sierra Club published an advertisement in a series of national newspapers designed to rebuke proponents of the Bridge and Marble Canyon dams. Protesting that the canyon could be improved for power boaters with reservoirs, and mocking the position of federal officials, the headline, in stark capitals, read 'SHOULD WE ALSO FLOOD THE SISTINE CHAPEL SO TOURISTS CAN GET NEARER THE CEILING?'⁸⁶ Such a confrontational question was typical for the Club under Brower's command by 1966. Repeating critiques of growth found in *This is Dinosaur*, *The Place*, and *Time and the River*, the Club asked that the public question their priorities and lifestyles given the costs to landscape. They contended the nation would be much poorer if the Grand Canyon was dammed.⁸⁷

near the plateau. At this stage, the company was well aware that the Club had gone on the record in support of coal plants even if the wider Intermountain public was not. William Gould would later contend that Brower and the Sierra Club had singled out Kaiparowits as an especially desirable location for a coal burning plant in their PSWP testimony. See: Gould, 'The Kaiparowits Decision', Ms 619, Box 42.

⁸⁶ *Should We Also Flood the Sistine Chapel So Tourists Can Get Nearer the Ceiling?* [online]. Sierra Club [cited 28 April 2016]. Available from: http://vault.sierraclub.org/timeline/brower/ads/gc_ad_1966-4.pdf.

⁸⁷ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, p. 231.

Indeed, this, perhaps the Club's most famous advertisement, forms a stark contrast to the Club's introduction to their first text on energy policy in 1972. As Keith Roberts would then note, Club members, seeking to prevent a range of energy infrastructural development on a national scale, felt the inconsistencies of their obstructionism acutely, and yearned for some form of centralised direction. That later statement suggested the Club's earlier energy advertisements had become viewed by many within the organisation as deeply flawed, but there was little public evidence of doubt in July 1966. Attention grabbing ads such as the second Grand Canyon piece had proven to be a good vehicle for publicizing the preservationist ethic, but they said nothing that suggested the Club was willing to compromise with its opponents. Instead, the advertisement glorified the Club as a group exploding in popularity, taking care to note to readers they were now 46,000 members strong. It proudly declared that the Club had achieved a national reach and detailed conflicts in Alaska, the Redwoods forests in California and Oregon, the San Franciscan Bay area, and across the country on the Hudson River. It was a self-shaped image of a collective intent on an uncompromising crusade against industrial growth.

Like Southern California Edison, the Club offered two narratives, one that increasingly railed against the costs imposed by industrial development, one that professed continuing faith in the power of technological solutions.⁸⁸ But Edison's narratives had been complementary precisely because they were tailored to difference audiences, and only one of these was the general public. The Club's strategy, in which statements encouraging coal power and warnings about environmental crisis co-existed in the public space made it difficult to perceive the organisation's overarching agenda or logic. It wasn't that the two narratives were openly

⁸⁸ Needham, p. 210.

contradictory; rejecting development in the Grand Canyon whilst promoting industry elsewhere wasn't intrinsically difficult to grasp. It was more an issue of tonal or behavioural inconsistency. Intermountain residents would read about Brower respectfully engaging with the region's political representatives one day, then see incendiary rhetoric mocking officials in Club advertisements the next.

Further compounding the Club's trouble in shaping a consistent message was the way in which they had to stimulate their own growth. For Edison, grow-and-build meant privately talking about a crisis whilst publically promoting the lifestyle benefits of their service. For the Club and other preservation groups, their dominant message had to be less palatable. As historian Patrick Allitt has noted 'a sense of environmental crisis served the interests of a growing number of people whose livelihoods depended on it.' Allitt continues:

The leaders of the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, Audubon Society, Izaak Walton League [...] and other environmental organisations likewise understood that their memberships would swell in the wake of dramatic bad news. To broadcast reassuring, upbeat stories of environmental progress [...] would have been to diminish the sense of crisis on which they thrived.⁸⁹

In short, Edison's version of grow-and-build was dependent upon helping the public feel ebullient about their daily decisions. The environmental movement's version of this was far less tenable; it relied upon the emphasis of imminent disaster, grave human error, and individual and societal failings. For conservation groups to grow, they had to embrace contentious positions, politics, and statements; they became organisations in which alarmism functioned as boosterism.

⁸⁹ Allitt, p. 6.

There were admittedly institutional grounds for the Club to produce such an inflammatory pronouncement by July 1966. The IRS had just robbed the Club of its tax-exempt status, a move that came suspiciously soon after a prior round of advertisements had been published against the proposed Grand Canyon dams.⁹⁰ A radical image was proven to have financial consequences. Several national press outlets including the *New York Times* condemned the IRS's decision, contending it was a politically motivated attack on conservationists. There was at least an upside to this financial blow. Widespread reporting of the recent scuffle with the taxman was good publicity for the Club; membership swiftly increased fourfold in the wake of the decision. In 1959, they had 20,000 members. By the end of 1969, they had 113,000.⁹¹

When the Sierra Club were publishing their anti-Grand Canyon dam advertisements, they embraced the way that post-war critics had framed the push for natural preservation as a pugnacious practice. Club leaders proved adept at using the press to retain their purchase in the American mindscape, and at least with respect to organisation size, they benefitted from efforts to perpetuate their newfound visibility. Agitating print media commentators with attention-grabbing statements and public hearings testimony, paying for advertising space in newspapers, and publishing books on the natural world synchronised well with the Club's overarching aims in the period. For the Club, promoting natural appreciation and encouraging conservation consciousness was as important as the protection of specific landscapes. Publicity became a central factor in stimulating natural awareness. The Club continually gave their book publications to every member of Congress, they had texts on the Grand Canyon

⁹⁰ See: Tom Turner, *David Brower: The Making of the Environmental Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), pp. 123-128; Pearson, pp. 144-145; Donald W. Carson and James W. Johnson, *Mo: The Life and Times of Morris K. Udall* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), pp. 123-124.

⁹¹ Michael E. Kraft, 'U.S. Environmental Policy and Politics: From the 1960s to the 1990s', in *Environmental Politics and Policy, 1960s-1990s*, ed. by Otis L. Graham (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), pp. 17-42 (p. 24).

entered into the PSWP hearings testimony, and they managed to have *Time and the River Flowing* chosen by the Book-of-the-Month Club, instantly increasing its circulation by 40,000 copies.⁹²

The Club's decision to seek such attention was not however a trait that could be universally applied to the preservation movement, and this began to cause problems for the group. As Alitt notes, bad news for nature usually signalled an increase in the growth of groups that claimed to protect it, but he fails to note that these organisations seldom embraced the promotional rhetoric of alarmism with equal gusto. The Club's eagerness to remain in the pages of the press greatly outmatched the publicity desires of other national conservation groups. Few of the other national organisations equated an increased public profile with heightened ability to execute agenda to the degree the Club did. For the Wilderness Society, who turned their focus to the establishment of a system of legally protected wilderness areas after Echo Park, shaping a highly visible, omnipresent public identity in the way the Club were now doing was seen to carry as many hazards as it did benefits.⁹³ Obtaining sufficient support for their vision of the Wilderness Bill required the careful maintenance of relationships in the nation's political nexus. It needed the work of persistent, level-headed individuals more than it did the creation of an enthusiastic but unqualified mass membership base.⁹⁴ Brash public announcements in line with the ones the Sierra Club were making seemed to invite

⁹² Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, p. 184; Wyss, p. 165.

⁹³ James Morton Turner stresses that the Wilderness Society's approach to passing the Wilderness Bill in the sixties should be understood as a mix of pragmatism and 'careful politics,' by leader Howard Zahniser, who did not exhibit the same worries about post-war growth and consumerism to the extent David Brower did. See: Turner, *The Promise*, p. 27.

⁹⁴ It is important to note that other organisations, including the Sierra Club, were involved in the passage of the Wilderness Act, and it had a range of critics that used similar arguments to the ones seen during the Echo Park and Grand Canyon conflicts. What made the Wilderness Act a more private affair is likely down to the amount of drafting required over the nine years of revisions. This was compounded by the number of factions. The lack of a unified opposition dramatically inflated the time required in private mediation. See: Turner, *The Promise*, pp. 28-33.

unnecessary risk. Unlike the Club, the Wilderness Society did not consider their comparatively private method of preservation campaigning synonymous with being politically inert. As Robert Gottlieb notes, the Wilderness Society's 'immersion in bureaucratic rule making contrasted with the charged and publicly visible battles that swept up [...] the Sierra Club.'⁹⁵

Other preservation groups, confronted by the choice between aping the Wilderness Society's path or the Sierra Club's, largely hewed toward the road taken by the former. The Audubon Society, Izaak Walton League, and National Parks Association all returned to recreational, appreciatory pursuits such as hiking, fishing, and birdwatching following the CRSP and PSWP conflicts. Normative routines for these groups made less space for consistent political engagement, and notions of confrontational protest were once more divorced from their daily institutional identities. The reticence of certain groups to engage in any contentious public debate was notable. The Audubon Society, for example, played 'an exceedingly passive role during the Rachel Carson controversy,' despite the severe impacts of DDT on bird life.⁹⁶

Whilst their membership bases had little desire to remain in the pages of the press, that did not mean complete abdication of engagement from conservation conflicts. The National Parks Association managed to more discretely mount resistance to the Grand Canyon Dams with subpoenas and legal challenges. They found that politically potent actions could still be pursued whilst maintaining a degree of anonymity.⁹⁷ There also remained a question as to whether those who found themselves won over to the cause of conservation by Brower's publishing efforts were guaranteed to identify with the Club. Other groups that had stayed out of the public gaze benefitted from the rising popularity of conservation during the Grand

⁹⁵ Gottlieb, p. 80.

⁹⁶ Dowie, p. 35.

⁹⁷ Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 356.

Canyon conflict also.⁹⁸ As one member of the historically discrete National Wildlife Federation recalled ‘we were just sitting there [...] and suddenly there they were, knocking at the doors.’⁹⁹ Appearing more discreet and unassuming had its own reputational benefits. One Arizonan resident, writing to the *Tucson Daily Citizen* during the CAP public hearings noted ‘The National Wildlife Federation showed a willingness to compromise.’ This support ‘is particularly significant because it stands in direct opposition to the determined obstructionist efforts of the well-known, well-financed and well-publicized Sierra Club.’¹⁰⁰ Whilst the choices the Club made in the public sphere makes their growing radical reputation understandable, it is easy to imagine their frustration in the situation. The group was the only preservation group publically declaring an alternate route to regional growth, but they were cast as the disproportionately obstinate organisation.

This is to say that as conservation and preservation groups moved with varying speed toward broadened, environmental agendas, growing public awareness of individual organisations proceeded in a similarly disproportionate manner. The IRS’s revenge on the Club was indicative of the growing perception that the Californian conservationists were the ringleaders of all nature loving radicals, a scenario that was similarly reflected in the Intermountain press. Increasingly, it was the Club specifically, not ‘conservation’ or ‘preservation’ more generally, that was singled out. One issue of the *Arizona Republic* argued Club members were ‘rabid and senseless and irresponsible.’¹⁰¹ Several months later, the publication noted that “There is a powerful cult in the United States, best exemplified by the

⁹⁸ See: Kraft, pp. 17-42 (p. 24).

⁹⁹ David Peterson del Mar, *Environmentalism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013) p. 52.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Game Protective Group Is Helping’, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, 28 June 1967, p. 22.

¹⁰¹ ‘Nailing a False Statement About the Grand Canyon’, *Arizona Republic*, 20 June 1966, p. 12B.

Sierra Club of California.’¹⁰² The *Arizona Daily Star* also turned specifically on the organisation, accusing the group as guilty of ‘utter misstatement’ in how they had presented the conflict, and of ‘irrational emotionalism.’¹⁰³ In Utah, junior Democratic Senator Frank Moss’s PSWP statements against the organisation were widely reported when he declared ‘every time I read a statement by the Sierra Club or its executive director David Brower [...] I catch my breath at the way the truth is being twisted.’¹⁰⁴ One writer noted how he was ‘extremely irked, as I think every Arizonan should be, at the constant hammering away by the Sierra Club.’¹⁰⁵ ‘Sierra Club’ was rapidly becoming a negative regional metonymy, convenient shorthand for any individuals who were branded as proudly Luddite, radical, illogical, and emotional by their critics.

Behind the Scenes

Although the Club became accustomed to taking the brunt of public ire between 1964 and 1967, their reputation was distinctly more imposing, vital, and politically radical than the organisation was in practice. As historians Michael Cohen and Frank Zelko have noted, Brower’s art of selling the Club helped ‘foster a public image,’ for the organisation, ‘that far outstripped its actual strength.’¹⁰⁶ Even within the Club, David Brower’s eye-catching rhetoric was beginning to be seen by other leading members as the words of a dogmatic

¹⁰² ‘A River Tamed’, *Arizona Republic*, 23 September 1966, p. 6.

¹⁰³ ‘Human Beings Are Valuable, Too’, *Arizona Daily Star*, 17 June 1966, p. 14B.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Moss Hits Critics of River Dams’, *Daily Herald*, 21 June 1966, p.3.

¹⁰⁵ James E. Gaylor, ‘Seeks Support for CAP’, *Arizonan Daily Star*, 16 December 1966, p. 52.

¹⁰⁶ Frank Zelko, ‘Challenging Modernity: The Origins of Postwar Environmental Protest in the United States’, in *Shades of Green: Environmental Activism Around the Globe*, ed. by Christof Mauch, Nathan Stoltzfus, and Douglas R. Weiner (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), pp. 13-40 (p. 30); Cohen, *The History*, p. 275.

malcontent.¹⁰⁷ For the Club's older leadership particularly, the group's original public identity, that of a gentlemanly hiking organisation, was sorely missed.¹⁰⁸

Brower's critics within the Sierra Club challenged what they saw as an increasingly radical stance in the Club's publications. The point where anxieties most clearly manifested were over the way publications were seen to shape an increasingly radical public image. The product of these fears was a series of editorial battles and ultimately, instances of editorial censorship. Sierra Club Publications Committee member August Fruge wrote to Brower about his foreword for 1968 text *Navajo Wildlands*, noting with surprise but approval that 'in comparison with some of our manuscripts, this one contains very little objectionable writing [...] I think it may turn out to be one of the better books.'¹⁰⁹ Senior Club member and Publications Committee figure George Marshall criticized initial draft of *Glacier Bay: the Land and the Silence*, published in 1967, for its criticism of the National Park Service, demanding any critical commentary against other institutions be scrubbed from the product and future Club publications.¹¹⁰ Similarly, the draft of *Kauai and the Park Country of Hawaii*, appearing the same year, saw criticism and the editorial machete for its attacks on sugar companies. The most contentious of all editorial debates emerged over *Not Man Apart*, a book that twinned the poetry of Robinson Jeffers with images of California's Big Sur coastline. Publications Committee member and Western naturalist Wallace Stegner was worried

¹⁰⁷ For commentary surrounding Brower's contentious later years, see: Adams, Teiser, and Harroun, pp. 680-682; Leonard, "Mountaineer, Lawyer, Environmentalist," an oral history conducted 1972-1975 by Susan R. Schrepfer, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, pp. 346-352; Michael McCloskey, "Sierra Club Executive Director: The Evolving Club and the Environmental Movement," an oral history conducted 1981 by Susan R. Schrepfer, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, pp. 89-102.

¹⁰⁸ Wills, p. 60.

¹⁰⁹ August Fruge to David Brower, 31 July 1966, BANC MSS 71/295 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

¹¹⁰ George Marshall to August Fruge, 29 December 1966, BANC MSS 71/295 c.

readers of the text would view the Club as overly militant. He accused the text of being ‘a Nietzsche-Jeffers book with Sierra Clubbish photography,’ arguing its message for Marine preservation was tantamount to asking people to, ‘wade out and breathe deeply.’¹¹¹

Press commentary in response to later Club publications in the 1960s does provide some evidence that attempts to return the group’s image to an approximation of what its old guard considered a respectable reputation were successful. The *Salt Lake Tribune*, reviewing 1966 Exhibit Format book *Everest: the West Ridge*, remarked with some surprise that the text ‘departs from the others [...] no specific dam project is opposed, no wilderness, being ruined or threatened by greedy interests, is dramatized.’¹¹² Eliot Porter’s 1967 text, *Summer Island: Penobscot County* was similarly praised by the paper, which declared ‘it most certainly worthy of attention.’¹¹³ More positive responses not only reflected the change in tone, but a change in subject as a result of the Club’s censorial shift; Exhibit Format books no longer positioned pristine nature and landscapes absent of settlement as a viable alternative to modern living, and Brower was given less space in which to forward anti-growth diatribes. Both *Summer Island* and *Everest* also focused on subjects that those beyond Brower’s circle of hardliners were receptive to; the texts focused on tight-knit communities at the fringes of industrial civilization. They emphasised the importance of familial connection and the traditional values of America before the sixties spate of protest groups and the rise of the counterculture.¹¹⁴

Unfortunately for the Club, these instances hinting at growing acceptance were rooted in the hope that the organisation was returning to its toothless, recreational roots. But the Club had

¹¹¹ Wallace Stegner to Ansel Adams, 29 December 1964, BANC MSS 71/295 c.; Wallace Stegner to George Marshall, 29 December 1964, BANC MSS 71/295 c.

¹¹² Ernest H. Linford, ‘Veteran of Everest Climb Records Classic Tale’, *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 March 1966, p. W13.

¹¹³ ‘Sierra Club’s New Volume’, *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 April 1967, p. W19.

¹¹⁴ Blower, 39-55 (pp. 48-49).

more substantial problems than the reception of their publications by 1967. The organisation's expanding reach was beginning to cause substantial financial troubles. By 1969 the Club would find itself in a dramatically weaker state than its outward reputation suggested; on the brink of bankruptcy and internally divided, particularly over Brower's continued tenure. Before the end of the decade, the Sierra Club would eject the executive director from the organisation.¹¹⁵

Brower, both during his tenure and after he left the Sierra Club, would often be compared to the group's original architect, John Muir. Whispers persisted that he was, in essence, John of the Mountains reincarnate, or at the very least the genuine heir to Muir's legacy.¹¹⁶ With regards to public profile, the comparisons were sound. By the middle of the decade, Brower had become North America's principal conservation celebrity. In 1966, *Life* magazine ran an extended piece on the Club leader, the 'Knight Errant to Nature's Rescue' and America's 'No. 1 Conservationist,' placing Brower alongside advertisements with sixties celebrities Woody Allen and Elke Sommer.¹¹⁷ Yet how Brower and Muir approached notions of public receptivity to their cause cast them as radically different individuals. Muir was willing to moderate his earlier elitist public image in the hopes that a more inclusive message would produce a greater constituency of support for the natural world. Brower, confronting an admittedly wider, more pressing set of environmental problems, gave increasingly less thought to the way he or the Club might be viewed. The protection of nature was simply too pressing to worry about public image. In the late sixties, he proved fundamentally incapable of moderating his tone for any appreciable time. Brower had positioned himself as the public

¹¹⁵ Turner, *David Brower*, p. 150; Schrepfer, *The Fight to Save the Redwoods*, pp.183-184.

¹¹⁶ Fox, *The American Conservation Movement*, pp. 250-290.

¹¹⁷ 'Knight Errant to Nature's Rescue', *Life*, 27 May 1966, pp. 38-42.

face of the Club, but his eligibility for this function was debatable; he was notoriously sensitive to criticism.¹¹⁸ He never appeared to consider in the decade that his flagrant disregard for the ecology of human relationships would harm or impinge upon the Club's various protective missions.

Reflecting upon the Club's loss of their tax-exempt status over the 1966 advertisements, Brower noted that 'people who didn't know whether they loved the Grand Canyon knew whether or not they loved the IRS.'¹¹⁹ The executive director was partially joking, but what he did not seem to consider in this equation was how many people actually loved the Sierra Club. At the national level, soaring membership numbers offered a quantitative response to that query. In parts of Utah and Arizona, where local Club chapters were more limited and opposition to Echo Park and Glen Canyon remained fresh in people's minds, the answer to that same question was far less clear. With little knowledge of their support for coal, their internal financial problems and philosophical divisions, all that remained in the public sphere was the image of a private group of increasing size and reach, with no clear limits on what they were willing to oppose. By the late sixties, Brower had helped the Club attain a public image that, as historian John Wills notes, made them appear as 'the key proponent of radical environmental campaigning.'¹²⁰ Now, fear over what that meant would produce escalating public opposition to the Sierra Club to the north of the Grand Canyon.

Phoney Conservationists

¹¹⁸ Wyss, p. 185.

¹¹⁹ Brower, quoted in Wyss, p. 97.

¹²⁰ Wills, p. 59.

A letter in the 1 April 1966 edition of *Arizona Republic* by state resident Russel Werneken ably embodied new and distinctive strains of discontent. Werneken wrote to the paper with a single purpose: to express his fervid anger at growing support for the Sierra Club. For two years, he had listened to their arguments in favour of ‘saving’ the Grand Canyon from the Bureau of Reclamation’s planned Bridge and Marble Canyon Dams. He had read Club literature about the projects, seen their advertisements claiming the great ravine would be flooded, and heard stories of the way the landscape would be decimated by industrial incursion.¹²¹ Werneken was unconvinced. He posed his own question for readers concerned about the Sierra Club’s agenda, pondering ‘Why were they so set against reservoirs like Lake Powell, where hundreds of thousands of people now boated and played?’ Werneken answered his own query: the Sierra Club was elitist. Club members desired to ‘keep people like you and me away from 100 miles of spectacularly beautiful riverway that they are hoping to retain as a private little reserve for themselves and their millionaire friends.’¹²²

Being charged of elitism was hardly a new reputational frame for preservationists by 1966, but Werneken offered a new organising principle through which the Sierra Club’s actions could be better understood. He continued:

The Sierra Club are phoney conservationists because they vigorously oppose everything else that conservation has stood for and accomplished for the last hundred years. Despite their attempted perversion of the word, conservation still means man’s skilful and far-sighted management of natural resources for the greatest good of the greatest number, not just today but for generation after generation to come.¹²³

¹²¹ Russel Werneken, ‘Reader Says Sierra Club Wants a Private Canyon’, *Arizona Republic*, 1 April 1966, p. 7; Needham, p. 197.

¹²² Werneken, p. 7.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

Werneken sought to turn attacks on preservation's public image into a form of reputational contest. Given his invocation of 'for the greatest good of the greatest number,' Werneken explicitly meant the utilitarian, multiple-use model of land management first exemplified in North America by Connecticut-born forester Gifford Pinchot. Pinchot had passed in 1946, and it was unclear two decades later how many Intermountainers recognised this slogan. The motto itself had been developed by Pinchot, paraphrasing John Stuart Mill's own utilitarian maxim, in the hopes that the credo would catch on.¹²⁴ It had difficulty doing so amongst Muir's intellectual heirs; when the National Wildlife Federation launched the 'Conservation Hall of Fame' in the mid-1960s, Pinchot placed a measly eighth place.¹²⁵

Werneken's comparative arguments designed to damage conservationist reputation in Arizona found less purchase nationally, but in Utah, the notion of using comparison as a delegitimising strategy had found purchase soon after the Echo Park conflict. In 1958, Utahn Frederick P. Champ, a Logan banker and senior member of the National Resources Committee, had used essentially the same argument as Werneken. Champ took it upon himself to defend an association of sheep grazers known as the Utah Wool Growers against what he termed 'a constellation of crusading conservationists.'¹²⁶ Speaking at a Utah livestock conference in January, Champ pitched the two classic models of conservation, but credited 'preservation' as the purview of outsider forces predicated on the lock-up of public lands. The utilitarian model, conversely, was presented as a local, rational, and fundamentally *Utahn* variant that embraced Pinchot's teachings.

¹²⁴ J. Baird Callicott, 'The Wilderness Idea Revisited', in *Ecological Perspectives: Scientific, Religious, and Aesthetic Perspectives*, ed. by Christopher Key Chapple (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 37-64 (p. 41).

¹²⁵ Miller, *Gifford Pinchot*, p. 7.

¹²⁶ O. N. Malmquist, 'Factions Peril Industry, Champ Tells Woolmen: "Conservationists" Seek Single Use of Forest', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 January 1958, p. 17.

Champ relied upon the idea of legitimate conservationists – predominantly framed as Utah’s foresters, livestock men, hunters, and ranchers – being undermined in their daily practice by a rogue faction. He noted that ‘successful livestock men must be and are real conservationists’, but argued their longstanding role as stewards of the land had been corrupted by a new, radical minority. He charged that ranchers and livestock producers ‘have been pictured by clever writers as plunderers and despoilers.’ Champ accused preservationists of having turned their efforts toward damaging the livelihood of Utah woolgrowers through reputational attacks.¹²⁷ Heading up this vast network of radicals, Champ contended, was none other than ‘David Brower of the Sierra Club.’¹²⁸ The ultimate agenda of the Club was not conservation, he argued, as that title that was merely being used as a facade by a ‘small coterie of manipulators who would socialize America in the name of conservation.’¹²⁹

Two days after Champ’s initial comments to the press, the *Salt Lake Tribune* offered a follow-up piece. On the whole, the *Tribune* cautioned the public to be wary of some of Champ’s points, noting that some of the studies he had cited in aid of his cause were out of date. Still, the newspaper ultimately sided with his critical view of the ‘new’ conservation practiced by external groups. The paper concluded its coverage of the small controversy by making the following appeal to readers:

¹²⁷ For discussion on the Council of Conservationists, and accusations of conspiracy against them, see: Richard N. L. Andrews, *Managing the Environment, Managing Ourselves: A History of American Environmental Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 190-191.

¹²⁸ Malmquist, ‘Factions Peril Industry’, p. 17. The question has been raised as to whether the public was joining the Sierra Club in the 1960s because the groups mission resonated, or because of David Brower’s increasingly public profile. As Pearson notes, even after the organization ejected Brower in 1969, membership growth continued at the same rapid pace for a further three years, suggesting that outside of the Club itself and agitated opponents, Brower was not that widely known. See: Pearson, p. 223.

¹²⁹ Malmquist, ‘Factions Peril Industry’, p. 18.

We of the Intermountain West should settle our differences and present a united front to those who would lock up the wildlands and throw away the key. The stockmen should be presented to the country as true believers in conservation and multiple use, erasing forever the stereotype of the despoiler.¹³⁰

Werneken's framing of the Sierra Club as 'phoney' conservationists and the *Tribune's* efforts to frame Utah stockmen as 'the true believers in conservation' spoke to two wider cultural phenomena that could be perceived in Utah and the Mormon culture region more generally in 1966. The first reflected the endurance of Mormon anxieties about how they had been historically presented to the wider nation. As chapter two noted, the first cornerstone to Mormonism's cultural inclusion was predicated on new perceptions of LDS followers as exceptional miners and agricultural stewards.¹³¹ In their acerbic critiques against development during and between the Echo Park, Glen Canyon, and Grand Canyon conflicts, the Sierra Club undermined this image, casting residents of the Mormon Corridor – and southwesterners more broadly – as irresponsible land owners. In doing so, they eroded the image that national acceptance of Mormonism had been initially reliant upon. Less a contest between utilitarian and preservationist variants of conservation, this was, in a broader sense, the notion that preservation sought to erode Mormon culture. Indeed, David Brower had used that argument writing to the *Salt Lake Tribune* in 1963 when he feared that the rising waters of Lake Powell would impact the canyons around Rainbow Bridge National Monument. The executive director argued that it was preservation, not utilitarianism, that the Saints needed to embrace if they wanted to remain within the American orthodoxy. Referencing the

¹³⁰ 'West Should Unite on Conservation Front', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 January 1958, p. 12.

¹³¹ Fluhman, p. 131.

need to preserve Rainbow Bridge, Brower concluded his letter with the words 'We hope Utahns are aware of their national responsibility in this regard.'¹³²

Certain press coverage pushed back against such inferences even as it exposed regional anxieties about reputation. When the Grand Canyon conflict was in full swing, the *Arizona Daily Star* complained that the Sierra Club had fed lies to distant press outlets about what the people were going to do to the canyon, which had been 'gullibly swallowed.'¹³³ In June 1966, the paper initiated a mail campaign to counter the Club's 'heavily financed attack' on the state, and to let 'high Washington officials know that Arizonans are proud of the Grand Canyon, and have no intention of destroying it.'¹³⁴ The illusory vitality and radicalism of the Sierra Club therefore converged and intermingled with regional concerns over presentation and inclusion. Attacks against the Club reflected the belief that Brower and followers were in fact dangerous aggressors not just against regional growth, but that they were attempting to isolate and denigrate the Intermountain region's own people and culture.

More than regional paranoia, there is evidence to suggest that the 'true believers in conservation' of the Intermountain West had some reason to be concerned. As historian R. McGreggor Cawley points out in his research into the Sagebrush Rebellion, certain preservationists were already hostile to Pinchot's intellectual descendants and deeply suspicious of multiple-use land management by this juncture. Michael McCloskey, who would go on to succeed Brower as Sierra Club executive director, wrote an attack on Pinchot and the historical practices of the Forestry Service in a 1961 article for the *Oregon Law Review*.¹³⁵

¹³² David Brower, 'Canyonlands Plan Calls for Soul-Searching', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 June 1963, p. 10A.

¹³³ 'Nailing a False Statement About the Grand Canyon', *Arizona Daily Star*, 20 June 1966, p. 12B.

¹³⁴ 'Canyon Project Attacks Denounced', p. 38.

¹³⁵ See: J. Michael McCloskey, 'Natural Resources – National Forests – The Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960', in *Oregon Law Review*, 41 (1961), 49-77.

McCloskey feared that utilitarian conservation only grudgingly made space for recreational use and aesthetic appreciation, and was far more concerned with simply using the West's natural resources under a façade of constraint.¹³⁶ Preservationists and utilitarianists used the same logic against each other; their 'real' model of conservation was a front for something else. David Brower also made attacks in the same vein. When interviewed for *Life* magazine in May 1966, two months before Werneken's letter appeared in the *Republic*, he noted that 'I dislike the word conservation [...] so many people fight to use it as a defense of what they are doing. You go to meetings of almost any group that is using up resources and somewhere along the line they will say, "We're conservationists too."' ¹³⁷

The conflict to own 'conservation' also spoke to the way Intermountain and Mormon culture had, as Jan Shipps and J. B. Haws have identified, come to view itself as a staunch defender of traditional American values against a rising tide of countercultural ideas.¹³⁸ Pinchot's model of conservation, seldom referenced during the Echo Park conflict, now found itself included within these 'traditional' boundaries. Preservation, conversely, had become a spreading virus, a contagion infecting and subverting longstanding utilitarian practices in the Intermountain region. There was also evidence that Arizonan and Utah commentators were fearful that Club attempts to subvert conservation were achieving success. The *Arizona Daily Star* argued that 'shortsighted people,' had been, 'deluded by the propaganda of the Sierra Club (which has never loved Arizona or Arizonans and probably never will).'¹³⁹ In Utah, Frank Moss charged the Club with overstating their position to the extent that 'otherwise sensible persons in this

¹³⁶ Cawley, p. 15.

¹³⁷ Knight Errant to Nature's Rescue', p. 40.

¹³⁸ Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land*, p. 100; Haws, p. 36.

¹³⁹ 'Human Beings Are Valuable, Too', p. 14B.

country are convinced that the Bridge Canyon dam would flood Grand Canyon National Park from rim to rim.’¹⁴⁰

Although the idea of preservation as a form of cultural corruption seems bizarre, the notion has been observed by historians Robin Kelsey and Andrew Needham. When Needham went searching through the archives of Interior Secretary Stewart Udall to see how the Sierra Club had influenced resistance to the Bridge and Marble Canyon Dams, he came away surprised. Not only had the Club managed to produce an astounding level of national resistance against the dams, they had managed to assimilate many private citizens to their own style of writing and thinking about the natural world. Viewing the spread of the Club’s philosophy as akin to a lexical virus, Needham noted its swift transmission. Not only had the ‘Sierra Club’s language and arguments’ begun to appear in national newspapers including *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, their influence ‘was also evident in the language of individual citizens opposing the dams,’ who increasingly wrote, ‘in language deeply influenced by the Sierra Club.’¹⁴¹ Kelsey, conversely, has argued that publications and advertisements by the Club changed how people *saw* nature, and when visitors to the West’s National Parks took photographs ‘to love landscape was to photograph it as if for the Sierra Club.’¹⁴²

Six Years of Delays and Mormon Conservation

The Kaiparowits Project’s own trials illuminate certain affinities within Mormon conservation. Whilst the Grand Canyon controversy dragged on, Edison’s plans were making little progress

¹⁴⁰ ‘Moss Assails Sierra Club’, *Daily Herald*, 1 September 1966, p. 12A.

¹⁴¹ Needham, p. 196, 200.

¹⁴² Kelsey, pp. 71-92 (p. 86).

away from the pages of the Intermountain press. Delays reached back as far as November 1964, when Edison paid the Utah Land Board \$18,825 to acquire land between Wahweap and Warm Creek.¹⁴³ Edison wanted to begin construction of the Kaiparowits Plant on the western shoreline of the rising Lake Powell, and they were confident about the economic viability of the Kaiparowits coalfield. What planners still needed to guarantee was if they could draw 102,000 acre-feet of water from the reservoir annually once the plant was in operation.¹⁴⁴ Edison executives were hopeful that the necessary water permits would be granted swiftly, so that any Kaiparowits Generating Station could begin operation by the end of the decade. In practice, it would take just under six years to acquire the finalised permits to draw water from Lake Powell. Even with the delay, Gould would later ruefully remark 'gaining the water contract with the state [...] was to be something of a speed record in all of the negotiations for the Kaiparowits Project.'¹⁴⁵

It was not the obstinate, outsider preservation groups many Utahns believed were seeking to prevent all growth in their state that were to blame for delays. Instead, it was something much closer to the 'legitimate' conservation concerns individuals like Champ and Werneken had argued were part of the fabric of the Mormon corridor. Edison had quietly won the support of Utah's Governor, Calvin L. Rampton, and state Democratic Senator Frank Moss to

¹⁴³ Edison's planners ultimately chose a plant site adjacent to Kaiparowits, on the shores of Lake Powell. following an assessment of nineteen previous sites on the plateau itself, and following extended conversations with the National Park Service. The company then narrowed their spot to terrain between Wahweap Creek and Warm Creek, nine to fifteen miles north of Glen Canyon Dam, on the shores of the slowly rising Lake Powell. See: 'Southern California Edison Site Analysis: Nipple Bench and Fourmile Bench, Kaiparowits Generating Station, April 1975', Ms 619, Box 105; H. Nakamura to Frank E. Moss, 22 November 1967, 'A Half Billion Mine Mouth Plant for Utah – Draft Copy', Ms 146, Box 615.

¹⁴⁴ Kaiparowits Generating Station Draft Project Plan, Fact Sheet. Series 8, Box 305, p. 1-7; Ellis L. Armstrong to Frank E. Moss, 30 March 1971, Ms 619, Box 615; Department of the Army – Sacramento District, Corps of Engineers, Public Notice No. 5873 to F. G. Rockwell, Jr., Ms 619, Box 615. Edison would make it clear over the following years that they could not commit to any coal project in southern Utah unless the annual water allowance was guaranteed. See: Alan M. Nedry to Governor Rampton and Frank E. Moss, 27 June 1967, Ms 619, Box 615.

¹⁴⁵ Gould, 'The Kaiparowits Decision', Ms 619, Box 42.

their plans in 1964, but they also needed the ear of Interior Secretary Stewart Udall. Attaining his support was crucial; after asking for the 102,000 acre-feet per annum from Lake Powell, Edison in the spring of 1965 additionally requested 3,760 acres of land be taken out of the proposed Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, then being managed by the Department of the Interior.¹⁴⁶ Udall, a lapsed Mormon, was seen as typically in favour of energy expansion in late-1964. He had ably intertwined ecology and aesthetics in *The Quiet Crisis*, but the text was in keeping with the core environmental concerns of the decade; aside from sporadic reference to nuclear power, Udall had remained notably silent on the environmental impacts of energy development.

Privately, Udall feared that a Kaiparowits power plant would rob yet another reclamation project, the long awaited Central Utah Project (CUP) of its necessary water. The secretary remained noncommittal with Moss and Rampton during Washington trips, ignoring their requests to meet.¹⁴⁷ Although still in its infancy in 1965, the CUP had far deeper historical roots than either the CRSP, PSWP, and CAP, stretching back to the first decade of the twentieth century. Originally designed to maximise the usage of Utah's snowmelt for farmers in the middle and eastern portions of the state, CUP's image as a post-war reclamation project meant it had inherited complex associations with environmental damage. Yet CUP remained

¹⁴⁶ 'Udall Asks Area for Power Plant at Glen Canyon', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 25 March 1965, p. 12C; Edison needed the land transferred into Utah's hands so they could then purchase it from the state. See: 'Asks Area for Power Plant at Glen Canyon', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 25 March 1965, p. 12C; Howard L. Edwards to Frank E. Moss, 13 March 1965, Ms 619, Box 615.

¹⁴⁷ 'Rampton Plugs for Utah In Busy Capital Round', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 July 1965, p. 8; Frank E. Moss to Stewart L. Udall, 26 August 1965, Ms 619, Box 615. The Ute Indians also had some claim to the water rights requested by Edison, but there is little to suggest that this played any significant role in proceedings – at least it was not given any significant attention. The Frank E. Moss records suggest that the Ute took greater issue with the Central Utah Project. See: 'Kaiparowits Coal Project, Kane County, Utah', Ms 619, Box 617; A. W. Althouse, W. A. Zitlau, C. M. Titus to Mr. Hubert C. Lambert, 31 August 1965, Ms 619, Box 618.

a project that, in the minds of planners, appealed to two interlinked facets of Utah's self-conceived conservation identity: the Mormon agrarian ideal and Pinchot's utilitarianism.¹⁴⁸

Utah's water regulatory bodies understood that choosing between CUP and the Kaiparowits Project was more than a choice between maximising growth potential. Deciding which project would take precedence meant deciding what *character* growth would take in Utah, and by extension help shape the future identity of a large area of the state. That was an important concern for a region that had always been conscious of its cultural separateness. By the late-1950s, CUP supporters in Utah still traced the project's history back to small, interdependent irrigation projects and weirs in the state's Strawberry Valley, but they increasingly emphasised the utilitarianism of the project also.¹⁴⁹ Yet this 'new' vision of CUP was of debatable distinctiveness. Both the Mormon agrarian ideal and Pinchot's utilitarianism had similarities to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young's utopian belief that collective ownership of resources would sustain Mormon communalism.¹⁵⁰ In this frame, press invocations for Pinchot's model of 'legitimate' conservation became a form of Mormon cultural nostalgia. As environmental historian Dan Flores notes, because early LDS church regulation of natural resources had established a precedent of control, the people of Utah were 'solidly in favor' of their terrain increasingly being designated as National Forests under Pinchot's vision. Furthermore, Reed Smoot, one of Utah's beloved early twentieth century elder statesmen,

¹⁴⁸ The agrarian ideal in the context of American western history has an extensive and storied history, being connected back to Thomas Jefferson, but extending far into the twentieth century. For extended discussion of this vision, see the influential: Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (New York: Vintage Books, 1950); Mormons were not immune to the lure of this romantic vision, and both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young make reference to it. See: Dyal, 19-35.

¹⁴⁹ See: Adam R. Eastman, *From Cadillac to Chevy: Environmental Concern, Compromise, and the Central Utah Project Completion Act* (unpublished master's dissertation, Brigham Young University, 2006), pp. 10-14, 38.

¹⁵⁰ Matthew Kester, *Remembering Iosepa: History, Place, and Religion in the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 36-37; Dean L. May, *Three Frontiers: Family, Land, and Society in the American West, 1850-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 259-260.

was one of the only Western politicians who championed its cause.¹⁵¹ Even as press coverage in the state forwarded its wary war against outsider conservationists, page space continually expressed frequent support of foresters and interest in the endeavours of the Soil Conservation Service. These initiatives and figures would only lose popular support when the image of conservation came to represent something radical, irrational, and fundamentally alien, and federal control and environmentalism became synonymous after 1970.

In contrast to the agrarian and Mormon associations of CUP, Edison's vision was thoroughly industrial, complete with smokestacks and planned boomtown. Like any state, Utah had its own history of industrial expansion, but the Kaiparowits Project came attached to less savoury associations. The plant would provide Utahns with employment, but none of the power would remain within the state – it would be sold to consumers in California and Arizona, whilst locals had to cope with any pollution. Furthermore, the scale of the Kaiparowits townsite was a risky prospect for the insulated political and cultural ecosystem of southern Utah. These considerations placed Kaiparowits in sharp contrast not only with CUP, but emergent debates over the costs of growth.

The two state bodies left with making this unenviable decision were the Utah Water and Power Board (UWPB) and the Utah State Engineer. Their decision had to be based on frustratingly amorphous claims; Edison claimed the Kaiparowits Plant would not impinge upon the needs of the immediate phase of CUP, but conflict arose over the so-called 'ultimate phase,' which would produce a water demand conflict with the Kaiparowits plant as early as 1983.¹⁵² Yet the ultimate phase of CUP was not authorised, and was fiscally controversial,

¹⁵¹ Dan L. Flores, 'Zion in Eden: Phases of the Environmental History of Utah', in *A World We Thought We Knew: Readings in Utah History*, ed. by John S. McCormick and John R. Sillito (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), pp. 442-440 (p.435).

¹⁵² 'Kaiparowits Coal Project, Kane County, Utah', Ms 619, Box 617.

with no guarantees it would ever materialise. Furthermore, the UWPB were attempting to track water needs as far ahead as 2030, even as they admitted that all these figures were little more than 'guesstimates.'¹⁵³

After several months of deliberation, with the UWPB acting as mediators between SCE and CUP proponents at the Central Utah Water Conservancy District (CUWCB), a frustrated board exempted themselves from the debate. They suggested SCE and CUWCB fight it out amongst themselves. The board recommended that the Utah State Engineer only approve the water permits following federal sign off and once 'an understanding between parties' had been reached, but declined to provide any specific criteria for what an accord might look like. Whilst the board concluded that if no decision could be reached, Edison would still receive an unspecified annual acre-footage of water, SCE indicated to Moss that their initial 102,000-acre-foot requirement could not be reduced further.¹⁵⁴

Udall granted the plant the land and water permits in September 1965, almost a year after SCE had made the request. The Californian press enthusiastically welcomed the decision, reporting that the project alone would consume triple Utah's 1963 total coal production, but SCE then swiftly made the decision to tinker with their plans.¹⁵⁵ Project managers at Edison rationalised that a project of Kaiparowits' magnitude would not be realised overnight.¹⁵⁶ Subsequent federal attempts to claim a portion of the power would tie Edison's reconfigured plans for the plant up until near the end of the decade, and the company had to seek renewed permission from Udall's successor, Interior Secretary Walter Hickel, to proceed. Despite

¹⁵³ Utah Water and Power Board Resolution, 12 February 1965, Ms 619, Box 615.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ 'Udall Oks Colorado River Use for Utah Power Plant', *San Bernardino County Sun*, 3 September 1965, p. C7.

¹⁵⁶ David Kent Sproul, 'Environmentalism and the Kaiparowits Power Project, 1964-1976', *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 70 (2002), 356-371 (p. 361).

Edison's assurances that final approval neared, little forward motion was evident. At a Salt Lake City dinner in Edison's honour at the end of 1969, the utility remained so cautious when speaking about the project that Frank Moss angrily remarked that he felt the evenings program had been put together by a lawyer.¹⁵⁷ Beyond the view of the public, Edison continued to further tweak project particulars, moving it away from Lake Powell and onto a spot on the plateau itself, but by this point the material problems of the other Four Corners plants were beginning to cause concern.

Conclusion: No Dams? Then Choke on Smog

In a strange instance of historical synchronicity, four years to the day after Russel Werneken wrote to the *Arizona Republic* to protest the 'phoney conservationists' in the Sierra Club, another letter appeared in the paper expounding on a similar theme. Written by Scottsdale resident C. C. "Bud" Cooper, the letter reiterated the emotional and irrational character of Club members and argued 'that the people of the United States have had a poor trade forced upon them by a limited group of unrealistic idealists.' Readers scanning through the *Republic* that day would have been forgiven for thinking that this was yet another regional grievance about the elitism of an outsider conservation group. Or perhaps this was a delayed complaint about the Club's success in preventing both Grand Canyon dams, which had been recently abandoned. In this instance, both guesses would have flown wide of the mark. Cooper declared:

How ironic it is and embarrassing it will have to be to Mr. David Brower, who, as the then-leading light of the Sierra Club, set the stage for this new contamination of natural beauty by waging a very successful campaign against

¹⁵⁷ 'Speakers Hail Bright Future with Kaiparowits Power Plant', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 9 October 1969, p. 20C; 'Kaiparowits Plant', *Southern Utah Free Press*, 9 October 1969, p. 1, 12.

the building of dams for hydroelectric power on the Colorado River at Bridge Canyon and at Marble Canyon.

Cooper was not, for once, complaining about the Club frustrating the region's growth. At least someone had been listening to the Club's statements in favour of coal power. Cooper thought Arizonan residents should be angry at the Club not because they created an absence of dams, but because their obstinacy in protecting the Grand Canyon meant something far worse would now emerge in their stead. Something the Club had actively supported.¹⁵⁸

If Cooper felt, as other critics had, that the new regional image of conservation was best viewed as a kind of cultural contagion, then the material geography of the Four Corners complex was the physical evidence of this creeping malady. The Sierra Club, for their part, would come to regret their coal advocacy in the early 1970s, and began trying to rectify the mistake. Evoking their old advertisements in defence of the Grand Canyon, they would run a new piece in the national press against strip mining in the Four Corners with the title 'Should We Also Tear Apart St. Peter's to Get at the Marble?'¹⁵⁹ Always eager to excoriate the Club, press outlets appeared in this instance unconscious of their past positions, aside from a single article in the *Tucson Daily Citizen* that told readers 'No Dams? Then Choke on Smog,' and accused the Club of having, 'forced the adoption of a worse alternative.'¹⁶⁰

The spatial and environmental inequalities of coal power were equally evidence of the Club's unwarranted reputation at the end of the 1960s, for two reasons. Seen as deeply radical and universally obstructionist by their critics, the Club continued to be an organisation of conservative recreationalists that divided the landscape into explicitly 'pristine' and industrial

¹⁵⁸ C. C. Cooper, 'Vacation Lands Face Air Pollution', *Arizona Republic*, 1 April 1970, p. 7.

¹⁵⁹ Needham, p. 212.

¹⁶⁰ 'No Dams? Then Choke on Smog', *Tucson Daily Citizen*, 12 May 1971, p. 34.

spaces. Furthermore, even as the Club did this, their advocacy of coal reflected an enduring faith in the technological systems their critics accused them of universally opposing.¹⁶¹ Other regional actors would be all-too conscious of this. Interested In Saving Southern Utah's Environment (ISSUE) leader Lloyd Gordon and his organisation would initially refuse to work with the Club in their opposition to the Navajo and later Kaiparowits plants. Gordon felt that for his followers 'There was a flavour to the Sierra Club that they wanted to avoid [...] the people who formed ISSUE did so because they did not want to be associated with the Sierra Club.'¹⁶²

Cooper, in his own attack of the Sierra Club, railed against its image rather than the reality, but he drew fundamentally different conclusions from other critics. He suggested the Club's radicalism and idealism had produced the very scenario they had publically claimed to resist. Gigantic coal behemoths would now rise across the Four Corners region where Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico met, belching hideous smoke. Far from preserving an enclave of pristine nature, the Club, clouded by their romantic lens, had sacrificed the entire region to a coming F; they had become agents of unchecked growth without due regard for the consequences. This was worse than trading Echo Park for Glen Canyon; this was trading the Grand Canyon for the entirety of the southwest. To hear Cooper say it 'when one compares the aesthetics of two lakes on the Colorado utilizing but a small fraction of the total reach of the river with that of the smoke pollution, one cannot help but form a pretty clear understanding of which group was being the most realistic about conservation.'¹⁶³ Cooper

¹⁶¹ Needham, p. 210.

¹⁶² Lloyd Gordon, Interviewed by Lynn Coppel, Utah State Historical Society and California State University, Fullerton Oral History Program, Southeastern Utah Project. Southeastern Utah oral histories, Accn 1868, Box 4. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah, pp. 1-2.

¹⁶³ Cooper, 'Vacation Lands Face Air Pollution', p. 7.

questioned how much thought the Club had actually invested into their debates about the dangers of growth.

Mormons had long prided themselves on their ability to create what they felt was a stable society in the arid West. They had even convinced certain naturalists, like Wallace Stegner, of the fact.¹⁶⁴ Another convert to this thinking, historian Leonard J. Arrington has argued that the warm Mormon embrace of Pinchot's utilitarian resource policies 'seems to have protected Utah from [...] abuses and wastes' and other ecological damage on the scale of its neighbours.¹⁶⁵ It was difficult in 1971 to suggest the Sierra Club's policy on coal had been an avenue to environmental stability. To Cooper, the construction of Navajo to the south of Lake Powell, and soon, Kaiparowits to its north, meant the Sierra Club had opened Pandora's Box over the region. Or, to put it another way, perhaps they were the phoney conservationists after all.

¹⁶⁴ Gessner, pp. 158-159.

¹⁶⁵ Leonard J. Arrington, quoted in Flores, 'Zion in Eden', pp. 442-440 (p. 432).

Chapter 4

The Blame Game:

Utah, Environmental Reputation, and the Crisis

Decade

Introduction: The Environmental Decade

Utah observers already fearful about the agenda of post-war conservation and environmental groups had plentiful reasons to be concerned at the end of the 1960s. As the decade reached its denouement, environmental issues were increasingly presented by national print media – and now television channels – as a ubiquitous, inescapable point of discussion. In 1969, ABC News lingered on scenes of apocalyptic despair at Santa Barbara, as oil from offshore drilling began to stain the once cream-coloured beaches black with tar.¹ The *New York Times* focused on the way Apollo 8's image, *Earthrise*, illustrated the unique but fragile nature of human existence.² Then, on 22 April 1970, millions of Americans congregated across the country at

¹ Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, pp. 35, 40-41; Stephanie LeMenager, *Living Oil: Petroleum Culture in the American Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 40-41.

² For the earthrise image as an ecological symbol, see: Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, pp. 207-209; Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, pp. 37-39; David Oates, *Earth Rising: Ecological Belief in an Age of Science* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1989), pp. 11-31.

teach-ins and rallies in support of 'Earth Day.' As environmental issues achieved widespread bipartisan support, newspapers began to inform Americans that 'pollution is everyone's problem.'³ Across 1970, environmental imagery conveyed to the nation that earth was ecologically vulnerable, and suggested Americans should be fearful of their planet's future.⁴

The ubiquity of the environmental crisis gave great currency to the 'environmentalist' label. Once associated with a select few groups by the press, Earth Day made the marker a highly pursuable commodity.⁵ As Patrick Allitt notes 'politicians of all stripes suddenly became environmental enthusiasts.'⁶ Of course, conservation had always possessed a peculiar tendency to cut across political allegiances and ideological boundaries, but 21 April 1970 was distinctive. It made private environmental sympathies public, and encouraged formerly ambivalent politicians to adopt ecological identities as matter of political expediency.⁷ The country's leading journal of conservative thought, the *National Review*, recognized conservation as a spiritual issue.⁸ Many corporations like Ford, Consolidated Edison, Mobil, and Southern California Edison promoted their own environmental efforts, although activists remained dubious about their sincerity.⁹

³ See, for example: 'Action on smog', *Reno Gazette-Journal*, 12 October 1970, p. 4; 'This is the river behind our house', *Daily Journal*, 11 August 1970, p. 3; 'Earth Likened to Trashy Cave', *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, 18 March 1970, p. 12B.

⁴ Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, p. 39.

⁵ Although as others have argued, the notion that everyone should now be environmentally concerned was part of a consistent rhetorical strategy across multiple Earth Days that invested blame in individual Americans, rather than industrial or corporate bodies. See: Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, p. 82; Thomas Jundt, *Greening the Red, White, and Blue: The Bomb, Big Business, and Consumer Resistance in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 233; Gary Cohen, 'It's Too Easy Being Green: The Gains and Losses of Earth Day', *New Solutions*, 1 (1990), 9-12.

⁶ Allitt, p. 67.

⁷ Drake, p. 183.

⁸ Allitt, p. 73.

⁹ Bill Christofferson, *The Man from Clear Lake: Earth Day Founder Senator Gaylord Nelson* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), pp. 5-6; Wills, p. 145.

Even as being seen as 'environmentally friendly' became politically valuable, many visuals of environmental figures in the period would only reinforce past reputational accusations about the emotional instability of environmental group members. Finis Dunaway, in his overview of environmental images in the lead up to and wake of Earth Day, makes choices in this context that are telling. He focuses on ABC News' interview with Kathy Morales, an eighteen-year old crying on Santa Barbara beach in 1969 over the oil spill, who warned listeners 'we will soon destroy ourselves.' He also notes *Life's* interview with Judy Smith, who was described as 'quietly weeping' about the environment before she noted 'I feel as though I had gone into somebody's house where everyone was murdered.' Finally, he looks at the advertising figure of the 'Crying Indian,' Iron Eyes Cody, and his tears over American mistreatment of the environment.¹⁰ Where the visual politics of ecological insecurity operated on a global scale, the *environmentalist* was presented to the nation through frames that were intensely personal. These images helped inscribe that environmental activists felt so strongly about these matters they had lost all control of their emotions, and possessed little capacity for reasoned debate.

Popular culture helped reinforce that environmental identity was emotional to the point of irrationality throughout the decade. Cinema in the 1970s purported to offer environmental narratives for the first time, but the characters embodying an environmental ethic often possessed a manic edge that bordered on the unhinged. In Douglas Trumbull's science fiction picture *Silent Running* (1971), Bruce Dern's portrayal of Freeman Lowell personified Earth Day's environmental histrionics. Tending the last forests alive in a remote space station orbiting the planet, Lowell guards his natural charges with childlike awe and, as esteemed film

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 35, 41, 79-95.

critic Roger Ebert noted 'not terribly acute intelligence.'¹¹ When these last stretches of vibrancy are endangered, he kills his fellow shipmates, only to belatedly realise he misses them, a regret that eventually leads to his own suicide.¹² In a similar vein, *The China Syndrome* (1979) purported to offer the public a critical dramatization of the nuclear power industry's failures. Yet its environmental protest character Richard Adams, played by Michael Douglas, is conveyed as a 'quintessential sixties radical.' Adams is ultimately 'too hotheaded, too quick to condemn nuclear technology and challenge authority figures [...] his "hysterical" reactions appear juvenile, based solely on feeling and not on fact.'¹³ Environmental cinema in the 1970s conveyed that environmentalism had social value, but its long-term proponents were wild eyed, untrustworthy figures that occupied the American fringe.

The first Earth Day remains a celebrated point in environmental history, but historical texts have limited their attention to its manifestations in urban, seaboard cities such as Los Angeles, New York City, and Washington D.C. There is little to suggest America's heartland received the event with the same level of enthusiasm. In Utah, the run-up to Earth Day saw many of the states' more popular newspaper columnists and editors return to preaching about the relationship between environmentalism and the cultural scoundrels of the American periphery. Writer Holmes Alexander feared that 'the kids seem willing to burn down the barn to get rid of the rats,' and promised readers, 'a wave of vandalized anarchy, beginning with Earth Day.'¹⁴ The *Salt Lake Tribune* was curiously silent, not running a single article on the

¹¹ Roger Ebert, *Silent Running* [online]. Updated 23 August 2016 [cited 23 August 2016]. Available from: <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/silent-running-1971>.

¹² See: Robin L. Murray and Joseph K. Heumann, *Ecology and Popular Film: Cinema on the Edge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), pp. 96-107.

¹³ Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, p. 130.

¹⁴ Holmes Alexander, 'Earth Day Activists Aim Toward Vandalized Anarchy', *Ogden-Standard Examiner*, 6 April 1970, p. 6A.

event.¹⁵ Ogden's *Standard-Examiner* offered commentary, but was unsure if it wanted any part of proceedings. Consistently framing Earth Day as a 'rite' and emphasising the ceremonial dimensions of the day's occurrences, the paper ran a piece asserting that whilst the rest of the nation would be celebrating the earth, Utah would mark the occasion of 'Clean Countryside Day,' a decidedly more respectable festivity.¹⁶ Whilst the paper moderated its tone, the *Standard-Examiner's* coverage recalled earlier qualms about the perceived radicalism of 'phoney conservationists.' It paraphrased unnamed 'conservative professional naturalists,' who, 'are worried that the "Earth Day" rites will take on extreme forms that will do more harm than good.'¹⁷ The most obstreperous commentary came from popular Utah columnist Hal Williams, who presented Earth Day as an unholy convergence between socialism, the counterculture, and environmentalism. Exploring the entirely coincidental fact that Earth Day took place on the same day as Lenin's birthday, Williams remarked 'so many of those long-haired piles of drug-prone garbage often referred to as "hippies," aren't so "hip."¹⁸

Williams's publisher, the *Orem-Geneva Times*, broke with standard practice that day to issue a note proclaiming that the author's views in no way reflected the opinions of the paper's managers. That disclaimer was telling. Following Earth Day, the practice of critiquing the environmental movement and its spokespeople appeared a riskier prospect for newspapers.

¹⁵ Indeed, the *Salt Lake Tribune's* coverage of Earth Day is curiously lacking across the entire twentieth century; the publication first referenced the event in April 1971, but only in reference to supporter Senator Muskie accusing the FBI of placing him under surveillance. See: 'Under FBI "Earth Day" Watch, Muskie Says in Senate Speech', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 April 1971, p. 1.

¹⁶ See: 'Rampton Talk Highlights 2-County Earth Day Rite', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 23 April 1970, p. 1. The following quote also describes the day using the same language.

¹⁷ 'Nation Plans to Celebrate First "Earth Day" Utah Plans "Clean Countryside Day"', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 12 April 1970, p. 6A.

¹⁸ Hal Williams, "'Earth Day" Pollutes America's Mainstream on Lenin's Birthday', *Orem-Geneva Times*, 30 April 1970, p. 2.

Where critics had once constructed the image of environmental groups with little risk to their own reputation, the explosive concern about ecological wellbeing and pollution now placed that relationship in doubt. Criticism suddenly carried a higher risk of stigma for the claimant rather than the target. As one Utah paper bemoaned 'It has come to appear that anyone who is not an "environmentalist" is some kind of public enemy.'¹⁹

For critics like Williams, who remained adamantly suspicious of environmentalism, or those in industries now burdened by what they felt was excessive regulation, the question inevitably became: what could dislodge environmentalism as new and celebrated belief of the American mainstream? On what grounds could critics contest the movement at the height of its reputational power? In the two years following 1970, that question seemingly had no answer. The initial years of the decade exposed the limits of attacks that sought to sully the reputations of environmentalists. Writers and companies who had employed reputational attacks in the past had always conducted their attacks most effectively when there was some sense of individuality in their objects of critique. Be it the Sierra Club or David Brower, a single individual or organisation could be framed and reframed around perceived moral and personal failings, or their intentions presented as running counter to the wants of the wider public. That seemed difficult after 21 April 1970 for two reasons. One, 'environmentalism' was now a nationwide phenomenon that seemed too large to rationally condense. Two, 'environmentalism' appeared less an ideology owned by a limited number of elite groups. It was pervasive, it was accepted, and it appeared cognitively embedded across all American political and cultural life.²⁰

¹⁹ 'Concern, But Let's Compromise', *Color Country Spectrum*, 9 August 1973, p. 2.

²⁰ Mark Thomas Kennedy, Jay Inghwee Chok, and Jingfang Liu, 'What Does It Mean to be Green? The Emergence of New Criteria for Assessing Corporate Reputation', in *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Reputation*, ed. by Michael L. Barnett and Timothy G. Pollock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 69-93 (p. 78).

This chapter explores environmental groups' reputational immunity across the years 1970-1972, and the breakdown of reputational attacks against the movement following newly positive appraisals in northern Utah. It then turns to exploring the challenges to this immunity when energy supply issues exploded into the national consciousness in 1973. Although scholars have suggested environmentalism suddenly lost much of its political efficacy following the 1973-1974 gas crisis, the reputation and image of the movement largely survived unscathed. A series of alternate figures: electric utilities, oil corporations, Arabic cartels, and President Nixon, and California assumed a greater burden of blame. Furthermore, the changing structure of environmental groups and the languages they communicated in further frustrated attempts of critics to shape them.

Blame People, Blame Kaiparowits

Earth Day had come to focus, above all other environmental issues, on the purification of the American environment from insidious pollutants and deadly toxins. In the northern reaches of the Beehive State, that purgative impulse – perhaps surprisingly – extended to expunging some of the negativity commonly attached to environmental advocates. Previous doubts about the moral character and ideological goals of activists faded in the weeks following Earth Day. Earlier criticisms of the movement found diminished space, and in their place appeared a series of supportive readings of the event. The *Daily Utah Chronicle* framed Earth Day as a point of unification distinct from the vitriolic rhetoric of two decades of conflict. A day ‘when government men, university people, clergy, radicals, conservatives, conservationists, industrialists, and miscellaneous confronted each other about the shaky state of the

environment.’²¹ An earlier issue in anticipation of the event went as far as to welcome state native Edward Abbey as commencement speaker for the festivities in Utah, calling him ‘a latter-day Thoreau.’²² The *Chronicle’s* praise signalled that certain expressions of environmental advocacy previously labelled ‘radical’ were becoming culturally accepted in northern Utah.

Press support for post-1970 environmentalism was however selective in nature. What was most notable about northern Utah’s post-Earth Day coverage was the way in which it frequently excised references to the national and planetary implications of pollution and ecological collapse. Instead, newspapers focused on the local; they praised Earth Day not because it provided new insight into human and nonhuman life’s fragility, but on how the event was seen to inspire in Utah’s younger residents a renewed sense of civic responsibility. Newspapers reported, with some surprise, that good Mormon students were not transformed overnight into a new generation of countercultural malingerers. Quite the opposite; numerous press outlets noted the way in which school children in Vernal, Orem, and other towns across the state had been inspired by the goals of Earth Day organisers to clean up their localities.²³ Policing communities for litter and cleaning up the classroom became the most promoted initial manifestations of ‘environmentalism’ in northern Utah. By embracing these practices, many Utahns felt they had found a model of environmentalism that made more sense. Committing to a ‘clean’ environment was socially beneficial, even if common dust rather than deadly dioxin or DDT was the enemy. These collective practices

²¹ ‘The Earth Story’, *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 23 April 1970, pp. 1, 4-5.

²² Nancy Ossana, ‘Earth Day to focus on the environment’, *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 15 April 1970, p. 1.

²³ ‘Vernal Receives “Clean Face” on Earth Day 1970’, *Vernal Express*, 30 April 1970, p. 6; ‘“Earth Day” Trophies at OHS’, *Daily Herald*, 24 April 1970, p. 4; ‘Maintaining Goals of “Earth Day”’, *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 23 April 1970, p. 4A; Helen Hennessy, ‘Small Fry Litter Letters: Food for Adult Thought’, *Daily Herald*, 22 May 1970, p. 9; ‘Clearfield Youngsters Heed Appeal – Chairs Get Cleaning’, *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 17 May 1970, p. 12A.

were presented as more palatable and respectable than the acerbic rhetoric of David Brower's Sierra Club in the late 1960s.

National press coverage of Earth Day helped convey that the post-1970 manifestation of environmental politics was distinctive from that offered by the ever-contentious preservationists. The press stressed Earth Day was an inclusionary event uniting America as one environmental community. The *New York Times* declared two days after 'Conservatives were for it. Liberals were for it. Democrats, Republicans and independents were for it. So were the ins, the outs, the Executives and Legislative branches of government.'²⁴ Indeed, the only people that seemed exempt from Earth Day were the longstanding preservation groups themselves. As Robert Gottlieb notes, Earth Day was characterised by a 'sense of discovery,' as if environmentalism had suddenly exploded into existence, fully formed, from nowhere.²⁵ It was a reset button. Little coverage in the national press connected the protectionist squabbles over Echo Park and the Grand Canyon to the outpouring of the new decade's environmental concern, which was treated as possessing a degree of spontaneity. The voices of older, traditional groups such as the National Wildlife Federation, Audubon Society, and Wilderness Society remained largely absent from proceedings.²⁶

Whilst Utahns celebrated Earth Day on terms that offered a version of environmentalism more in line with their own conservative cultural identity, the Sierra Club had avoided Earth Day because they feared it would make them appear *too* politically radical. New Club executive director Michael McCloskey admitted that most of the leadership had trouble identifying with the new popular expression of environmentalism. The Club, he said 'believed

²⁴ Nan Robertson, 'Earth's Day, Like Mother's, Pulls Capital Together', *New York Times*, 22 April 1970, p. 30.

²⁵ Gottlieb, p. 152.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

more in mastering the arts of political persuasion than demonstrating to show our discontent.’²⁷ Whilst there were signs that the Club would not shy from their controversial reputation at the end of the 1960s, such as when they picketed Chevron’s offices after the Santa Barbara spill in 1969, the group did calm its approach.²⁸ Others in the organisation agreed with McCloskey’s decision. Brock Evans, who ran the Club’s D.C. office from 1972, wanted to create a new public image for the Sierra Club. He wanted to make the transition from emotional volunteer to serious professional. He sought to ‘soften the image’ of the organisation.²⁹ As Club historian Susan Schrepfer noted, in the contest between ‘the cry of outraged conscience and principle’ and the ‘need for credibility,’ credibility triumphed.³⁰

In their removal of litter and tidying of classrooms, Utahns shaped a more wholesome variant of environmentalism, but this approach had its own drawbacks. It drew upon one of Earth Day’s more problematic emphases: the doctrine of personal responsibility.³¹ Promoted during that first day in late April 1970, and at each Earth Day since, personal responsibility – perhaps unintentionally – supplanted critiques against polluting industries and placed the environmental onus on individuals and small communities. People, rather than business interests, became the janitorial staff seeking to remove the refuse left in the wake of post-war ‘progress.’ The notion that Americans should bear the burden of environmental

²⁷ McCloskey, *In the Thick of It*, p. 105.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 102-103.

²⁹ Brock, quoted in Allitt, p. 75.

³⁰ Susan Schrepfer, ‘The Nuclear Crucible: Diablo Canyon and the Transformation of the Sierra Club, 1965-1985’, *California History*, 71 (1992), 212-237 (p. 214).

³¹ Maureen Smith, *The U.S. Paper Industry and Sustainable Production: An Argument for Restructuring* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), p. 1; Gaylord Nelson, Susan M. Campbell, and Paul A. Wozniak, *Beyond Earth Day: Fulfilling the Promise* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), pp. 127-128.

stewardship, rather than corporations, Finis Dunaway argues 'castigated spectators for their environmental sins but concealed the role of industry in polluting the landscape.'³²

Dunaway's point is flawed in that he presents the doctrine of personal responsibility and corporate blame as binary choices. Nothing was stopping Americans changing their own consumptive practices and also admonishing industrial polluters for their failings, although these narrative threads seldom converged in Utah's northern press. Yet not all Utahns embraced the idea that they alone were liable for the nation's environmental decline, or that post-1970 environmental activism should become predicated on local acts of sanitation. Many looked toward the Four Corners power plants with increasing unease. When these residents heard news that the southern reaches of their state would be next to 'benefit' from a large coal-fired generating station, they found themselves quick to embrace less demure elements of Earth Day. Namely, its rhetoric of environmental apocalypse. Whilst parts of the event stressed environmental citizenship, another focus of the event spoke to a growing conception that the 1970s would be the last decade in which to save the planet. Earth Day organiser Denis Hayes said 'This may be our last chance. If environment is a fad, it's going to be our last fad.' Senator Gaylord Nelson published a book in concordance with the event entitled, *America's Last Chance to Preserve the Earth*. In *Life* magazine's special issue on ecology, writer John Pekkanen wrote that Americans 'would all be walking the streets in gas masks ten years from now.' President Nixon flatly declared 'It is now or never.'³³

To many regional residents, Kaiparowits was the Four Corner's tailored manifestation of this amorphous point of ecological no return. Salt Lake couple Robert and Irene Flint, writing to

³² Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, p. 82.

³³ See: Paul Schatt, 'Ecology movement is altering tactics', *Arizona Republic*, 13 June 1970, p. 27; Gaylord Nelson, *America's Last Chance to Preserve the Earth* (Waukesha: Country Beautiful Corporation, 1970); Ralph Graves, 'Editor's Note: Why John Pekkanen Gave Up Eating Liver', *Life*, 30 January 1970, p. 3; Dowie, p. 33.

Senator Frank Moss about the project, declared ‘Murder for YOU and ME – our CHILDREN, our NATION. A Giant Killer is on the way to finish us off [...] BLACK DEATH BREEDS BEYOND BLACK MESA’S BORDERS [...] Please Help: the Kaiparowits plant at Lake Powell must be stopped.’³⁴ A pamphlet, entitled ‘Suicide in the Southwest,’ remarked that when it came to a plant atop the Kaiparowits Plateau ‘what we are faced with is a complete obliteration of the entire southwest.’³⁵ Other correspondence didn’t quite commit to the same gloomy outlook, but offered similarly scurrilous commentary. Salt Laker Leonid S. Polevoy asked ‘Isn’t it logical to ask them to clean up the mess at Four Corners, New Mexico, before they are given a chance in southern Utah?’³⁶ A petition against the plant opened with the declaration ‘If an alien culture were to propose the burning of Mormon temples or the dynamiting of National Parks, no doubt you would understand.’³⁷ A married couple from Salt Lake City felt attempts to solicit the public’s opinion about the Kaiparowits project was ‘much like arguing with a prostitute over the price, once one has decided on the act.’³⁸

In keeping with their post-Earth Day perspectives, some Utah newspapers once critical of preservationist demands over Echo Park and the Grand Canyon agreed with this view of the plant as a regional death knell. Particularly vocal was the *Daily Utah Chronicle*, which in early 1971 ran a three-issue focus on pollution in the Four Corners region. Author Bill Marling told residents to set their alarms to six years. ‘The desert is dying,’ the publication claimed ‘the desert ends in 1977,’ a date given because it coincided with Edison’s new estimate for

³⁴ Robert N. Flint and Irene A. Flint to Frank E. Moss, 9 July 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

³⁵ Attached to: Stuart H. Johnson, Jr. to Frank E. Moss, 21 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

³⁶ Leonid S. Polevoy to Frank E. Moss, 8 June 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

³⁷ James Force, Wanda Force, Kristine Force, Eva J. Force, and Robert Kay Force to Frank E. Moss, n. d., Ms 146, Box 616.

³⁸ Christian Fannesbeck and Sydney Fannesbeck to Frank E. Moss, 7 June 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

Kaiparowits' completion.³⁹ Other regional publications also spoke out against the plant. Editors of the Navajo magazine *Dine Baa-Hani* inverted the booster imagery of the Golden Circle to show Kaiparowits as the plant that would at last encircle the Navajo Nation in a ring of death.⁴⁰ Environmentalists often feared the material reality of coal power development; once plant construction was initiated, it became that much more difficult to prevent the final point of operation.⁴¹ But public correspondence from Utah frequently expressed the inverse opinion. Kaiparowits was neither tangible nor extant, a project on paper alone, but it was the hammer blow, the power plant that would wring the last life from the vast, clear skies of the southwest.

Indeed, it appeared that Southern California Edison were finally ready to proceed with the Kaiparowits Power Project at what seemed the worst possible moment in summer 1971. After years of being trapped in contractual limbo over Lake Powell's water rights, Interior Secretary Walter Hickel had cleared the legal blockade.⁴² But by the time Edison were concluding their own economic feasibility studies, Hickel was gone, and his successor, Rogers C. B. Morton, recognised that building an environmental reputation was now a political necessity.⁴³ He arranged a five-stop 'Southwest Energy Study,' with Salt Lake City offering a venue for the first public hearing on the Kaiparowits plant in May 1971.⁴⁴ Enthusiasm for the Kaiparowits project within Morton's Interior Department was tepid. 1970 had seen the Four Corners Generating Station at Farmlands, New Mexico install its fifth and final turbine. The Mohave

³⁹ See: Bill Marling, 'The Desert is Dying, Part One', *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 3 February 1971, pp. 4-5; Bill Marling, 'The Desert is Dying, Part Two', *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 4 February 1971, pp. 4-5; Bill Marling, 'The Desert is Dying, Part Three', *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 5 February 1971, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁰ Needham, p. 219; Gomez, pp. 119-121.

⁴¹ Needham, p. 212.

⁴² 'Speakers Hail Bright Future with Kaiparowits Power Plant', p. 20C; 'Utah Hydropower Contracts Signed', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 3 October 1969, p. 12A.

⁴³ 'Kaiparowits plant refusal due review', *Tucson Daily Citizen*, 21 June 1973, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Rogers Morton to Governor Rampton, 13 June 1973, Ms 146, Box 615.

Plant would begin operation that November, and the Navajo power project had begun construction. The Interior Department and Congress had, in the words of historian William Wyant 'invited private industry to the Four Corners feast,' but now they needed to assert their environmental credentials. Not only had environmentalism gone from regional pariah to being nationally celebrated, of all the power stations planned for the area 'only the Kaiparowits giant was caught at a stage where construction had not begun.'⁴⁵ The question was if Edison's project would become the scapegoat that absolved the Interior of past sins.

Blame Electric Utilities

Attacks on the geography of coal power in northern Utah reflected a wider, regional picture of rising discontent with coal pollution. Shortly before Earth Day's first anniversary, an article in *Life* magazine appeared entitled 'Hello, Energy, Goodbye, Big Sky.' Its author, Jack Neary, extolled the southwest's expansive horizons, but the article was more funereal requiem for a suffocated landscape than it was booster's vision. To Neary, the southwest canyon country and Colorado Plateau was the last frontier, a space that had until 1971 escaped the pollution that was now seen to envelop the rest of the nation. No longer. To hear Neary tell it, the southwest was now burdened by a 'dark miasma, that overhanging penumbra of soot and dirt and ash and photochemical smog.' The Four Corners region had been the last place to glimpse the heavens, but the black cloud:

Stretches all the way now. All the way across the North American continent. All the way from the lip of the Atlantic across the Alleghenies and the Piedmont, across the prairie, over the Rockies and beyond, to the Pacific ashtrays of Los Angeles and San Francisco. Now you know that the last stretch

⁴⁵ William K. Wyant, *Westward in Eden: The Public Lands and the Conservation Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 349-352.

of wide-open space we had left, the American Southwestern skyscape, is gone, too.⁴⁶

Neary certainly conjured a dire picture of the southwest, but he was guilty of the same binary environmental thinking that had been one of the long hallmarks of preservationists. The southwest, he suggested, had once been pristine. Now, it was desecrated. The article tried to provide some last-minute comments on the difficult position utilities found themselves in, but it hewed far closer to the apocalyptic rhetoric of Earth Day than it did the doctrine of personal environmental responsibility. Neary only implicitly connected the consumptive demands of individual Americans in distant urban centres to the costs of the southwest's horizon, and six pages of articulate, sorrowful writing implied that readers should direct their indignation toward the architects of smog.

With coverage such as Neary's, it was no surprise that the following month, Southern California Edison president, T. M. McDaniel, Jr., received a letter that could best be described as a threat. 'Need I remind you,' read the document 'that when masses of people become hostile, you are extremely vulnerable, if not politically, then physically.' The letter came from Frank Langdon, a man who was decidedly unimpressed by Edison's recently-operational coal-fired plant in Laughlin, Nevada. Langdon was not a tactful man. He continued:

After a long arduous week seeking some rest and relaxation, I had the misfortune this weekend to go to the Colorado River. At 1:15AM Sunday morning, May 23, 1971, I was awakened by what seemed to be a squadron of jet aircraft under my pillow. After gaining my senses, I was pleased to find out it was simply your Mohave Generating Plant blowing off a little steam. Now I realize that this is all my fault because I was dumb enough to buy property in a beautiful recreation area more than 15 years before you got there, and happened to be located only three miles from your generating plant; so, for

⁴⁶ Jack Neary, 'Hello, Energy, Goodbye, Big Sky', *Life*, 16 April 1971, p. 63.

this lack of foresight on my part I guess I must, for the time being, tolerate this harassment. If it were just the noise pollution, one could sleep with earplugs and survive; however, the eye pollution and the air pollution is also somewhat more than intolerable. I think even you will have to agree the aesthetics of your generating plant make it anything but a thing of beauty and joy forever. The area in which you sited your power plant is not just another location to be raped [...] I feel that ultimately you have no choice but to clean up this abortion.⁴⁷

Letters expressing a level of vitriol comparable to Landon's were not common, but they did reflect a hardening of language in Intermountain correspondence to utility officials and politicians after 1970. People writing to their political representatives in defence of the Grand Canyon in the 1960s had talked about the 'living river' expressed by the Sierra Club's literature, and of ecological wholeness and sublime aesthetics.⁴⁸ People talking about the beginnings of a southwestern coal complex in the Four Corners region talked about creeping death and rolling smog. Most shared with Langdon if not the same degree of anger, then a similar penchant for gruesome detail. It was this they conveyed to those identified as responsible for this decay. William, Kathleen, and Wendy Phelps invited Senator Frank Moss to 'imagine yourself living in a heap of rubble, trying to choke down air which has become saturated with gasses so poisonous to man and vegetation.'⁴⁹ C. A. Smith said that instead of the 'slow poisoning that is developing' from the new Four Corners plants, he 'might as well have a nuclear blowup' – at least then he'd die instantly.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Frank L. Langdon to T. M. McDaniel, Jr., 27 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

⁴⁸ Needham, p. 210.

⁴⁹ William C. Phelps, Kathleen Phelps, and Wendy Phelps to Frank E. Moss, 28 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

⁵⁰ C. A. Smith to Frank E. Moss, 22 September 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

McDaniel Jr., and Edison as a whole were cognizant that their industry's reputation was in precipitous decline following Earth Day's focus on pollution. Speaking to an audience at UCLA, William Gould lamented the ways in which the image of utilities was being challenged:

Perhaps in another time this was – electricity generation – a peaceful enough enterprise, it was carried out methodically and efficiently, and for the most part with a degree of anonymity. However, that idyllic era has resolutely concluded. We have been swept into a new era and the climate for electric utilities has proven unstable and frequently stormy.⁵¹

Later in the year, he bemoaned that Edison had become 'the target of detractors' who were seeking to besmirch the company's image.⁵² Speaking before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Gould remarked that 'Electric utility companies all over the United States are in the vortex of this growing criticism,' and later asserted 'electric utilities have been cast as the villain.'⁵³ This wasn't paranoia; outside of positive appraisals of the industry in financial magazines like *Business Weekly* and *Fortune*, the vultures were beginning to circle over the utility industry.⁵⁴ The environmental decade's concerns about pollution found their regional focal point in the Four Corners. These plants emerged in tandem with growing scientific awareness over the damage caused to human health by the particulates emitted by these projects.⁵⁵ As the lay public traversed this epistemological horizon, it became increasingly hard for Edison to maintain their reputation as the gatekeepers to improved standards of

⁵¹ William R. Gould, "Locating a Power Plant: A Case Study of Southern California Edison's Siting Problems," 10 August 1971, UCLA Conference on Contemporary Challenges to American Business-Society Relationships, Ms 619, Box 40.

⁵² William R. Gould, 'Reliability & Adequacy of Electric Service in the West', Before the Annual Meeting of the Colorado River Water Users Association, Las Vegas, Nevada, 6 December 1971, Ms 619, Box 40.

⁵³ William R. Gould, 'Environmental Effects of Producing Electric Power', 25 February 1970, Before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Congress of the United States, Ms 619, Box 40.

⁵⁴ Daniel Pope, *Nuclear Implosions: The Rise and Fall of the Washington Public Power Supply System* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 29.

⁵⁵ Vietor, *Environmental Politics*, pp. 127-193.

living. Their advertisements that stressed increased quality of life lost purchase in the face of extensive criticism. Suddenly, Edison's promotions switched from touting their social role as domestic stewards to reassuring customers they accepted culpability in the national clean-up effort. The advertising rhetoric of electric living was replaced with the dubious claim the company was 'importing cleaner air.'⁵⁶

Utilities learnt that if a positive reputation had helped reap tangible operational benefits, then a negative one foreshadowed a comparable loss of agency. The industry's image had aided utility managers perpetuating the pre-eminence of local regulatory structures through the 1963 Clean Air Act amendments and helped water down the provisions of the 1967 Air Quality Act, but by 1970 the game was up. Both President Nixon and his chief political rival, Democratic Senator Edmund Muskie, sought to reinforce their own environmental reputations in the face of popular concern, and stricter legislation became inevitable.⁵⁷ A new Clean Air Act recognised air pollution as a national concern and gave the federal government a vested authority in its prevention.⁵⁸ Most problematic for Edison and the Kaiparowits Project was the way in which the 1970 act defined acceptable ambient air quality standards, which were set solely with regards to human health. Technological achievability and economic costs were not part of this new equation, and environmental regulations would only proliferate further over the course of the decade.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ See: 'We're Importing Cleaner Air', *The Desert Sun*, 26 May 1970, p. 4.

⁵⁷ Michael R. Vickery, 'Conservative Politics and the Politics of Conservation: Richard Nixon and the Environmental Protection Agency', in *Green Talk in the White House: The Rhetorical Presidency Encounters Ecology*, ed. by Tarla Rai Peterson (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), pp. 113-133 (pp. 121-122).

⁵⁸ Vietor, *Environmental Politics*, pp. 155-193; Conley, pp. 72-73.

⁵⁹ Vietor, *Environmental Politics*, pp. 160-161; Conley, p. 74. The most prominent environmental acts of the decade were: the Clean Air Act (1970), the Occupational Health and Safety Act (1970), the Marine Protection Act (1972), the Water Pollution Control Act (1972), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972), the Endangered Species Act (1973), the Safe Drinking Water Act (1974), the Toxic Substances Control Act (1976), the Resource

At the national level, this suggested a reversal of reputational fortunes; it put Edison in the position the Sierra Club had been in 1967; outwardly viewed as a threat to the public good and possessing organisational fortitude. Unfortunately for the company, they also shared another facet with the Club of the late sixties; Edison were operationally weakening. The years 1969-1972 had exposed a series of industrywide vulnerabilities to managers that remained unobservable to the public, and Edison was not exempt from this. Foremost was an emergent set of problems Richard Hirsch has termed 'technological stasis.' Most utilities had ignored the warning signs in the early 1960s that their attempts to improve generating efficiency were producing diminishing returns. The only way to transcend these limitations was to build generating units with more expensive metals to overcome metallurgical problems, but the economic costs to achieve this were exorbitant.⁶⁰

Technological stasis was further compounded by supply issues that worsened between 1970 and 1972; like utility executives and managers, fossil fuel producers had missed arising industry struggles and opened insufficient mines to meet rising consumer demand. When the winter of 1972 hit preternaturally hard, utilities had no other option but to hike prices. Consumers were swift to turn their discontent toward providers.⁶¹ Many formerly supportive parties that had been content to bask in the glow of the industry's reputation were swift to turn on their former allies, and hostility came from many quarters, including component manufacturers, stakeholders, and investment bankers.⁶²

Conservation and Recovery Act (1976), the Clean Water Act (1977), and the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act, also known as 'Superfund' (1980). See: Dowie, p. 33.

⁶⁰ Hirsch, *Power Loss*, p. 56.

⁶¹ David E. Nye, *Consuming Power: A Social History of American Energies* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 230-231.

⁶² Hirsch, *Power Loss*, pp. 68-69.

The popularity of environmentalism exacerbated these difficulties. The *New York Times* noted that 'not since the trust-busting days of Theodore Roosevelt has the force of public opinion intruded so emphatically on the business community's patterns of operation.'⁶³ Electric utilities, withering under a hostile public gaze, turned to the public relations industry and the construction of corporate environmental reputation to evade further regulation. Possessing an environmentally-friendly reputation for utilities and other industrial sectors was not only seen as valuable; it became a commodity in what was a competitive, hostile marketplace. Better to appear environmentally friendly, one PR firm argued, than the alternative: having your plant shut down by a politician looking to build his own reputation as a green crusader.⁶⁴

The way in which many industrial sectors attempted to shape environmental reputation was however deeply flawed. In attempts to avoid blame and greenwash their images, they often emphasised success in pollution control and waste reduction that far outstripped its possible reality. At other points, companies suggested their attempts at clean-up were out of a newfound sense of environmental morality, rather than mandated by federal regulations. Others still greatly exaggerated their financial commitments to being 'green.'⁶⁵ The result gave the false impression that controlling the waste products of energy generation was a simple task, which served to erode the very public image many companies sought to construct. This sense of simplicity legitimatised the idea that protestors were right to condense complex environmental issues down to single slogans on their placards. The supposed ease of negating pollution further conveyed that many industries simply had not been bothered to try before public will forced their hand.

⁶³ Gladwin Hill, 'Industrialists Get Word: Environment', *New York Times*, 11 January 1970, p. 471.

⁶⁴ Conley, p. 67.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

By adopting this strategy, the electric utility industry missed a potential alternative framing. They tried to build an image that maintained a façade of competency rather an image that emphasised their struggles. They could instead have encouraged public connection by noting that energy production that paid due attention to pollution control had always been a technologically complex and difficult task. Indeed, few companies seriously stressed that they had made attempts to control pollutants prior to Earth Day. Nor did any seriously claim that corporate bodies and individual citizens alike had to assume varying degrees of responsibility in America's environmental decline. Greenwashing seldom built uncontested environmental reputation; it merely further inscribed the duplicitous image of corporate America.⁶⁶

Environmental Mavericks

As broad enthusiasm for environmental matters and discontent against utilities began to take root in Utah's urban north and across the nation more broadly, the new heroes and villains of the 1970s found their roles inverted in the state's rural south. This was especially true in Red Rock Country, where Kaiparowits Project support remained considerable. During 1971, locals living around the plateau began to write to Salt Lake politicians welcoming Edison and the plant. Excitement for the project was not organised, but it was endemic; correspondence primarily flowed from citizens of townships scattered along Utah byway 12 to the north and west of Kaiparowits. The largest clusters of zeal arose from the communities of Boulder, Escalante, Henrieville, Cannonville, Tropic, Bryce Canyon City, Kanab, and slightly further west, Panguitch and Cedar City. Many letters contained statements that would be expected

⁶⁶ William S. Laufer, *Corporate Bodies and Guilty Minds: The Failure of Corporate Criminal Liability* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 164.

from towns eager to benefit from the employment opportunities that Kaiparowits promised to provide. But many would also seek to excoriate those deemed guilty of holding up Edison's project and Western development more generally. Utah's northern press seldom represented the thoughts of the state's southern communities, but private correspondence revealed how many residents felt the Kaiparowits Project was a regional referendum on the desirability and character of American environmentalism.

A short digression is necessary to explain the conditions foregrounding environmental hostility in southern Utah. Historians have long pondered why Utah became *the* environmental maverick state. The transition presented a kind of narrative puzzle to observers. Joseph Smith and Brigham Young's lessons on stewardship and communal ownership were hard to reconcile with post-war hostility to environmental speech.⁶⁷ Some scholars have questioned why natural iconography, notably the bee and beehive, became rhetorically and visually entangled in Mormon developmental pursuits. There are, admittedly, some good reasons for the choice. The bee represents industriousness and communalism, two things that remain integral elements of Mormon culture, and 'Deseret' is the Saint's word for honeybee.⁶⁸ Environmental historian Donald Worster argued the bee does not seem to reflect the daily material experience of Utah's landscape, and it is difficult to understand Mormon culture divorced from its environmental origins in the desert West. He proposed an

⁶⁷ See: Jeanne Kay and Craig J. Brown, 'Mormon Beliefs About Land and Natural Resources, 1847-1877', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 11 (1985), 253-267 (pp. 259-260). A collection of essays from prominent Mormons and Utahns tried to explore this question more recently, from the perspective that something had gone fundamentally wrong with the Mormon land ethic. See: *New Genesis: A Mormon Reader on Land and Community*, ed. by Terry Tempest Williams, William B. Smart, Gibbs M. Smith (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 2008).

⁶⁸ Michael S. Durham, *Desert Between the Mountains: Mormons, Miners, Padres, Mountain Men, and the Opening of the Great Basin, 1772-1869* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), p. 158. These traits were also used as evidence of Mormon character failings. See: Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830-1846* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. 70.

alternate symbol for the Saints: the beaver. The LDS were the first commercially successful irrigators in North America, he reasoned, and beavers are communal too; they are an intensely familial animal.⁶⁹ Although Worster left it unsaid, perhaps he also chose the beaver because they are viewed as ecologically disruptive creatures; mammals that cannibalise the surrounding environment to build their miniature empires.⁷⁰

Yet this pursuit of an all-encompassing symbol is folly; as the variegated responses to Earth Day demonstrate, there was no universal Mormon environmental ethic within the state's political borders by 1970. The beaver is undoubtedly a fine choice as a symbol representing the familial emphasis and hydrological adeptness evinced by northern Utahns, but it would not be an accurate emblem for Utah's southern populace. In Utah's central-southern counties, Mormon attempts at irrigation and ushering in the agrarian ideal have long proven far more difficult to achieve.⁷¹ Naturalist Wallace Stegner, in his own travails through Mormon country, made the same mistake as Worster by trying to encapsulate all Mormon identity in a single natural form. He argued that the Lombardy poplar best represented the LDS spirit. Lombardy poplars, Stegner wrote, are 'Mormon trees,' which the Saints planted wherever they went. To outsiders, the Lombardy poplar could almost serve as a non-human map of Mormon passage, as if one could trace the old borders of Deseret by following their floral silhouettes through temporal and material spaces.⁷² Stegner saw in their collective planting and placid, rigid form many of the characteristics of the culture and state that had

⁶⁹ See: Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, pp.74-83; Donald Worster, 'Expanding Our Moral Vision Beyond the Human Community', in *A World We Thought We Knew: Readings in Utah History*, ed. by John S. McCormick and John R. Sillito (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), pp. 411-421 (p. 412).

⁷⁰ See: Carol A. Johnston, 'Beaver Wetlands', in *Wetlands Habitats of North America: Ecology and Conservation Concerns*, ed. by Darold P. Batzer and Andrew H. Baldwin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), pp. 161-172.

⁷¹ See: *History of Kanab's Water Supply* [online]. Kanab Government, updated 3 December 2016 [cited 3 December 2016]. Available from: <http://kanab.utah.gov/2165/History-of-Kanabs-Water-Supply>.

⁷² Jared Farmer, *Trees in Paradise: A California History* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 2013), p. xxvi.

adopted his family when he was young.⁷³ But few Lombardy poplars grow in much of southern Utah. To hear historian Edward Geary tell it, the tree that best encapsulates a more specific, quintessentially southern Utahn identity is the black locust. Unlike the Lombardy poplar, the black locust boasts ‘ragged outline, deeply sculptured bark, and dark foliage.’ They are not uncommon nearer Kaiparowits, and certain locals hold them in high esteem. One Escalante farmer noted to Geary they are valued because ‘they can stand the drought. They can stand the wind.’⁷⁴ Perhaps the crucial feature of the black locust in southern Utah is that it is not native to the region; it should not be there, but it has managed to carve out life in a difficult, often hostile environment.⁷⁵

Southern Utahns valued long-term endurance in the landscape, but more than their northern neighbours, they expressed distaste of those who would conduct only temporary visitation. This trait converged with an insularity to northern Utah’s ecological problems that produced the ideal grounds from which discontent with environmental ‘outsiders’ could flourish. Northern Utah had managed to achieve a ‘striking similarity to the rest of the country’s mainstream, conservative way of life’ by 1970, but these residents also had to confront their own instances of ecological decline as a result of their continued presence.⁷⁶ Utah’s Dixie had thoroughly embraced the wider Mormon tendency toward patriotic, free-market attitudes

⁷³ Wallace Stegner, *Mormon Country* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), pp. 21-24.

⁷⁴ Edward A. Geary, *The Proper Edge of the Sky: The High Plateau Country of Utah* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992), p. 158.

⁷⁵ For histories of the two counties referenced here, see: Linda King Newell and Vivian Linford Talbot, *A History of Garfield County* (Salt Lake City: Garfield County Commission, 1998); Martha Sonntag Bradley, *A History of Kane County* (Salt Lake City: Kane County Commission, 1999); Garfield County Chapter of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, “*Golden Nuggets of Pioneer Days*”: *A History of Garfield County* (Panguitch: Garfield County News, 1949).

⁷⁶ John B. Wright, *Rocky Mountain Divide: Selling and Saving the West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), p. 243. Salt Lake Valley residents were not unfamiliar with smog by 1970, having experienced numerous atmospheric inversions over the years, particularly in winter, from both federal operations and private industry. See: Gerald D. Nash, *The Federal Landscape: An Economic History of the Twentieth-century West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), p. 46.

that was observable in the northern stretches of the state. Yet southern residents had thus far managed to evade the same level of environmental consequences experienced by their neighbours along the Wasatch Front.⁷⁷

Kane and Garfield residents began writing to express support for Edison's project in anticipation of the public hearings on further coal plants in the Four Corners region that were scheduled to be held in Salt Lake City in May. Here, the focus would be squarely on Kaiparowits. The hearings came at a time when both counties, but Kane especially, were in the midst of severe economic depressions; sheep grazing was in deep decline, and the timber industry had collapsed in the middle of the 1960s.⁷⁸ One particular instance illustrated the strength of local desire for the project and frustration at its supposed opponents. In anticipation of state-wide plant hearings, natural sciences teacher Wayne Robinson received funding from the Kane County School District to take schoolchildren from Kanab High School as far into the Kaiparowits region as vehicles would allow. Noting he was a staunch supporter of Edison's development in correspondence with Frank Moss, Robinson conveyed to the assembled class the problems the project was facing.⁷⁹

Within their resultant letters to the senator – part of a homework assignment – two argumentative threads readily emerged. The first involved shaping Kaiparowits itself. It was, to hear the students speak of it a 'vast dry area,' a 'big bare place,' 'so barren there is little plant or wild life,' where 'there wasn't any vegetation to be destroyed.' It wasn't, to hear fourteen-year-old Jill Betenson speak of it 'the type of place where a family would go for a

⁷⁷ Wright, p. 242; Mark Stoll, *Inherit the Holy Mountain: Religion and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 232. Nor had the impacts of nuclear fallout from the Nevada Test Site on southern Utah become fully exposed at this point in time. See: Sarah Alisabeth Fox, *Downwind: A People's History of the Nuclear West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), pp. 172-174.

⁷⁸ Bradley, *A History of Kane County*, pp. 298-301.

⁷⁹ Wayne H. Robinson to Frank E. Moss, 11 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

picnic,' whilst Worth Brown bluntly declared 'I think the land is a waste land.' A second, connected set of statements expressed discontent toward opponents of the project, at which point the children roundly turned on outsider 'conservationists' and the Sierra Club. Norma-Lynn Corry told Moss 'I am very concerned about the Kaiparowits coal project and the unbiased fight so many conservationists are putting up against it,' whilst Maywell Jackson asserted, 'I don't think the Sierra Club knows what they are talking about,' and accused them of never having visited the plateau. Kevin Glazier asked 'What are conservationists going to do, put water on the rocks and see if they grow?' A further complainant confided 'I am hoping that our say as citizens of Kane County will be more powerful than the ideas of conservation groups, composed mainly of out-of-staters.'⁸⁰

The Kanab County high school children echoed what their parents and other adults were expressing in their own correspondence to Moss. Kanab Councilman Thomas Haycock argued:

There was opposition to the building of Glen Canyon Dam. Now there is opposition to utilization of the waters of Lake Powell and the Kaiparowits Power Project. Perhaps we natives [...] should have a little more to say about developing our area than the fly by night prophets of doom that try to tell us how to live and what we should do.⁸¹

Attacks against outsiders formed a common theme of letter writing. Kanab resident Douglas Bunting noted 'this issue is being presented by conservationists of which half of them don't even live in Utah and hardly none in Kane County.'⁸² Again, certain residents rounded on the

⁸⁰ See: Holli Crosby to Frank E. Moss, May 10 1971, Ms 146, Box 616; Mike Talbot to Frank E. Moss, May 10 1971, Ms 146, Box 616; Lloyd Johnson to Frank E. Moss, May 10 1971, Ms 146, Box 616; Maywell Jackson to Frank E. Moss, May 10 1971, Ms 146, Box 616; Jill Betenson to Frank E. Moss, May 10 1971, Ms 146 Box 616; Kevin Glazier to Frank E. Moss, 11 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 616; Worth W. Brown to Frank E. Moss, May 10 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

⁸¹ Thomas H. Haycock to Frank E. Moss, 14 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

⁸² Douglas G. Bunting to Frank E. Moss, 11 May 1971, Ms 146 Box 616.

Sierra Club more specifically. Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Hoyt wrote to Moss: 'Those of the Sierra Club that are so against the project evidently are well established in thriving businesses, and are concerned only about a playground for their leisure hours in this area.'⁸³ Ernest Kirby took a similar tack: 'If the Sierra Club and the Wasatch Club and the radical ecologists win out they won't have to look for a Wilderness area – all of Kane County will be so classified.'⁸⁴ The signatures of Kaiparowits supporters from various townships gave quantitative support to individual statements by the end of May 1971; the town of Kanab sent Frank Moss 484 signatures in favour of the plant, whilst isolated residents scattered across Kane County sent a further 42. 83 then materialised later that month from Glen Canyon City.⁸⁵ In 1971, this was approximately twenty percent of the entire population of Kane County.

The letters of Red Rock Country's residents and their children did not contest the identity of the post-Earth Day environmental movement. They contested an echo, the reputation of the Sierra Club and the wider conservation movement that had become inscribed in regional memory following the Echo Park, Glen Canyon, and Grand Canyon conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s. By framing Kaiparowits as *terra nullius*, an aesthetically unremarkable emptiness, writers sought to sell Moss an idea of American conservationists as a group of wealthy outsiders that mistakenly believed the tableland to be an arid paradise. Yet the rhetorical questions of residents wondering *why* anyone might appreciate Kaiparowits, or what they expected to do to the landscape that might make it recreationally appealing, spoke to the reputation of an aesthetically focused group seeking recreational jollies at the expense of the

⁸³ Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Hoyt to Frank E. Moss, 10 May 1971, Ms 146 Box 615.

⁸⁴ Ernest G. Kirby to Frank E. Moss, 7 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 615.

⁸⁵ Concerned Citizens Who Favor Building the Kaiparowits Plant to Frank E. Moss, 12 May 1972, Ms 146 Box 616; Residents of Kanab City to Frank E. Moss, May 13 1971; A Petition from the Citizens of Glen Canyon City to Frank E. Moss, n. d., Ms 146, Box 616.

nation's growth. That image did not reflect contemporary arguments against the Kaiparowits Power Project in 1971.

Historian Jared Farmer's exploration into support for infrastructural development in southern Utah and northern Arizona provides some insight into these responses. Farmer, looking at roads around Lake Powell, noted that what many would see as an expected infrastructural necessity in the state's urban north was seen in far more wondrous dimensions by southern Utahns, even in the post-war period. This is not to suggest southern Utah's rural populace was backward or simple. Their reaction was different because the *meaning* behind development in a region so isolated was much greater; 'supplies, medicine, mail, family – all of these were only as close as the roads were passable.'⁸⁶ In Kane and Garfield, roads remained a symbol of transformative growth well into the 1960s. Where urban environmentalists 'mainly saw the work of nature,' in southern Utah, 'rural Mormons mainly saw the work of people,' people that had managed to carve out infrastructure, imposing order onto a chaotic landscape.⁸⁷ Furthermore, in Mormon historical consciousness, roads had particular significance. Mormon faith is exceedingly literal, and infrastructural edifice served two purposes. Roads were more than a symbol of the pioneer trail. They were a route to 'the literal Kingdom of God on earth.'⁸⁸ Equally, they had once served as a more expedient means of escape from past instances of persecution.⁸⁹ For understandable reasons, power plants were not major features of Mormon historical consciousness. But an enduring belief in the work of the people behind infrastructural development ensured that Kaiparowits presented

⁸⁶ Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, p. 43.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), p. 2.

⁸⁹ Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, p. 43.

itself as an almost Edenic panacea to two counties haemorrhaging social cohesion and economic opportunities. As the nation turned against previously beneficent images of electric utilities and recast the industry as environmental polluters, southern Utah's continued to place great faith in the power of these infrastructural facilitators. The county began to sharply diverge from the normative rhythms of public opinion that were visible across the nation.

The Hearings

Southern Utah attacks against the Sierra Club reflected their status as regional bogeymen in 1971, but the group had actually played a minimal role in opposing any of the Four Corners power projects by the time the southwest power hearings reached Salt Lake City that May. The first major challenge to the Four Corners generating stations would not come until June, when the Environmental Defense Fund, National Wildlife Federation, and Native American Rights Fund allied to force Interior Secretary Rogers Morton to call a moratorium on development.⁹⁰ Still, there could be no major developments toward Kaiparowits' construction until all five regional hearings over the Four Corner's power plants had concluded and the Interior Department had made a decision, and the Utah stopover was only the third.⁹¹ The Club would make comments against Kaiparowits during the hearings in May, but their testimony hardly saw the organisation stake a prominent stance against the plant. Their position was expressed by a single local chapter member, rather than any recognisable national leadership figure. Nor did the Club seem that intent on explicitly dealing with the

⁹⁰ The Club also allied with the Native American Rights Fund in a lawsuit against the Interior, Agriculture, and Corps of Engineers. See: 'Lawsuits Filed to Block Six Power Plants', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 3 June 1971, p. 12A.

⁹¹ 'Power Plant Hearing Runs Gamut of Pro and Con Arguments', *Daily Herald*, 27 May 1971, p. 9.

Kaiparowits project. As sole Club spokesperson Jack McLellan would note that May afternoon ‘the emphasis this morning was primarily on the Kaiparowits plant. We will be taking a little broader view [...] we can’t consider just the problems created by one plant.’ Kaiparowits, McLellan rationalised, was in the advanced planning stages, but other coal-fired projects were either even closer to initiating construction, or already in operation, and debate should be prioritised around those instead.⁹² He based his commentary around the problems of coal power more generally, rather than issues that solely related to the Kaiparowits Project.

Established reputations played a disruptive role during the Kaiparowits hearings in Salt Lake City. Many speakers that had doubts about the plant confronted what they felt were long-held prejudices informed by an entrenched, outdated, and incorrect image of environmental advocacy. Vocalising the extent of this divide was Botanist Stanley Welsh from Brigham Young University (BYU). Welsh summarised the tangible effect two decades of hostility exerted on the debate when he contended the state of Utah offered a forum biased against conservation interests. He complained about ‘the division of speakers into advocates and foes,’ and argued proceedings were akin to a caucus of believers begrudgingly having to listen to an oppositional minority. Welsh told hearing organisers he ultimately fell into neither camp, but conference coordinators, anticipating a clean divide between locals and out-of-state environmentalists, had discounted the possibility that there might be anyone occupying an undecided middle ground.⁹³ There existed only space for the polarising positions of ardent support and emotional resistance. Into this arena, identity became a more prevalent feature in determining trust than factual and scientifically rigorous testimony.

⁹² *Problems of Electrical Power Production in the Southwest: hearings, Ninety-Second Congress, first session* (Washington: U.S. Government Print Office, 1971-1972), p. 995.

⁹³ Stanley L. Welsh to Frank E. Moss, 27 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

Certain hearing organisers encouraged the discordant atmosphere. Senator Frank Moss, introducing McLellan, refused to let the audience forget the Sierra Club's contentious position in Utah's historical memory. In place of a formal introduction, Moss declared 'Mr. McLellan is the conservation chairman of the Uintah chapter of the Sierra Club, and we know the reputation of the Sierra Club.'⁹⁴ Writing to Governor Rampton before the hearings, Moss feared that 'there will be a lot said about environmental aspects.' He reassured the governor that 'I can keep the students and environmentalists in check in the hearing. I won't tolerate any demonstrations, even if I have to shut the hearing down.'⁹⁵ The anticipation of discontent from environmentalists and students alone spoke to a rather narrow understanding of who comprised the environmental movement in Utah by 1971. Whilst environmentalism had still yet to reckon with its racially homogenous composition, speakers at hearings represented a far more diverse selection of Utah's citizens and professions than Moss was willing to recognise. McLellan was followed by a wide range of individuals that included journalists, biochemists, photographers, geologists, housewives, hikers, and anthropologists. Few of these spokeswomen and men were formally affiliated with organised environmental advocacy groups.

The voices of opposition to Kaiparowits were clearly conscious of Utah's historically icy reception toward anyone that fell under the banner of 'environmentalist.' Spokespeople took extensive care during initial hearings in Salt Lake City to frame their identities as clearly as their arguments. Throughout the afternoon, a series of anti-Kaiparowits speakers attempted to disassociate themselves from the varying difficult reputations that had been attached to conservationists over the previous two decades. McLellan sought to underline his local status.

⁹⁴ *Problems of Electrical Power Production*, p. 994.

⁹⁵ Frank E. Moss to Governor Rampton, 19 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 615.

Declaring himself a proud Utahn, he tried to divorce himself from the elitist, affluent, aggressive image of the national Sierra Club. He argued 'Our presentation was not put together by high paid advertising and public relations professionals. Our presentation was put together with our own hands at great personal expense and on our own time.'⁹⁶ The next speaker, geologist Gene Foushee, also attempted disassociation from environmentalism's Utah image his introduction. He began by declaring that 'I have no delusions about the nonsense of man returning to live in caves. I respect and appreciate the standard of living with my family is able to enjoy because of technological advancements.'⁹⁷ Orators following Foushee and McLellan walked their own rhetorical tightropes.

Conservationist testimony at the May hearings underlined how significantly the arguments against energy development had changed since the Grand Canyon conflict. McLellan and others seldom relied upon the aesthetic arguments that Kane and Garfield locals mocked for their absurdity that same month. They instead relied upon the dry technical language of geology, botany, and anthropology to dispute the plant. They did not try to frame Kaiparowits as an example of sublime monumentalism, nor did they invite comparisons with its submerged neighbour, Glen Canyon. Whilst some speakers expressed concern about what a Kaiparowits Plant would do to adjacent national parks, more warned of the cumulative impact successive plants would cause, of the deleterious health effects of smog and fly-ash particulates, how strip-mining was impacting the Navajo Nation, and how pollutants would damage the southwest's archaeological sites. They sold to organisers a visual portent of the Four Corners as a cauldron of intense heat and billow smog, but this image was designed to

⁹⁶ *Problems of Electrical Power Production*, p. 995.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1009.

evoke reduced liveability for the society of the southwest, not infer Kaiparowits would despoil a people-less landscape.

Even as suspicion toward preservationist views persisted in Utah's south, the Sierra Club and other environmental spokespeople at the hearings shared much unrecognised common ground with southern Utahn locals with regards to the character of Kaiparowits itself. No one in any of the three environmental nationals ever seriously attempted to suggest the plateau was a glorious, untouched wilderness that needed protecting from the corrupting hand of man. Kaiparowits was as much *terra nullius* to many conservationists as it was to plant supporters. Critics of environmental groups in southern Utah were correct when they charged members of having demonstrated little interest in visiting the plateau in person. But Kaiparowits locals were debating with a spectre, making assumptions about the position of environmental groups that failed to cohere with their actual positions.

Disparities between southern Utah's Kaiparowits Project proponents and environmental speakers of both national and local affiliation manifested not over aesthetic disagreements, but visible divides did still exist. The most prominent divergence of opinion arose over different conceptions of coal's impact on human health. Even as southern Utahns responded to an outdated image of the conservation movement, a plurality of pro-plant voices demonstrated similarly anachronistic perspectives concerning coal's polluting potential. Growing national dismay toward the resource's effect on the human body had been ably depicted in Earth Day's most dominant visual apparatus, the gas mask. Its prevalence in televised reports and photography in the initial years of the decade helped underscore that most Americans feared the 'placeless ubiquity of air pollution.'⁹⁸ The sudden emergence of

⁹⁸ Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, p. 51.

gas masks as visual emblem of this boundless spread paradoxically reflected that conceptions of air pollution's scope were increasingly divorced from its optical dimensions. As late as 1967, air pollution had been treated by regulators as a strictly local nuisance. By 1970, it had changed from being seen as a provincial issue to a pervasive inevitability.⁹⁹

Industry reputation in the period also conspired to amplify fears about the polluting potential of the Four Corner's plants and diminish the potential for reasoned debate. Southern California Edison, along with Frank Moss and Calvin Rampton, were careful to stress that their project was environmentally distinctive from other Four Corners plants between 1971 and 1973. They argued that new scrubbing technology would remove 99.5 percent of particulate pollution, and ninety percent of sulphur oxides.¹⁰⁰ This was the newly greenwashed version of Kaiparowits. It was, planners suggested, not comparable to existing structures polluting the Four Corners because it inhabited a new technological horizon.

Southern Utah locals were particularly receptive to this optimistic rhetoric; faith in technology and the experts behind its design meant Kaiparowits was often viewed as either entirely pollution free or its impact would be limited enough to constitute an acceptable trade. Even here, residents found ways to connect their own faith in Edison's prowess to the emotionality of conservationists. Ernest G. Kirby noted to Moss 'I'm sure they [ecologists] don't realize that we can have the power and a clean land too.'¹⁰¹ Kanab couple Mr. and Mrs. G. C. Bonham failed to 'understand the current hysteria that a few people have over the construction of the Kaiparowits Project.' They suggested:

⁹⁹ Vietor, *Environmental Politics*, p. 128.

¹⁰⁰ See: Frank E. Moss to Carlyle F. Stout, 7 August 1973, Ms 146 Box 615; Gould, 'The Kaiparowits Decision', Ms 619, Box 42.

¹⁰¹ Kirby to Moss, 7 May 1971.

That segment of the population crying about ruining the environment should stop and realize that any company willing to spend [...] one third of a billion dollars on a project is not going to let that investment fail merely because they are not willing to control stack emissions.¹⁰²

Another correspondent argued they could not see 'any way it could hurt the little vegetation that was trying to break through the rough and dry soil.'¹⁰³ Mrs. L. Pugh begged Moss to accelerate the project's timeline. 'If we are willing to chance a little pollution,' she asked, 'why should we have to fight conservationists who make their money elsewhere?'¹⁰⁴

These local arguments were difficult for environmental advocates to engage with. Even though many environmental groups continued to place great weight on natural aesthetics, it was recognised by the late 1960s that such arguments were losing their purchase in public power hearings.¹⁰⁵ Regulatory bodies and federal departments were faced with new demands to incorporate environmental mandates into the approval process. Yet they remained institutions comprised of technical professionals who had been long viewed their professional roles as that of resource developers, and they did not understand the public shift toward environmental values.¹⁰⁶ Ecological arguments, in this context, came to play a similar public relations role to that of greenwashing. Where the latter masked industrial practices under an environmental façade, ecological arguments concealed environmental pleas behind the authoritative mask of scientific legitimacy.¹⁰⁷ But if more ecological arguments were still seen

¹⁰² Mr. and Mrs. G. C. Bonham to Frank E. Moss, 10 May 1971, Ms 146 Box 615.

¹⁰³ Sam G. Aiken to Frank E. Moss, 10 May 1971, Ms 146 Box 615.

¹⁰⁴ Mrs. L. Pugh to Frank E. Moss, 11 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

¹⁰⁵ Lifset, *Power on the Hudson*, p. 64.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ See: Michael Egan, *Barry Commoner and the Science of Survival: The Remaking of American Environmentalism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), pp. 103-104.

by locals as part of the movement's perceived historic emotionality, it appeared unclear how any divide could be breached.

Were the pleas of locals for the passage of the Kaiparowits Project effective? The events following the conclusion of the Southwest Power Hearings suggested otherwise. Rogers Morton declared a one year moratorium on the southwest power development. Rampton and Moss were furious. Invoking the spectre of outsiders, the governor declared at a press conference he was 'sick and tired of having an absentee landlord.'¹⁰⁸ Edison dutifully agreed to help the Interior Department conduct assessments on the plant's environmental impact. After several months of deliberation, the company announced the plant would move away from Lake Powell, onto Kaiparowits' concave throne at a site called Nipple Bench. Morton visited the new site in August.¹⁰⁹ Months dragged by. In early June 1973, the *Arizona Republic* ran an article noting that as promising as the power plant was for employment in southern Utah and northern Arizona, it had been little more than a 'sleeping giant,' since 1971.¹¹⁰ Signs of the project flickering to life remained painfully elusive. Then, just as Edison looked ready to re-sell Kaiparowits to the public that summer, Morton announced he would not issue the necessary land permits for the 3,508 acres of federal land the utility had requested atop the plateau.¹¹¹

It seemed after eleven years, the Kaiparowits Power Project was dead.

¹⁰⁸ 'Moss, Rampton Blast Morton Moratorium on New Power Plant', *Daily Herald*, 30 May 1971, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ 'Secy. Morton to Visit Kaiparowits Site', 7 August 1971, p. 44.

¹¹⁰ Grant E. Smith, 'Less Energy at Higher Cost Confronts U.S.', *Arizona Republic*, 4 June 1973, p. 1.

¹¹¹ 'Permit Denied Power Plant in South Utah', *Arizona Republic*, 13 June 1973, p. 1; 'Kaiparowitz Rejected by Morton', *Daily Herald*, 13 June 1973; Stan Benjamin, 'Power Plant Permits Denied', *San Bernardino County Sun*, 13 June 1975, p. B5; Bill Beecham, 'Thousands Already Spent on Plant', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 14 June 1973, p. 14A.

Then, it wasn't. Last minute political duress placed upon Morton by Moss and Rampton was enough to achieve a reprieve.¹¹² Not that all was good news; following a meeting with EDF and the Sierra Club in November 1973, Edison concluded their site at Nipple Bench would be contested just like the original location at Wahweap Creek had been. The utility offered four more sites, but conservationists remained unimpressed. Edison seemed to expect their new site would calm environmentalist concerns, because it moved the plant into Kaiparowits' concave depression, out of sight of Lake Powell, but like southern Utahns, they failed to understand that neither EDF nor the Sierra Club were driven by aesthetics. The Sierra Club Southwest Office argued that SCE 'fail to comprehend what our objections are all about.' Another Club activist declared 'If the power plant is built [...] it will destroy the last remaining clean air in the nation. Why do we have to fight every dumb little battle that comes along?'¹¹³ Edison turned in their own two-volume environmental impact statement, then an improved four-volume version. Kaiparowits mutated again; once a 6,000-megawatt project, by the end of 1973 it was down to a more modest, but considerable 3,000-megawatt. In January 1974, the Interior finally announced that the Bureau of Land Management would conduct an official environmental impact statement that corresponded with NEPA regulations. Years had passed, and still the plateau lay silent.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Frank E. Moss to Walter F. Bennett, September 20, 1973, Ms 146, Box 615.

¹¹³ 'Power Plant is Not Wanted', *Gallup Independent*, 1 December 1973, p. 10; 'Firms Suggest Alternate Kaiparowits Plant Sites', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 2 December 1973, p. 1E.

¹¹⁴ 'Department of Interior Accepts Application for Kaiparowits Project', *American Fork Citizen*, 17 January 1974, p. 8.

Blame Oil Companies

What had ultimately saved the Kaiparowits Project from a more final end would also offer hope to Utah's pro-development forces. Southern California Edison and William Gould had been warning of an energy crisis since 1964, and that scenario had at last arrived in the autumn of 1973. Apprehensions about resource consumption had not formed a significant component of Earth Day's environmental crisis rhetoric, which remained preoccupied with the ecological endpoints of abundance rather than fears of material absences. The more utilities like Edison had advertised the wonders of electric living, the more its usage seemed mundane, and the less Americans thought about it.¹¹⁵ As a result, the public failed to awaken to the depletion of domestic sources of fuel until the crisis began to impact their daily lives. It was hard to overstate how traumatic a shock these sudden shortages were.¹¹⁶ Declines were not however lost upon foreign oil producers, and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) would escalate oil prices by 1700 percent between 1969 and 1980. An even more prominent disruption would come in response to America's military aid to Israel in the Yom Kippur War, in the form of an oil embargo announced 17 October 1973, and lasting till March 1974.¹¹⁷

One month after the start of the oil embargo, President Nixon announced in a radio and television address to the nation that the country faced 'the most acute shortages of energy

¹¹⁵ David E. Nye, *When the Lights Went Out: A History of Blackouts in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), p. 223.

¹¹⁶ Richard K. Vietor, *Energy Policy in America Since 1945: A Study of Business Government Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 3; Juliet E. Carlisle, and others, *The Politics of Energy Crises* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 24.

¹¹⁷ See: Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Touchstone, 1991), p. 589-612.

since World War II.¹¹⁸ Nixon's long-term solution to the emergency was a singular goal: returning America to a state of energy independence, something he promised could be achieved within six years.¹¹⁹ The President proposed two actions to achieve this; he called on Congress to consider his proposal for an Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), and announced 'a major new endeavour,' entitled Project Independence. The latter proposal was grandiose. Nixon wanted to combine the American technological ingenuity of the Apollo space program with the grim determination of the Manhattan Project, to meet the energy needs of the country through dogged domestic resource development.¹²⁰

Project Independence would prove remarkably inchoate. Watergate, a lessening of the energy crisis, and subsequent President Gerald Ford's own distaste for large government ventures all sapped political will for the project. But the rhetoric of energy independence proved startlingly virulent.¹²¹ That was ostensibly good news for Edison and their project in southern Utah. As Gould later reflected, in 1973 'energy independence was the watchword, and Kaiparowits looked better and better.'¹²² Other projects, like Pacific Gas & Electric's Diablo Canyon nuclear plant in California, saw renewed enthusiasm after the emergence of dialogues stressing energy self-sufficiency. Supporters in the Golden State linked PG&E's

¹¹⁸ Richard Nixon, *Address to the Nation About Policies to Deal With the Energy Shortages, November 7, 1973* [online]. The American Presidency Project, 1999, updated 3 January 2015 [cited 3 January 2015]. Available from: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=4034>.

¹¹⁹ Robert Bryce, *A Gusher of Lies: The Dangerous Delusions of Energy Independence* (New York: Perseus Books, 2008), p. 1.

¹²⁰ Nixon, *Address to the Nation About Policies to Deal With the Energy Shortages, November 7, 1973*.

¹²¹ Peter A. Schulman, *Coal and Empire: The Birth of Energy Security in Industrial America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015), p. 226; Jasper, p. 130; Douglas R. Bohi and Milton Russell, *Limiting Oil Imports: An Economic History and Analysis* (New York: Earthscan, 2011), p. 241; James M. Jasper, *Nuclear Politics: Energy and the State in the United States, Sweden, and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 115-116.

¹²² Gould, 'The Kaiparowits Decision', Ms 619, Box 42.

atomic endeavour with Nixon's grandiose rhetoric, and proponents of the Trans-Alaska pipeline embraced this new language in turn.¹²³

Could the energy crisis and the rhetoric of energy self-sufficiency rob environmentalism of its newfound legitimate image in Utah? Historian Patrick Allitt suggests that the sudden shock of the energy crisis not only awoke Americans to the threat of scarcity, but this new awareness of resource limits blunted the public's support of environmentalism.¹²⁴ This question became especially relevant in the Beehive State; one of Project Independence's cornerstones was a rapid recommitment to domestic coal production, and compared with nuclear projects, coal plants could be more rapidly expedited.¹²⁵ As political scientist Eric Smith notes, many employed by industries dependent upon coal saw the energy crisis as 'an opportunity to beat back environmental advances.'¹²⁶ Executives within the electric utility industry certainly hoped the crisis would produce a major resurgence of support for coal. Many believed it was time to abandon the defensive stances of Earth Day and begin a concerted PR assault against environmental regulations.¹²⁷ However, a question remained over whether explicitly reputational attacks on environmental groups and individuals would become a major feature of this renewed aggression.

Southern Utah locals were quick to support the idea of energy independence in pleas to expedite Kaiparowits' construction between the end of 1973 and 1975, but they seldom connected fuel shortages to the machinations of environmental groups. Writing to Rogers Morton in October 1973, Ronald Heaton, an economic development director for southern

¹²³ Wills, pp. 77-78; Peter Coates, *The Trans-Alaska Pipeline Controversy: Technology, Conservation, and the Frontier* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1993), p. 249.

¹²⁴ Allitt, p. 199.

¹²⁵ Egan, p. 157.

¹²⁶ Eric R. A. N. Smith, *Energy, the Environment, and Public Opinion* (Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield, 2002), p. 26.

¹²⁷ Conley, pp. 176-177.

Utah argued that the Secretary's Kaiparowits disapproval was 'a severe blow to the economy of the whole state of Utah and a more serious blow to the well-being of the Western United States during this period of the energy crisis.'¹²⁸ Southern Utah resident John Morgan, writing to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, argued that 'coal – good old reliable coal – can help solve the energy crisis if America is determined to do so.'¹²⁹ The ideal of energy independence also prompted broader political support for Kaiparowits from county commissioners across the state, who began to coalesce behind the project. Piute County Commissioners unanimously threw their support behind their Kane and Garfield neighbours, arguing that 'everyone realizes that a large steam generating plant will help to alleviate the power crisis in the United States. We claim to have a shortage of fuels and allow the vast potential of the Kaiparowits Plateau to lie idle.'¹³⁰ Echoing these thoughts with similar arguments, the Sevier, Carbon, San Juan, Salt Lake, Sanpete, and Morgan County Commissioners followed suit, requesting the Kaiparowits Project began construction immediately.¹³¹

The Intermountain press more explicitly connected the energy crisis to the agenda of the environmental movement, although few escalated their accusations to a point where they argued that groups welcomed lines at gas pumps. What characterised the rhetoric of environmental hostility in the years of energy crisis was the increasingly vague nature of attacks. In place of critiques against specific environmental groups that had begun to appear at the end of the previous decade, newspaper columnists turned to critiquing poorly defined,

¹²⁸ Ronald W. Heaton to Rogers C. B. Morton, 9 October 1973, Ms 146, Box 615.

¹²⁹ John H. Morgan to Jack W. Carlson, 19 December 1974, Ms 146, Box 615.

¹³⁰ Piute County County Commissioners to Rogers C. B. Morton, 24 September 1973, Ms 146, Box 615.

¹³¹ Sevier County Commissioners to Frank E. Moss, 12 October 1973, Ms 146, Box 615; Carbon County Commissioners to Frank E. Moss, 24 September 1973, Ms 146, Box 615, Morgan County Commissioners to Frank E. Moss, 25 September 1973, Ms 146, Box 615; Salt Lake County Commissioners to Frank E. Moss, 10 October 1973, Ms 146, Box 615; Sanpete County Commissioners to Frank E. Moss, 17 October 1973, Ms 146, Box 615; Dale Holmes to Frank E. Moss, 25 September 1973, Ms 146, Box 615.

nebulous foes. Writers parroted past criticisms, arguing that the crisis had been inevitable because the federal government had decided to submit to irrational environmental obstructionists. Conservative columnist Henry J. Taylor decreed that ‘in recent years the environmental extremists have gone wacky.’¹³² Old critic of the Sierra Club, the *Arizona Republic*, argued before the crisis that if there were to be power shortages ‘most of the blame will rest with militant environmentalists.’¹³³ Regional politicians also joined the fray. Wayne Aspinall remarked that ‘the extreme environmentalist’ was going to send America back into an era of darkness.¹³⁴ Barry Goldwater, himself a lover of the Grand Canyon and the southwestern wilds (and once-Sierra Club member) castigated environmentalists when he connected ‘material shortages,’ to the movement’s, ‘strange sort of antitechnological hysteria.’¹³⁵ Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz, who nurtured a long hatred of the environmental movement, suggested that if fuel shortages became severe enough, environmentalists should be the first ones to be rationed. Reporter Kevin Phillips noted that Butz’s candour often landed him in trouble ‘but in this respect, he was right on the mark.’¹³⁶

‘Militant,’ ‘extremist,’ and occasionally the older refrain of ‘radical’ became the dominant pejorative terms attached to environmental movement members over the course of the 1973-1974 energy crisis. Often delivered as off-hand criticisms, this rhetoric continued to mark environmentalists – now increasingly poorly defined – as outside the mainstream. That these ‘environmentalists’ staunchly believed their ideological positions, which the press seldom explored in any detail, offered no moderating note in anti-environmental

¹³² Henry J. Taylor, ‘Environmentalists Have a Share in Current Shortage of Energy’, *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 26 December 1973, p. 6A.

¹³³ Ralph de Toledano, ‘Environmentalist militants vs. the people’, *Arizona Republic*, 4 April 1972, p. 6.

¹³⁴ ‘Let there be darkness’, *Arizona Republic*, 16 December 1972, p. 6.

¹³⁵ Barry Goldwater, ‘Technology is actually man’s ally, not his foe’, *Arizona Republic*, 12 November 1973, p. A6.

¹³⁶ Kevin Phillips, ‘Fit punishment to crime: Cold comfort for environmentalists’, *Arizona Republic*, 21 November 1973, p. A6.

commentaries. Instead, the energy crisis seemed to confirm past claims about movement radicalism. In the 1950s and 1960s, critics had argued that conservationists had sought personal recreation over regional development. The energy crisis offered an escalated scenario, one that more starkly illustrated what happened to a society when environmental ideologies were allowed to run amok. Rumours of fuel rationing and not being able to keep the lights on spoke not to regional stasis, but the risk of societal collapse.¹³⁷

Two things undercut the efficacy of these criticisms. The first was the narrow way in which the press presented the energy crisis, which failed to communicate to Americans the entire story and focused attacks away from environmental groups. The majority of papers and news reports framed the energy crisis as one enforced by the foreign machinations of OPEC. This was a crisis of oil, they argued, not fuels more generally. They made little reference to the ongoing electric energy crisis, caused by technological stasis and supply issues, and the shortages of 1973-1974 became synonymous with an 'oil shock' that did not accurately reflect the breadth of the situation.¹³⁸ This coverage ensured that in the spring of 1974, when Americans began to lose hope and went 'looking for villains,' they blamed, 'the Nixon administration, the Arabs, and the oil companies for their troubles.'¹³⁹ In January 1974, public opinion pollsters Roper asked who deserved 'major blame' for the crisis. Out of the six available choices, 'environmentalists' ranked bottom, with only ten percent of the vote, whilst 'oil companies' received almost sixty percent in the final tally.¹⁴⁰ Congress, following the

¹³⁷ Carlisle, and others, p. 24.

¹³⁸ See: Robert Lifset, 'A New Understanding of the American Energy Crisis of the 1970s', *Historical Social Research Special Issue: The Energy Crises of the 1970s: Anticipations and Reactions in the Industrialized World*, 39 (2014), 22-43; Hirsch, *Power Loss*, pp. 58-63.

¹³⁹ Michael J. Graetz, *The End of Energy: The Unmaking of America's Environment, Security, and Independence* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), p. 36.

¹⁴⁰ Carlisle, and others, p. 63; Wellock, p. 279.

Watergate scandal, simply blamed Nixon.¹⁴¹ The great irony in this was that environmental groups *were* culpable in exacerbating the crisis, at least in electrical energy. Widespread public support and the ability to effortlessly produce legal and regulatory blockades for utilities like Edison ensured infrastructural development had slowed to a crawl.¹⁴²

The second factor was the more surreptitious way in which American industry chose to dispute the environmental movement following the energy crisis. After having committed substantial time and money to the construction of their own environmental reputations, few utilities engaged in the blame game so openly. The one exception came in February 1974, when the nation's largest electric service provider, American Electric Company (AEC), ran a series of adverts promoting coal power. Depicting two wealthy Arabic sheiks smirking in front of a Rolls Royce, the ad declared 'We have more coal than they have oil. Let's use it!' Although the accompanying text warned of 'environmental resistance,' AEC dismissed the efforts of environmental groups, rather than placing them front-and-centre.¹⁴³ Whilst many executives in major polluting industries recognised the energy crisis represented a 'windfall political opening,' in their case against environmental groups, they did not commit to the popular rhetoric of Project Independence.¹⁴⁴

As a grand national narrative, energy independence offered clear potential for the shaping of reputation. Reference to the Apollo Space Program and the Manhattan Project not only gave it populist appeal, it also suggested those who failed to go along with its goals were working against the national interest. But as industries began coordinating efforts to dispute

¹⁴¹ Grossman, p. 23.

¹⁴² Robert Lifset, 'Environmentalism and the Energy Crisis', in *American Energy Policy in the 1970s*, ed. by Robert Lifset (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), pp. 283-301 (pp. 286-296); Hirsch, *Power Loss*, pp. 63-68; Vietor, *Energy Policy in America since 1945*, p. 229.

¹⁴³ Conley, p. 178. See Appendix: Image 3.

¹⁴⁴ Conley, p. 174.

environmental regulations, they committed to another language entirely, that of the ‘cost-benefit analysis.’ This focused on disputing environmental restrictions by reintroducing discussion of timeframes and economic costs back into regulatory discourse. However, cost-benefit analysis was a long-form language dependent on technical arithmetic and abstract concepts, rather than publically-digestible, eye-catching statements. That was the problem according to electric utility consultant Charles B. Yulish, who worried service providers would lose the communications war to environmentalists because the latter could translate their statements into easily understood, emotional pleas.¹⁴⁵ Unlike many Mormon commentators over the 1950s and 1960s, Yulish recognised the positive role emotionality played in fostering support for a cause. He appeared unaware that by 1974, most professional environmental groups were intent on using ecological language to move away from their perceived emotionality, in their quest for a more legitimate image.

Blame California, Blame Environmentalists

In Utah, discussions that rhetorically linked the Kaiparowits Project to energy independence would be further undermined by Utah’s self-conceptions of their conservation credentials. Between 1971 and 1973, electric utility Utah Power & Light (UPL) continued to run advertisements with messages that many service providers had stopped following Earth Day. As Edison had, the company connected the virtues of electric generation to domestic bliss, but their most controversial advertisement from 1971 proudly declared that the company had ‘Power to Spare.’¹⁴⁶ This message, University of Utah professor David Steinmuller accused UPL president E. M. Naughton, was ‘short-sighted, provincial, and reprehensible.’ ‘The time

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 173.

¹⁴⁶ See Appendix: Image 4.

has come [...] when we can no longer consider power sources simply as local commodities,' wrote an angry Steinmuller.¹⁴⁷ That was the central message of Project Independence also, but many Utahns converted to the environmental mindset became doubtful when they began to think about the specifics of energy self-sufficiency. When President Nixon had invoked the Manhattan Project in his energy address in 1973, he recalled a grand technological achievement that the nation had celebrated. But for many communities of southwestern Utah living in the shadow of atomic testing, the years following illustrated that the government's definition of achievement could very well mean living in a sacrifice zone. For these residents, it was clear that the environmental burdens of technological advancement were seldom shared equally.¹⁴⁸ When Nixon mentioned in his energy independence address that the coming months would 'require some sacrifice by all Americans,' he hadn't necessarily suggested the costs would be equal.¹⁴⁹

Utahns reflecting upon these matters would quickly find the burdens of the Kaiparowits Project exacted too high a price. When William Gould had spoken about the Kaiparowits Project at Brigham Young University in 1970, Edison lawyers had edited his speech, which they argued had been:

Revised to avoid what would seem to be a clear implication that the company has curtailed construction of additional fossil-fueled plants in Southern California because they constitute an "air contamination problem."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ David Steinmuller to E. M. Naughton, 22 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

¹⁴⁸ See: Stephanie A. Malin, *The Price of Nuclear Power: Uranium Communities and Environmental Justice* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015). It was not until after 1980, however, that the extent of atomic testing on southwest Utah came to wider attention.

¹⁴⁹ Nixon, *Address to the Nation About Policies to Deal With the Energy Shortages*, November 7, 1973.

¹⁵⁰ William E. Marx to Mr. J. D. Bass and William R. Gould, 8 April 1970, Ms 619, Box 40.

This was the crux of the problem; were Kaiparowits constructed, none of its power would go to Utah residents.¹⁵¹ It would all go to the urban centres of southern California and Arizona. Southern Utahns would receive jobs, but many more state residents were convinced they would suffer from the omnipresent threat of air pollution. The media had presented the environmental crisis in the late 1960s as ubiquitous; they framed it as something that impacted all Americans. The energy crisis was not framed as an all-pervasive event, and its presentation often undercut its severity in Utah. Photojournalists during the years 1973-1974 used panoramic shots of gas stations to frame densely packed urban spaces overflowing with immense numbers of automobiles.¹⁵² In New York City, the press offered reports of motorists battling with fists and knives at fuel pumps. Another story claimed a man in Albany entered a store with what appeared to be a hand grenade, demanded gasoline, and left with all he could carry.¹⁵³ These oppidan contexts gave credence to the notion that the American megalopolis was becoming, in the words of historian Robert Lifset, 'unlivable and ungovernable.'¹⁵⁴ But most Utahns did not see themselves as living in an urban state. The energy crisis seemed to be an at-best distant manifestation, and little suggests Utah was hit particularly hard by fuel shortages.

This seemed to reinforce the belief in the Beehive State that the Mormon model of society was still functioning particularly well, even as distant urban centres experienced a breakdown in social cohesion. Utah lawyer Owen Olpin would reflect upon these arguments in the *Journal*

¹⁵¹ Utah Power & Light had originally inquired about subscribing to the remaining power from the Kaiparowits Project, but ultimately elected against it. See: Alan M. Nedry to Frank E. Moss, 19 February 1974, Wayne Owens papers, Ms 108, Box 43. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

¹⁵² Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, p. 109.

¹⁵³ Andrew Scott Cooper, *The Oil Kings: How the US, Iran, and Saudi Arabia Changed the Balance of Power in the Middle East* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), p. 151.

¹⁵⁴ Lifset, 'Environmentalism and the Energy Crisis', pp. 283-301 (p. 285).

of Contemporary Law in 1975. Olpin cautioned Utah's residents against seeking to return to their historic isolation when the nation needed them, but he still warned against support of Edison's project. Why should Utahns support the Kaiparowits power plant, Olpin reasoned, when *'the power will be consumed outside Utah.'*¹⁵⁵ Many Utahns agreed with him. 'Should we pollute this area to give electricity to people in California? This cannot be justified' wrote Salt Lake City residents Richard and Carolyn Vernimen to Frank Moss's office.¹⁵⁶ Other letters not only attacked Californian residents for their conspicuous consumption but used the chance to reinforce residents' belief of their state's superior environmental stewardship. Jordan Saunsen wrote to Frank Moss telling him 'After living in California for seven years, I was relieved to move back to Utah. It is sad to see how southern California has used its beauty and destroyed it.'¹⁵⁷ Richard Moffat concurred, arguing 'the people in southern California chose to live there of their own free will [...] I didn't choose to live there because I didn't want to be crowded and I didn't want to live in a polluted atmosphere.'¹⁵⁸ 'If southern California is so hungry for energy,' wrote Gregory Gnesios, 'let them rape the land out there and drown in their own waste.'¹⁵⁹

Predictably, southern Utahns did not agree with these assessments of the situation, and continued to support the Kaiparowits Project in large numbers. The crisis spawned one organised expression of power plant support, the American League for Industry and Vital Energy (ALIVE), which emerged in the final months of 1974. Despite the name, a fact sheet

¹⁵⁵ The italicised emphasis here is Olpin's. See: Owen Olpin, 'Utah as Energy Basket', *Journal of Contemporary Law*, 1 (1975), 191-200 (p. 199).

¹⁵⁶ Richard and Carolyn Vernimen to Frank E. Moss, 24 May 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

¹⁵⁷ Mrs. Jordan Saunsen to Frank E. Moss, 3 December 1971, Ms 146, Box 616.

¹⁵⁸ Richard H. Moffat to Frank E. Moss, 12 September 1975, Ms 146, Box 616.

¹⁵⁹ Gregory M. Gnesios to Frank E. Moss, 3 April 1976, Ms 146, Box 616.

produced by ALIVE members framed the group as an explicitly anti-environmental outfit that embodied tensions soon-to-be expressed by the Sagebrush Rebels:

ALIVE was organized to counterbalance the impact of preservation groups and intends to make every effort to publicize the views of those favoring energy development and in some cases, industrial growth.¹⁶⁰

By the spring of 1976, ALIVE had already attracted political interest from the nation's capital, and a group of seventy Kane and Garfield County members conducted a visit to Washington on March 15, to meet with President Ford's energy aids. According to ALIVE, the purpose of their trip was 'to effect a public promotional effort aimed at counteracting environmental groups.'¹⁶¹ Presenting this purpose as a biblical mission, Kane County Commissioner Sterling Griffiths, declared 'From out of the desert of southern Utah I've led these people.'¹⁶² Another pamphlet, a 'grassroots message from ALIVE,' announced that 'ALIVE [...] is a challenge to all who believe that many of our social and economic decisions can best be made by state and local entities.' The Kaiparowits Plateau, they suggested, was 'drab, uninviting, unproductive for man, plant, or animal.'¹⁶³ It was time to rise up and fight the environmentalists.

Conclusion: Slippery Reputations

Environmentalism's public image weathered the energy crisis in most of Utah and the wider nation. Beyond the emergence of other targets to which blame could be assigned and the

¹⁶⁰ 'ALIVE Miscellaneous Information Sheet', Allan Turner Howe papers, Ms 140, Box 64. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² 'ALIVE Prepared Statement of Sterling Griffiths', 15 March 1976, Ms 140, Box 65.

¹⁶³ 'A Grassroots Message from "ALIVE" to the People of America on Energy Independence, Natural, Orderly Economic Growth, and Practical Environmental Protection', Ms 140, Box 65.

diffusion of the environmental ethic more generally, the changing identity of 'environmental' spokespeople also made the movement's image more difficult to negatively brand. Where the middle years of the sixties saw environmental concerns spread to the counterculture and to government figures, the early 1970s saw similar anxieties manifest in the work of policy experts, economists, and academics. Individuals like Rachel Carson and Paul and Anne Ehrlich inhabited these professions, but they had used fiction and emotive language to challenge post-war society. Newer orators relied on mathematical algorithms and economic theory to support their dire predictions.¹⁶⁴ As such, they were difficult to challenge in the way their predecessors had been, and the lay public were disinclined to challenge them. 1972 saw think-tank the Club of Rome publish *The Limits to Growth*, which used computer models to predict a grim future in which industrial society collapsed through overconsumption. This was swiftly followed by economist Herman Daly's *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, which accused industrialists of an array of sins, whilst E. F. Schumacher's *Economics as if People Mattered*, called for a downscaling of technological and infrastructural systems.¹⁶⁵ This is not to suggest that there was a complete dearth of criticism, or that these individuals were entirely beyond the reach of reputational forces. It was merely that when critical attacks did emerge, they tended to arise beyond the popular space; Paul Ehrlich and Barry Commoner's debate over population and pollution, for example, was largely contained to academic circles.¹⁶⁶ Criticism about the Club of Rome largely focused on the flaws in their computer model, although there were some claims the group were a secretive cabal of elite businessmen.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ The rhetorical differences between the ecological writers of the 1960s and the growth critiques of the 1970s are discussed in: Erazim Kohak, *The Green Halo: A Bird's-Eye View of Ecological Ethics* (Peru: Open Court Publishing Company, 2000), pp. 142-144.

¹⁶⁵ Hirsch, *Power Loss*, pp. 137-138.

¹⁶⁶ Egan, pp. 109-138.

¹⁶⁷ David Howard Davis, *Ignoring the Apocalypse: Why Planning to Prevent Environmental Catastrophe Goes Astray* (Westport: Praeger, 2007), pp. 33-34.

Even as new 'economic' and 'scientific' environmentalists proved difficult to assail in the court of public opinion, another form of environmental group arose to challenge the utility industry, in a war conducted largely outside the public sphere. This new model of campaigning was exemplified by the Environmental Defense Fund.¹⁶⁸ Unlike traditional groups such as the National Audubon Society and Izaak Walton League, the EDF went to court. They recognised – as groups before them had not – that industries presenting contrasting public and private narratives were legally vulnerable, particularly when the details they chose to conceal impacted civic health. In 1972, EDF would seek to contest the way utilities offered discounts for bulk electricity sales to drive consumption.¹⁶⁹ EDF and similar groups like the National Resources Defence Council (NRDC), had little interest in public education and engagement, and largely stayed out of the spotlight. Their ability to engage cases that were legally, technologically, and scientifically complex helped them evade the eager pens of opinion writers, who lacked the specific vocabulary with which to approach many of their legal battles. That had always been the downside of the Sierra Club and David Brower's strategy. Sweeping statements about growth had helped make environmental conflict an accessible arena of discussion, but that same broad rhetoric had allowed a wide range of critical voices easy entry to the debating floor. Between 1972 and 1974, when EDF made legal challenges against electric utilities, their fundamental aim was still to question energy consumption and societal growth. It was however harder for the press to frame the fiendishly complex regulatory

¹⁶⁸ See: Douglas Bevington, *The Rebirth of Environmentalism: Grassroots Activism from the Spotted Owl to the Polar Bear* (Washington: Island Press, 2009), pp. 20-21; Norman Miller, *Environmental Politics: Stakeholders, Interests, and Policymaking*, 2nd edn. (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 75-77. For the history of other environmental law groups of the period, the National Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, see: Dowie, pp. 34-38.

¹⁶⁹ For an overview of this contest, see: J. Robert Malko and Philip R. Swensen, 'Pricing and the Electric Utility Industry', in *Public Utility Regulation: The Economic and Social Control of Industry*, ed. by Kenneth Nowotny, David B. Smith, Harry M. Trebing (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), pp. 35-77 (pp. 56-59).

nightmare of electric rate reviews in a digestible and engaging way.¹⁷⁰ The politics of individual and collective reputation were simply more entertaining than technical discussions and legalese, and identity narratives were available in many spheres beyond environmental campaigning.

Broader shifts in the nature of environmental campaigning also made the reputations of new and established groups alike difficult to shape in the early 1970s. Between Bernard DeVoto's call to protect Echo Park in 1950 and the end of the Grand Canyon conflict in 1967, land-use controversies that involved aesthetic defences had drawn escalating press attention. Environmental groups increasingly had to rely upon a media strategy that involved stimulating public sensitivity in an effort influence Congress to abandon a project. This was especially true when sympathy from government was seldom forthcoming without popular external pressure.¹⁷¹ This approach had worked in certain respects; it had increased the membership ranks of groups like the Wilderness Society, National Wildlife Federation, and Sierra Club, and had played a direct role in the crystallising of environmental support that had led to Earth Day in 1970. But it had also produced a deeply negative set of reputations that had helped ferment antagonistic sentiment in certain regions, notably the Intermountain West. Equally, the effort of remaining in the public eye proved emotionally and financially draining for groups that were most willing to employ it as a tactic.¹⁷² That was no longer the case after 1969. NEPA not only placed the financial and investigatory burden of exploring ecological impacts on the

¹⁷⁰ Even energy historians have recognised the complexity of this issue. In 1967, there were 3 electric rate reviews in the United States. By 1970, there were 45; by 1975, 114. See: Carl Pechman, *Regulating Power: The Economics of Electricity in the Information Age* (New York: Spring Science and Business Media, 1993), pp. 134-135.

¹⁷¹ Lifset, 'Environmentalism and the Energy Crisis', pp. 283-302 (pp. 290-291).

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

federal government, it also eroded the public perception that environmental groups were the chief opponents of economic growth.¹⁷³

This is not to say that national environmental groups were in total control of their own reputations following Earth Day. At the national level, those in control of environmentalism's public image were now internal benefactors with vested financial interests rather than external critics. Whilst this situation may have seemed preferable, the longstanding groups would, over the course of the 1970s, be forced to rely increasingly upon the dictates of two groups. The first set contained private and corporate philanthropists, the second direct mail donors. Both were comprised of cautious, conservative individuals. These new sources of funding were welcome, but they also made speaking for nature a more restrictive business. Such oratory, once the realm of wild eyed converts to the sublime, would become the purview of focus groups and public relations firms, in the name of preserving public respectability as much as the American landscape.¹⁷⁴

For Kaiparowits proponents, what was desperately needed by 1975 was the emergence of a singular figure who could be shown to embody all the failings of the environmental movement. Luckily for members of ALIVE, and thousands of silent Kaiparowits Project supporters, that is exactly what they would get.

¹⁷³ Ibid., pp. 283-302 (pp. 291-292).

¹⁷⁴ See: Dowie, pp. 38, 41-43.

Chapter 5

Celebrity Environmental Protest:

Robert Redford and the Kaiparowits Project

Introduction: Star Power atop Kaiparowits

In the autumn of 1975, a helicopter chartered by Southern California Edison flew high above southern Utah's Red Rock Country, looking down at the vast, and at that height relatively featureless expanse of the Kaiparowits Plateau. For the scant handful of ranchers and hikers who had reason to be so close to the plateau that day, helicopter traffic was no longer so abnormal. In an area with few roads and little ground access, passage by air had become a practical requirement for those tasked with performing tests for the Kaiparowits Project's long on-going environmental impact statement. For the people in the air, however, this particular trip was far from formulaic.

Riding in the helicopter, passengers noted a small black speck growing larger as they drew nearer the landing site on the plateau's dissected face. It was, the party observed, a single

desk situated alone in the middle of the Kaiparowits wilderness, placed without obvious purpose. When their ride reached the ground the group disembarked, falling in line behind their leader, a man who walked with intense purpose and no small degree of anger. The man approached the artificial intrusion of the desk, where sat a solitary SCE spokesperson, whose name was Doug. Doug wore a hard hat and a suit, the latter flown in to look smart for the imminent conversation. The two men proceeded to talk about a number of topics at some length. They spoke about the sublime nature of the American wilds, the necessity of industrial development, the country's energy future, and how the Kaiparowits power conflict touched upon all these issues. Not the most charismatic of speakers, Doug somewhat mechanically informed the other man that:

This is Nipple Bench, one of several proposed sites for the construction of the 3,000 megawatt Kaiparowits Power Project which will bring needed electricity to cities in Southern California and Arizona and reduce our nation's dependence on imported oil.

The man from the helicopter seemed only vaguely interested in what SCE had to say. Instead, he approvingly cast his eyes around at the lonely, rugged face of the plateau, lingering on the vast stretches of pinion pines and patches of sagebrush. To the remainder of the party, the entire scenario was understandably bizarre, two men debating over an office desk in the middle of one of the most remote parts of the United States. The group did not know Doug, but they all knew who the other man was. That man was movie star Robert Redford, then one of the nation's most visible celebrity figures. Redford had just entered into an alliance with the Environmental Defense Fund, with the express purpose of conducting a one-man war against the Kaiparowits Power Project.

This, at least, was how the event was retold.¹ The press conference between Edison and Redford passed without comment in the Intermountain press, but a newer expression of print media latched on to the strange display. This particular – and seemingly only – retelling of Redford’s Kaiparowits tour was relayed to the national readership of briefly popular biweekly magazine *New Times* in April 1976. The report brought the conflict over the plateau’s coal to its largest audience yet, particularly to younger readers along the urban seaboard. Compressing over a decade of complex conflict between SCE, federal government departments, and private environmental advocacy groups into the space of seven pages, author Michael Parfit gave Redford primary billing. The star was cast as leading protagonist in an exciting conflict in a faraway corner of the Old West. Redford assumed the role of champion spokesperson for wild nature, a lone individual who would vie against the insidious tides of industrial expansion.

Parfit’s blending of modern celebrity and contemporary discord was typical fare for the biweekly. Launched in 1973 by publisher George Hirsch, *New Times* was part of an emergent media that aimed to delve into social issues and the transmission of alternate or countercultural perspectives. The increasingly broad boundaries of environmental conflict were a core component of *New Times*’ editorial spelunking. Disappointed in journalism’s lacklustre critical inquiry throughout the 1950s, and inspired by the social movements of the 1960s, journalists for these publications were intent on rooting out corruption and wrongdoing.¹ Environmental spokespeople became recognisable individuals of kinship that could be shaped in a gallant frame. However, Hirsch’s backers placed both the motivations

¹ See: Parfit, pp. 47-53, Ms 146, Box 617.

¹ James Aucoin, *The Evolution of American Investigative Journalism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2005), p. 108; James Aucoin, ‘Investigative Journalism’, in *American Journalism: History, Principles, Practices*, ed. by W. David Sloan, Lisa Mullikin Parcell (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2002), pp. 209-218 (p. 215).

and efficacy of such crafting into question. The publisher had received initial financing from Chase Manhattan, the Bank of America, and American Express. This heralded two things. One, that environmental politics had the financial backing to form a mainstay of the glossy investigative journalism of the 1970s. Two, that the publication of such conflicts would be seen as little threat to corporate backers who saw profit in the popularity of ostensibly anti-establishment narratives.²

Whilst corporate funding placed the purity of *New Times'* motivation into question, the changing tastes of audiences also played a role in the warping of the Kaiparowits conflict around a single celebrity figure. The magazine was designed for a curiously hybrid market. It sought a constituency that wanted more depth from their reading material than the average tabloid provided, but balked at magazines they deemed as possessing too many cultural pretensions such as the *New Yorker*. When *New Times* decided to publish a piece on the Kaiparowits controversy, it therefore had to offer its readership two things. The article needed to appeal to an audience questing for insight into the internal world of celebrity culture whilst simultaneously fulfilling a more casual readership's interest in anti-establishment voices. This was a difficult approach to pursue in a competitive market.³

New Times' solution was to present environmental thought as something deeply personal. Expressing sympathy for nature was presented as a risky admission that would impact personal and professional reputation. In southern Utah, ten years of conflict over energy development had proved that often to be the case. This made it an ideal fit for Parfit's

² David Armstrong, *A Trumpet to Arms: Alternate Media in America* (Boston: South End, 1981), p. 133; Deidre Boyle, *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 245.

³ Other magazines such as *Esquire*, for example, focused on long form interviews, and television was adopting similarly investigative postures when it approached individual personalities. See: Gail Collins, *Scorpion Tongues: Gossip, Celebrity, and American Politics*, New and Updated edn. (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007), p. 187.

audience; environmental discourse became evidence the interviewer was unveiling a celebrity's intimate thoughts. In this instance, Parfit would peel back the charismatic palimpsest of Robert Redford, the 'actor' and reveal Robert Redford, the human being. The piece emphasised to readers that Redford's environmental beliefs represented a deeply emotional, private matter for the performer. His thoughts on Kaiparowits gave them the sense they were peaking behind the curtain to something primal. 'You feel it,' Redford noted when speaking about the plateau 'I don't have to talk about it. You feel it, it means a lot.'⁴ The result was an extended, intimate conversation with a movie star that oscillated between banal discussions of future film projects toward more in-depth thought on the spiritual significance of Red Rock Country.

While the *New Times* article elevated Redford to lead role in the energy drama, at time of publication the precise nature of what impact a celebrity voice might have on an environmental controversy – or on movement reputation – was difficult to ascertain.⁵ SCE's decision to hold the bizarre press conference atop the plateau certainly pointed to some anxiety from the utility consortium on how Redford's voice might impact on the project's fortunes. The conference very much centred on the company making a good impression on the actor, and the tour was heavily weighted around Redford. When SCE invited Redford to the site in late August, he was encouraged to bring multiple guests along for the ride. Frank Moss, newly elected Republican Senator for Utah Jake Garn, and other members of the

⁴ Parfit, p. 49, Ms 146, Box 617.

⁵ The majority of scholarship on celebrity environmentalism focuses on contemporary or post-twentieth century issues, although more general historicising work with a US-specific context does exist. For the best examples, see: Dan Brockington, *Celebrity and the Environment: Fame, Wealth and Power in Conservation* (London: Zed Books, 2009); Mark Wheeler, *Celebrity Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), pp. 33-59.

Beehive State's political class were only allocated a single spot for the trip.⁶ SCE appeared desperate to convince Redford of the dire necessity of the Kaiparowits Project.

Edison believed that showing Redford Kaiparowits up close would be an effective way to demonstrate it to be fundamentally unremarkable. They wanted the actor to see the plateau as a worthless geography with little aesthetic or ecological merit. In this endeavour, the utility had little success. Redford's initial impressions of Kaiparowits mirrored those of Clyde Kluckhohn's first ascent of the plateau in the late 1920s. The actor declared that Kaiparowits 'was the most beautiful spot I'd ever seen.' By contrast, SCE's faux tour and office performance for the actor, Redford recalled, was 'something of a nightmare.'⁷

Despite such heartfelt proclamations atop Kaiparowits, Redford would prove an ultimately sporadic activist and spokesperson for EDF. An actor at the height of a busy film career, Redford only had time for infrequent proclamations. Yet *New Times'* initial article, whilst it contorted more than a decade-long conflict for a specific readership, anticipated the disproportionate blame and centrality Redford would come to assume in the Kaiparowits plant's ultimate cancellation. Redford's critical commentary against the Kaiparowits Project would be sufficient to transform him into a potent scapegoat in the Intermountain press, a symbol of everything wrong with environmental protestors.⁸ By April 1976, when Edison

⁶ Garn, like Moss, was a staunch supporter of the project from his entry into Utah's political sphere. See: David W. Evans to Allan T. Howe, 21 August 1975, Ms 140, Box 64.

⁷ Parfit, pp. pp. 49-50, Ms 146, Box 617.

⁸ Although *New Times* greatly amplified Redford's role, it did little to make clear exactly when the actor had become personally interested in speaking out about the Kaiparowits Project. It was likely Redford had known about Edison's plans for some time before his decision to enter the fray. Redford called his Sundance Ranch northeast of Provo, Utah home for much of the year. He owned boats that he frequently took out on Lake Powell, in Kaiparowits' shadow, and had developed a close friendship with Utah democrat Wayne Owens who was involved in on-going negotiations with SCE. Known to identify as an Utahn rather than a member of Hollywood in interviews, and having become interested in environmental matters at the end of the previous decade, it would have been hard for Redford to miss news of the proposed plant as the controversy escalated. All Parfit noted was that it was the actor who had contacted the Environmental Defense Fund first, sometime between the end of 1974 and the initial months of 1975. Redford offered EDF to leverage his star power for publicity

pulled out of the project, effectively cancelling it, Redford had alienated much of southern Utah and northern Arizona, and sparked a war between Utah's political class and television broadcaster CBS.

Ultimately, the introduction of a modern celebrity voice into a long-raging environmental conflict would produce new mutations to the environmentalist image whilst also recalling older prescribed identities. Redford's star power would benefit the environmental coalition against the plant through his ability to stimulate media interest, but this process did not materialise overnight. When local and national attention did coalesce around the actor and his statements, regional perceptions of Redford as a privileged, wealthy outsider further damaged the public image of private environmental groups in Utah. In the final nine months of the conflict, Redford would help the plateau achieve its symbolic apotheosis. His involvement would cement the plateau as a wound on the landscape for southern Utah's locals. In doing so, Redford would come to personify the wider power of an environmental elite; a group more concerned with romanticising the landscape for affluent recreationalists than paying heed to the struggles of a local populace.

A Lack of Interest

If Edison were waiting anxiously for a public backlash following Redford's trip to Kaiparowits in August 1975, they needn't have worried, at least initially. No immediate tide of national support for Redford's position materialised. Indeed, there was a general dearth of

against the project. See: Parfit, p. 50, Ms 146, Box 617; Mary Belle Bloch to Frank E. Moss, February 4, 1976, Ms 146, Box 615.

commentary on Redford's trip to the plateau that year. Major Utah press outlets the *Salt Lake Tribune*, *Deseret News*, and *Daily Herald* all let the expedition pass without comment, a response that was comparable in California and further afield. Slightly more interest registered in Red Rock Country, although page space given to the actor remained severely limited. Redford's trip was briefly mentioned by Saint George's *Color Country Spectrum*, as was his alliance with EDF and small environmental organisation the Utah Environment Center, but he appeared as little more than a footnote. When it came to characterising individual environmental sympathisers, the *Spectrum* was more interested in cataloguing the endeavours of Lloyd Gordon, the head of a local environmental group containing a handful of people that had been set up explicitly to prevent the Kaiparowits plant.⁹ The paper identified Gordon as an 'outspoken and very active environmentalist' from Cedar City. It questioned why he would 'choose such a lonely and often locally unpopular role.'¹⁰ Gordon got a full two-page spread in the *Spectrum*, which the paper's editor justified on the grounds he was 'probably the best known environmental advocate in Southern Utah.'¹¹ Redford was reduced to a single mention.

The limited nature of coverage revealed a notable disparity between Edison's fears of what influence Redford might be able to exert on the public, and the level of attention paid by the press, particularly closer to Utah's Dixie, to the celebrity-utility courtship. Edison's view was that a celebrity environmental spokesperson represented a new and unknown quantity in the sphere of environmental politics, an abnormality that was worthy of efforts to placate. It was

⁹ Gordon and Coppel, p. 1.

¹⁰ Loraine Juvelin, 'Lloyd Gordon speaks out on environment', *Color Country Spectrum*, 7 August 1975, p. 20. See also: LaVarr G. Webb, "'People Problem" is Biggest Problem to Kaiparowits Planning', *Color Country Spectrum*, 4 September 1975, p. 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

a perspective filtered through a decidedly southern Californian lens. Edison's service area in and around Los Angeles placed it at the nucleus of global celebrity culture; nowhere was the intensification of interest in – and social influence of – entertainers more apparent.

In practice however, widely held public assumptions about the ideological climate of Hollywood in the decade curtailed rather than amplified Redford's ability to transmit his message. The absence of reaction to the actor's comments suggests that to a plurality of readers in Utah and California, Redford's pronouncements about wilderness were interpreted as just another celebrity seeking to belatedly vocalise the back-to-nature aspirations of 1960s counterculture.¹² The public had trouble viewing the performer's comments as all that surprising in 1975; there already existed a common understanding that Tinseltown was both bastion and popular vanguard of left-leaning political issues.¹³ Redford's celebrity had therefore given him the ability to interface with Edison, but conforming to the accepted political bias of west coast entertainers did little to attract the attention of the press.

The lesson was that controversial statements – or at least the perception that one's commentary was contentious – still counted for much in winning press coverage of environmental conflict in Utah. Bernard DeVoto's lambasting of the Bureau of Reclamation and their plans for Echo Park in 1950 had established the idea that conservationist and environmentalist rhetoric was at the very least colourful, and frequently demagogic. The most high-profile members of the environmental movement in the following years, those such as David Brower, who managed to be identified by critics beyond their parent organisations, had further confirmed that. They had amplified their individual profiles through a marriage of

¹² Dunaway, *Natural Visions*, pp. 186-189; Andrew Kirk, "'Machines of Loving Grace': Alternative Technology, Environment, and the Counterculture', in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s*, ed. by Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 353-378 (p. 354).

¹³ Wheeler, *Celebrity Politics*, pp. 43-59.

acerbic pronouncements and firebrand identities. Lloyd Gordon, living in a region hostile to his views had gained a better understanding of the rhythms of environmental press coverage better than Redford. He noted to the *Spectrum* that ‘I have to be controversial to make news.’ Bemoaning that the Associated Press only published his comments when he expressed opposition to projects, Gordon concluded that the press wanted ‘Environmental questions [...] to be controversial.’¹⁴

An identity or worldview that stood apart from that of the region also helped. The notion that an actor from Hollywood would express environmental sympathies was expected. In southern Utah, that a local like Gordon would voluntarily claim the mantle of environmentalist was far more surprising – and thus newsworthy. Gordon recognised this also, suggesting to the *Spectrum* that ‘there are probably fewer active environmentalists per square mile here than in almost any part of the United States.’¹⁵ Where Redford was seen to be conforming to the political norms of the Hollywood elite, to the *Spectrum* Gordon was a virtual anomaly. With Redford’s Kaiparowits tour passing with a lack of commentary by the beginning of 1976, the actor found that a year into his alliance with EDF, his public stature had won the plant’s opposition forces scant visibility. That was a succinct problem – Redford’s supposed ability to generate media attention had been, in the actor’s own estimation, the entire point.¹⁶

¹⁴ Juvelin, p. 20.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Parfit, p. 50, Ms 146, Box 617.

Celebrity Protest and Press Resistance

The notion that Redford's commentary was insufficiently worthy of surprise reflected more than the specific rhythms of press coverage in Utah. In the national press, dedicating page space to the social and political influence of film stars was seen to constitute a headlong flight into fancy, and in the beginning months of 1975 there were more pressing events necessitating media coverage. The Vietnam War was barreling toward its embarrassing conclusion; the reverberations of Watergate continued to echo. With declining readership numbers as a result of television, newspaper editors bemoaned visual media's celebrity coverage as they lost popular purchase. 'The doleful fact is,' reported *Newsweek* in 1977 'that the celebrity industry has reached the point where demand is outstripping supply.'¹⁷ 1974 saw the establishment of *People*, which sold the country singular personality stories almost-exclusively, and a slew of imitators quickly followed.¹⁸ Resistance at an editorial level reflected the anxiety that stories of substance – political developments and social strife – were to be increasingly replaced with leisure and entertainment news.¹⁹ Refusal to cave to this pressure remained especially true for the press in Utah. When Redford moved to his Sundance resort on a more permanent basis in 1970, the *Daily Herald* declared its resistance to excessive coverage: 'we leave him alone in his private life [...] his professional work and his

¹⁷ The debate over what has caused the decline in readership numbers of US papers is a continuing area of discourse, although most point to the rise of alternate media sources. See: Anthony M. Nadler, *Making the News Popular: Mobilizing U.S. News Audiences* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), pp. 59-61; Jousha Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 43.

¹⁸ *Brand Bible: The Complete Guide to Building, Designing, and Sustaining Brands*, ed. by Debbie Millman (New York: Rodrigo Corral Design, 2012), pp. 110-111; *Star Struck: An Encyclopaedia of Celebrity Culture*, ed. by Sam Riley (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2010), pp. 171-173; Karen Sternheimer, *Celebrity Culture and the American Dream: Stardom and Social Mobility*, 2nd edn. (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 217.

¹⁹ James Brian McPherson, *Journalism at the End of the American Century, 1965-Present* (Westport: Praeger, 2006), p. 87.

interest in Utah we certainly cover. But we don't send a reporter and a cameraman to his doorstep every time he comes home.'²⁰

Even though few long-established newspapers had caved to extensive celebrity coverage by 1975, the separation between political reporting and the personal lives of public figures was beginning to show clear signs of erosion. Continuing competition from television coverage provided one impetus for the change; the Watergate scandal furnished another. Prior to the scandal, press coverage of politicians remained rigidly concerned with their professional function. External to the boundaries of office, the nation's representatives were non-entities with private lives seldom mentioned.²¹ Watergate confirmed the public's worst fears about their most prominent political representatives, and followed years of escalating cynicism over the government's approach to Vietnam. As *New York Times* journalist Gail Collins notes, Watergate was the last straw. It made much of the US media realise their historic discretion toward elected officials had been misplaced – and awoke them to a huge audience that had been clamouring for insight into the private lives and personalities of public figures.²² In contrast, the private lives of celebrities – actors, singers, or performers – were considered open season as soon as serious page space began to be regularly dedicated to them.²³

Watergate encouraged reporters to put the private proclivities of politicians into print. Yet no inverse development was observable when it came to reporting the political aspirations of entertainers. Interest in the private lives of the famous escalated, but celebrity attempts at

²⁰ Theron H. Luke, 'Let's let him live among us', *Daily Herald*, 5 July 1970, p. 26.

²¹ George Comstock and Erica Scharrer, *The Psychology of Media and Politics* (Burlington: Elsevier Academic Press, 2005), pp. 76-77; Mark J. Rozell, *The Press and the Ford Presidency* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1992), p. 233.

²² Collins, p. 191; Bob Batchelor, *Gatsby: The Cultural History of the Great American Novel* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), pp. 103-105.

²³ Riley, p. 172.

political engagement often passed without remark. Not that an absence of commentary equated to an absence of political practice. Even though Redford's comments on coal power were ignored, his entry into the Kaiparowits controversy did point to the continuing evolution of celebrity political investment.

Celebrity Environmentalists and Environmental Celebrities

The potency of celebrity status in the public sphere had increased considerably since its emergence in the first decade of the twentieth century. The power of stardom had initially allowed individuals to eclipse the anonymity of modern industrial society through their newfound status. By 1975, it also allowed the biggest stars to transcend the boundaries of the entertainment industry and exert influence on what they saw as moral issues and social causes.²⁴ As with newspaper editors in the 1970s, cultural commentators watched the developing influence of the star system with no small degree of anxiety. Intensifying interest in celebrity figures from the general populace appeared to presage new forms of cultural hierarchy. Sociologist Leo Lowenthal had expressed concerns about this through detailing the emergence of a new cultural elite in 1944, a fear that C. Wright Mills resuscitated in the mid-1950s.²⁵

Early fears about what impact celebrity figures might be able to achieve through political careerism were outmoded by the time Redford joined with the Environmental Defense Fund.

²⁴ Richard de Cordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp. 98-105.

²⁵ Philip Drake and Michael Higgins, "'I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Into Politics': The Political Celebrity and the Celebrity Politician", in *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*, ed. by Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 87-100 (p. 87). Wheeler, *Celebrity Politics*, p. 9.

The performer's actions spoke not to the desire for a more general political career, but represented a more distinctive, narrower set of aims. Redford was an early supporter of the environmental cause, but this adoption could already be located within an emergent trend. Starting in the mid-1960s, entertainment figures began to eschew entangling their identities and personal brands with a political system that was losing its beneficent lustre. Instead, they would turn toward association with contentious social causes such as civil rights activism, anti-war protest, and environmentalism.²⁶ Whilst celebrity involvement in mainstream politics had become normalised following John F. Kennedy's star-studded 1960 campaign for the presidency, the Vietnam War catalysed the passion of entertainers, who began to expound their feelings on more divisive issues.²⁷ Paul Newman campaigned for anti-Vietnam war candidate Eugene McCarthy in 1968, joined by Dick Van Dyke and Leonard Nimoy.²⁸ At home, Warren Beatty and sister Shirley MacClaine suspended their careers to support anti-Vietnam Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern. More extreme examples, though rare, also presented themselves. Jane Fonda broadcast radio shows from North Vietnam where she denounced the US government and railed against the military-industrial complex.²⁹

Whilst celebrities had quickly adopted civil rights and especially the Vietnam War as causes they could champion, like many protestors Hollywood's entertainment elite was slower to adopt environmental causes. Even as late as the first Earth Day in April 1970, well-known speech givers at rallies and teach-ins were more likely to be people like Barry Commoner or

²⁶ Wheeler, *Celebrity Politics*, pp. 52-58.

²⁷ Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), p. 123; Wheeler, *Celebrity Politics*, pp. 45-46.

²⁸ Marian Edelman Borden, *Paul Newman: A Biography* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011), pp. 93-95.

²⁹ Henry Mark Holzer and Erica Holzer, *"Aid and Comfort" Jane Fonda in North Vietnam* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), p. 61.

Ralph Nader. These were figures that had fought long and hard to establish their conservationist credentials before they had accrued much in the way of a public reputation. Belated celebrity came as a result of prior expertise.³⁰ Those representing the inverse, a willingness to trade pre-existing star power for the conservationist cause were far rarer, although some notable examples emerged. Popular folk singer Pete Seeger performed at the Washington Monument and was made Earth Day's honorary chairman.³¹ Paul Newman entertained crowds, joined by fellow movie stars Ali McGraw and Dustin Hoffman.³²

However, whilst press coverage of Earth Day remained ample, in keeping with print media's belief that celebrity reportage was reserved for television, the participation of entertainers was thinly mentioned. When commentary on their involvement did appear, it was with no small degree of hostility. Writing for the *Baltimore Sun*, Ernest B. Furgurson noted that, until 'the celebrities arrived,' the assembled Earth Day crowd was 'outnumbered by the tourists.'³³ Expressing resistance to the message of Earth Day and to the new geography of federal environmental protection was not Furgurson's aim. Instead, his criticisms mirrored the broad feelings of the press' editorial corps in the period. The cynical marshalling and deployment of entertainment figures to stimulate public interest did little to amplify what he felt was the importance of the environmental message. Instead, entertainers obfuscated and distracted from the severity of environmental decline; they were unhelpful spokespeople for an urgent cause.

³⁰ Egan, pp. 109-125; Paul Sabin, *The Bet: Paul Ehrlich, Julian Simon, and Our Gamble over Earth's Future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 47-49.

³¹ Egan, p. 111.

³² J. Michael Martinez, *Environmental Sustainability and American Public Administration: Past, Present, and Future* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), p. 188; Mary Graham, *The Morning After Earth Day: Practical Environmental Politics* (Washington D.C.: Bookings Institution Press, 1999), p. 1.

³³ Ernest B. Furgurson, 'Hello, Earth Lovers! Can you hear me?', *Baltimore Sun*, 23 April 1970, p. A18.

Yet Furguson missed a crucial point in his analysis of Earth Day's celebrity deployment, one that environmental organisers themselves were slowly awakening to. The inclusion of performers in Earth Day proceedings not only promised a broader societal purchase for environmentalism. Their presence also denoted that the public were increasingly willing to vest conservation thinking, hopes, fears, plans, and practices in the identities of prominent entertainers.³⁴ This was precisely Southern California Edison's fear; that public appreciation of Redford's filmic output and personal charisma would easily translate into support for his belief that southern Utah should remain unencumbered by coal power.

Vesting conservation ideals in entertainers was a developing phenomenon that became most notable in the 1970s, but the idea that a single individual could embody conservation practice or environmental advocacy was no new frontier. As anthropologist Dan Brockington has noted, there were numerous examples of North Americans who had won fame and sometimes adoration by writing and speaking for nature long before 1970.³⁵ The American public had long appreciated connections more broadly between individual charisma and environmental narratives. Lewis and Clark and John Wesley Powell were early examples, whilst Buffalo Bill proved celebrity could be attained through connection to popular conceptions of landscapes and climates.³⁶ Examples more explicitly connecting celebrity status to geographical protection were more limited, although John Muir had certainly enjoyed widespread regional recognition in his later years. Lists of famous conservation celebrities were likely to include similar sets of names, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry

³⁴ Brockington, p. 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

³⁶ See: Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), pp. 123-159. Celebrity forms a consistent theme in: Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, and on the cusp of wider recognition in 1975, Utah's own Edward Abbey. Posthumous appreciation of North American naturalists eerily mirrored the cadence of 1970s celebrity adoration. Pilgrimage and tutelage became the watchwords. Fans continued to travel to Thoreau's home and lodgings at Walden Pond. They sought out his writings, and some would look to adapt small elements of their lives to his teachings and image.³⁷ Similarly, touristic visitation to the homes of the rich and famous, despite being practiced decades earlier, experienced their own expansion in the 1970s. Meanwhile, adherence to celebrity lifestyle advice began to creep into the mass-produced magazines of the decade. Robert Redford found people were beginning to ask him for his knowledge on an absurdly broad range of topics, from the secret of making a marriage last to how to make eggs benedict.³⁸

Conservation Relic

Celebrity and environmental protest had therefore experienced an at least partial convergence by 1975. Where did Redford fit into this tapestry of environmental speech making and the public and press response to it, and where could he be located with respect to his celebrity conservationist precursors? On some levels, Redford's initial approach to the Kaiparowits Project marked him as having more parallels with earlier nature writers than the environmental leaders of the 1970s. Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, Carson, Abbey – all possessed a supreme talent for simplistic yet evocative writing. They shared an ability to speak plainly and directly about their passion for nature. Redford demonstrated his own ability in this regard.

³⁷ Brockington, p. 64.

³⁸ Michael Feeney Callan, *Robert Redford: The Biography* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2011), p. 179.

Recalling his helicopter tour of southern Utah with Edison, the actor found his mind wandering to his experiences reading the words of one of Utah's most celebrated authors, Wallace Stegner. He noted:

My passion came from the pages of Wallace Stegner, who prided himself on his attachment to the land. We flew over the Escalante Red Rocks, this paradise that has been untouched for millennia, and I thought about what Stegner has written: that here is a place where the silence allows you to hear the swish of fallen stars. I told Howard [Allen], 'the last thing southern Utah needs is a behemoth to break the silence and pollute the water and the air.'³⁹

Here was the paradoxical commentary of the celebrity environmentalist. Redford could ably relate his own perceptual experience of southern Utah back to one of the state's literary greats, but he extolled rootedness in the land (and its silence) whilst taking a helicopter ride. Still, charisma counted for much, and by 1975 his career and public status had allowed him to hone his own talent for passionate, forceful public speech. His comments to Allen were in keeping with his sporadic commentary against the project. Redford's own shaping of the Kaiparowits controversy was distinct from that of state opposition and other environmental spokespeople. They talked about cumulative impact, ecological damage, fly ash particulates, sulphur oxide, and other technical jargon. When Redford spoke about the landscape, he favoured words like 'wild,' and 'virgin.'⁴⁰ It was a more welcoming, inclusionary rhetoric, one that emphasised a higher emotional stake in southern Utah's landscape. Whether this was an intentional strategy on Redford's part or simply due to unfamiliarity with the technological and ecological complexities of the project was less clear. If this was a personal attempt to avoid embarrassment or accusations of hubristic expertise, it was also a risk given the state's southern reaches established hostility to emotional and romanticised environmental speech.

³⁹ Howard Allen was the public relations manager for Southern California Edison. See: Callan, p. 237.

⁴⁰ Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, p. 216.

Redford appeared, to the few public observers paying attention, an artefact from a bygone era thrust unexpectedly into contemporary environmental politics; a John Muir that travelled by helicopter rather than by foot.

In private, however, Redford's own aspirations as passionate nature lover hewed much closer to the post-1970 manifestation of white, mainstream environmental politics. Redford quickly learned that to be an effective force for environmental reform in post-Nixon America meant engaging in Washington-style lobbying more than it did eloquently expounding the glories of wilderness. Preserving wilderness had gone in the space of two decades from an exercise in grassroots organising to an arduous political process.⁴¹ Redford's realisation had come whilst he was filming *All the President's Men*, when he began to more seriously reflect upon the kind of political impact he might make. Joan Claybrook, a public interest lobbyist for Ralph Nader, had chastised Redford for engaging in an outmoded form of environmental campaigning. She agreed with the actor's complaints about American industry's encroachment on the vistas of the Intermountain West, but charged that his laments were empty rhetoric when unaccompanied by action.⁴²

Redford's first real attempt at environmental lobbying came just before his trip to Kaiparowits, in summer 1975, when he sought to prevent former governor of Wyoming, Stanley Hathaway, becoming Gerald Ford's Secretary of the Interior. Redford believed Hathaway would all but confirm the approval of a Kaiparowits Generating Station, given the politician's reputation as a staunch advocate of mining.⁴³ However, the actor's experience

⁴¹ This is James Morton Turner's central thesis in his coverage of post-1964 wilderness politics. See: Turner, *The Promise*.

⁴² Callan, p. 235.

⁴³ See: Summitt, p. 74; Mark S. Foster, 'Walt Disney, Cesar Chavez, Barbara Jordan, and the Evolution of the West's Identity, 1945-1980', in *Western Lives: A Biographical History of the American West*, ed. by Richard W. Etulain (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), pp. 355-385 (p. 370).

behind the scenes in Washington proved not dissimilar from his difficulties in generating media coverage for the threat to southern Utah. Redford believed he had convinced enough senators to vote against Hathaway's confirmation, but whilst celebrity gave access to prominent figures, it provided no guarantee anyone would listen. Hathaway was still confirmed. 'I had those bastards,' Redford declared. 'They promised me and they lied to my face.'⁴⁴ If anything, the Ford administration seemed more concerned by Redford's actual career than his newfound enthusiasm for environmental politics. The White House expressed to Warner Brothers that *All the President's Men* should have its release date changed so as to not hurt Republican political fortunes.⁴⁵ The whole experience in Washington further hardened Redford against Edison's proposals in Kane and Garfield.⁴⁶

"Don't Burn Coal, Burn Environmentalists"

Redford had still failed to gain any real public attention for his comments against Kaiparowits by the start of 1976. He had tried to form a Utah-based pressure group to dispute the plant, the Southwestern Energy Alliance, and wanted to hold further public hearings, but both ventures had collapsed.⁴⁷ If environmental groups were disappointed with the actor's lack of impact, then another skirmish over the plateau in January further demonstrated the risks of celebrity inclusion for the sake of media visibility. Tensions were running particularly high that month in the communities of southern Utah. Delays over environmental concerns continued

⁴⁴ Callan, p. 236.

⁴⁵ Beverly Merrill Kelley, *Reelpolitik Ideologies in American Political Film* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), p. 128; Robert Brent Toplin, *History by Hollywood: The Use and Abuse of the American Past* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), pp. 179-202.

⁴⁶ Callan, p. 237.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

to engulf the Kaiparowits development as the BLM beavered away at their impact statement. Concerns about inflation's influence on the project's economic viability also caused doubts.⁴⁸ As a result, SCE and their utility consortium announced a self-imposed, one-year moratorium to construction on 30 December 1975, as they awaited the Department of the Interior's final assessment of their proposals.⁴⁹

Sensing a chance to go on the offensive, the Sierra Club organised and led a two-day conference of six national environmental groups against Edison and their project at Wahweap Lodge in Page, Arizona, in mid-January.⁵⁰ The invitation of national press outlets to the conference signalled that North America's environmental leadership were finally willing to translate the Kaiparowits conflict beyond its regional boundaries, and awaken the nation against the project. No longer just the concern of lonely Utah environmental figures like Jack McLellan and Lloyd Gordon, clear signs of escalation had been evident since August 1975. Both the National Parks Association and the Sierra Club had published articles against Kaiparowits.⁵¹ Jack McLellan argued that the Kaiparowits conflict had become 'one of this century's greatest environmental battles.' Like earlier letters against the plant to Frank Moss, the article posited that Kaiparowits would be a tipping point of sorts, placing the entirety of the Four Corner's region and Golden Circle under a deathly pall. 'If you have good photographs of Grand Canyon, Zion, Bryce, Capitol Reef, Arches, and Canyonlands national

⁴⁸ Basil Lay to Thomas S. Kleppe, 8 December 1975, Ms 146, Box 615; David W. Evans to Frank E. Moss, 15 December 1975, Ms 146, Box 615.

⁴⁹ Sproul, 356-371 (p. 369); 'Kaiparowits Suffers Year Delay, Says Power Firm', *Daily Herald*, 1 January 1976, p. 20.

⁵⁰ Members from the Environmental Defense Fund, Friends of the Earth, National Audubon Society, National Parks and Conservation Association, Sierra Club, and Wilderness Society were reported as in attendance. See: Robert S. Halliday, 'Kaiparowits Parley Disrupted', *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 11 1976, p. B1.

⁵¹ See: Marga Raskin, 'SMOG ALERT for our Southwestern National Parks', *National Parks & Conservation Magazine*, pp. 9-15. Press Clippings. Ms 146, Box 617; Jack McLellan, 'Kaiparowits: Southern Utah at the Crossroads', *Sierra Club Bulletin*, 60 (1975), pp. 6-8.

parks,' McLellan announced, 'save them.' 'They may be valuable some day as records of a golden age when the scenic Southwest lay under clear blue skies.'⁵²

Spearheaded by new Club president Kent Gill, the conference brought together longstanding environmental luminaries like president of Friends of the Earth David Brower, Hopi Native American leader David Monongye, senior Club leader Brant Calkin, and prominent western historian Alvin Josephy. Continuing environmental groups' inclination for celebrity incorporation, figures with more popular appeal were also invited. Redford was notably absent for conference proceedings, busy with filming commitments, but the Club managed to provide another star attraction: countercultural figure and star of smash-hit *Easy Rider* (1969), actor Dennis Hopper. This amalgamation of star presence and conference location would illustrate how ignorant environmental leaders were about their difficult reputation in Red Rock Country.

The shores of Lake Powell provided an odd location for an environmental conference run by the Sierra Club in 1976. Many attendees belonging to the older groups still maintained their hatred of the reservoir.⁵³ Whilst Wahweap Marina provided strange emotional geography from which discuss Kaiparowits, it was an equally odd choice of physical location. As the Kaiparowits Project had continued to adapt to numerous external demands, it had inched further and further onto the plateau. Existing plans now suggested that Fourmile Bench was the preferred site of project development, giving the plant far greater employment potential for the communities of southern Utah, but placing it substantially further away from Page and

⁵² Ibid., p. 7.

⁵³ Two of the lead speakers of the conference, David Brower and Edward Abbey, both maintained an enduring hatred of the lake. See: McPhee; Gessner, pp. 169-170.

Glen Canyon Dam.⁵⁴ Utah's press subtly inferred the reason for environmentalists to hold a conference at Wahweap was so that they could enjoy the recreational opportunities around Lake Powell.⁵⁵ Such suggestions cast environmentalists as both hypocrites and cowards, simultaneously enjoying a place they had once vocally opposed, whilst avoiding the locals that would benefit from plant construction. The distinctly liminal character of proceedings that weekend served to entrench such attacks. The press implied elite recreation was as big a focus as discussing Kaiparowits.

Admittedly, locals at the adjacent town of Page did view Lake Powell as an explicitly recreational space by 1976, but environmental visitors embraced a style of enjoyment within its boundaries that was becoming contentious. Following an initial decade of the region's families seeking 'pristine' nature in the nooks and crannies of Powell's canyons, seasonal visitors had begun to embrace speed and bacchanalian consumption as integral parts of the lake experience.⁵⁶ As foreign tourists, celebrities, and boat owners made increasingly frequent pilgrimages to Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, the triumphant churning of waters rendered Powell an aquatic speedway.⁵⁷ Thrill seeking was becoming more predominant, but not necessarily welcome. The decision to conduct helicopter tours of the plateau were also viewed as dubious. Arizona's *Casa Grande Dispatch* and other papers argued conservationists were conducting a 'flyover' of the region.⁵⁸ In this manner, they illustrated the actions of plant opponents as physically and economically distant from the

⁵⁴ 'Site Analysis' Nipple Bench and Fourmile Bench, Kaiparowits Generating Station, April 1975', Ms 619, Box 105.

⁵⁵ 'Conservationists are Ridiculed at Kaiparowits Power Hearing', *Casa Grande Dispatch*, 12 January 1976, p. 12; 'Power Plant Foes Given Cat Calls', *Arizona Daily Sun*, 12 January 1976, p. 2.

⁵⁶ Farmer, *Glen Canyon Dammed*, p. 173.

⁵⁷ Wallace Stegner discusses this transition in: Stegner, 'Glen Canyon Submersus', pp. 137-145.

⁵⁸ 'Conservationists are Ridiculed', p. 12; 'Vocal Utah Citizens Back Electric Plant', *Arizona Republic*, 11 January 1976, p. B16.

concerns of Utah's deprived southern communities, a group looking to ignore face-to-face contact at ground level.⁵⁹

Paul Swatek, associate conservation director of the Sierra Club, admitted the week after the conference that the event had exposed a communication gap between the anti-Kaiparowits coalition and the positions of environmental groups, and that they got 'more dialogue' from locals than expected.⁶⁰ Yet it would be more accurate to characterise this gap as a gulf. Indeed, none of the conference organisers had seen fit to invite any locals from Kane and Garfield County to give their own perspective on the project's development.

If evading debate was the intent, it failed. Although pro-Kaiparowits voices had not been invited, locals had been made aware of their exclusion and decided to protest the conference. In the middle of a briefing in which environmental leaders conferred to the national press the plant's potential impacts, almost one hundred Kane and Garfield County citizens poured into Wahweap Lodge. Led by Kane County Commissioner and senior ALIVE leader Sterling Griffiths, the group quickly diverted the media's attention. Only sporadic interaction between the two sides in a conflict lasting over a decade ensured hostility was immediate. Locals booed and laughed over speeches from environmental leaders and 'changed the scheduled script into an impromptu free-for-all.'⁶¹ As Sierra Club president and chief conference organiser Kent Gill tried to speak, southern Utahns chanted their opinions of the environmental movement: 'When people get cold they gonna go out and lynch the environmentalists.' Another protestor shouted 'We should have shot you Sierra Club hippy freaks ten years ago.' According to the

⁵⁹ My thoughts here are taken from discussion of the term, 'flyover states,' found in: Richard William Bledsoe, *Can Saul Alinsky Be Saved?: Jesus Christ in the Obama and Post-Obama Era* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), p. 51.

⁶⁰ 'Conservationists are Ridiculed', p. 12.

⁶¹ Halliday, 'Kaiparowits Parley Disrupted', p. B1.

Daily Utah Chronicle, the press conference devolved into what could best be called ‘a shouting fiasco.’⁶² Protest placards further emphasised years of building discontent with the movement; ‘don’t burn coal, burn environmentalists’; ‘This may be your playground, but it is our home’; ‘Stop Kaiparowits: sponsored by the Arab Chapter of Sierra Club.’⁶³

Undermining environmentalist counter-arguments to this rather disastrous shaping of their image was the presence of Dennis Hopper. An ensuing controversy involving Hopper’s attire that weekend would derail a rare chance at negotiation between plant supporters and project opposition. The result would be further press coverage about the ‘elitist’ environmental movement’s ignorance and indifference to the landscape they purported to defend.

Like Redford, Hopper was a prominent celebrity in 1976, but several differences marked his role as appropriate environmental spokesperson more tenuous. Although Redford had gone to EDF first, his role as ambassador against the Kaiparowits Project had rational foundations. Throughout the latter months of 1975, the actor had demonstrated a focused if not consistently public interest in the increasingly contentious politics of environmentalism. Furthermore, Redford was difficult to cast as an outsider in a state where the term was a virtual epithet; his wife was from Provo in northern Utah, and he had planted economic roots in the state. The actor persistently identified himself as Utahn before declaring any Hollywood attachments, and the northern press had accepted him as a legitimate, long-term resident. Conversely, whilst *Easy Rider* had made Hopper a star, his associations were more broadly countercultural. Nor did the actor have the obvious connections to Utah that Redford did. While *Easy Rider* had actively depicted the natural West as a character in its questing

⁶² Linda Garrison, ‘Environmentalists Discuss Kaiparowits’, Locals Disrupt Southern Utah Confab’, *Daily Utah Chronicle*. Press clipping. Ms 146, Box 617.

⁶³ Parfit, p. 48, Ms 146, Box 617.

narrative, incorporating isolated stretches of California, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico, Hopper had skirted Utah's natural landscape entirely. The actor had never made any public statements on the topic of the Kaiparowits Project. His presence appeared entirely superfluous to proceedings, beyond the vague assumption that his star power would stimulate the interest of the attending national press.

Although Hopper's presence at Wahweap Lodge did produce some instances of press coverage, it was not in the way conference planners might have hoped. The actor had arrived early in the weekend, wearing a Stetson adorned with three eagle feathers. The problem was possessing unregistered eagle feathers was a crime punishable by a \$1000 fine and up to a year in jail. The feathers were swiftly noted, the relevant enforcement agencies informed, and the actor found himself cited in violation of federal law. Reports varied as to whether he was actually charged.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, when the incident was printed on the front page of the *Albuquerque Journal* – New Mexico's largest newspaper – on Monday morning, Hopper's actions were recorded as an outsider's token environmental gesture rooted in ignorance.⁶⁵ The controversy also appeared on the front page of the *Santa Fe New Mexican*.⁶⁶ Here was evidence of a clear disparity in celebrity environmental coverage. Redford had struggled to have his message heard in support of the plateau's landscape. Hopper's error was quickly embraced by the New Mexico press, and his reputation was torn apart. As of January 1976, it appeared celebrity incorporation into environmental campaigning was more adept at gaining negative press coverage without much in the way of positive return.

⁶⁴ See: Phil Niklaus, 'Feather Ticklish Problem', 12 January 1976, *Albuquerque Journal*, p. 1; 'Feathers are Heavy Subject for Actor Dennis Hopper', 12 January 1976, *Las Cruces Sun-News*, p. 18; Phil Niklaus, 'Actor's Possession of Feathers Probed', 20 January 1976, *Albuquerque Journal*, p. A-10.

⁶⁵ Niklaus, 'Feather Ticklish', p. 1.

⁶⁶ 'Dennis Hopper has his feathers ruffled', 12 January 1976, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, p. 1.

Hopper's rebuttal to critics was that he'd been gifted the plumage by a native friend from the Taos Pueblo.⁶⁷ In a similar way to the manner that *New Times* had presented Redford's environmental philosophy as something intimate, Hopper underlined that his ownership of the eagle feathers was 'really personal to me.'⁶⁸ Indeed, the actor's recounting of the tale imbued the series of events leading up to the acquisition of the feathers as something deeply private. Hopper had sought to remove himself from Hollywood following the arduous editing process of *Easy Rider*, but the personal nature of his defence did little to inoculate him from the sharp words of the New Mexico press.⁶⁹ Nor were Hopper's counter-arguments an ideal way of ingratiating environmental attendees of the Wahweap conference with a Utahn audience. Hopper's incorporation of eagle feathers into his attire reflected the American countercultures co-option of Native American aesthetics as a marker of oppositional identity.⁷⁰ This was hardly a welcoming symbol for Mormon culture, that had cast their chances with the American orthodoxy. Equally, the actor's own response to the controversy undercut the position of environmental groups. Hopper exclaimed, with nonconformist affectation 'What are they kidding me man? What kind of society are we living in?'⁷¹ The answer was one with environmental regulations. The Bald Eagle had seen protective measures instituted in 1940, the Golden Eagle in 1962.⁷² It was hardly an ideal response;

⁶⁷ Like Redford, Hopper had become disillusioned with Hollywood following the upheaval of the 1960s, and moved to Taos, New Mexico. See: 'Dennis Hopper has his feathers ruffled', p. 1.

⁶⁸ 'Feathers are Heavy Subject for Actor Dennis Hopper', p. 18.

⁶⁹ Lawrence Linderman, 'Gallery Interview: Dennis Hopper', in *Dennis Hopper: Interviews*, ed. by Nick Dawson (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), pp. 59-90 (p. 72); Whilst this self-imposed exile invited comparisons with Redford's life in Utah, Taos was already an oasis for the culturally savant by 1970. For example, the town had already claimed New York arts patron Mable Dodge Luhan, photographers Ansel Adams, Paul Strand, and Alfred Stieglitz, and painter George O'Keefe, as residents, to name only a few. See: Victor Maymudes and Jacob Maymudes, *Another Side of Bob Dylan: A Personal History on the Road and off the Tracks* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2014), p. 152.

⁷⁰ Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, p. 81; Joel P. Rhodes, *Growing Up in a Land Called Honalee: The Sixties in the Lives of American Children* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2017), p. 232.

⁷¹ 'Dennis Hopper has his feathers ruffled', p. 1.

⁷² Michael J. Bean and Melanie J. Rowland, *The Evolution of National Wildlife Law*, 3rd edn. (Westport: Praeger, 1997), pp. 93-94.

Hopper seemed out of step with and unaware of the legislative push of the environmental decade, and his remarks suggested he felt the rules did not apply to him.

Away from the eyes of the press, the incorporation of a more tenuous celebrity figure also caused internal tensions within the anti-Kaiparowits coalition. It was not the intruding pro-power plant protestors that had reported Hopper to authorities. That task had fallen to Lonnie Johnson, environmentalist and executive director of the Humane Society of Utah, who interpreted the eagle feathers as an instance of animal cruelty.⁷³ More entrenched environmental leaders also had concerns about Hopper's presence. These were primarily voiced in a typically cantankerous but veiled manner by author Edward Abbey. Speaking to the *New York Times* after the conference's events, Abbey slyly mocked Hopper's countercultural credentials, noting the traps of fame, before remarking 'I think it would be a fate worse than death to become a cult figure, especially among undergraduates.'⁷⁴

Abbey's recent publication of eco-sabotage fantasy *The Monkey Wrench Gang* had brought him a form of regional celebrity beyond the boundaries of the literary cognoscenti, and Hopper would later explore adapting the narrative to celluloid.⁷⁵ Ostensibly, Abbey had much in common with the *Easy Rider* star, including a sense of dismay at centralised power and creeping bureaucratic control.⁷⁶ But Abbey, despite a devil-may-care attitude, cared more about his reputation when his audience was comprised of working people. His time in Moab during the uranium boom of the 1950s and academic interest in anarchism provided him a

⁷³ 'Feathers are Heavy Subject for Actor Dennis Hopper', p. 18.

⁷⁴ Grace Lichtenstein, 'Edward Abbey, Voice of Southwest Wilds', 20 January 1976, *New York Times*, p. 24. Kaiparowits is not mentioned in the *Times* article, yet the date of interview and location mark this as conducted in the immediate wake of the Wahweap Lodge conference.

⁷⁵ John A. Murray, 'Introduction: Edward Abbey, Yesterday and Today', in *Abbey in America: A Philosopher's Legacy in a New Century*, ed. by John A. Murray (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015), pp. 1-23 (p. 13).

⁷⁶ Drake, p. 142.

greater sense of kinship with pro-plant protestors. Abbey was uncharacteristically quiet throughout the conference. One friend recalled seeing 'the look of torment on Ed's face' as protestors filed into the lodge. Abbey then spoke up:

I certainly don't blame working people. They're more victimized by this process than the rest of us. Most of them have their lives and their health threatened more directly and more constantly, simply by the work they do, than we lucky ones who escaped that trap.⁷⁷

That statement of sympathy and recognition about how the movement were increasingly viewed was rapidly undercut by David Brower's comment, when he declared that Kaiparowits 'carries dangers the local populace hasn't given ten minutes thought to.'⁷⁸ Abbey struggled to express a model of environmental politics that was conscious of the socio-economic disparity between national environmental group leaders and pro-industry locals. The author sought a practicable, ideological schematic that balanced protection of the land with sensitivity to the needs of those who desperately depended upon extractive and energy industry jobs. The environmental movement appeared to offer an increasingly potent blueprint for the former in 1976, but in southern Utah they could not achieve this without seemingly accelerating the fate of communities already in decline.

The asymmetry of this remained a succinct problem for Abbey. Often mistaken as misanthropic, the author's own outspoken nature was more frequently rooted in anti-statist values than it was a more general distaste for people. Abbey was more comfortable verbally assaulting Utah's political class, whom he felt were aggressive, invasive architects seeking to smash and grab southern Utah's resources. In an interview for *Playboy*, Abbey used sexually

⁷⁷ Jack Loeffler, *Adventures with Ed: A Portrait of Abbey* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), p. 129.

⁷⁸ 'Power Plant Foes Given Cat Calls', p. 2.

charged innuendo to lambast Frank Moss, Jake Garn, and Calvin Rampton. 'All three are backing the Kaiparowits project to the hilt,' he noted. 'All three are doing their best for the power industry, the mining industry, the oil-shale industry.'⁷⁹ He was more careful when it came to attacking the working men and women who might benefit from industrial development. Fame did little to erode Abbey's identity as working class; in certain respects, celebrity reified it. He increasingly presented himself a 'Joe Six-Pack,' and distanced himself from the of the conservation elite.⁸⁰

Learning from Wahweap

Two months after the showdown at Wahweap Lodge, locals, because of the self-imposed moratorium on Kaiparowits development, found themselves playing a familiar game. Once more they waited, this time for the final announcement on the environmental impact statement, now over two years in the making. The decision ultimately lay with the Secretary of the Interior. Rogers C. B. Morton had left the post last autumn, ending his tenure an unpopular and divisive figure. His successor, Stanley Hathaway, had quickly stepped down due to health issues, and his replacement Thomas S. Kleppe, was a figure with no experience in natural resource management.⁸¹ That alone was cause for hope; plant supporters had always suspected Morton was too much of an environmental sympathiser.

With no knowledge about land use conflicts, Kleppe found himself inheriting what was the West's most enduring, antagonistic dispute in the form of the Kaiparowits Project. Immediately he was pressured by a number of Utah's senators to confirm Edison's plans.

⁷⁹ Edward Abbey, 'Second Rape of the West', *Playboy*, p. 235. Press clipping. Ms 146, Box 617.

⁸⁰ Loeffler, p. 129.

⁸¹ Thomas J. Schoenbaum, *The New River Controversy*, A New edn. (Jefferson: McFarlan & Company, Inc., 2007), p. 122.

Governor Rampton asked Kleppe to make federal lands in southern Utah available post haste 'or pass necessary legislation,' required to expedite the process, 'because of the energy crisis.'⁸² In early February the Utah State Senate passed a concurrent resolution that called on the secretary to immediately approve and accelerate the Kaiparowits Plant timeline.⁸³ Kleppe promised he would come to a decision by the beginning of April.⁸⁴

Letters from southern Utahns mirrored pressure from Utah's political class, but in private correspondence anger against environmental groups again became the dominant theme. Many chose to subtly warn the secretary against charting the same friendly path with groups like the Sierra Club that they felt Morton had. Commissioner of Piute County Basil Lay wrote to Kleppe to complain about 'so called environmentalists from everywhere taking advantage of every economic opportunity in their own localities while try to control or paralyze our economy.'⁸⁵ Others wondered what power private environmental advocacy groups had over the federal government. The Mayor of Moab wrote to tell Klepp, 'I cannot for the life of me see why such an investment by industry should be held back beyond the two-year recommendation that the EPA requires.'⁸⁶ Calvin Black ranted that 'all the arguments both pro and con on this matter have been repeated thousands of times. During the past five or six years nothing new or of substance has been added.'⁸⁷ Western industrialist Lee Travis concurred. He noted that 'the continued delay on getting final approval of this project is preposterous.' Travis blamed 'a small minority of our population – primary vocal

⁸² Calvin Rampton to Thomas S. Kleppe, 17 November 1975, Ms 146, Box 615.

⁸³ 'Kaiparowits Project History', Ms 619, Box 105.

⁸⁴ 'Interior Secretary gives Kaiparowits Support', *Color Country Spectrum*, 11 December 1975', p. 10; 'Interior Boss "Backs Kaiparowits"', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 7 December 1975, p. 8B.

⁸⁵ Basil Lay to Thomas S. Kleppe, 8 December 1975, Ms 146, Box 615.

⁸⁶ Dean McDougald to Thomas S. Kleppe, 9 December 1975, Ms 146, Box 615.

⁸⁷ Calvin Black to Thomas S. Kleppe, 22 December 1975, Ms 146, Box 615.

environmental groups, who [...] are doing a great disservice to the overwhelming (and too often silent) majority of our people.’⁸⁸

Kleppe would have been familiar with such arguments had he been heading the Department of the Interior during the energy crisis, and there was little appreciable development of argument from pro-plant writers here. Once again Kaiparowits was framed as a utilitarian boon and national necessity, and contrasted with the exclusivity and emotionality of environmental appreciation. All the while, the economics of the plant were becoming increasingly unsavoury for Edison. William Gould admitted that each month that Edison failed to begin construction cost the company 6.3 million dollars.⁸⁹ Making matters worse, the previous summer the Salt River Project had withdrawn from Edison’s Kaiparowits consortium. Although their commitment was only for ten percent of the plants initial capacity, SCE had still never managed to fill the remaining fourteen percent, leaving almost a quarter of total generating capacity now unsubscribed.⁹⁰

Such a state meant rumours began to circle that Edison was going to pull out of southern Utah, but as late as the end of February Gould was writing to Kleppe in efforts to convince him to side with the utility. Using familiar arguments focusing on the notion of utilities as a vital part of the public good, the Edison executive VP tried to convince Kleppe that the project ‘is vital to us as well as to the wellbeing of literally millions of residents of the western United States.’ ‘Indeed,’ Gould continued, ‘we believe that this decision is more than a decision

⁸⁸ Lee C. Travis to Thomas S. Kleppe, 2 February 1976, Ms 146, Box 615.

⁸⁹ William R. Gould, ‘Opening Panel Remarks’, 20 June 1975, Utah State Bar Hearings, Ms 619, Box 42.

⁹⁰ Salt River Project gave two reasons for their abandonment in withdrawal discussions with SCE: they felt cheaper power options were now available to them elsewhere rather than subscribing to Edison’s project, and they were doubtful the required transmission lines necessary to supply their customers would be allowed by the Navajo. See: El Paso Energy Company to Ted B. Hardy, 26 March 1975, Ms 619, Box 105; J. H. Drake to William R. Gould, June 3 1975, Ms 619, Box 105.

concerning a single power plant; it is a verdict as to whether or not our vast low sulphur, western coal resources can be developed in clean, modern electric generating plants for the benefit of the people of America.’⁹¹

Gould could be reliably confident at the end of February 1976 that even if the ‘people of America’ had little opinion about Edison’s project, then at least the people of Utah still overwhelmingly supported it. In Kane County, approval remained in excess of eighty percent.⁹² According to Senator Garn’s office, in certain counties of Utah almost ninety percent of polled citizens were in favour of project construction at the start of 1976.⁹³ The claim had quantitative backing to its political bluster. In autumn 1975, Frank Moss’s office had drawn up a ‘Special Issues Questionnaire’ that claimed to offer the citizens of Utah the chance to have their voices heard on nineteen key issues. The pamphlet offered a range of fairly substantial topics, including national healthcare, wage ceilings, and military spending.⁹⁴ Superseding all these was the question: ‘Should the Kaiparowits power plant, planned for southern Utah be completed?’ 228,000 copies of the questionnaire were distributed; Moss received more than 85,000 back. Over 82.1% favoured the power plant, whilst only 12.2% rejected it, and 5.7% had no opinion.⁹⁵ Yet less than a month later, Garn’s assertion of ninety percent approval had flipped to ninety percent disapproval. ‘It just kind of flip-flopped’ Garn’s spokesman recounted.⁹⁶

⁹¹ William R. Gould to Thomas S. Kleppe, 25 February 1976, Ms 146, Box 615.

⁹² ‘Kane County Poll Likes Kaiparowits’, *Southern Utah News*, 14 August 1974. Press clipping. Ms 146, Box 617.

⁹³ Given Kane County had the most to benefit; it seems unlikely that counties further removed from the plant site, as they would gain less from the project. See: Angelyn Nelson, ‘Public Cited in Halt of Kaiparowits’, *Salt Lake Tribune*, pp. 1-2. Press clippings. Ms 146, Box 617.

⁹⁴ Special Report: Senator Frank E. Moss, Results of Fall 1975 Special Issues Questionnaire, Ms 146, Box 616.

⁹⁵ Frank E. Moss to Clinton R. Miller, 7 April 1976, Ms 146, Box 616; Frank E. Moss to LaMar H. Snyder, 20 November 1975, Ms 146, Box 616; Frank E. Moss to John M. Wade, 17 December 1975, Ms 146, Box 616.

⁹⁶ Nelson, ‘Public Cited’, Ms 146, Box 617.

Even long-term supporter of the Kaiparowits Project the *Salt Lake Tribune* had to admit at the beginning of April that ‘an erosion of support for Kaiparowits’ was evident.⁹⁷ Student protests had begun to take over the University of Utah campus in Salt Lake City, where hundreds of undergraduates, postgraduates, and staff spoke out against the development.⁹⁸ For the paper, the cause for the dramatic shift in the project’s public support was Robert Redford. The actor had reassumed his role as anti-Kaiparowits crusader for EDF that March. Having learnt from print media’s resistance to his first year as spokesperson for the southern Utah wilds, Redford took no chances. He obtained an interview with nationally-recognised journalist Dan Rather at CBS; celebrity environmentalism was about to prove its incredible potency.

Boomtown Folk

Robert Redford appeared on CBS’ *60 Minutes* on 21 March 1976. Although a mainstreamed version of the glossy countercultural journalism contained in publications like *New Times*, *60 Minutes* still possessed a journalistic code that was cynical and aggressive toward government and business interests.⁹⁹ Practicing a style that would become known as ‘confrontational journalism,’ the show became infamous in the 1970s for ‘making the sharpest executives and politicians crumble.’¹⁰⁰ Using the same kind of simple and direct language that concerned

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Bob Bryson, ‘Kaiparowits Protests Aired at S.L. Rally’, *Salt Lake Tribune*. Press clipping. Ms 146, Box 617; ‘200 Stage Anti-Kaiparowits Rally’, *Deseret News*, 31 March 1976, p. B4; Joseph Bauman, ‘Kaiparowits foes rally at U’, *Deseret News*, 15 April 1976, p. B1, B10.

⁹⁹ Yanek Mieczkowski, *Gerald Ford and the Challenges of the 1970s* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005), p. 22; Bonnie M. Anderson, *News Flash: Journalism, Infotainment, and the Bottom-Line Business of Broadcast News* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), pp. 6-7.

¹⁰⁰ Alan T. Belasen, *The Theory and Practice of Corporate Communication: A Competing Values Perspective* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2008), p. 71.

southwesterners had used against the earlier Four Corners power plants, Redford flatly framed the impact of Kaiparowits for a national audience of millions. 'For me it's the beginning of the end,' he declared. His statement was picked up by press outlets across the nation.¹⁰¹

60 Minutes also gave airspace to Kaiparowits project manager Robert S. Currie and Utah Governor Calvin Rampton, but the plant's supporters did not feel the report was balanced.¹⁰² It contained no interviews with Kane and Garfield locals, and Frank Moss struggled to keep a diplomatic tone in his correspondence to Dan Rather, identifying what he believed were substantial flaws in the way CBS presented Edison's Kaiparowits proposals.¹⁰³ The senator contended that CBS showed no desire to head into southern Utah. In *60 Minutes'* visuals, camerawork lingered on Lake Powell from Page, implying the plant would cast a pall of smog over the town and Wahweap Marina. That reflected dramatically out-dated plant siting proposals. Moss felt that Rather and CBS were trying to argue the Kaiparowits Project would loom directly over the power boaters at the reservoir, disrupting their recreation 'rather than in desolate and rocky open country miles away.' He also relied upon earlier arguments in Utah about conservation spokespeople leading people astray with their language. He charged that Redford's rhetoric sought to exploit a distant audience's simplistic understanding of plateau geology more generally. Viewers would not realise, Moss bemoaned, that Kaiparowits'

¹⁰¹ 'Network Airs Kaiparowits Views', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 22 March 1976, p. 11A. For a sample of coverage on Redford's comments from beyond the region, see: 'Kaiparowits Would be Beginning of End for Redford', *Idaho State Journal*, 22 March 1976, p. B1; 'Utah throng burns Redford effigy', *Lansing State Journal*, 19 April 1976, p. A3; 'Utah Power Plant Backers Burn Robert Redford Effigy', *Burlington Free Press*, 19 April 1976, p. 5.

¹⁰² 'Kaiparowits TV Version Criticized by Governor', *Daily Herald*, 25 March 1976, p. 34; 'Unhappy with Broadcast', *Color Country Spectrum*, 25 March 1976, p. 2.

¹⁰³ Allan T. Howe to Don Hewitt, 22 March 1976, Ms 140, Box 64.

summit was far more concave and deeply dissected than a flat plane, and that a particularly sunken 'rocky depression' was the preferred site for development.¹⁰⁴

By 1976 the contention that anti-plant forces had not bothered to visit Kaiparowits was a common refrain. But Redford and Rather also set their sights on other targets. Discourse about the plateau as a physical reality had always had trouble retaining any prolonged purchase in Utah's long power controversy. That remained just as true that evening in the CBS studios. Increasingly, it was the planned townsite accompanying the project that had become a focal point for environmental groups. In December 1974, Sierra Club southwest officer leader John McComb had written to Friends of the Earth, NRDC, and EDF members suggesting 'Within Utah [...] emphasize the socio-economic problems that will accompany this growth in hopes of generating some local reaction against the plants.'¹⁰⁵ Redford did just that; approximately thirteen minutes of that evening's show focused on Page, Arizona, lingering on images that shaped it as a desolate boomtown.

Redford and Rather crafted for audiences a visual narrative that suggested Page was little more than a transitory space in which little consideration was given to environmental wellbeing or social order.¹⁰⁶ The report idled on basic medical facilities that were little more than tents, single-story motels in disrepair, and depressing, decrepit shopping facilities.¹⁰⁷ Instead of selling Page as an example of rugged, pioneer living in the modern arid West, *60 Minutes* promoted the town as an empty, blank space, devoid of civic pride and human presence. It was an urban invocation of *terra nullius*. The images were transmitted that

¹⁰⁴ Quotes here are from: Frank E. Moss to Dan Rather, 24 March 1976, Ms 146, Box 615.

¹⁰⁵ John A. McComb to Ruth Frear, June Viavant, Tony Ruckel, Hank Hassell, Lloyd Gordon, Mary Ann Ericksen, Dick Lahn, December 1974. Intermountain Power Project collection, Accn 1482, Box 1. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

¹⁰⁶ 'Pamphlet Concerning Page, Arizona', Ms 146, Box 617. See Appendix: Image 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

evening to millions of Americans, but they were clearly designed as a parable for southern Utahns, an anti-Kaiparowits sermon delivered by means of Redford's global celebrity status. It communicated a single message: this will happen to you next.

Citizens of Page were understandably aggrieved at *60 Minutes*, but they recognised the presentation for exactly what it was: an attack on their communal reputation to dissuade Kaiparowits' construction. CBS' depiction of Page as a place in disrepair was designed to convey that the town's residents were fundamentally negligent characters you would expect to find in a modern boomtown. Although commonly considered to be a feature of the previous century, the nation's collective memory characterised boomtown inhabitants as morally lenient people of sordid character with a propensity for violence.¹⁰⁸ The lack of appropriate healthcare and visitor facilities in Page was architectural evidence of collective limitation, physical proof that inhabitants possessed little in the way of civic responsibility.

Like most reputational attacks in environmental campaigning, the counterattack was swift. Page residents created a pamphlet for Interior Secretary Kleppe, expressing concerns that 'anyone who viewed that program and who has never been to Page most certainly is left with the impression that our fine community is a make-shift "boom town."¹⁰⁹ The pamphlet's primary aim was to reconstruct the town's image and revitalise the reputation of residents as civically responsible. The paper noted that Rather and Redford's narrative was selective, disregarding many of the improvements Page had made over the years, including a ten-million-dollar school development, a modern shopping centre, a new motel, and several modern churches, which townsfolk provided visual evidence of.¹¹⁰ Residents also took the

¹⁰⁸ Kelly J. Dixon, *Boomtown Saloons: Archaeology and History in Virginia City* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005), p. 149.

¹⁰⁹ 'Pamphlet Concerning Page, Arizona', Ms 146, Box 617.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

opportunity to devise their own assessment of Kaiparowits opponents, although they offered arguments that were now familiar: 'the obstructionists still refuse to accept progress [...] they oppose facilities such as Kaiparowits.' The pamphlet warned Kleppe that many in the region believed 'environmental organizations, which oppose the Kaiparowits Project [have] reached a point of emotional mania.'¹¹¹

Other publications against the plant provided a downcast image of the kinds of people that lived in modern boomtowns. A March 1976 edition of *Audubon* magazine included an article on Edison's project by historian Alvin Josephy that was titled, simply 'Kaiparowits: The Ultimate Obscenity.' It reiterated many of the points of the *60 Minutes* coverage, perpetuating the movement's cycle of anti-boosterism against Page:

A hot, windswept town, mostly of trailer homes and claptrap restaurants, bars, and stores [...] after the dam was built, most of the construction workers moved away, and the town on the dusty bench above the new lake went into decline.¹¹²

Josephy's report contained complaints from locals, including legendary river runner Ken Sleight, who complained that because of an influx of undesirables, Red Rock Country was 'getting to be like a Coney Island.' Even blunter than the title of the article and Sleight's words was the accompanying cartoonish vision of the southwest's future by veteran illustrator John Huehnergath.¹¹³ Huehnergath's depiction of the plant sought to compress the material dimensions of Kane County so to more easily depict a range of environmental sins. In the foreground was Rainbow Bridge, and immediately behind it Lake Powell. Looming over both was a fully completed Kaiparowits Project and townsite, the last two depictions being an

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Alvin M. Josephy, 'Kaiparowits: The Ultimate Obscenity', *Audubon*, 78 (1976), p. 68.

¹¹³ See Appendix: Image 11.

indistinguishable, imposing conglomeration of residential and industrial features. Unlike Redford's visuals of an abandoned Page that inferred moral failing, Huehnergarth's nightmarish vision of southern Utah was wholly dependent upon the presence of those who now populated it. Here, Lake Powell and its surrounding environs were replete with litter and graffiti, and reckless pleasure seekers in boats and jeeps. It is possible that Huehnergarth employed environmental determinism to suggest this would be the fate of the southern Utah character if the Kaiparowits Project saw completion. Yet it is more likely that he intended these individuals as the immoral characters a boomtown would invite. Their disrespect for landscape implied a temporary presence, but beyond environmental callousness, Huehnergarth branded them as interlopers through excessive consumption of alcohol, a drink conservative Mormons typically renounced.

Redford and particularly Huehnergarth's visions of a desecrated southwest depended upon the same fears that environmentalism's Intermountain critics had used for a quarter of a century: the spectre of outsiders. It is unlikely that many pro-Kaiparowits supporters had seen the *Audubon* illustration, but there were certainly signs that Kane and Garfield locals had growing doubts about what a Kaiparowits townsite would mean for their counties historically insulated cultural ecosystems. Utahn Ann Nelson worried that 'Southern Utah will almost certainly undergo the same process which is presently occurring in the area of Fairbanks, Alaska: a squalid boom-town in which fantastically high salaries are sent out of state.'¹¹⁴ Patricia Ehrman feared that 'incoming workers and their families will permanently disrupt a lifestyle that is based on religion and close communities.'¹¹⁵ Ted Johnson, clearly influenced by *60 Minutes*, wrote 'I shudder to think of a shabby trailer town like Page, Arizona, being

¹¹⁴ Ann Nelson to Frank E. Moss, 10 March 1976, Ms 146, Box 616.

¹¹⁵ Patricia Ehrman to Frank E. Moss, 15 January 1975, Ms 146, Box 616.

built in Utah [...] and 90% of the town and jobs filled by out-of-state people.’¹¹⁶ To the north, Logan resident Daniel Green argued that the town offered southern Utah residents ‘the prospect of a severe adjustment in lifestyle with no hope of compensation.’¹¹⁷ ALIVE leader James Carrico, reflecting on the Kaiparowits Project in 1978, singled out the spectre of boomtown people raised by the environmental resistance as the most potent tactic. He complained how ‘the opposition indicated that the townsite would be a mecca for hoodlums, roughnecks, rednecks and rowdies.’¹¹⁸

Whilst such fears were usually expressed with sufficient ambiguity, in rare instances more explicitly asserted commentary suggested underlying gendered and racial anxieties. These exposed the less savoury elements of the Mormon faith, notable its rigid morality and troubling paternalistic streak.¹¹⁹ The *Los Angeles Times* quoted Kane County Commission Chairman Merrill McDonald saying ‘this is a small Mormon area, and there is a lot of concern about what is going to happen to our young virgins. The coming-in of minority groups is going to create social problems.’ When the *Times* asked the Sierra Club for a response, a spokesperson wryly replied ‘They’re not all going to be teetotallers.’¹²⁰ An Autumn 1975 development conference focusing on Kaiparowits had seen speakers express similar concerns. Mormon spokespeople had warily betrayed their fears of the kinds of people boomtowns would bring. In a *Color Country Spectrum* editorial, columnist Paul Harvey warned

¹¹⁶ Ted Johnson to Frank E. Moss, 29 March 1976, Ms 146, Box 616.

¹¹⁷ Daniel W. Green to Paul Howard, 17 November 1975, Ms 146, Box 615.

¹¹⁸ James Carrico, Interviewed by Lynn Coppel, Utah State Historical Society and California State University, Fullerton Oral History Program, p. 1. Southeastern Utah Project, Accn 1868, Box 3.

¹¹⁹ See: Gessner, pp. 158-159; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints*, 2nd edn. (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1992), p. 335.

¹²⁰ Philip Fradkin, ‘Smog from Power Plants Threatens Utah Color Country’, *Los Angeles Times*, 9 February 1975. Press clipping. Ms 146, Box 617.

that 'boom towns mean social problems [...] drinking is the major recreation [...] with gambling and prostitution as close favourites.'¹²¹

The hellish dimensions given to boomtowns as framed by Redford and the Audubon Society were unlikely to be welcomed by any community, but there were aspects of Mormonism that made the heavily LDS communities of Kane and Garfield particularly wary to these visions. Mormon culture had long been prideful that they had created what they felt was a viable society in the desert West. John Wesley Powell felt the Mormon inclination toward tightly communal townships and orderly society was superior to rugged individualism that was doomed to failure.¹²² The collective memory of boomtown culture presented the antithesis of this, full of raucous individuals, they were seen as transient constructions, inappropriate sites from which to worship God. Admittedly, many of Utah's northern communities in the latter-half of the nineteenth century could be labelled as boomtowns at one time or another, but southern Utah's communities had never had that experience, representing the zealous, undiluted epicentre of Mormon faith.¹²³

Infrastructural and political worries also amplified fears over cultural change. Residents complained that the very sparse police presence in Kane County would not be able to cope. They also made reference to the potential that a virtual tide of unwashed masses into the Kaiparowits townsite would mean it would become the district's political nexus.¹²⁴ Others still saw the new town as further evidence of California's ecological imperialism. Edison had hired

¹²¹ Paul Harvey, 'Good Planning Needed', *Color Country Spectrum*, 28 August 1975, p. 2.

¹²² See: Gessner, pp. 158-159; Dean L. May, *Utah: A People's History* (Bonneville: Bonneville Books, 1987), p. 43; Fluhman, p. 144.

¹²³ For Utah communities as boomtowns, see: Laurel B. Andrew, *The Early Temples of the Mormons: The Architecture of the Millennial Kingdom in the American West* (Albany: State University of New York Press), pp. 175-176; May, pp. 113-134.

¹²⁴ See: Larry J. Breinholt to Frank E. Moss, 24 February 1975; Ehrman to Moss; Dick Carter to Thomas S. Kleppe, 15 March 1976, Ms 146, Box 616.

the Henry J. Kaiser Company to envision the accompanying city Kaiparowits would create.¹²⁵ Their plan was remarkably utopian, but also unrealistic; it relied upon the incorporation of green belts around the new community to promote civic pride. As one critical citizen asked: why did Kane and Garfield, which were almost entirely undeveloped space, need a green belt? Furthermore, it had taken Edison years to acquire the water permits for Lake Powell due to the large quantities they required. How did they propose to irrigate a vast, green space? The author protested 'In heavily populated southern California, open space and green belts may be attractive concepts. In sparsely populated, water short and work ethic oriented Kane County they are concepts that will fall on hostile ears.'¹²⁶

Even as those questions spoke to the limits of environmental transformation in Utah's Dixie, in the northern half of the state Robert Redford was conducting his own variant of social and environmental change, a kind of celebrity environmental imperialist project. Ecological and cultural preservation had become the watchwords around Kaiparowits, but Redford fully pledged himself to the idea of remaking the human and natural environment to his liking on the slopes of Mount Timpanogos in Utah's Wasatch range. He bought the Timp Haven ski area from brothers Paul and Ray Stewart at the end of the 1960s after solidifying his fame.¹²⁷ A curiously Mormon recreational experience, Timp Haven was a quaint hub that closed on Sundays, with the Stewart's noting 'we simply don't open. That's the Lord's Day,' whilst the family's sheep could be found grazing on the slopes throughout the off-season.¹²⁸ Redford

¹²⁵ Richard K. Sager to Frank E. Moss, 19 August 1975, Ms 146, Box 615; Calvin Rampton to Thomas S. Kleppe, 17 November 1975, Ms 146, Box 615.

¹²⁶ Green to Howard, Ms 146, Box 615.

¹²⁷ Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, p. 216.

¹²⁸ Mike Korologos, 'Sheep Can't Safety Graze at Sundance Anymore', *Skiing*, January 1970, 138-139 (p. 139).

changed all that, renaming the complex 'Sundance' and spending increasing time at his property on the mountainside.

In fairness to Redford, he proceeded slowly and responsibly, and the mountain's landscape was already in flux when he arrived in the early 1960s, but there was something more obstinate about his rhetoric in connection to the ranch. Framing Sundance as an anti-resort, Redford declared in 1970 that 'I'm collecting space, and space has a very deep meaning for me,' before stating, 'anything that is beautiful around here is going to stay that way.' The *Daily Utah Chronicle* cheered that, 'Robert Redford [...] has been on a personal crusade to preserve all that is here.'¹²⁹ In 1971 the *Los Angeles Times* presented Redford as a 'one-man ecological posse.' The paper noted that to northern developers 'Redford might just as well be Teddy Roosevelt storming San Juan Hill.'¹³⁰

Yet Sundance came to evoke all the elitist trappings critics had pinned on post-war conservationists. What started as a personal hideout for the actor eventually became a brand. Sundance adopted its own mail-order catalogue, purporting to offer rustic and homespun luxury items divorced from the networks of modernity.¹³¹ For distant consumers of the Sundance experience, simplicity comes at a high cost, and everything Sundance offers operates around popular culture's vision of pioneer basics. Like many spaces and places in North American history before it, the resort hid its own unnaturalness; on Sundance, power

¹²⁹ Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, p. 216; 'Greek Winter Carnival at Sundance', *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 10 February 1970, p. 7; Mike Twitty, 'Sundance is Major Recreation Area', *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 6 December 1970, p. 2A; Trimble, p. 73.

¹³⁰ 'Robert Redford Wouldn't Have Disappointed Old Harry Longabaugh', *Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1971, p. 471.

¹³¹ *Sundance Catalog* [online]. 2017, updated 14 September 2017 [cited 14 September 2017]. Available from: <https://www.sundancecatalog.com/>. For nature and the rustic becoming commodity, see: James Morton Turner, 'From Woodcraft to "Leave No Trace": Wilderness, Consumerism, and Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America', *Environmental History*, 7 (2002), 462-484; Jennifer Price, *Flight Maps*, New edn. (New York: Basic Books, 2000), pp. 167-206.

lines were not allowed, but ski lifts were.¹³² It made, to quote Jared Farmer 'living in Utah bearable for non-Mormons and cosmopolitans.'¹³³

In that respect, Sundance came to operate on the same logic of the boomtown that Redford chastised Kaiparowits managers for inviting into southern Utah. As Redford continued to transform the mountain, Sundance gained further lodges and a homeowner's community. These residences of paradoxically bucolic opulence came to house the new boomtown elite; a select few jet-setters that were global, rather than regional transients, coming to the mountain in pursuit of recreation in a foreign town before leaving once more.¹³⁴ Redford declared in the 1970s that he felt 'simple pioneer communities worked so well,' but there was a clear disparity between the one he was creating, and the communities he fought to the south. Here once more there were parallels between Redford and Muir's experiences in Utah. Like John of the Mountains, the actor deployed evocative, romantic rhetoric, but he also forgot that getting back to nature was only fantastic when you had a home to return to. 'There was,' historian Jared Farmer noted 'something disingenuous about an outsider, a resort developer, nostalgically claiming the language of pioneering.'¹³⁵ Given how Sundance's transformation proceeded in parallel with southern Utah's stasis, such expressions risked leaving a particularly bitter aftertaste.

¹³² Korologos, 138-139 (p. 138).

¹³³ Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, pp. 219-220.

¹³⁴ Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, p. 220. For the evolution of skiing in the West into the elite pursuit of outsider interests, see: Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), pp. 186-226.

¹³⁵ Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, p. 220.

Conclusion: Environmentalist as Outlaw

Redford received a chance to further explore his obsession with pioneer trappings later that year when he wrote an extensive, almost forty-page article for the November issue of *National Geographic*, where he explored the southwest's most infamous outlaw characters and their actions. Lingering on the tales of bandits like John Witherill, who 'shot one man too many,' Tom Horn, and yes, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Redford physically crossed much of Utah in preparation for the article.¹³⁶ The piece certainly suggested Redford was wholly in love with the romantic mythology of the popular west. The actor spared no space when it came to longingly describing the landscape he traversed, but the article also exposed that when it came to environmentalist encounter in rural Utah, interaction with locals seldom ran as fluidly as masculine adventure narratives.

One tale in Redford's peripatetic account stands out above all others. The actor, on his way to Vernal, Utah, descended down Nine Mile Canyon when he came across a 'leathery, squint-eyed' old rancher repairing a tractor. Redford remarked how beautiful the land was, to which the rancher replied:

Yeah? Well, you can have it. You want to take those cows out there off my hands, you got it. This is a hole – a hellhole. Ain't nothing but dust and rocks and some starvin' cows. Let me outta here.

Reflecting upon their interaction, Redford told readers of *National Geographic* that he pitied the man. 'I thought that this was the real plight of the ranchers in the area. They don't often see the beauty of their surroundings.'¹³⁷ It was entirely possible that Redford was unaware that this isolated engagement between outsider environmentalist and lifetime Utahn

¹³⁶ Robert Redford, 'Riding the Outlaw Trail', *National Geographic*, 150 (1976), 622-657 (p. 645).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 622-657 (pp. 646-647).

labourer had many parallels to John Muir's own confrontation that he had detailed so long ago in *Mormon Lilies*. Then, Muir, grasping flowers, had exclaimed to his surprised, lonely Mormon listener 'Here are the true saints, ancient and Latter-day, enduring forever!'¹³⁸ Redford found himself two counties east of Muir's original encounter on the slopes of the Oquirrh range, and several months shy of an entire century removed. Yet the central disconnect between those who sought to develop Utah's landscape and those who wanted to preserve it had not changed. Environmental figures felt Mormon labourers were blind to the wonders of nature; Beehive State residents felt emotional idolisation of the natural world was its own form of myopia.

But even if the core of the disconnect had not changed, the relationship had. A century of encounters had seen each group's appraisal of the other immeasurably decline. There was perhaps no better popular frontier archetype for Robert Redford to idolise in 1976 than the outlaw. In southern Utah 'outlaw' and 'environmentalist' were rapidly becoming synonymous.

On 14 April 1976, fifteen years after it began to survey the Kaiparowits coal seams, Southern California Edison abandoned their plans to transform southern Utah. Secretary of the Interior Kleppe had still not made a decision on the plant, but he was quick to declare any declaration in either direction moot now that the utility had lost its appetite for the project.¹³⁹ The Arizona Public Service Company and San Diego Gas & Electric abdicated in turn. They remained interested in securing power from the Kaiparowits coalfields, but the project had become untenable without Edison's commitment. The Intermountain press kept a measured tone in

¹³⁸ John Muir, *Mormon Lilies*.

¹³⁹ 'Kleppe: Kaiparowits is Moot', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 22 April 1976, p. B10; Frank E. Moss to Thomas S. Kleppe, 15 April 1976, Ms 146, Box 615; William R. Gould to Thomas S. Kleppe, 17 May 1976.

their events coverage, noting in their respective post-mortems a multiplicity of reasons for cancellation, primary amongst them inflation and the financial toll delays were taking on Edison each month.¹⁴⁰ Yet reflecting the length of Kaiparowits' theoretical life, in its absence people wrote about it as if a family member had died. The *Deseret News* ran its own obituary for Edison's proposal:

Somewhere in the Sagebrush, Kane County – Kay Paro Wits, a [...] soul without a body, died April 14, 1976, at home after a long bout with clean air.¹⁴¹

As obituaries willed readers to believe that Kaiparowits, even as theoretical idea, once had life, others would invest Kaiparowits with bodily meaning to frame environmentalists as brutal murderers guilty of biblical sin. Newly elected Salt Lake Mayor Ted Wilson received a letter noting:

I am deeply offended by your recent speech to the Sierra Club, in which you publically opposed the proposed Kaiparowits Project. This unjustified act will not be forgotten by our people. Those who have actually viewed Heaven and part of Hell more recently tell us that those who use their power unjustly to dominate the lives of other people will inherit the hottest corners of Hell. In my opinion, you have done just that.¹⁴²

Further south, the *Color Country Spectrum* exclaimed to its readers 'American disease kills power plant.' The ideological malady of emotional environmentalism was seen to have become a pandemic. The *Spectrum* encouraged retaliation, calling 'Southern Utahns everywhere to fight big, unresponsive government and unrepresentative pressure groups.'¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ See: '3 Utility Firms Shelve Kaiparowits Project', *Daily Utah Herald*, 14 April 1976, p. 2, 5; Bill Cooper, 'Kaiparowits Shelved', *Color Country Spectrum*, 14 April 1976, p. 1; 'Kaiparowits Foes Win Long Fight', *Daily Herald*, 15 April 1976, p. 1.

¹⁴¹ 'Kaiparowits Obituary', Ms 146, Box 617.

¹⁴² Ronald Heaton to Ted Wilson, 13 April 1976. Ted Wilson papers, Accn 859, Box 112. Special Collections and Archives. J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

¹⁴³ 'American disease kills power plant', *Color Country Spectrum*, 14 April 1976, p. 4.

And that is what they did, at least symbolically. Three days after the cancellation announcement, hundreds of southern Utah residents assembled in front of the local courthouse in Kanab, where they proceeded to hang and burn effigies of those found guilty for their part in the 'death' of Kaiparowits.¹⁴⁴ Press estimates of attendance varied, with reports of between four and six hundred arriving to view the macabre spectacle.¹⁴⁵ The location and mock-gallows suggested a level of humour to proceedings, reinforced in the *Spectrum* by Kanab resident Rose Wilcox smiling as one of the pyres erupted behind her.¹⁴⁶ But the ritual was also a recognition of defeat; Kaiparowits' cancellation went hand in hand with the wider realisation in Utah that environmentalist groups were now an intrinsic, inextricable element of the cultural fabric. They could not be so easily exorcised.

The effigies had been constructed hastily on the Saturday afternoon. But for many attendees, the southern Utahn endeavour of constructing an image of the American environmental movement they could destroy had begun long ago. For some, that project had long preceded even Edison's first venture onto the Kaiparowits plateau; these effigies were twenty-five years in the making. Their burning defanged, if only temporarily, a social protest collective that residents had come to see as accruing a dangerous degree of political and social power over the course of two decades. The effigies themselves, made from cloth stuffed with straw and dressed in old clothes, left virtually no trace in front of the Kanab courthouse beyond remnants of burnt wood. These few particles were far less anomalous remnants in the wider desert landscape of southern Utah than 'outsider' environmentalists.

¹⁴⁴ See Appendix: Images 12, 13.

¹⁴⁵ 'Kaiparowits Enemies Burned In Effigy by Kanab Citizens', *Daily Herald*, 19 April 1976, p. 8; Art Challis, 'ALIVE Seeks Alternatives', *Color Country Spectrum*, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ Challis, 'ALIVE Seeks Alternatives', p. 1.

As the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported, there was a perverse form of catharsis in this ritualistic display.¹⁴⁷ The Mormon communities of southern Utah had long felt comfortable placing their faith in infrastructural development as evidence of linear, predictable, and positive communal change. Committing to the emotional destruction of a hated antagonist proved surprisingly comforting. The effigy burnings symbolically removed the distant and elite obstructionists. Where once the materialisation of Kaiparowits was the sole criterion for the regions future, the Kanab effigy burnings represented a restoration of communal agency through explosive deconstruction.

What lessons did the Kaiparowits cancellation and Kanab effigy burnings have to offer in respect to the potency of celebrity environmental protest? On a quantitative level, it proved Redford's efficacy, although choice of medium helped. It was far more difficult to convey passion for Red Rock Country in print than it was on television; CBS and *60 Minutes* noted that they received a higher response than usual following the actor's segment on the show.¹⁴⁸ When the Office of the President tallied all Kaiparowits letters received between Redford's national airing of grievances in late March and the beginning of May, they found, in the Western states excluding the Four Corners, 5,623 against the project. They received seven letters in favour.¹⁴⁹

But Redford's inclusion also proved the way in which celebrity presence could warp a complex, contentious narrative in a way that was detrimental to the legitimate concerns of multiple constituencies. Press and individual responses to project cancellation highlighted this distortion. Redford demonstrated how a star figure could bring increased media visibility to a

¹⁴⁷ According to the *Tribune*. See: 'Kane Cooler After Fire', *Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 April 1976, p. B2.

¹⁴⁸ Nelson, 'Public Cited', Ms 146, Box 617.

¹⁴⁹ Kaiparowits Letter Tally, Office of the President. Ms 146, Box 617.

cause, but provided no guarantees that coverage would be accurate or even. Redford's identity seemed to block out ecological and financial discourse about plant viability in much reporting after the project's cancellation, and obscured debates about the socio-economic plight of southern Utah. In place of this was the actor's established love of the Old West of popular memory as a framing device. The *Deseret News* noted:

It seems the Kanab folks haven't had their fill of dramatic productions and have formed a company of their own. When will the sequel to "Hanging at the OK (Old Kaiparowits) Plant" be released? Perhaps it will go something like this: Robert Redford comes galloping up on his horse, Big Red, followed by the mounted Sierra Club, and throws a flaming torch onto a big pollution belching plant and burns it to the ground. In the hot glowing embers, the members of the Sierra Club roast their grub, while Redford, on Big Red, rides off into the sunset.¹⁵⁰

The *News* situated the Sierra Club as inferior lackeys to Redford's frontier hero. That was very much in keeping with past depictions of environmental groups in the state; inferences that they were patsies or flunkies of some greater force. Now, Redford was revealed as the final man behind many curtains. Kane locals also explicitly embraced the iconography of the popular Old West by erecting gallows to hang Redford in front of the courthouse as an example of frontier justice. They too adopted the *News*' hierarchical view of environmental leadership; Redford's effigy was an individualised construct complete with blonde wig. The Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and other environmental groups by contrast all shared one effigy, representing their local reputation as an anonymous, subservient conglomeration.¹⁵¹

As a result of Redford's fame and beloved status, his effigy burning received more national coverage than any other development in the Kaiparowits Project's fifteen-year lifespan. Nationally, it also put the reputational burden on southern Utah locals, who were more than

¹⁵⁰ Karen Blake Frei, 'Showdown at OK', *Deseret News*, 22 April 1976, p. A4.

¹⁵¹ Ernest Kirby, 'Torch Fires Protest in Kanab', *Salt Lake Tribune* 18 April 1976, p. B1.

conscious of the way their symbolically violent actions shaped their own image, particularly the way in which the press had framed the effigies as an outpouring of intense emotion. Local Jim Carrico would note 'after the emotionalism that we had seen, after the blatant misrepresentations and everything else, our reaction tended to be an emotional thing after it was over and done.'¹⁵²

Reflecting the way Kaiparowits was presented differently by a supportive Utah press, the narrative surrounding Redford's involvement was decidedly different in the Beehive State. The press reported that Kleppe branded the actor an 'extremist' for his role in the project's cancellation (proving an effective scapegoat for his own indecision). Redford correctly noted that 'extreme environmentalist' was little more than a hollow catchphrase by 1976, but by this point he had already released a statement in justification of his actions to southern Utahns and held a press conference at Sundance explaining his opposition.¹⁵³ Redford seemed conscious of the way his presence had not proved helpful to the state's reception of environmentalism, but he also used the opportunity as a strange promotional opportunity by declaring 'the Kaiparowits controversy has taught me the importance of penetrating the myth surrounding the controversy and searching diligently for the reality. My recent experience in filming "All the President's Men" reinforces that lesson.'¹⁵⁴ It also led to a telling admission, one that nationally was considered a thoroughly mundane statement by 1976, but one that the *Ogden Standard-Examiner* presented as a final, guilty and shameful confession on the part of the actor. It was a comment that fully stigmatised those it was attached to in southern

¹⁵² Carrico and Coppel, p. 2.

¹⁵³ 'Myth Surrounded Utah Power Project, Actor Robert Redford Claims', *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 1 May 1976, p. 6; Ralph Wakley, 'Redford Urges Energy Plan', *Color Country Spectrum*, 2 May 1976, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ 'Redford called an extremist, actor parries with comeback', *Daily Chronicle*, 27 May 1976, p. 21; 'The Lessons of Kaiparowits: Statement by Robert Redford,' Ms 146, Box 617.

Utah. 'We're called environmentalists,' Redford declared. 'And if so, I am. I'm an environmentalist.'¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ 'Network Airs Kaiparowits Views', p. 11A.

Conclusion:
The Ghost of Kaiparowits:
The Geography of Hostility

Introduction: This is Watt You Get

In the summer of 1980, several years after Robert Redford had seemed deflated by the way he had divided Utah's with his anti-Kaiparowits crusade, another celebrity arrived in the state. Like Redford, he came looking to make a political name for himself. This new arrival had also tried his hand at acting, but his entertainment career had long ago faded. Still, he possessed grandiose political ambitions that dwarfed the one-man-ecological-posse's own. Public recognition of Redford as a potent force in environmental politics and genuine threat to the Kaiparowits Project had taken the better part of a year to cement in Utah. In contrast, the new visitor received rapturous support when he reached Salt Lake City. This glowing

reception was partly because the man symbolised a countervailing force to that of 1970s environmentalism. The man was Ronald Reagan, campaigning for the US presidency.

Scarcely reported at the time, Reagan is now well known for six words he spoke to a crowd in Salt Lake City that August. Reagan had declared 'count me in as a rebel.'¹ It signalled the presidential hopeful's support of the Sagebrush Rebellion, the Western uprising of grassroots agricultural and development interests that sought to regain legal control of public land in the Intermountain West. Comprised of numerous local groups like Kaiparowits' ALIVE, the sagebrush rebels arose to channel a creeping resentment against out-of-state environmentalists and meddling federal institutions into something more tangible. ALIVE had never proven particularly potent in this regard. After the Kaiparowits Power Project's cancellation, they became obsessed with disproving Redford's environmental credentials. Members called for an investigation of the Sundance Resort, questioning its timber-cutting practices and building placement. This largely played as bitterness; a bizarre parody of environmental concern clearly designed to expose Redford as a false environmentalist ALIVE believed he was.²

ALIVE's trip to Washington to protest the bureaucratic web they believed had strangled the Kaiparowits Project had been successful, but the group failed to secure the ear of any major political patron and faded swiftly into history. Yet words like Reagan's denoted that in the latter half of the 1970s, across the Intermountain West, other prominent political figures had begun to take note of the discontent expressed by county commissioners and local communities. The spark to ignite the flame was the 1976 Federal Land Policy and

¹ Sara Dant, *Losing Eden: An Environmental History of the American West* (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), p. 176.

² 'Sundance Denies Kanab Charges; Claims Timber Cutting Supervised', *Daily Herald*, 18 April 1976, p. 22.

Management Act (FLPMA). FLPMA meant much of the public land in the West would remain under federal ownership for the foreseeable future.³ The sagebrush rebels conversely wanted the transfer of public lands to state ownership. In declaring himself part of the uprising in Salt Lake City, Reagan located Utah as the epicentre of the environmental backlash.

Both Redford and Reagan had spent much of their professional careers playing make-believe. Each man had been paid, at varying points, to re-enact the exploits of contentious frontier figures. Redford executed this most famously as the highwayman and latter title character in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969). Almost three decades earlier, Reagan assumed the role of the disobedient General George Armstrong Custer in *The Santa Fe Trail* (1942). When it came to environmental campaigning (and campaigning against environmentalism), both had eagerly returned to these frontier types, Redford committing to the idea of the outlaw, Reagan to that of the rebel. Through these twin invocations, they committed to intriguingly similar images that expressed dramatically different – and hyperbolic – conceptions about the role and value of American environmentalism and how it related to the social and cultural mainstream.

For Redford, environmentalists were the last outlaws. They were a small coterie seeking to stop the greedy developers at the heart of capitalist America from gobbling up the remaining traces of wilderness the country possessed. Kaiparowits, as the actor had declared on CBS, was the last chance to achieve this, and failing to do so would symbolise the beginning of an ill-defined apocalyptic end for Western nature. For Reagan, rational development of resources had been pushed to the cultural fringe by the unrestrained reach of environmental regulation, and it was the sagebrush rebels who were on the outside looking in. Each

³ Cawley, pp. 34-41; Switzer, pp. 172-173.

presented their associated cause as a social pariah. Redford and Reagan suggested each group's outsider status was commendable, and above all morally just. Yet one man's group could only be viewed as heroic outsiders by positioning the others as a dictatorial, dominant societal force.

These contrasting depictions of environmentalism, alongside the Kaiparowits Project cancellation, had a significant impact on the Sagebrush Rebellion in Utah, although it would be overly simply to suggest they were the sole determinants of its character. The rebels had emerged in Nevada first, and despite Reagan's claims made in Salt Lake City in 1980, he played a sympathetic but ultimately indirect role in the uprising.⁴ Some of the issues animating the rebels pre-dated both Southern California Edison's project and the emergence of environmentalism, such as the perception that the West had never attained an equal political footing with the East. Other aspects distanced the project's relationship to the rebellion. Frank Moss and Calvin Rampton, the principle political patrons of SCE in Utah, had no wish to be associated with the sagebrush rebels, both largely retiring from public life after the mid-1970s.

The Kaiparowits Project's design intent also complicated its relationship to the Western uprising. The plant had always aimed to power the urban seaboard cities of California whilst southern Utah gained employment, and what had promised to be a significant increase in pollution. Kaiparowits correspondence had ably demonstrated how California was increasingly viewed by Utahns as a distinctive cultural entity that had its own colonial relationship with the interior West. As such, it was hardly the ideal symbol for a collective seeking to re-assert Western self-determination and political agency. One supporter of the

⁴ Turner, *The Promise*, p. 235; Cawley, pp. 131-132.

rebels worried that any sagebrush success that reclaimed the nation's public lands would mean 'Kaiparowits becoming a pawn in California's greedy energy usage.'⁵

Still, the swift growth of support for the Sagebrush Rebellion in Utah *can* be related back to the way the Kaiparowits controversy had poisoned environmentalism's reputation in the region. Although the sagebrush rebels first emerged in Nevada, support spread to the Beehive state rapidly, and scholars like Jedediah Rogers have convincingly argued that Utah quickly became the frontline in the conflict over the West's public lands.⁶ The character of the rebellion in Utah was also distinctive; less focused on the problems of a vast bureaucracy, and more overtly anti-environmental in its expression. Republican Representative for Utah Ray Schmutz expressed support for the Sagebrush Rebellion in June, arguing that 'environmentalists are in control of all the government land use agencies [...] you saw what happened to Kaiparowitz.'⁷ Another self-proclaimed sagebrush rebel, Utah Senator Ivan Matheson, argued in favour of the rebellion's proposed public land transfer by stating 'the worst form of pollution we have today is environmentalists and ecology groups.'⁸ While the sagebrush rebels tended to expose ideological divisions and oppositional conceptions of place wherever they emerged, Utah was particularly primed for such debates. Southern Utahns were already particularly resentful following the Kaiparowits cancellation in April 1976, and hopes the plant would still be revived continued for several months. The passage of the FLPMA, the chief catalyst for the rebellion, came mere months later in October 1976. There

⁵ Jedediah S. Rogers, *Land Grabbers, Toadstool Worshipers, and the Sagebrush Rebellion in Utah, 1979-1981* (unpublished Master's dissertation, Brigham Young University, 2005), p. 81.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁷ Richard Cooper, 'Schmutz tells chamber gov. encroachment is biggest problem', *Daily Spectrum*, 6 June 1980, p. 3.

⁸ Rob Moore, 'Allen-Warner divides large crowd', *Daily Spectrum*, 29 July 1979, p. 1.

would be no cooling-off period; environmental obstructionism appeared relentless and never-ending.

Anti-environmental rhetoric in Utah during the sagebrush years of the late 1970s is easily found, but contemporary observers would be forgiven for thinking that things had come full circle. During the Echo Park Dam conflict in the mid-1950s, the Sierra Club and others had had to contend with accusations of being armchair environmentalists and 'nature lovers.' In 1979, Orrin Hatch, who had won Frank Moss's senate seat partly because the latter had failed to initiate construction atop Kaiparowits, drew upon these established characterisations. Taking his turn at the pulpit to rant against the evils of environmentalism, Hatch charged environmental groups as 'radical [...] dandelion pickers.' They were a 'selfish,' group that constituted, 'a cult of toadstool worshippers.'⁹

What made this anti-environmental rhetoric different was not its repetitive argument, but the way in which it was now parroted at the national level. Much of this came from Reagan's Interior Secretary James G. Watt. It is safe to say that even as recent historiography has extended the boundaries of environmentalism outward, incorporating surprising figures like Barry Goldwater and Zane Grey, Watt will never be included within these borders. Watt was 'a vehement anti-environmentalist,' whose, 'name [...] still sends shivers down the most ardent environmentalist's spine.' He declared environmentalists 'extremists,' who were, 'a left-wing cult that seeks to bring down [...] government.'¹⁰ Whilst Watt's reliance on the idea of environmentalists as outsiders, and as an extreme and secretive fringe group was hardly new, he went further than even the most ardent critics of environmentalism in Utah. Watt's

⁹ Rogers, *Land Grabbers*, p. 43.

¹⁰ Rowell, p. 9.

rhetoric was influenced by a theological and patriarchal fervour that drew inspiration from the Book of Genesis, where it stated that God had given 'man' alone dominion over nature.¹¹ Even as environmentalists were appalled by Watt nationally, local Kaiparowits Project supporters believed his appointment would remove of barriers preventing southern Utah's energy development.¹²

Contemporary observers themselves noted the connections between earlier rhetorical clashes in the press and the debates incited by the Sagebrush Rebellion in Utah. Environmentalism's reputation continued to be a central focus in the state as the sagebrush rebels pursued their goal of a land transfer into 1980. Bernard Shanks, speaking to the *Daily Spectrum*, bemoaned how the debate had manifested in Utah, characterising it as a continuation of past critiques against environmentalism. Whilst not discounting the prominent vein of anti-federalism motivating the movement more broadly, he argued that his conversations with Utah rebels 'perpetuate the idea that the issue is one of environmentalist versus responsive development.' The *Spectrum*, which had given pro-Kaiparowits Project spokespeople their most prominent press platform in 1975 and 1976, pushed Shanks into concluding that environmental groups were elitist, though he refused to characterise them as radical.¹³ That statement in turn offended the Utah Cattlemen's Association, Utah Woolgrowers Association, and Utah Farm Bureau, who felt Shanks's statements about environmentalist elitism were 'insulting.' A spokesperson argued Shanks

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² 'Sagebrush Rebellion leaders delighted with Watt choice', *The Daily Spectrum*, 28 December 1980, p. 4.

¹³ 'Utah State professor likens Sagebrush to McCarthyism', *Daily Spectrum*, 15 May 1980, p. 16.

had attempted to imply 'that supporters of the Sagebrush Rebellion are not as well educated or involved in the democratic process' as environmental sympathisers were.¹⁴

That response inadvertently reinforced part of Shanks's argument, but once more a sense of repetition set in. Hatch's commentary had echoed earlier reputational attacks made during the Echo Park Dam controversy. This latest spat more closely mirrored anxieties expressed by farmers and stockmen about the way in which environmentalists had tried to present them as irresponsible despoilers during the Grand Canyon dam controversy. Although the anti-environmental rhetoric of the Sagebrush Rebellion found itself spoken by more prominent political figures, it was hardly new. It had been forged much further back in Utah's contentious history with environmentalism's emergence.

Conclusion I: Retracing Decline

The Kaiparowits conflict demonstrates the degree to which different regional commentators were able to shape the public image of individuals and organisations who spoke out in the defence of landscape. Contesting visions of Kaiparowits as an ecological, aesthetic, and economic space played some role in Utah's long power controversy. But observers expended far more energy assessing and speculating about the moral character, hidden motivations, and ideological sympathies of several environmental actors that sought to prevent Edison's vast power complex. Kaiparowits' history has been shaped by a range of figures, but its own character at the end of the twentieth century was no more celebrated than when Clyde Kluckhohn first breached the Straight Cliffs in 1928. As a material geography, the plateau

¹⁴ Alarik Myrin, Hatch Howard, and Frank O. Nishiguchi, 'AG Groups Criticize USU News Release', *American Fork Citizen*, 12 June 1980, p. 19.

remained a landscape similarly trapped in stasis, with no major legible development occupying its dissected, concave surface. Conversely, the reputation of American environmentalism in southern Utah had proven a far more malleable construct than the hard, red rocks that grounded Kane and Garfield County.

Utah's reception of John Muir's preservationist message had seemed so positive in the nineteenth century, even though it depended on the Wasatch press' brazenly selective retelling of the naturalist's Mormon commentary. Yet the relationship would precipitously decline after 1950 when Muir's message evolved into a more organised form. The shaping of reputation in environmental conflict found its role as a tool of de-legitimisation. It became an instrument of social control designed to rob the perceived opponents of regional growth their political agency, and to isolate and denigrate them in the eyes of the Intermountain public. From the 1950s onward, relatively conservative nature enthusiasts were cast as the patsies of a range of cultural and regionally-distant industrial elites, including eastern technocrats and Californian water barons. The increasing public confidence of conservationists and their transition toward broader agendas created a cascade of reputational rhetoric. The Intermountain press, Utah residents, and Southern California Edison became intent on communicating to different audiences the societal dangers of environmentalism. The movement and its members became a canvas that seemed to provide inexhaustible opportunities for derogatory reinvention.

The initial success of delegitimizing environmental speech proved unsustainable. Whilst the advent of the 'environmental decade' and the diffusion of conservation sympathies failed to erode suspicion of the movement, it did represent a kind of blank slate. Northern Utahns embraced their own form of environmental politics. A range of press outlets reconceptualised

histrionics over pollution into local commitments to cleanliness in the school and the community. This was hardly a form of environmental politics, but it was a rebranding more digestible to northern Mormons, one that provided a sense of continued belonging to a nation embracing environmentalism.

Simultaneously, emergent concerns about pollutants placed industry on the defence. The smokestacks of power plants, once a concrete representation of American prosperity, began to symbolise decline. Southern California Edison, once honoured for their role as chauffeurs of post-war growth, found themselves recast as irresponsible polluters. Although it initially appeared that the populist rhetoric of energy independence would help restore past criticisms against environmental advocates, this language of technological enthusiasm did not possess the impact its proponents hoped. The refrains that environmental groups were hotbeds of 'extremists,' 'militants,' and 'radicals' became repetitive, and the frequency of these claims diluted their wider cultural and political agency. It was with celebrity incorporation that older criticisms of elitism found renewed purchase. By then, however, this was limited to rural southern Utah, and the Sagebrush Rebellion offered only a brief resurgence of this rhetoric.

Repeatedly, holding a positive reputation and public image were shown to have tangible economic and political ramifications in energy politics. For Edison, a decline in public faith formed part of the reason behind new forms of centralised regulation and national environmental legislation. Conversely, the traditional environmental groups would only fall foul nationally to the constricting nature of public image after the 1970s had ended. The corporatisation of environmentalism across the 1980s would find large groups like the Sierra Club, the National Wildlife Federation, and Greenpeace increasingly dependent on the

funding of conservative constituencies and private philanthropy. These sources of financial aid cared about the way these organisations presented themselves to the public. Like the major industries that had to rely upon greenwashing in the early 1970s, environmental groups increasingly found themselves walking a rhetorical tightrope between radicalism and conservatism to replenish their coffers.¹⁵

The varying reputations environmental groups found themselves burdened with in Utah were frequently driven by predictable, if not entirely unsympathetic, political and economic biases. Yet such framings were just as frequently borne of legitimate cultural anxieties distinct to Mormon culture more specifically. Reputational claims about environmental groups often revealed more about the insecurities of the claimants than it did the targets of stigma. Attacks on conservationists said much about Mormonism's conception of itself in relation to the post-war Intermountain landscape and relationship with the nation. By the time the Kaiparowits conflict conflagrated the media in 1971, the LDS had embraced, with more ardour than any outsider group before them, the belief in industrial growth that had long permeated the American orthodoxy. Environmentalism, conversely, presented itself as a warped variant of the utilitarian origins of Mormon stewardship. Organisations such as the Wilderness Society and Sierra Club were considered to have perverted rational land management practices into something emotional and unrecognisable.

Distinctive visions of the purpose of southern Utah's landscape conspired to progressively degrade the environmentalist-Mormon encounter, paled with perception and miscommunication about the character of each environmental agent. In both respects, failure to recognise historic common ground was constant. Mormon commentators saw

¹⁵ Dowie, p. 43.

environmental groups as emphasising regional stasis in exchange for personal recreation. Environmental orators saw Mormon residents as too quick to embrace hydrological and industrial development. Neither group appeared to reasonably consider the justification for either's position, and reputations frequently proved selective in pursuit of political and economic outcomes. Mormons built an image of environmental groups that was insufficiently sensitive to the needs of future land management. Ecological imperilment was never seriously entertained by residents surrounding the plateau, who framed environmentalists as only concerned with Kaiparowits' aesthetics whilst they viewed pollution as a surmountable nuisance. Environmentalists, conversely, reacted to Mormonism's desire for development without due consciousness of the past. Both Muir and Brower were guilty during their time in Utah of failing to recognise the role persecution and exodus had played in fermenting a multifaceted and complex environmental ethic.

Did the negative image of environmentalists impact their campaigns and development in Utah? Their ability to contest and delay the Kaiparowits plant almost indefinitely ultimately had little to do with their strength in the state itself. But as several commentators I've cited throughout this thesis have noted, no environmental group has much of an operational presence in southern Utah, a place that has become notorious as the most hostile region in the United States to anyone designated as an 'environmentalist.' Such discontent is important. To return to Robert MacFarlane's point, if a landscape is seen as worthless, it becomes vulnerable to unwise use.¹⁶ What happens if the people who are seen to have protected it are hated in turn? What function does reputation come to play long after the fact?

¹⁶ MacFarlane, pp. 29-30.

On this point, the Kaiparowits Plateau had one last tale to tell.

Conclusion II: An Updated Image

At the end of August 1996, Paul Rauber, an avid outdoorsman and a senior editor for the Sierra Club's bimonthly magazine, *Sierra*, prepared to undertake a week-long mountain biking expedition across southern Utah's Kaiparowits Plateau. Rauber's friends, with varying degrees of humour, rated his chances of survival at around fifty percent. Rauber was unlikely to have the physical endurance required for the trip, they had argued, nor the expertise. An email from a colleague reinforced the general doubts surrounding the idea. 'Please don't get the impression I'm trying to intimidate you,' it read 'I consider you a perfect choice for this "regular-person Sierra Club mountain bike" story – assuming you live to write it.'¹⁷ Rauber remained undeterred; more than a desire for recreation drove his trip. Accompanied by veteran Sierra Club organizers Vicky Hoover and Jim Catlin, the arduous Kaiparowits trek was planned to publicize and rally support against Dutch interest Andalex Resources who sought to mine the vast coal reserves that ran beneath the plateau.

Twenty years had passed since Edison had abandoned Kaiparowits, but Andalex's aims were framed by the Sierra Club as no less grandiose or threatening. The Club claimed that the planned mine was going to be twice the size of Manhattan Island. The Kaiparowits coal had exhibited a sustained ability over the years to attract what the Club identified as 'generations of get-rich-quick schemes.' Extracting the coal beneath the plateau had continually arisen in the minds of various project architects as a promising commercial opportunity. Discussions

¹⁷ Paul Rauber, *Kaiparowits for Keeps* [online]. Sierra Magazine [accessed 18 May 2014]. Available from: <http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/199703/utah.asp>.

about exploiting the coal had been resuscitated in 1979 as the Sagebrush Rebellion raged on.¹⁸ For Andalex in 1996, the coal would service not California and Arizona but be shipped to far more distant places: it would find passage to Korea, and Japan.¹⁹ Regional outsiders had been supplanted by international ones. In 1996, the potential fuel contained within the 650,000-acre plateau was valued at just over one trillion dollars. The threat to the plateau was credible. One legacy of the combined forces of neoconservatism, the Sagebrush Rebellion, and James Watt's time as Interior Secretary had been the removal of 387,000 acres of the Kaiparowits region from the wilderness inventories of 1979 and 1980.²⁰

Like Southern California Edison before them, Andalex never got to translate their project into the material realm. On 18 September 1996, President Bill Clinton, standing on the south rim of the Grand Canyon and flanked by Robert Redford, declared that the Canyons of the Escalante, Grand Staircase, and Kaiparowits Plateau would all be included within the new 1.8 million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM). The president stood at the exact same spot where in 1908, Theodore Roosevelt had declared the Grand Canyon a national monument. Paraphrasing the Rough Rider's remarks from that earlier speech, Clinton declared 'we have gotten past the stage when we are pardoned if we treat any part of our country as something to be skinned for.'²¹

¹⁸ Rob Moore, 'Kaiparowits coal looms as alternative to power project plan', *Daily Spectrum*, 21 August 1979, p. 1.

¹⁹ Rauber, *Kaiparowits for Keeps*; Katharine Bill, *Mega Coal Mine Proposed Again in Utah* [online]. High Country News [accessed 6 July 2014]. Available from: <http://www.hcn.org/issues/16/492>.

²⁰ Raymond Wheeler, 'Stroke and Counterstroke', in *Reopening the Western Frontier*, ed. by Ed Marston (Washington D. C.: Island Press, 1989), pp. 134-150 (p. 144).

²¹ See: William J. Clinton, 'Remarks Announcing the Establishment of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument at Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona, September 18, 1996', in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, William J. Clinton July 1-December 31 1996* (Washington: National Archives and Records Administration), pp. 1600-1602 (p. 1602).

The important role reputation played in environmental politics was on obvious display that September morning, and the Grand Canyon served two purposes in this context. The president employed the canyon as both perceptual and geomorphic landscape. The perceptual canyon connected Clinton with one of the West's most famous and popular presidents – and conservationists – Theodore Roosevelt in the minds of his audience. Physically, the canyon served to disconnect Clinton from communities of angry and disappointed locals in southern Utah, enraged that the Kaiparowits coal question had once more been determined by the actions of outside bureaucratic forces. In northern Arizona, conservation non-profit the Grand Canyon Trust rented all available busses to ensure the media would see only the appreciative cries of the conservation faithful.²² If any citizen in Kane or Garfield had ever read Zane Grey's *Wild Horse Mesa*, perhaps they thought that Grey was right to have suggested in 1928 that the Grand Canyon was where thieves congregated. But GSENM's creation not only highlighted the power reputation had come to play in environmental politics, it also illustrated its dubious place in the political process. At the end of the twentieth century, the perception of being environmentally conscious had become as important as the reality. Clinton, then seeking re-election, had little chance of winning Utah, but his green image was in need dire need of bolstering following an inauspicious first term. The designation of the monument, arranged for maximum performative impact but with minimum forewarning, was environmental political theatre at its finest. With a single signature, Clinton transformed his environmental image. GSENM was, like naming Al Gore his vice president, a symbolic gesture designed to make people think he was a staunch agent of

²² Charles F. Wilkinson, *Fire on the Plateau: Conflict and Endurance in the American Southwest* (Washington: Island Press, 1999), p. 329.

preservation.²³ In that respect, it worked; the monument's creation appeared to wipe away doubts.²⁴ Both the League of Conservation Voters and Sierra Club leadership praised Clinton for his decision.²⁵ The *Washington Post* called the action 'the greening of Bill Clinton.'²⁶ But even as Bill Clinton 'environmentalist' was shaped for those watching the press conference on that evening's news, the creation of this new image was dependent upon destruction. The designation ensured that Utah 'lost' 1.8 million acres – an incredible trade for one man's public image. And as if to hasten the state forgetting the 'lock up' of their coalfield, Kaiparowits found its name absent from the monument's title, an act of pre-emptive political erasure.

Southern Utah locals would strenuously resist consigning this memory to oblivion. The reactions of 'old timers' who still remembered the original conflict over Kaiparowits in 1976 were best conflated by one observer, who noted: 'they will never forgive, and they will never forget.'²⁷ Predictably, no glowing response or superlatives came from the communities of Kane and Garfield County. That the Antiquities Act had not been used since 1978, and then in distant Alaska, conveyed to southern Utah locals that an arcane bureaucratic instrument had been marshalled against them.²⁸ In Escalante, residents wore black arm bands as a sign of

²³ Mark Squillace, 'The Antiquities Act and the Exercise of Presidential Power: The Clinton Monuments', in *The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation*, ed. by David Harmon, Francis P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006), pp. 106-137 (p. 108). See also: J. Robert Cox, 'The (Re)Making of the "Environmental President": Clinton/Gore and the Rhetoric of U.S. Environmental Politics, 1992-1996', in *Green Talk in the White House: The Rhetorical Presidency Encounters Ecology*, ed. by Tarla Rai Peterson (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), pp. 157-180.

²⁴ For an overview of Clinton's first term environmental record, see: Martin A. Nie, "'It's the Environment, Stupid!": Clinton and the Environment', *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 27 (1997), 39-51.

²⁵ Paul Richter and Frank Clifford, 'Clinton Designates Monument in Utah', *Los Angeles Times*, p. A3.

²⁶ David Maraniss, 'Clinton Acts to Protect Utah Land' [online]. *Washington Post*, 19 September 1996 [cited 16 September 2017]. Available from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1996/09/19/clinton-acts-to-protect-utah-land/03918776-0364-466b-a2df-537c7414770f/?utm_term=.185e15406653.

²⁷ Trimble, p. 273.

²⁸ Jeffrey O. Durrant, *Struggle Over Utah's San Rafael Swell: Wilderness, National Conservation Areas, and National Monuments* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007), p. 93.

protest. The anti-monument gathering released swarms of black balloons to mourn the plateau.²⁹ The same occurred in Kanab, where officials additionally ordered that flags were flown at half-mast.³⁰

But existing assumptions about the character of environmental advocates from locals played as much of a role in reactions against the monument. Suspicion of environmentalism in any form meant reactions were borne from the belief that GSENM represented a grand triumph of environmentalist agency. In certain respects, the secrecy behind the monument's creation did reinforce existing local conceptions about the more nefarious undercurrents they saw lurking beneath American environmentalism. Yet emotion rather than investigation meant the specifics of the policy were often not sufficiently explored by locals. Many southern Utah residents did not realise that the designation preserved their water rights, hunting rights, and grazing rights on the monument.

Clinton's designation of Grand Staircase-Escalante suggested that environmentalism was once more back in the national mainstream at the close of the twentieth century, after years of neoconservative repudiation. Few, if any environmentalists fondly remembered the Reagan years. George H. W. Bush offered no improvement, proving more subtly anti-environmental through his courtship of the sagebrush successors, the Wise Use movement, and desire to drill for oil in the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge.³¹ That increasingly understated character, sociologist Peter Jacques argues, is how anti-environmentalism has

²⁹ Wilkinson, p. 330.

³⁰ David DeMille, "'Culture war' plays out at Grand Staircase monument' [online]. *USA Today*, 10 May 2017 [cited 14 September 2017]. Available from: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/05/11/clear-clash-cultures-play-wednesday-two-sides-20-year-old-debate-over-grand-staircase-escalante-national-monument-trying-to-make-their-case-visiting-interior-secretary-ryan-zinke/317253001/>.

³¹ See: Damian Finbar White, Chris P. Wilbert, and Alan Rudy, 'Anti-environmentalism: Prometheans, Contrarians and Beyond', in *The SAGE Handbook of Environment and Society*, ed. by Jules Pretty, and others (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Ltd., 2008), pp. 124-121 (p. 130).

almost universally manifested at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries. Jacques suggests that although the Sagebrush Rebellion and Wise Use movements achieved political support, 'open hostility to environmentalism is and has been unpalatable to the public.'³² People might not always agree with restrictive environmental policy, he argues, but they *like* environmentalists, and so anti-environmentalism has been forced underground, rebranding itself as environmental *scepticism*. That means a questioning of environmental and climate science, rather than attacking the character of the environmental movement. The Sagebrush Rebellion, Jacques declares, proved that 'open hostility to environmentalism was a political non-starter.'³³

It seems unlikely Jacques has ever visited southern Utah. Here, the ghost of Kaiparowits still stalks the hills, anti-environmentalism remains a naked, untethered force, and its principle expression is through active hatred of movement members.

Conclusion III: Demon Environmentalists

Historian Stephen Trimble has argued that around Kaiparowits, Wallace Stegner's 'geography of hope,' his succinct articulation of American wilderness, has become a 'geography of hostility.'³⁴ In southern Utah, the reputation of every active environmental organisation is bad enough that even the possibility of communication between groups and communities is nigh-on impossible. When Trimble tried to speak with local Larry Fletcher, he noted the man:

Imagined every Sierra Club member, every environmentalist to be his enemy
– a faceless Other from New York, who would never come to his town or to his

³² Jacques, p. 43.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Trimble, p. 270, 273.

home territory, much less to his driveway. He was convinced that these people hated him and wanted to destroy his way of life.³⁵

Here, Trimble noted, was the image of the 'demon enviro' writ large.³⁶ Indeed, it is easy to justify Clinton's actions based on the product and not worry too much about the thoughts of locals like Fletcher. But the reputation of environmental actors has continued to define political life in southern Utah. Continual rejection of the perceived hostility of environmental outsiders has come to play a comforting, if disturbingly petulant role in communities like Kanab and Escalante. Following 1996, 'environmentalists' retained their image as distant figures, but the spectre of environmentalism was increasingly incorporated into daily communal identity. The perception of environmentalists as vultures circling inward served to unify a culture that was as precariously placed in 1996 as it was at the end of the nineteenth century. Resistance to the perceived intentions of conservation groups has become something that is proudly advertised. As Edward Geary notes, go to the town of Escalante in Garfield County and count the number of bumper stickers that declare 'Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance sucks.'³⁷ Community identity without contrast is rarely salient, and in southern Utah, environmentalists provide that contrast ably.³⁸

Whilst much civic pride in southern Utah's rural communities still rests on their Mormon heritage and faith, many residents of Kane and Garfield have come to view their continued existence on the land as being in direct opposition to the perceived wants of a dictatorial environmental movement. Through their perceived resistance, locals produce an inversion of the cultural construction of wilderness. Wilderness cannot exist without urban environments,

³⁵ Ibid., p. 210.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Geary, p. 171.

³⁸ Fine, p. 236.

academics have reasoned. It needs an opposite, a contrast; you cannot construct and celebrate pristine nature without the existence of corrupted urbanity.³⁹ By the same logic, the rational land stewards of Utah's rural south need their own opposite: the irrational, emotional, urban environmentalist devils. The same dualistic necessities are required to idolise the people who speak for nature; they need rabid developers as opponents. David Brower could not have become John McPhee's 'Archdruid' without the existence of Floyd Dominy's arrogant hydrological ambitions.⁴⁰ Edward Abbey could not have become 'Cactus Ed' without quintessential southern Utah antagonist, vocal San Juan County Commissioner Calvin Black. Environmental historians have always liked their environmentalists who were wide of eye, convinced that society teetered on the edge of the abyss. Similarly, they have embraced the idea of the anti-environmentalist who wears a cowboy hat and drives his quad bike, all the while brimming with rage.

When Mark Harvey wrote the epilogue for his history of the Echo Park Dam conflict, he cautioned against such creations. The conservation battles of the 1950s and 1960s bore little resemblance to those of the late twentieth-century, he reasoned. More contemporary environmental conflicts make less space for individual personalities, and historians should resist nostalgia. Still, the contest over Echo Park proved seductive in the way it built heroic individual, organisational, and spatial reputations. Conservation protest became an avenue to celebrated public stature. The Sierra Club 'gained a new public image,' and, 'reputation for a hard-driving and uncompromising approach.' David Brower 'developed his own national reputation.' Echo Park became a 'symbol of wilderness.'⁴¹

³⁹ Cronon, pp. 69-90; Farmer, *On Zion's Mount*, p. 219.

⁴⁰ Tom Wolf, 'Mr. Dominy, are you a hero or a villain?' [online]. *High County News*, 26 October 1988 [cited 16 September 2017]. Available from: <http://www.hcn.org/issues/141/4583>.

⁴¹ Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness*, p. 291.

The Kaiparowits conflict presents its own distinctive, unique story, but in certain respects should be viewed as the inverse of the Colorado River power struggles. For locals, the Kaiparowits Plateau has become a symbol not of sublime nature, but of oppression by outsiders. The landscape embodies environmentalism as a paradoxically distant yet omnipresent threat to community agency. Locals looking toward Fifty Mile Mountain often feel the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, EDF, and SUWA are a tyrannical force. In 2017, the *New York Times* argued that for these residents, the plateau's fate is 'a wound that never healed.'⁴² It has become geologic testimony to all the flaws of American environmentalism in its post-war glory years: its elitism, its failure to engage with those beyond its narrow demographic borders, its blindness to class inequities, and its anti-ruralism. Through the demons of environmentalism, the Kaiparowits Plateau finally has its own mythos, its own folklore.

Indeed, the Kaiparowits Plateau's story should temper the temptations of academics who would look to the years 1950-1975 and write a story about the exceptionalism and ascendancy of American environmentalism. Until recently, that historiographical project seemed concluded, but more recent publications – including two new texts on David Brower in the last three years – suggests that traditionalist, post-war environmental politics remains an alluring arena. In an era of unprecedented partisanship, global uncertainty, and the breakdown of civil communication, it seems movement scholarship and narratives about the triumphalism of environmentalism are poised to make a return. That would be a mistake. Discussions about post-war environmentalism contain space for many issues. Discourse

⁴² Julie Turkewitz and Lisa Friedman, 'Interior Secretary Proposes Shrinking Four National Monuments' [online]. *New York Times*, 24 August 2017 [cited 10 September 2017]. Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/24/us/bears-ears-utah-monument.html? r=0>.

already encompasses the growth of organisations, the evolution of national thinkers and grassroots activists, the development of landmark legislation, and pathways to environmental reform. But we should include the narratives of those who found themselves (and still find themselves) vociferously against the movement. If we do not understand the circumstances, the cultural peculiarities, and the anxieties that have produced not hatred, but *fear* of environmentalism, then we will be left without the chance of dialogue. That itself seems especially important today, when American environmentalism remains a fractured movement, besieged on many sides by people contesting its image, rather than its realities.

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APPENDIX

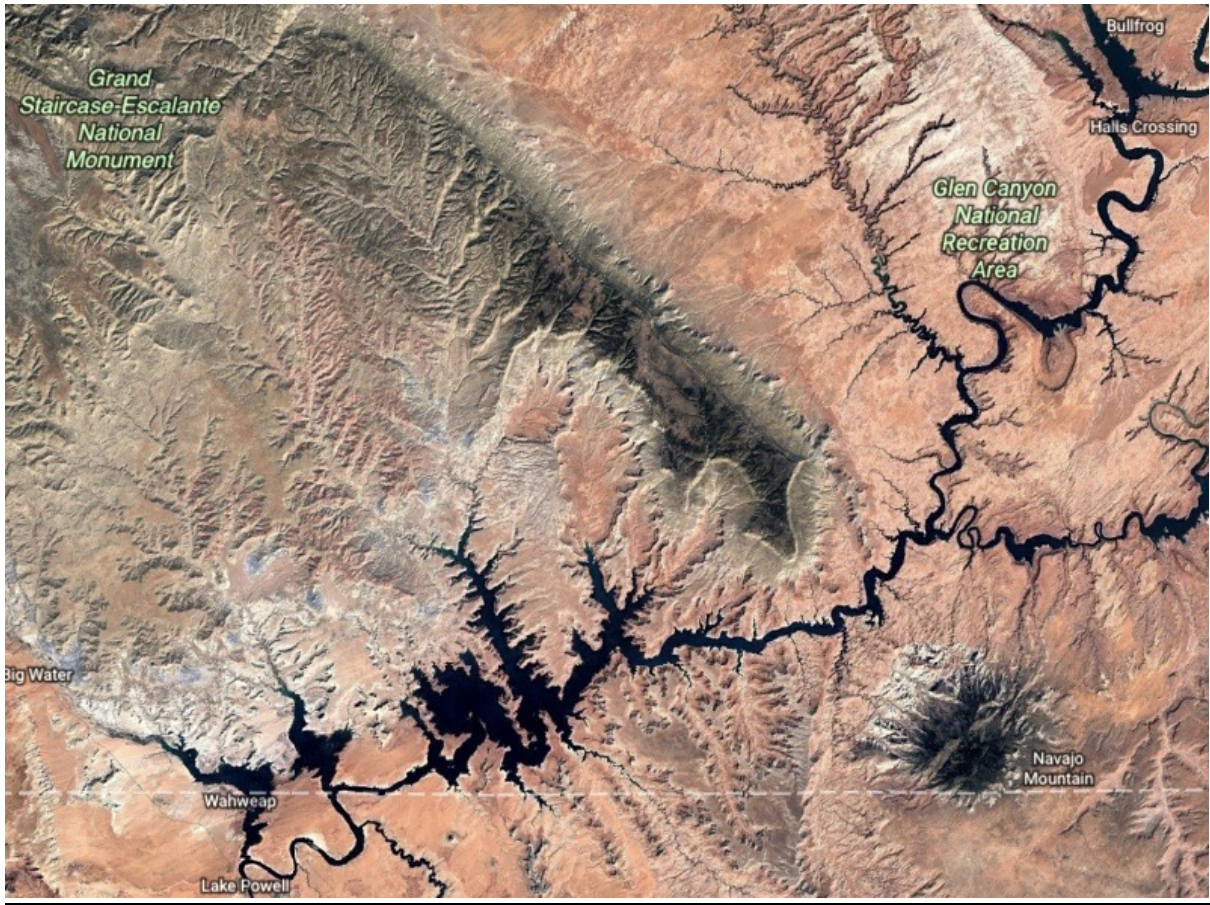


Image 1. Ka-pu-rats, (John Wesley Powell's "arm").

Source: Google Earth.

Sweeping Back the Flood



Image 2. John Muir.

Source: *San Francisco Call*, 1909.

April 20th, 1974, Friday, Feb. 8, 1974, Page 1

**We have more coal than they have oil.
Let's use it!**

<p>America is self-sufficient in one fossil fuel source of energy: COAL. Manufacturing about half the world's known supply— enough for over 100 years!</p> <p>It can be the major solution to our present energy problems.</p> <p>Coal can be used instead of other gas for the production of electricity.</p> <p>Electricity, in turn, can be used for virtually all energy needs, except some forms of transportation.</p>	<p>And when electricity is fully put to use, the staggering amounts of oil and gas wastes can be diverted to other, more critical uses. Such as transportation.</p> <p>To be sure, turning the coal of land as well as extracting new coal as quickly as possible, is not without its problems.</p> <p>And when you start to do all such things as sub-surface price controls, reforestation, environmental resistance, new mine development and land reclamation, the</p>	<p>problems seem formidable.</p> <p>But they are nothing that American ingenuity cannot fix.</p> <p>Coal—good old reliable coal—can help us solve the energy crisis. For once, we have used it as we have never used it before. It is to be our national characteristic.</p> <p>Let's start using that coal. Folks.</p> <p>Now.</p>
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American Electric Power Company, Inc.

Image 3. American Electric Company Advertisement.

Source: *Logan Daily News*, 1974.

When you flick a switch in your home tonight,
there will be plenty of power to answer your call.



There'll be more than enough power for the precipitation and other air filtering devices used in homes and factories, power to spare for the new sewage treatment plants and other equipment and installations used to clean up our environment.

There's power to spare, too, for the electric typewriters in your office—or the computers, or electric saws or paint spray guns, or big motors at your job. In the area we serve, there's more than enough power to light the street corners and freeways for you tonight—and for your TV set. And your refrigerator. And your electric range. And for the 300-odd other electric appliances that are available for your home.

We take very seriously our obligation to plan for

enough ahead to have power to spare here for tomorrow, next year, and the years after that. These are years of action for the folks at the power company.

Next fall a huge new generating unit will go "on the line" at our Houghton Plant near Kemmerer, Wyoming—with enough additional generating capacity for another Salt Lake City. Several years ago, planning and engineering began on a new plant that will probably be the largest on our system before the end of this decade—the Huntington Canyon Plant near Panguitch, Utah. It has its first huge unit scheduled for completion in June 1975.

That's why there is—and will be—power to spare in the area served by Utah Power & Light Company, Your Electric Concern.

Utah Power
& Light Co.
has
Power To Spare

Image 4. Utah Power & Light Advertisement.

Source: *Daily Herald*, 1971.

MAIL THE LETTER AND PICTURES TO THE SECRETARY OF INTERIOR TODAY!

The following citizens paid for this advertisement

Mr and Mrs Al Boss

Mr and Mrs Fred Warner

Mr and Mrs Clark Jaques

Mr and Mrs K.R. Hopkins

Mr and Mrs Bill Bishop

Mr and Mrs Wes Parks

Brad and Vicki Blair

Mr and Mrs Bill Elam

Mr and Mrs Ken Farris

Mr and Mrs Dick Hulse

Mr and Mrs Jerry Human

Mr and Mrs Parry Slack

Mr and Mrs Bill Adkinson

Mr and Mrs Ray Hickman

Mr and Mrs Carlyle Hulet

Mr and Mrs John Schoppman

Mr and Mrs Mel Schoppman

Mr and Mrs Bill Greene

Mr and Mrs Eldon Roundtree

Mr and Mrs Earl Johnson

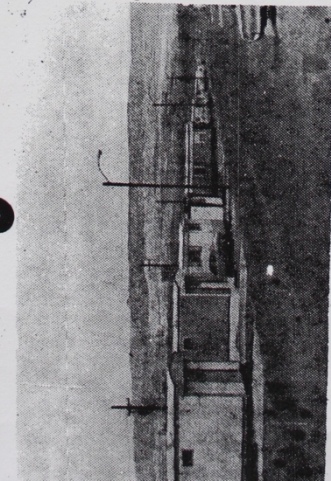
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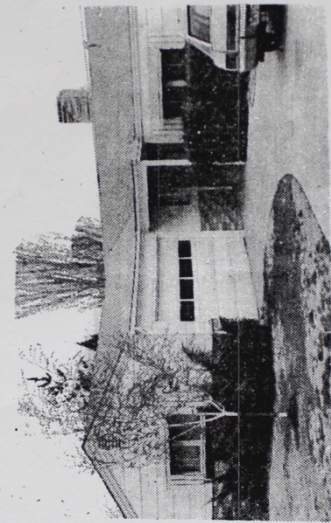
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Image 5. Page Pamphlet in response to Robert Redford *60 Minutes* interview, no. 1.

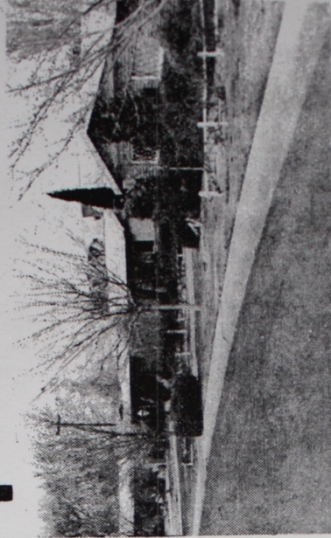
Are the environmentalists really telling the truth about Kaiparowits?



Housing area in Page, Arizona, as shown on CBS-TV



Housing area in Page, not shown on CBS-TV



A typical street in residential Page

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Image 6. Page Pamphlet in response to Robert Redford *60 Minutes* interview, no. 2.

Medical facilities as shown on CBS-TV

New medical clinic in Page, not shown on CBS-TV

Motel in Page, as shown on CBS-TV

Motel in Page, not shown on CBS-TV

Sample of shopping facilities shown on CBS-TV

A modern Page shopping center not shown on CBS-TV

Modern church building, there are several, were not shown on CBS-TV

New \$10 million Page school facilities were not shown on CBS-TV

The Page, Arizona story, as shown on national television, is just one example of the misrepresentations utilized by those who are opposed to the Kalparowits Project.

Image 7. Page Pamphlet in response to Robert Redford's *60 Minutes* interview, no. 3.

Dear Sir:

A recent television documentary on CBS-TV devoted approximately 13 minutes to the proposed construction of the Kaiparowits Project in Southern Utah.

It is the opinion of many people living in the Page, Arizona, and Southern Utah area, that the contents of this nationally-televised show were very deceiving and to say the least, unfair.

The CBS show, in our opinion, is typical of the methods being used by environmental organizations who oppose the construction of the coal-fired electric producing plant on the Kaiparowits Plateau.

Page, Arizona was depicted as a "boom" town. During the construction of the Glen Canyon Dam, in the late '50s and early '60s, thousands of construction workers made their homes in our community. Many returned when the Navajo Generating Station was built in the early and mid '70s. During the time when there was no construction at either site Page assumed the role of a bedroom community for the hundreds of people who worked in tourist-oriented businesses in the area surrounding Lake Powell.

We object to being called a "boom town" by the environmental organizations. Page serves as the home for people working at two of the major electric power producing facilities in the Southwest, Glen Canyon Power Plant and The Navajo Generating Station. Our contributions in the field of electric energy are very important to the environment of millions of Americans and the economy of our nation.

In addition to our energy resources, we provide services for hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit this area each year.

Our school system educates, in addition to the local children, hundreds of Navajo Indian students who might not have been given these opportunities had it not been for Glen Canyon Dam and the Navajo Generating Station.

The medical facilities in Page provide services to people in an area that encompasses thousands of square miles. Our business community serves, not only the local population but also thousands of tourists and American Natives who make their home on the Western Navajo Indian Reservation.

Because our community leaders have been energetic in supporting such facilities as the Navajo Generating Station, hundreds of jobs have been created.

The Navajo Generating Station has proved that with modern technology in the field of environmental control we can indeed utilize our coal resources without destroying our environment.

The people of Page are proud of the participants in NGS who have spent millions of dollars to protect the environment of our community and surrounding area. They are doing a commendable job.

However, the environmental organizations use deceptive methods to paint a very bleak picture if the Kaiparowits Project is approved.

They pointed Page out as a "boom town". They failed to point out that we are indeed a permanent community in Northern Arizona. They do not tell the story of how Page people respond to the needs of highway accident victims who suddenly find themselves hundreds of miles from home. These environmentalists won't point out the number of families in Page who adopt Native American children in order to provide them with a better opportunity in life.

Nor will they evaluate the need for the United States to become independent of foreign energy sources.

To further point out the deceptive methods used by the environmental organizations, these pictures of Page, Arizona, the way it was presented on CBS-TV and the way it really is, should certainly convince the Department of Interior that their case against the Kaiparowits Project is based solely on emotional negativism.

Name _____

Address _____

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Image 8. Page Pamphlet in response to Robert Redford *60 Minutes* interview, no. 4.

There has been much talk around town the past two weeks concerning the CBS-TV documentary about the Kaiparowits Project and Page.

Anyone who viewed that program and who has never been to Page most certainly is left with the impression that our fine community is a make-shift "boom town". Those of us who live here and those who visit Page know better.

To say the least the documentary was not complimentary. In the opinion of many local residents, the producers went to great lengths to depict Page as a "boom town" dependent upon construction projects in the Lake Powell area.

Environmental organizations, which oppose the construction of the Kaiparowits Project, are using every means to stop the program to build a needed electric producing facility in the Southwest.

Many believe they reached a point of emotional mania, utilizing every resource they have to block construction of the plant.

The Navajo Generating Station has proved that mankind, through modern technology, has found a way to utilize our natural resources for the production of electric power and still protect the environment.

But the obstructionists still refuse to accept progress. They opposed the construction of Glen Canyon Dam. They are fighting construction of nuclear power plants. They oppose facilities such as Kaiparowits.

Most people in this country realize that the United States must become energy independent, using the resources we have to produce the power we need.

The environment of the average American is very dependent upon electric power. We heat and cool our homes with electricity. Appliances in our homes use

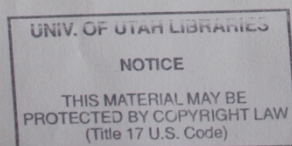


Image 9. Page Pamphlet in response to Robert Redford *60 Minutes* interview, no. 5.

electricity. Industry that processes the food we eat, the cars we drive, and the materials that go into the construction of our homes uses electricity.

If we don't continue to build facilities that produce this needed energy our life style will take a drastic turnabout.

The environmentalists have painted a very bleak picture of what they believe will happen to our environment in the Southwest if these coal-fired power plants are built. But they haven't said what will happen if they are not built.

The letter, and accompanying pictures, to Thomas Kleppe, Secretary of the Interior, point out a prime example of how the environmental organizations are functioning.

They are not telling it the way it really is. The deceptive approach they utilize is not fair, and most certainly does not inform the American people as to all of the benefits of the proposed Kaiparowits Project.

If you believe that it is time for the average American to stand up against this strong environmental lobby in Washington and let our leaders know we do care about the economic future of this nation, clip out the letter on the opposite page and send it to the Secretary of the Interior.

It will bring to his attention the fact that, while the power industry is spending literally millions of dollars to protect our environment, the obstructionists have to resort to taking "cheap shots" at Page, Arizona, our home, because their case against coal-fired power plants in the Southwest is becoming weaker and weaker.

The power industry has proved they can burn coal to produce electricity and still maintain a good environment.

The environmentalists are really scraping the bottom of the barrel when they have to pick on Page, using national television, as a means of obstructing progress.

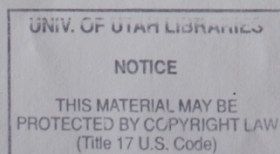


Image 10. Page Pamphlet in response to Robert Redford *60 Minutes* interview, no. 6.

Source: Frank E. Moss papers, Ms 146, Box 617.

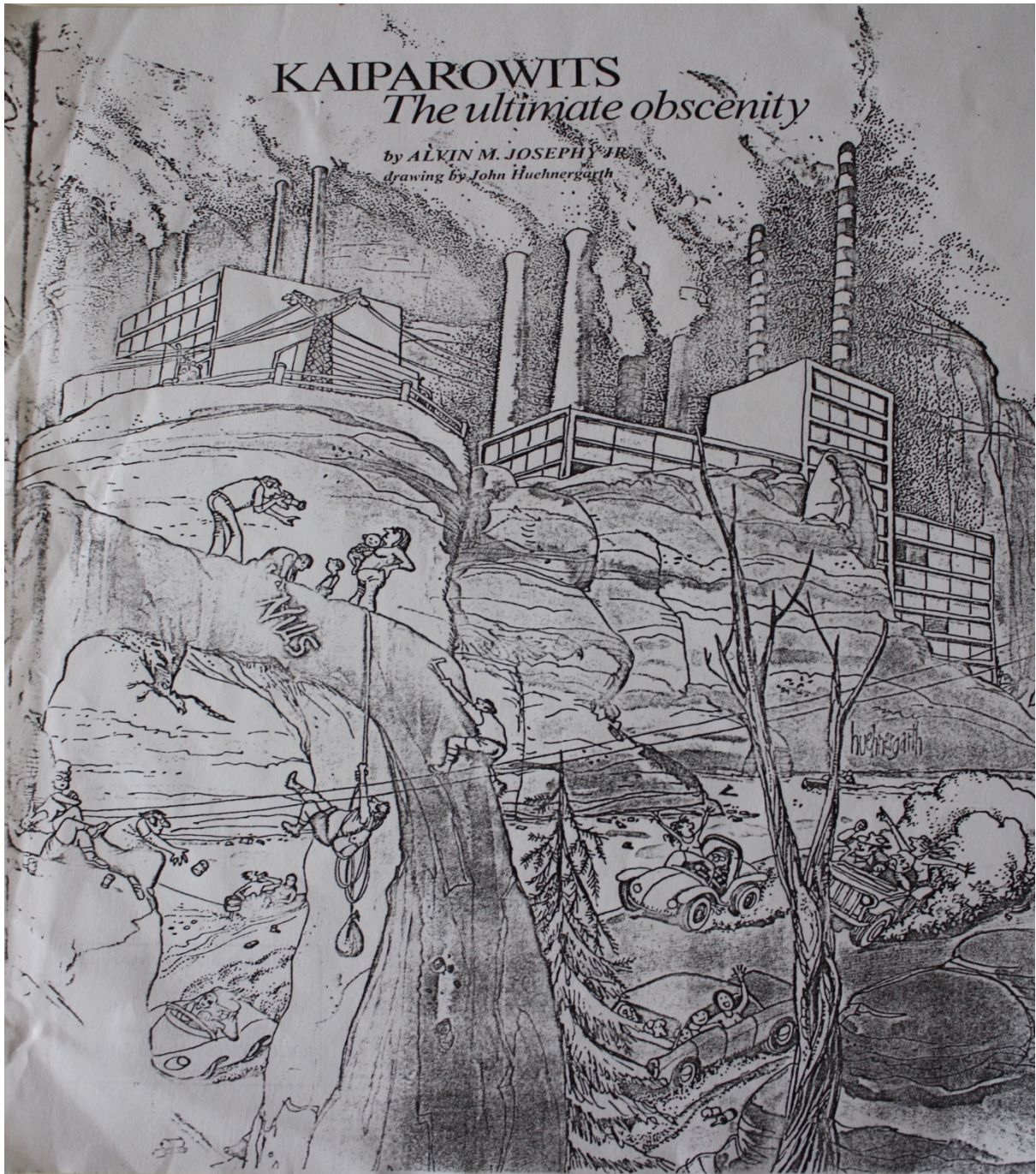


Image 11. 'Kaiparowits: The Ultimate Obscenity' by John Huehnergarth.

Source: *Audubon*, 78 (1976).



Image 12. Kanab Effigies.

Source: *San Bernardino County Sun*, 1976.



DUMMIES representing former Interior Secretary Rogers Morton and actor Robert Redford dangle in chili Southern Utah night before angry backers of Kaiparowits burned the figures, then roasted hot-dogs.

Image 13. Kanab Effigies.

Source: *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, 1976.