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Erica Cottam  
*Utah State University*

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**FROM EXILE TO EDEN  
CONFRONTING MYTH AND WATER CRISES IN A DESERT  
LANDSCAPE**

by

**Erica Cottam**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree**

of

**HONORS IN UNIVERSITY STUDIES  
WITH DEPARTMENTAL HONORS**

in

**American Studies  
in the Department of English**

**Approved:**

---

**Thesis/Project Advisor**  
Dr. Paul Crumbley

---

**Departmental Honors Advisor**  
Dr. John McLaughlin

---

**Director of Honors Program**  
Dr. Christie Fox

**UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, UT**

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## Abstract

Citizens of Washington County are about to face serious water shortages that time-honored myths imposed on the landscape during the pioneer era will make difficult to confront. Biblical views of the desert as undesirable wilderness drove early Mormon settlers to create an Edenic oasis. Twenty-first century residents believe the desert *has* been conquered and no longer poses a threat, a myth that allows for aesthetic appreciation of the landscape but also supports extravagant use of water for recreation and development. To admit that the desert is still a formidable opponent is to deny the achievement of previous generations and question the myth of the Garden. While the myth helped early settlers face an alien landscape, it now impedes rational efforts to conserve and develop an important limited resource.

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From Exile to Eden  
Confronting Myth and Water Crises in a Desert Landscape

In the winter of 1862, after just one season of living in Washington County, Utah, Wilhelmina Cannon told her husband that he was free to stay, but she was leaving. "There is not a single thing of beauty in this whole place," she despaired (qtd. in Alder 79). The woman's husband scoured the desert high and low until he found her a sego-lily, which convinced her stay (79). Over 140 years later, the area is unequivocally praised. "Who can blame us all for wanting to be here?" the St. George Area Chamber of Commerce boasts. "Our history, scenery, national parks, reservoirs, [and] climate...all are features that make this the greatest place on earth" (*St. George Area Guide 2006*). The human reading of the landscape of Southwestern Utah appears as a narrative of transformation that altered this region from a place of exile to an Eden, but it is a transformation that has consequences for the future of the people who live in Washington County, and for the desert landscape itself.

Attitudes towards the landscape of the American West and the language used to describe it have paralleled the changes brought about by settlement and subsequent development that characterize Washington County. Originally described as a lifeless desert and wasteland, the West has metamorphosed into a landscape seen as unique and beautiful. Southwestern Utah is only one such Western landscape that has transformed in the eyes of its inhabitants, but the implications of that transformation are emblematic of many growing desert communities. Richard Slotkin states that cultural myths have the power to "reach out of the past to cripple, incapacitate, or strike down the living" (5). The desert myths that have emerged out of the pioneer subjugation of the landscape facilitate an attitude quite unlike that of the original settlers, one that ignores the realities and limitations of desert environments in favor of glorification of its beauty.

Changing perceptions of the desert have had a profound effect on the way the land has

been used, and changes in land-use have in turn altered perceptions. It was only in taming the seemingly uninhabitable landscape of Southern Utah that linguistic space could be cleared for the language of the sublime used to describe it today. While the Mormon settlers struggled to harness the Virgin River as it flooded year after year, and while they fought to plant crops and irrigate in alkali soils, it was difficult for them to see the landscape through any other lens than labor. Their perceptions were also heavily colored by biblical ideas about the value of wilderness and civilization. Therefore, they often described it as an unforgiving, hard place, and many took the first opportunity to leave it. Non-Mormon settlers tended to view the landscape in slightly different ways than the agriculturalist Mormons; they viewed it as a potential source for wealth obtainable through mining silver ore. Curiously, the indigenous Paiute understood the landscape in a manner that white residents only embraced much later. Contrasted with the Mormons' views, Paiute Indians viewed the land as imbued with the power of creation and had already adopted successful subsistence strategies. Mormons' views of the area began to change towards something more like Paiute attitudes once some measure of stability had been achieved and "improvements" made on the land. Today, most people who live in and visit St. George, Southwestern Utah's largest city, do not have to worry about water sources and failing crops; their relationship to the land is almost completely aesthetic and recreational. Understanding the dynamic of the development of the myth of the desert as a wilderness turned Eden is crucial to the future of land and water development in Washington County and other desert communities. Unlike Paiutes, who, though they viewed the desert as their home, understood its limitations and respected water, current residents have unconsciously let the myth of the conquered desert obscure sensitivity to the continued inherent harshness of the land.

A basic understanding of the location and climate of Washington County is integral to a discussion of people's reactions to it. The county is located in the extreme Southwestern corner

of present-day Utah [see figure 1]. The City of St. George currently has the largest population and was the center for settlement activities all over the county in the 1860s. Other major settlements in the area include Santa Clara, Hurricane, and Silver Reef, a non-Mormon mining town. The area's main water sources are the Virgin and Santa Clara rivers, which converge just south of St. George, and Ash Creek, a tributary of the Virgin, which drains into the Colorado River (Larson 1). St. George receives an average of seven to eight inches of rainfall per year (2). In the summers, the temperatures average highs near 105 degrees, with an average year-round temperature of 62 degrees (*St. George Relocation Guide*). It is semi-arid high desert at an elevation of roughly 2,800 feet, the northernmost tip of the Mojave Desert where it abuts against the southern edge of the Great Basin (City of St. George). The geological landscape is characterized by red sandstone cliffs, clay hills, and black volcanic rock (Alder 2).

In this paper, the terms Washington County, Dixie, and Virgin River Basin are used interchangeably. A political boundary, a culture area, and a river drainage system, the three cover the same basic geographic area in Southwestern Utah. Settlers applied the word "Dixie" to the region in its first decade of settlement. The term "can be linked to the growing of cotton in the area of Washington County; it can emphasize the fact that climate is distinctly different from that of the rest of the state, being warm in winter; it can refer to the area as of lower altitude, some 2,500 feet below the nearby rim of the Great Basin" (Alder 9). In addition, a large number of the original white settlers of Washington County were from the southern states, chosen for their experience in growing cotton (9).

Bands of Southern Paiute Indians initially inhabited the area; the first white contact with Washington County took place in 1776. Spanish explorers Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez and Fray Francisco Silvestre Velez de Escalante passed through Washington County on their way back to Santa Fe. Later explorers such as Jedediah Smith, John Wesley Powell, and John C.

Frémont traversed the region (Larson 15-16). Explorers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), also known as Mormons, visited the region as early as 1849 (17). Permanent settlement of the region by Mormons began in 1861 (13). Each of the groups that encountered the Virgin River Basin understood it according to cultural influences, their use of the land, and their perception of the amount of threat it posed to their well-being. The cultural forces driving the actions and perceptions of these individuals reveal the reasons for their reactions to a desert place.

The Mormon pioneers who settled Washington County viewed it through the lens of religion and a Euro-American cultural tradition that condemned deserts as wilderness places in need of redemption, standing in sharp contrast to the green garden places that they revered. Wilderness, though attitudes towards it have changed, has always been part of American identity. Many of the early environmental attitudes of the Europeans who colonized North America were based in the Judeo-Christian tradition (Nash 14). This tradition, which clearly separates humankind from the natural world (the latter being a source of evil and temptation), also fosters specific attitudes towards the desert. Roderick Nash states that the term "wilderness" in the Old Testament refers specifically to desert areas with little rainfall. He writes:

The Old Testament reveals that the ancient Hebrews regarded the wilderness as a cursed land and that they associated its forbidding character with lack of water. Again and again "the great and terrible wilderness" was described as a "thirsty ground where there was no water." When the Lord of the Old Testament desired to threaten or punish a sinful people, he found the wilderness condition his most powerful weapon. (14)

This association of the desert with God's anger and punishment led the desert to be equated with hell, the devil, and evil (15). Juxtaposed with the hell of the desert is the paradise of the Garden of Eden. The Garden, by contrast, is an essentially delightful place with plenty of water and an



abundance of food. Importantly, not only are the two opposites, but they are connected to each other on a continuum. According to the will of the Lord and the obedience of the people, a wilderness can become an Eden, or an Eden can fall into wilderness. The Bible abounds with references to God transforming the wilderness of Zion “like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord” (*The King James Version of the Holy Bible*, Isa. 51:3). These Old Testament views of the landscape carried over into Mormonism. The Mormons saw themselves as similar to the Hebrews, who also escaped into a desert wilderness that contrasted sharply with the paradise from which they had been driven (Flores 337). They saw it as their specific duty, throughout the Great Basin and the deserts south of it, to transform the wilderness into a garden.

In addition to the biblical attitudes that prevailed across the frontier, Mormons acted according to a set of doctrines they applied to the land they inhabited and controlled. The Mormon theory of stewardship held that the earth could not be owned, only occupied and improved by an individual for a time. For the Mormons, improvement meant “changing the natural order to make it more productive of the things most useful to them” (Flores 229). In other words, civilizing it, making it an agricultural garden capable of supporting a growing number of Mormon converts.

Though Puritans espoused biblical views of the wilderness in the earliest years of American settlement, those views had not changed completely even by the 1800s. Nash writes that because of continual westward movement, this view of the landscape as sinister did not end with the seventeenth century, but continued as Americans interpreted each successive frontier according to biblical terms (38-39). In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, “living in the wilds [the pioneer] only prizes the works of man” (qtd. in Nash 23). Because wilderness was still a direct threat to survival for westward-moving pioneers, they still viewed it in biblical terms. “The pioneer, in short, lived too close to wilderness for appreciation. Understandably, his

attitude was hostile and his dominant criteria utilitarian. The *conquest* of wilderness was his major concern” (Nash 24). So it was that when Mormons settled Washington County in 1861, biblical attitudes still colored the settlers' reactions to the land.

The positive attitude toward the landscape that developed over the next hundred years slowly eroded the biblical perception. William Cronon writes that the romantic view of wilderness becomes possible only after the conquest of uninhabited land has taken place. He writes, “Only people whose relation to the land was already alienated could hold up wilderness as a model for human life in nature, for the romantic ideology of wilderness leaves precisely nowhere for human beings actually to make their living from the land” (80). Pioneers naturally viewed the landscape with its economic value and its ability to support successful civilization in mind. Whenever settlers encountered a new section of country, they viewed it as a usable resource; “trees became lumber, prairies farms,” and later on, “canyons the sites of hydroelectric dams” (Nash 31).

Utilitarianism did not exclusively drive all views towards the landscape, however. Patricia Limerick asserts in her study of attitudes towards deserts that individuals often expressed contradictory attitudes towards landscape simultaneously, especially in times of cultural transition (6). She asserts that “The same individual can experience discomfort or inconvenience from heat, cold, or a difficult terrain, inspect a landscape for exploitable resources, and admire a view, all at the same time” (6). This was often the case with those who encountered Southwestern Utah. Clearly present in accounts of the region by early settlers, these overlapping attitudes continue into twentieth-century descriptions of Dixie. Limerick writes:

We have then three categories of attitudes: attitudes toward nature as a biological reality in human life—vulnerability to hunger, thirst, injury, disease, and death; attitudes toward nature as an economic resource—a container of treasures awaiting extraction or

development; and attitudes toward nature as an aesthetic spectacle. (6)

These three themes are evident in the writings of explorers, settlers, and tourists alike in Washington County. The first theme is especially evident in the accounts of explorers passing through Southern Utah on their way to California, New Mexico, or some other haunt of human civilization. The desert landscape was an “ordeal to be endured” (6). The second theme came with the settlement of Washington County by Mormon pioneers, the development of agriculture in the 1860s, and the discovery of silver in Silver Reef in the early 1870s (Larson 316-317). The third phase began in Southwestern Utah at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth as the development of stable water supplies, a connection to national highways, and a budding tourist industry removed the barriers and obstacles of the first two periods from daily experience.

Before the Mormons arrived, a landscape vastly different from anything else they had known unsettled early explorers. Like the later Mormon settlers, their reactions tended toward the negative, citing the region's aridity, lack of plant life, and apparent uselessness (Durham 8). The first glimpses of Southern Utah by non-Indians reveal a mixed reaction to the landscape that tends towards Limerick's first category of attitudes towards deserts—as a threat to life. Spanish explorers Dominguez and Escalante did not comment extensively on the unique physical characteristics of Washington County when they passed through in 1776. Dominguez and Escalante continually had an eye open for possible locations for Spanish settlement as they searched for an overland trail to Monterey. They described the timber, water, and soil of every suitable location they passed. They heaped praise on the lands just north of present-day Cedar City in Iron County, but after dropping down into the Virgin River Basin, that aspect of their narrative all but disappeared. They focused more on the characteristics of difficult travel down black lava ridges and over mesas (Warner 93-94). Although their general attitude towards the

area seems to be favorable, or at least not unfavorable, they did not linger long as they ran completely out of provisions and were unfamiliar with how to detain food in that landscape (97). Journeying down Ash Creek, the Padres remarked on the “very brilliant white sand and plenty of rock cliffs” and “sandstone cliffs” as well as the marked difference in climate from the lands to the north (95). Just north of present-day Hurricane, the party encountered evidence of Paiute irrigated farming, a sight which “overjoyed” them because they hoped to obtain provisions from the Indians and they believed that the Indians’ practice of agriculture would make them easier to civilize (95). But when they discovered they could not approach the timid Southern Paiute who (likely wary of outsiders due to slave-raiding activity), ran from the explorers, the Padres swiftly left the area (97). That Dominguez and Escalante did not dwell on the region’s unfavorable conditions may be a reflection of where they were coming from. The two men and their party were exploring out of New Mexico, parts of which are even drier than Washington County. They evidently viewed it as livable—after all, they witnessed Paiute agriculture and found groves of trees and wild grapes to shelter in (96-97). However, unable to obtain that food for themselves, the desert landscape became something to be endured on the way back to Santa Fe.

Later explorers had similar reactions. That is, while they did not stay in the area for long and reacted emotionally with disfavor, they acknowledged that the Virgin River Basin did have a limited capacity for agriculture. During his trip through the region in 1843-1844, John C. Frémont passed through Washington County. He evidently did not care much for the area. He called the Virgin River “the most dreary river I have ever seen—a deep rapid stream, almost a torrent, passing swiftly by and roaring at obstructions” (qtd. in Larson 16). Limerick writes that Frémont, like Wilhelmina Cannon, “found little beyond transitory wildflowers to praise in the desert. This lover of wilderness made a major exception for the arid wilderness” (43). Frémont related to the desert mainly through traveling through it himself and writing about it to other

travelers. As far as Frémont was concerned, the most important aspect of the desert was how to get across it, not whether or not it should be settled, and Washington County was no exception (33). He thus naturally focused on aspects of hardship in travel, not scenic beauty.

Years later, another explorer, coming from the same biblical tradition as the Spanish Padres and Frémont, assessed Washington County and grudgingly saw limited potential for settlement. John Wesley Powell explored the arid Southwest in the late 1860s and throughout the 1870s. He first explored the Virgin River in 1869, and his observations on water in Utah were published in 1878 (Powell xxvi). While he focused his reports on the area's potential for agriculture, he also reacted to the desert landscape emotionally. He wrote that there were limited areas that could be used for irrigated agriculture along the Virgin (119). He described the land around the Virgin River in the St. George area being among the region's "most productive" after settlers solved problems of high alkaline content in the soil (166). However, he qualified his scientific assessment of the area's agricultural capabilities with an essentially emotional response. He writes:

But all that portion of the cañon country south of Castle Valley and westward to the Beaver Dam Mountains is exceedingly desolate; naked rocks are found, refusing footing even to dwarfed cedars and piñon pines; the springs are infrequent and yield no bountiful supply of water; its patches of grass land are widely scattered, and it has but little value for agricultural purposes. (119-120)

Powell's visit to the region occurred after Mormon settlement. Despite his own observations that the land was irrigable—indeed, had been irrigated successfully—he still had an initial reaction of doubt, driven by cultural attitudes about deserts, about its ability to support human settlement.

Before Powell explored the arid Southwest, Mormon explorers confronted the region without the benefit of established agriculture and settlement. In 1851, just four years after the

settling of the Salt Lake Valley, George A. Smith conducted an exploratory mission to Southwestern Utah. In a letter to then President and Prophet of the Mormon church, Brigham Young, Smith detailed their progress and the state of the land and people they encountered on their journey south. Smith, like Powell, writes of the potential of several valleys for settlement. He does not describe the landscape aesthetically at all. He writes instead of the possibilities for grazing and timber, the quality of the soil, the abundance of water and fuel (Smith 5). His primary concern is clearly not the appreciation of wilderness, but scouting out sites for Mormon settlement—oases in the wilderness. As Nash asserts, settlers did not look at the aesthetics of land; they looked at it as “potential civilization” (33). Smith's men related to the land according to their intended use for it. The land did not provide the resources that they would need to successfully survive there and they could therefore not find it appealing—they could not even see it as potential civilization.

Smith and his men clearly viewed the landscape according to utilitarian restrictions, but like Powell, Smith and his fellow explorers reacted to the landscape with emotions born out of biblical tradition as well. They described the desert as wild, chaotic, and at times disturbing. Smith reported to Young that his group of men traveling south was physically well but felt a bit of homesickness. He wrote, “some do not like the s-o-i-l, it is so bloody r-e-d, timber so scarce, grazing scarce” (Smith 5). The reactions of Smith and his men demonstrate the force of lingering cultural fears of the desert as an uninhabitable, godless place. They link even the color of the soil with blood and the scarcity of timber and grazing—of garden places—caused them to react with repugnance. Dropping below the rim of the Great Basin, the terrain becomes even more a desert. Parley P. Pratt wrote the following when he first glimpsed the Virgin River Basin in an exploratory party in 1850:

“The great Wasatch range... here terminates in several abrupt promontories, the country

southward opening to the view for at least 80 miles, and showing no signs of water or fertility, indeed the Indians said there was none, but a wide expanse of cheerless, grassless plains, perpendicular rocks, loose barren clay, dissolving beds of sandstone and various other elements, lying in inconceivable confusion—in short a country in ruins, dissolved by the peltings of the storms of ages, or turned inside out, upside down, by terrible confusions in some former age.” (qtd. in *Under Dixie Sun* 23)

Clearly Pratt saw the landscape, as Brian Eisenhauer’s assessment of sense of place states, according to his relationship to it as a scout for future Mormon settlements (422). When the explorers and settlers like Pratt and the men in Smith’s exploratory party arrived in the Virgin River Basin, they had no way of imagining the landscape as capable of bearing fruit. Their frame of reference for it was biblical. None of the activities that formerly connected them with the land fit this new place, and so, in first glimpses like Pratt’s, it was disparaged as a wasteland.

However, despite his negative first impressions, Pratt soon encountered Paiute Indians farming on the bottoms of the Virgin and Santa Clara Rivers. He remarked that though the rivers were subject to flood and there was little timber to be had, the bottoms were fertile and arable. He deemed land farther south, however, “unpromising” (Larson 18). Once having seen the Indians farming, Pratt now had an agricultural frame of reference for envisioning the desert landscape. His encounter with the Indians is significant not only because it showed him that the land was indeed habitable and arable, but because the Indians were one of the primary reasons for a Mormon presence in Southern Utah in the first place. Mormons did not orient their first movements in Washington County towards settlement, but towards converting the Indians. Just as the Bible and other scripture shaped attitudes of Mormons towards the desert, their theology colored their relationship to Native Americans as well. In Mormon theology, the Native American has a place of special interest. *The Book of Mormon*, part of Mormons’ canonical



scripture, describes Indians as “‘the blood of Israel’ but fallen and cursed with dark skin because of their wickedness. By accepting the Mormon Gospel and living its teachings, they might be redeemed and become again ‘a white and delightsome people’” (Brown viii). Once settlers established towns, the redemption of the Indians later came to parallel the redemption of the desert landscape, but Mormons geared their first movements towards conversion. By 1854, a Southern Indian Mission was under way. Language describing Paiute Indians in redemptive terms is evident in the diaries of missionaries. In his account of the mission, Thomas D. Brown describes the missionaries' purpose as “saving Israel” (29). He writes that they will teach the Indians “to labor and to walk up to the blessings procured for them by the fathers” (20). Despite the efforts of Brown and other missionaries, the redemption of Paiutes was a difficult task—more so, perhaps, than the redemption of the landscape that came to dominate the Mormons' mission in Washington County in later years. Paiutes did not uniformly accept the religion (which for the Mormons meant abandoning many aspects of Paiute culture), and as their expectations broke down, the Mormons abandoned the Paiute Indians (Holt 153). Paiutes disappeared from the desert mythology as Mormons focused their attentions on the land.

Andrew Karl Larson writes that even the Indians' settlement in the region was fairly precarious. Between the struggle for forage in a dry environment and raids by Ute and Mexican slave traders, Paiutes were in a state of uncertainty (Larson 21). Paiutes subsisted on corn and various native berries, grasses, and seeds. Mormons who encountered Paiutes in Southern Utah regarded them as primitive, in an essentially fallen state, but recognized that they had a pattern of subsistence that allowed them to survive in a hostile environment. Richard Robinson, one of those called to the Southern Indian Mission, wrote in an 1854 letter to his parents, “Their farms are small. What little wheat they have they plant like corn; their wheat is ripe, they are harvesting it and it is as large as any I ever saw; their corn is over knee high. They make dams



and have water sects, which they make with sticks” (qtd. in *Under Dixie Sun* 29). Paiutes survived partly through horticulture, but with the unpredictability of the flood and drought cycle of the Virgin River Basin, they relied on a variety of seasonal food sources such as cacti, juniper berries, rabbits, grass seeds, and roots (Holt 6). However, the fact that Mormons knew that Paiutes successfully subsisted according to their own methods did not stop them from trying to convert Paiutes to full-scale agriculture as well as Mormonism. To them, civilization and agriculture were linked. The Indians could be redeemed through agriculture, which would help in the redemption of the land.

While the Mormon settlers evidently saw Paiutes as fallen people without the benefits of civilization, Southern Paiutes no doubt saw themselves and the landscape they inhabited differently. The biggest difference, at least at this juncture in settlement history, was that Paiutes viewed the Virgin River Basin as part of their holy land, given to them to protect and manage when they were created (Stoffle 238-239). Their sacred place of creation, Mt. Charleston, Nevada, was not far from Southwestern Utah (239). Unlike Mormons, who viewed the desert as a place of exile to be transformed into Eden by the will of God, the desert was the homeland of the Paiutes and did not need to be transformed. Although the conditions were often harsh and Paiutes suffered from slave raids, they mitigated that environment through their diversified subsistence strategy. Lora E. Tom, tribal chairwoman of the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, writes:

The landscape of the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau, which is the Paiute homeland, is scenically beautiful, with mountain vistas and desert horizons. However, water, tillable land, and other natural resources in this area are scarce. The climate changes from winter blizzards to summer heat waves. In spite of this, the Paiute people survived and even thrived in this natural environment. (xi)

If, as Nash argues, people see landscapes according to their relationship to them, Paiutes would

have a very different view of Dixie. Where the Mormon pioneers could not fathom farming the land and viewed it as a biblical wasteland, Paiutes saw it as a holy land all along and already had successful subsistence strategies. The settlers viewed Paiutes as primitive because the Indians were foragers and shifting horticulturists. Paiutes did not use the land in the ways Mormons viewed as right or most beneficial, and so Mormons condemned Paiutes as savages, even though varied Paiute subsistence strategies made more sense in a desert environment.

That Paiutes subsisted in the Virgin River Basin should not overshadow the fact that they also had a difficult time making a living from the arid landscape. Paiutes struggled not only with slave raids, but with surviving in a harsh environment. Martha C. Knack writes, “The resource that demanded their most careful husbanding was water. Everywhere Paiute country was arid, in spots true desert” (12). A Southern Paiute's description of the importance of water in Paiute culture demonstrates that they realized how dependent they were living in a desert land. “The river there is like our veins. Some are like the small streams and tributaries that run into the river there, so the same things; it's like blood—it's the veins of the world” (qtd. in Stoffle 241). An incident in 1856 involving Jacob Hamblin, who was in charge of the Indian Mission in Santa Clara, reveals a telling encounter with Paiutes regarding water. Hamblin evidently promised Paiutes that it would rain if they would help the missionaries build a dam and practice agriculture. Drought hit, and Paiutes began to question Hamblin's promise. According to Hamblin, as soon as he prayed for water, it began to rain. He writes, “From that time they began to look upon us as having great influence with the clouds” (qtd. in *Under Dixie Sun* 151). Like the early Mormon settlers, Paiutes carried a healthy respect for the shortage of water in the desert. But unlike the Mormons, Paiutes subsisted within the desert's natural limitations. Mormons, driven by a biblical ideology and the belief that God would transform the landscape to fit their needs, set out to redeem it.

As the Mormons began to utilize Washington County for settlement as well as for conversion of Paiutes, they often couched the language they used to describe the transformation they hoped to perform on the Indians and the transformation of the landscape in the same terms. Nash writes that as the pioneers settled westward, they saw Indians as a kind of wild being, part of and identified with the country they inhabited (7). Reclaiming the Indians for the House of Israel ran parallel to the settlers' mission of reclaiming the wilderness as a Garden of Eden. L. O. Littlefield described the settlement efforts as an attempt to "reclaim this region from the wildness of ages," just as the missionaries saw themselves as redeeming the Indians from the savagery of ages (Littlefield, "Incidents" 5). To the Mormons as well as other settlers, the Indians and the desert were the same: fallen, but redeemable. As Paiutes resisted the Mormons' expectations of redemption, the settlers' focus shifted almost entirely to the redemption of the landscape to the point where Paiutes began to fade from myth entirely.

The Mormons' reasons for settling the Virgin River Basin, despite their initial dislike of the place, extended beyond converting the Paiute people. The Southern Indian Mission became a base for experimental colonies in the area, and eventually opened the door for permanent settlement. The settlements in Southern Utah were an important part of Brigham Young's vision of the self-sufficient State of Deseret. Young desired a seaport, and the Southern Utah settlements were part of his plan to maintain a corridor to California (Larson 11). Young also had a bias against lands to the north of the Salt Lake Valley, which he viewed as unproductive and hostile, stating that "when people are obliged to live in the north country, that will be high time for them to go there" (qtd. in Meinig 204; Jackson 326). Finally, Mormons settled the area to help accomplish self-sufficiency through specialized agriculture. As the Civil War loomed, Young worried about an impending decrease in imports of cotton and other semi-tropical crops. In 1861, Young called a large group of Mormons to go south to strengthen the experimental

settlements that were already there and to man the "Cotton Mission" (Larson 12-13). Their primary purpose was to raise "cotton, sugar, grapes, tobacco, figs, almonds, olive oil, and such other useful articles as the Lord has given us, the places for garden spots in the South to produce" (qtd. in Larson 13).

Three hundred and nine families left Salt Lake for Dixie in 1861 (Larson 13). Church leadership chose specific people for colonization, a process referred to as being "called." In other words, those who settled the area did not generally decide for themselves to leave the Salt Lake area and head south into the desert. They were hand-picked by church leadership, who members of the Church believed received direct communication from God. D. W. Meinig asserts that church leadership often chose newcomers in need of land for new settlements, along with a combination of experienced pioneers and people with skills directly related to the specialized task of the settlement (198). In Dixie this meant sending converts from the American South with experience in growing cotton, along with English and Swiss newcomers (201-202). Because the Mormons believed that Young acted under the direction of God, they usually willingly obeyed his "calls," whatever the sacrifice (198). But not all those who Young called to Southern Utah went, especially after the initial group, and not all who went stayed. The foreignness and harshness of the landscape outdid even their prophet's call.

To Mormon settlers arriving in the arid areas of Southern Utah, the landscape must have been forbidding. Used to the climate of Illinois, where the members of the Church gathered before the exodus to Utah, or even the climate of the Salt Lake and Utah valleys, they were confronted with a landscape wholly alien. Maureen Whipple dramatizes the settlers' reactions in her popular novel *The Giant Joshua*. In the novel, a young Mormon woman enters Washington County for the first time as part of a group of settlers. Whipple writes:

White and crimson, or black and yellow and blue—behind her and ahead and around

her—spewed in fantastic violence, in every shade and nuance, the colors of this unreal landscape glittered with such intensity that she closed her eyes and for a moment her breath clung in her throat. She felt hemmed in with untamed, imponderable forces. This land was as different from the gentle valleys of the North as she imagined hell would be from heaven. (3)

Whipple's dramatization is a direct reflection of the settlers' reactions. The attitudes of those called to Dixie can be seen clearly in various diary entries. One settler wrote that he was “willing to help build up Zion in any way that the Lord wished,” but to go south was “revolting to his feelings” (qtd. in Jackson 328). Again, the problem was that because people viewed the landscape according to their use of it, they could not view it favorably if it appeared not to be of any use. Many of their critiques refer to the land's inability to support agriculture. One wrote that the area “seemed rather forbidding to a farmer especially. Scarce anything to be seen but sage and greasewood” (qtd. in Jackson 328). George A. Smith wrote, “I found a tract of land which pleased me, but not so with a great majority of our farmers who make up a rye [sic] face and say they can see no facilities here” (qtd. in Jackson 328). Others described the poor, clay soil, and the lack of water (Jackson 328). Even though experimental settlements had been in operation in Southern Utah since the founding of the Southern Indian Mission, proving that cotton and other tropical crops could be successfully grown there, the new settlers were still appalled at the appearance of the area.

Even late in the settlement of the region, settlers viewed the landscape of Washington County unfavorably. Upon receiving a call to St. George over twenty years after its initial settlement, one settler replied, “St. George! Are you going to send me to St. George? Why it is like sending me out of the world” (qtd. in Jackson 328). Even some of the leaders of the church viewed the landscape negatively, despite Brigham Young's approval of it. Smith and his men, as

we have seen, were disturbed even by the color of the soil. Smith later wrote that St. George “had the appearance of barren country generally. The mountains were barren and bleak volcanic rock, and a variety of grey colored clay prevailing, altogether giving it a kind of somber, deadly appearance” (qtd. in Jackson 328).

The settlers who went to St. George and had to struggle to make a living there were right to be apprehensive. The conditions were indeed harsh. The settlers were not merely upset by the alien contours of the land; they wondered where their water would come from. Lyman Hafen writes that “when the original 300 families entered the St. George Valley in late fall of 1861, they had little more than the two small springs, East and West, to rely on. From the day those indomitable pioneers set foot in this valley, until the day they died, their lives were spent in search of, obtaining, and wisely using water” (Hafen 9). The two springs, flowing from Red Hill, provided the settlers' drinking water for a time, but most of their water for irrigation to raise crops came from the Virgin and Santa Clara rivers (9).

Much of the negative reaction of settlers towards the Virgin River Basin stems from the river itself. The desert is not only a place of drought, but one of flood, a recurring setback that dominates the narrative of Washington County. When Swiss settlers arrived at the Indian Mission to make it the permanent settlement of Santa Clara in 1861, they immediately built a dam on the Santa Clara River. The settlers knew that without an irrigation dam, they could not hope to survive. They completed the dam on Christmas Eve, but that very day rain began to fall (*Under Dixie Sun* 162-163). The rain continued for a month and the Great Flood of 1862 washed away not only the dam, but most of the struggling settlement as well (*Under Dixie Sun* 38; 163). Nellie McArthur Gubler writes, “All day long the people watched the fruits of their six years' labor go. Tree by tree, their largest orchard went, each one bending slowly as if bowing to the will of the river” (*Under Dixie Sun* 164). Clearly the river had the upper hand on the settlers.

Their improvements on the land were subject to *its* will, not theirs, reinforcing a general perception of the land as hostile. Even before the arrival of the Swiss, floods washed away the first dam on the Virgin River in the Washington County settlements' experimental stage several times (Alder 44).

Long after the initial settlement, the Santa Clara and Virgin rivers continued to present great challenges to the settlers by producing both alternating water shortages that led to crop failures and dam-destroying floods. Larson writes:

The task of controlling the waters of the Virgin taxed to the limit the resources and strength of the settlers. But the most discouraging aspect of the whole business was the utter lack of assurance that the whole dreary routine of building the dam, mending the ditches, and shoveling the sand and mud from the clogged laterals would not have to be done again; if not tomorrow, then perhaps next month, or six months later. It was as certain as death. (*Under Dixie Sun* 45)

In the first four years of settlement, residents spent \$26,611.59 fixing flood-damaged dams and ditches (Hafen 9-10). The settlements continued to struggle well into the 1890s. Repeated floods led many of those who answered the call to abandon the settlement. After a particularly devastating flood in 1889, even the bishop left in an exodus that reduced the population of St. George from more than 600 to 312 (*Under Dixie Sun* 47). Upon leaving another desert settlement in Northern Arizona, one settler said in response to a telegraph sent by Brigham Young urging settlers to remain, that "they would not stay if he should come with Jesus Christ himself" (qtd. in Jackson 329).

Because of the struggle for control over the rivers, "church leaders frequently found the settlers discouraged, many threatening to leave the difficult land" (Alder 44). Irrigation in Washington County posed different challenges than irrigation in the rest of the Mormon



settlement in the Great Basin. The sandy soil meant that the streams often had no set course or vegetation to prevent rapid erosion of the banks. Because there was so little vegetation, when it rained, "the waters gushed off the hills and swelled the otherwise placid streams, which then roared suddenly, multiplying the flow as much as tenfold," and creating flash floods that wiped out dams and anything else too close to the capricious river (44). Because of floods, Mormons relocated several settlements, and some they abandoned altogether, like Grafton and the settlements in Zion Canyon (45). As the population of Washington County grew, the residents naturally had to look for more culinary water sources, the two Red Hill springs being adequate for only a small population. The settlers' attempts in the late 1880s to divert water from Pine Valley Mountain failed after huge outlays of labor and money (Hafen 12). But around the turn of the century, the settlers began to get a handle on the water, managing to divert water from other sources in the county to St. George (14). The Virgin and Santa Clara rivers still continued to plague the settlers, but survival seemed more certain.

An unpredictable water supply was only one of several environmental difficulties settlers faced. The desert also meant heat and wind that shriveled plants, filled homes with sand, and made living generally uncomfortable (Alder 47). Grace Atkin Woodbury wrote:

"A more forbidding place to build homes would be difficult to find, but it was necessary to avoid the mosquitoes of the fields and pastures. The summer sun beat so relentlessly down upon the whole scene. There was no vegetation around the house, except two small tamarix [sic] trees by the front porch and small flower gardens watered by hand.... Winds often blew through the gap and poured gray, sandy dust over everything. It left a layer of grit on the milk in the cellar, on the cream in the jar for churning, on the dishes in the cupboard, and over all the furniture. There was sand in the water buckets, the drinking dipper, the milk pails and pans set out to sun.... Was it any wonder that my mother, who



went to Atkinville as a bride, exclaimed during one of these windy onslaughts in sheer desperation 'Nothing tries my faith so much as one of these sand storms; I feel like apostatizing.'" (qtd. in Alder 47)

While some settlers abandoned the mission and those who remained struggled with control and perception of the landscape, religion continued to shape their relationship to the land. Mormonism and their calling by church leaders to grow cotton were important motivating factors for those settlers who remained. One who church leadership called to go south answered the call, writing that if it had not been for the gospel, he should never have gone: "but then I came here not to do my own will but the will of those that are over me and I know it will be all right if I do right" (qtd. in Jackson 334). Again, the biblical idea prevailed that if the people obeyed God and the prophets, the landscape would be transformed for them. Certainly the settlers of St. George labored with a prophecy made by Brigham Young in mind. As resident Charles Lowell Walker recorded in his diary, Young prophesied on November 9, 1864 that St. George would "become a large and flourishing city" [see figure 2] (qtd. in Larson 7-8).

Despite Young's enthusiasm and the dogged devotion of the settlers, even after the means for subsistence were established, the perceptions of the land as hostile prevented the development of an aesthetic affection for the landscape. That some stayed is no indication that they liked Washington County. Young continued to have problems obtaining settlers for the Cotton Mission. When Young asked one man to go well after the settlement had been established, the man replied, "It is no cotton country; it is the most wretched, barren, God-forsaken country in the world" (qtd. in Jackson 328). Young and other leaders attempted to change Mormons' perceptions of Southern Utah in order to facilitate settlement. In May 1863, Young traveled with a group of other leaders to the Washington County settlements. L. O. Littlefield documented their travels in letters sent to the *Deseret News* to be published and read

by the Saints in Salt Lake. His letters present a mixed impression of Dixie. Sometimes he describes the landscape favorably, in terms of the sublime. "The scenery," he writes, "which here stands in bold relief on either side and in the front of the traveler, is calculated to excite the wonders of romance, and bring the powers of imagination into lively exercise" (Littlefield, "Correspondence" 2). Littlefield is clearly awed by the landscape and views it not only through utilitarian eyes, but romantic ones as well. "Such a sight I never saw before; but there it was, though mute and silent, yet bearing testimony of itself that once upon a time a broad, livid, glowing, burning seathing [sic] stream flowed down to the Santa Clara, causing its waters to boil and hiss and steam with the terrible intensity of its heat" (Littlefield, "Incidents" 5). Yet when he reaches the Mormon settlements, he expresses clear relief at sighting the "green trees like an oasis in the desert," and entering a place that "looks like life" (Littlefield, "Correspondence" 2). The letters also reveal that as the leaders preached in each of the settlements, a good deal of their message to the Saints was "in a manner calculated to cheer their hearts and encourage them to perseverance" (Littlefield, "Correspondence" 2). Littlefield reveals that despite their leaders' liking of the place, the settlers who had to live there needed encouragement to endure it.

Other parts of Littlefield's narrative are clearly calculated to encourage immigration to the area. He writes, directly to the Saints it seems:

It is true this is a forbidding country when glanced over superficially; but when you come to hunt up the choice spots and prove their excellent adaptation to the raising of cotton and choice fruits, all objections are outweighed. The citizens are, as a matter of course, subjected to some hardships and inconveniences in their early endeavors to reclaim this region from the wildness of ages; yet, when towns and cities shall arise, polished with the arts and embellishments of civilization, and the blessings of civil government shall overspread this domain; then will the pioneers to all these benefits receive an ample

recompense of reward. (Littlefield, "Incidents" 5)

This ambivalence is evident in other articles as well. In 1892, Andrew Jenson wrote a letter to the *Deseret News* from Bunkerville, Nevada, a desert settlement viewed even more unfavorably than St. George. He loads his narrative with language like "lonely desert" and "dreary desert," yet also abounds with descriptions of "wild grandeur" and "romantic" canyons (Jenson 2). His language, like Littlefield's, exhibits clear relief upon reaching civilization. His article, also like Littlefield's, ends with a clearly calculated call for more settlers for Bunkerville, calling it "a healthy, sunny clime" soon to be a "perfect oasis in the desert" (2).

This seeming contradiction in attitudes towards the landscape cannot be attributed completely to the leadership's attempts at propaganda. Nash asserts that the 1800s were a time of transition in American attitudes towards wilderness (66). He asserts that "while appreciation of wild country existed it was seldom unqualified" (66). Limerick also asserts that reactions towards the desert were seldom simple and more often complicated by simultaneous contradictory attitudes (6). Both Littlefield's and Jenson's essays contain appreciation of a unique landscape, but it is indeed qualified by a heartfelt relief upon seeing human settlement again. Pioneer reaction to wild country was not simple, varying not only from individual to individual, but even in the same narratives. Settlers sometimes described the landscape with equal measures of repulsion and appreciation (Nash 65).

Poetry written during this period further reveals that not all mixed feelings about the landscape during this transitional phase can be attributed to promotional efforts. Even as late as 1902, poems written by residents of Dixie revealed mixed feelings. "Dixie Pioneers" by Charles Lowell Walker indicates that despite the hardships, the settlers felt pride at their accomplishment. He writes:

Forty years have we spent in this country so dreary.

Subduing the mineral, thorns, cactus and sands;  
 Our spirits are bright, though our bodies are weary,  
 In filling the Mission required at our hands.

.....

Then Isaiah's sayings we are now fulfilling,  
 Though mineral, cactus, and rocks may oppose;  
 The Mission we're filling shows that we are willing  
 To make the rude desert bloom like the rose. (qtd. in *Under Dixie Sun* 99)

Others described not only a sense of accomplishment at taming the landscape, but a love of the area as well. Brian Eisenhauer argues that familial and generational ties as well as time spent in a place are part of what connect people to landscapes (431). Even though they struggled to dam, irrigate, and permanently settle Southern Utah, people could still feel connected to the landscape in ways not shaped by their struggle against it. They became used to it. Eliza R. Snow wrote in 1864:

I love the land of Dixie--  
 Our mountain Dixie land;  
 Where peace is in the atmosphere,  
 And wealth, amid the sand.  
 I've seen its gorgeous mountains,  
 Of every form and hue;  
 Where huge volcanic craters yawn  
 Upon the gazer's view.  
 Imagination pictures  
 Where Vulcan's forge has stood:

If burning heat can purify,  
 Our Dixie must be good.  
 Emerging from the rudeness  
 That marks a desert way;  
 Those little Edens, to the view,  
 Seem like the break of day. (2)

Snow's appreciation seems to lean on the Edens, the settlers' successes. Though Snow often wrote poetry for the church, the poem reveals a marked step towards viewing the land with a positive emotional reaction based on aesthetics.

Limerick observes that the third phase of relating to the desert through aesthetics came about around the turn of the century (7). Zion National Park began to come into national prominence early in the twentieth century. Captain C. E. Dutton of the United States Geological Survey traveled through Zion Canyon in 1909. He writes about the canyon's geological curiosities scientifically, but reacts emotionally to its beauty as well. In an article in the *Washington County News* he called it "a scene which must ultimately become, when the knowledge of it is spread, one of the most admired in the world" (Dutton 1). Towards the end of his article, his language becomes less focused on the geological aspects, and more on his spiritual reaction. He ends the piece with the words: "We look into [canyons] from afar, wonderingly and questioningly, with a fancy pleased to follow their windings until their sudden turns carry them into distant, unseen depths" (1). In 1915, J. H. Paul, a professor of Nature Study at the University of Utah, visited Zion and waxed eloquent in its praise. But before he reached the unique grandeur of the canyon, he traveled through more mundane desert. "The day was perfect," he writes, "the landscape a varying panorama of weird desolation; stretches of gray plain covered with low desert shrubs and cacti; bare sand, rolling hills with only a few trees;

deep hollow, and wide ravines....Every mile of the country was filled with interest..." (Paul 1). Paul, while he expressed appreciation for the little city of Hurricane, calling it "a veritable oasis in the desert," he could hardly wait to leave it the next day to get back into the desert (1). He stared at the cliffs so long his neck hurt. He writes:

The breath of the desert is most agreeable at sunset. It is the odor of sage and cactus, or the cooling chill imparted to it by the bare surfaces of the lava rock, or is it the absence of dust and smoke that make it all so wonderful? I cannot tell...it makes one hungry and we like to breathe so deeply that we seem to feed upon the balmy air. (1)

Limerick writes that early in the twentieth century "complacency began to replace the awareness of vulnerability; it became possible to live in desert towns and cities with a comfortable faith that water would be there when needed" (91). Despite earlier setbacks in water management in Washington County, by the turn of the century the Mormons were making progress. They managed to complete the Cottonwood Canal in 1903, diverting additional water to the growing town, and started construction of a pipeline in 1909 (Hafen 13). "By 1912, most of St. George's homes were served with piped water," Hafen writes (15). The settlers now had the luxury of water in their own homes, without having to compete with their cows for it at the springs. It also became possible to travel through deserts without a sense of danger or much difficulty. In Washington County change came slowly. Most writings praising the land in the first half of the twentieth century still acknowledge the landscape's desert qualities. For example, Paul still retained knowledge of the harshness of the desert, particularly the unpredictability of the Virgin River. In Zion Canyon, he encountered the abandoned ruins of a Mormon settlement driven out repeatedly by the flooding river. He remarked that "the ever shifting stream has discouraged even these Mormon settlers, and they have abandoned farms which, years ago, with infinite toil, they once made very productive here" (Paul 1). Unlike the

Mormons who had tried to settle Zion, Paul was only a visitor. His praise of the desert landscape cannot be separated from the vantage point from which he viewed it. He described it as he whirled along in an automobile (1).

Paul's attitudes are evident in other articles published around the same time that heaped praise upon the scenic beauty of Washington County while also mythologizing its pioneers who created the oasis from which the residents looked out on the desert. One article entitled "Good Country: Glowing Tribute Paid to Dixie's Pioneers who Subdued the Desert and Built Homes," published in 1910, is indeed one long description of the incredible odds the settlers faced and the wonderful results of their labors. The article describes the physical landscape as a "painted desert" bathed in the "barren grandeur and impressive desolation of the many-colored and rugged Sahara" ("Good Country" 1). The landscape is painted as unique and weirdly beautiful, but the writer can easily imagine what the area must have meant to one without the benefits of trees, automobiles, and established water sources. The author imagines:

Into this area of desolation, which staggers the very imagination to picture, in 1861, when Western railroads were unknown and no sounds save the howl of a lone coyote or the chirp of a straggling bird of the desert broke the solitude, a number of "Mormon" pioneers penetrated, hundreds of miles from anything like a town....The whole undertaking, had their [sic] been any outside observer there to witness it, must have resembled a tragedy of slow death in the wilderness. (1)

On the same page as the previous article in the *Washington County News*, another article was reprinted from the *Deseret News* praising the settlers. Again, the author plainly realizes that Washington County in 1910 had the same climate it had in the 1860s, and that without the improvements, he or she would have probably reacted to it as negatively as the original settlers did. The article states:

Today as you approach any of these settlements, the silence of the surrounding desert is still the same, but the well-tilled fields, the thriving stock, the bursting hay-stacks, the many-colored and glistening fruits, including the fig and the pomegranate—all proclaim that here we have...the marks of a people in whom the materials of which heroes and heroines are made are plainly visible. (“A Rich Region” 1)

The author's language reveals that the garden aspects of Dixie are its highest virtues. The “glistening fruits,” the “fig and the pomegranate” clearly reflect biblical perceptions of the Garden of Eden. Viewed from the safety of the garden, the wilderness loses some of its hostility, a trend that continued throughout the twentieth century.

By 1920, the historical connection to the area's former hostility grew even more removed and praise of the landscape's aesthetic beauty more unqualified. No longer concentrated solely on survival, the residents of Dixie looked towards tourism with the advent of the automobile. In 1920, the residents cut a road up to the Sugar-loaf, a prominent red sandstone formation above St. George. The *Washington County News* remarked, “Tourists will delight in going on the Sugar-loaf to watch the transformation made in the scenery at sunset; the wonderful play of color on the Hurricane fault and other cliffs, from yellow to vermilion, fiery red, deeper shades of red and finally a rich dark purple” (“Very Fine Road” 1). In 1921, the newspaper published a series of fifteen articles extolling the area's virtues for purposes of growth and tourism (Evans, “Washington County” 1). The articles proliferate with imagery of St. George as the gem and oasis in the surrounding beautiful desert, the perfect access point for all of the area's natural wonders (1). One of the articles, “Scenery one of our Big Assets: Saint George the Center of Scenic Belt,” exclusively advertises the landscape's aesthetic beauties. R. Kenneth Evans, the author of many of the articles, predicted that tourism would soon outstrip agriculture and other industries as the largest economic factor in Washington County. He writes, “Southern Utah is



destined to be the greatest scenic region in the United States and St. George is the logical center of all these attractions which Nature has provided" (Evans, "Scenery" 1). Evans' prediction was remarkably accurate. It reflects an increasing separation from the region's aridity that became even more prominent in the later half of the twentieth century.

Evans' claim that "Nature was in its happiest mode when it fashioned Washington county," an incredible shift from Parley P. Pratt's impression that the area was "a country in ruins," was made possible by its subjugation (Evans, "Washington County" 1; qtd. in *Under Dixie Sun* 23). 1930 marked a turning point for the area as the first oiled road linked Washington County to the nation's highway system (Alder xvii). The ease of travel facilitated population growth, which in turn stimulated water development. In 1936, the county constructed a pipeline from Cottonwood, replacing the above-ground canal (Hafen 17). A wave of growth in the 1940s and 1950s forced the county to develop other sources of water, including Mill Creek and several mountain springs.

The Daughters of the Utah Pioneers published *Under Dixie Sun* in 1950 during this continuing search for water. Larson ends his chapter "Irrigation and Agriculture in Washington County" by looking forward to the potential agricultural wealth of the area should the rivers ever fully be tamed. He points back to the original pioneers' progress and asks the question, "Will their children finish the job?" (*Under Dixie Sun* 57). Larson's statement represents a collective sense of the region shared by many residents into the mid 1900s that emphasizes a keen awareness, or perhaps even exaggeration, of the harsh conditions upon arrival, the sacrifice of those who settled and tamed the area, and the need of present inhabitants to continue to wrest control from the desert in the few areas where it still had power over its residents. In her poem "So This is Dixie," which appears as the frontispiece of the 1950 *Under Dixie Sun*, Vilate Roundy describes the romantic grandeur of the landscape, but also indicates that the Virgin River

still waits to be harnessed, "Muttering to herself, 'I'll yet be claimed, / And made the mother of Prosperity, / Which lies in store for those who work and wait'" (qtd. in *Under Dixie Sun* 15).

As residents conquered the last lingering wildness of the desert as Roundy's poem suggests and celebrated their victory over the landscape, their concern with redeeming Paiutes faded even further. In descriptions of the desert landscape, both prose and poetry, Paiutes appeared less and less frequently after the initial missionary efforts. Ronald Holt writes that "the early missionary concern of the 1850s for the Lamanites seems by the early twentieth century to have been replaced by a feeling of extreme prejudice" and neglect (50). In Euro-American writings of the mid-twentieth century the Paiute lingered only faintly. The writings conveyed the impression that the Paiute Indians, like the hostility of the landscape, were slowly diminishing—being conquered, civilized, like the landscape. Because Mormons could not successfully convert Paiutes, they saw the Indians not as part of the redemptive landscape—the desert areas that bloomed like the rose—but as part of the conquered landscape. Mormons perceived Paiutes as diminished and unimportant, like the dangers of the river's flood and drought. The numbers of Indians in the area fell after the Mormons settled the region. The 1891 census recorded "114 males, 80 females, total 194 souls, including 40 children between six and sixteen years" (qtd. in Larson 543). Larson writes, "Victims of the white man's vices and diseases, most of the Indians are gone, and with them the dream of their conversion" (543). While the Mormons were able to "redeem" the landscape, Paiutes remained unassimilated into mainstream Mormon culture. But like the desert, they became increasingly viewed as conquered, subdued, and untroublesome, until they nearly disappeared out of collective conscious and cultural mythology altogether.

Other white settlers made their way to Washington County as well, bringing with them other attitudes towards the desert landscape that, while informed by biblical and American frontier attitudes of exploitation, did not impel the settlers to transform the landscape into a

garden. Non-Mormon groups settled in the Virgin River Basin, but for vastly different reasons than Mormons. Prospectors discovered silver less than twenty miles from St. George, the site later known as Silver Reef (Larson 314). The influx of “Gentiles” into the area caused Brigham Young great alarm. Because the Cotton Mission was so difficult in its early years, church leaders feared that young men in particular would desert to the mines (315). Not only did the mines represent potential for sin through greed and pursuit of worldly riches for the Mormons, but also a kind of land use that was not in Young's vision for the future of the Mormon State of Deseret. Incoming Gentiles tended to focus their early settlements around one industry, like mining or timber, and the settlements usually consisted more of single men than families (Meinig 211; Anderson 430). As Nash states, for those who viewed the area through utilitarian lenses, “Wilderness was waste; the proper behavior toward it, exploitation” (31). While the following statement does not reveal how the miners thought of the landscape, it does reveal how the Mormons considered their relationship with the land to be different from that of the miners. Larson writes, “Silver Reef was *worldly*—a treeless, grassless, red-sand location. St. George was *otherworldly*—a community of fields, gardens, and flowers” (428-429). This demonstrates again that Mormons measured the desirability of the landscape by the obedience of the people who lived in it and the “improvements” consistent with scriptural precedent that they made to it. Because the miners were not devoting their time to agriculture or other activities that created greenness in the desert, the Mormons viewed that land as unredeemed.

Mormonism and the mindset of creating Eden that drove it, of course, was not the only thing that motivated human beings to live in a landscape they saw as hostile. The miners were willing to endure the harsh climate for the prospect of finding silver. They were not concerned with turning Silver Reef into an Edenic Garden, but with becoming rich. They viewed the landscape through their use of it as a source for wealth. The miners were also not building a

permanent settlement. Miners filed the first claim in Silver Reef in 1871, and by 1876, the mining town boasted a population of over a thousand people with saloons, dance halls, banks, barber shop, Chinese laundries, and a Catholic church (Alder 114). But by 1888, the booming population had mined the bulk of the silver, and the city dried up as fast as it had come (114). Clearly the red rocks had not charmed many Silver Reefers into sinking permanent roots.

Silver Reef remained a tiny, forgotten piece of Washington County, bare in a desert landscape without the shade of mulberry trees and irrigation ditches that characterize Mormon settlements. As Silver Reef largely disappeared, the other settlements in the region continued to grow. The characteristics that made St. George “otherworldly” to Silver Reef’s “worldly” insured that St. George would need more and more water to maintain its alluring qualities (Larson 428-429). Despite advances in irrigation and damming that assured a steady water supply to residents and thereby distanced them from the hostility of the arid landscape, exponential population growth in the county assured that the issue of water did not disappear. The county created its first reservoir, Gunlock, in the 1970s (Hafen 42). In the 1978 “Supplement” to *Under Dixie Sun*, the section on Hurricane states, “To this day water remains one of the most serious problems. The Hurricane Canal Company is responsible for the ditch water which is used for irrigation so vital to survival in the valley” (16). The “Supplement” lists each town’s notable advances, nearly all of them mentioning progress in water development—dams, irrigation, hydroelectric projects, and culinary water—demonstrating that a preoccupation with water continued into the late twentieth century. Hafen writes, “The Gunlock project helped push St. George into the 1970s. But when it came to growth, the city hadn’t seen anything yet....The community’s water taps were fed by 7 million gallons of water a day from Gunlock....in spite of it all, the city desperately needed more water” (43). Continued booms in the 1980s and 1990s led to development of wells in Snow Canyon and the Quail Creek Reservoir

(48-49).

The county's continued search for water in the twenty-first century, however, does not change the fact that when current residents turn on the tap, water comes out. Now, automobiles are commonplace, air conditioning is the norm, and, as Limerick asserts, this growing distance of residents from the realities of living in the desert allows them to laud its beauties without qualification (91). In the latest phase of writing about the Virgin River Basin in the twenty-first century, writers depict St. George as a prosperous city and an oasis in the desert. It is characterized in travel literature as a "growing metropolis" (Scholl 217). More important than its size are the descriptions of the landscape around it. Contrasted sharply with Pratt's early description is the City of St. George's rhetoric on its website. It calls St. George a "green oasis in the desert" (City of St. George). It beckons to tourists with the following:

From as low as 2,000 feet above sea level at the bottom of the Virgin Gorge, to well over 10,000 feet at the peak of Pine Valley Mountain, you will discover within a short radius of the cities of St. George, Hurricane, Springdale, Ivins and Santa Clara, some of the most beautiful scenes found anywhere. The crown jewel of it all is Zion National Park. Add to that, the state parks, ghost towns, canyons, coves, deserts, streams, golf courses, mineral pools, tennis courts, swimming holes, pioneer building, horse back riding, bicycling, hiking and you have discovered the unique vacation that awaits you in Utah's Washington County. (City of St. George)

This view is possible in part because of what Larson calls the "final conquest" of the Virgin River and the building of numerous permanent dams to keep up with the growing water demands as the population climbed exponentially during the last forty years (Larson 356; City of St. George).

Where Larson envisioned an agriculture future, St. George has gone in a different

direction. Tourism has caused the “explosion of St. George's commercial district and new residential suburbs in nearly every direction. St. George and its sister communities of the Virgin River Valley no longer doze lazily in the Dixie sun and dream of their rural pioneer past. They have been yanked rudely into the hectic current of mainstream America” [see figure 6] (Scholl 217). The overwhelming majority of Washington County's economy is now based on retail sales (2002 Economic Census). It is because of this growth and change in economic focus that people can view the landscape from an almost entirely romantic perspective. Now the residents and visitors, “removed from a wilderness connection, [can begin] to sense its ethical and aesthetic values” (Nash 43). People now travel and live in an area once viewed as hostile without having to wonder where their water will come from or if the crops will fail. The Virgin River Basin has become “Utah's playground, a year-round Mecca for hikers, mountain bikers, golfers, boaters, anglers, and anybody else who just wants to get out of doors” (Laine 193).

Washington County did not merely stumble upon its oasis identity—it has been openly created and promoted, despite water issues. St. George created its first golf course in the mid 1960s (Alder 317). The area is now known for its golf courses. The cover letter for the packet the St. George Area Chamber of Commerce sends to tourists states, “Washington County is endowed with mild, low humidity winters with over 300 sunny days per year. Our desert climate promotes recreation and leisure activities year-round. St. George is known as the 'Year Round Golf Capital of Utah.' It offers ten great, scenic golf courses” (Behrmann). The message that the city consciously sends to potential residents and tourists alike is that there is plenty of water not only for survival, but for luxuries like golf courses, swimming pools, and green lawns.

The images disseminated by the city and by real estate agencies are telling. On the cover of *St. George Relocation Guide*, there is a picture of a golf course [see figure 3]. The course is brilliant green and lush. But the golf course is not taken out of its desert context. Broken desert

ridges covered in mesquite bushes form the background, and an outcropping of red sandstone appears in the left foreground. A separate graphic on the cover shows a red cactus flower (*St. George Relocation Guide*). The message is that St. George is an oasis, and that the desert has indeed been made to bloom. Similarly, nearly all of the advertisements for real estate feature homes with blooming vegetation set deliberately in the context of the red desert landscape. An advertisement for the Entrada development features a row of houses mimicking adobe architecture meant to blend in to the landscape [see figure 4]. But fifteen feet from the houses is an artificially created pond and waterfall, its banks lined in freshly mowed green grass. In the background, the Red Mountain towers, and in the foreground, desert vegetation grows prominently next to the grass (*St. George Relocation Guide* 23). The text under the photograph reads:

Only a limited number of people can forever bask in the close-up beauty of a red sandstone canyon. Having this impressive backdrop to our developments provides the inspiration for us to design and build unique and artistic homes....We combine imaginative architecture, creative stacked rock, faux rock masterpieces, colorful and unusual desert landscaping and waterscaping, and unique interior finishes and design.

(23)

The obvious disconnect between the beauty of the desert and its limitations, especially where water is concerned, are telling. Instead of relating to the landscape's harsh realities first and its aesthetic beauties second, residents can now enjoy the Red Mountain without wondering about the anomaly of a waterfall, pond, and grass in what was previously a lava flow [see figure 5].

Other photographs feature Pine Valley Mountain prominently in the background. Taken during the few winter months when the mountain is snow-covered, the photographs subtly advertise an abundance of water (93). Most feature the landscape in early spring when the native



desert vegetation of Washington County is at its greenest (26; 79; 89). The city's tourism and real estate industries do not feature the desert in August, when the grasses are yellow, the river is only a mud-colored trickle, and Pine Valley Mountain is bare rock in the distance. Daniel D. McArthur, St. George's mayor in 1996, also encourages a vision of the desert as a blooming Eden, often singing Charles Walker's poem "St. George and the Dragon," the chorus of which reads:

"Mesquite, soap root, prickly-pears and briars,  
 St. George ere long will be a place  
 That everyone admires.  
 Now green lucerne in verdant spots  
 Bedecks our thriving city,  
 Whilst vines and fruit trees grace our lots,  
 With flowers sweet and pretty." (qtd. in Alder 155)

For Walker, the poem celebrated a recent victory over a harsh time in fresh memory. McArthur, years removed even from Walker, takes the conquering of the desert landscape for granted, a phenomenon so far in the past that the desert could not possibly ever be a threat again. In an article in *The Spectrum* in January 2007, Rachel Tueller calls Southern Utah "undeniably more forgiving" than the northern portion of the state (Tueller). She calls the desert "seventh heaven," representing a complete turn-around from the opinions of the original settlers (Tueller). The irony of such statements is equally lost on her fellow citizens, who are so separated from the realities of the desert that they do not recognize the desert's unforgiving aspects: flood, water-shortages, dust storms, or unbearable summer heat without an air conditioner.

Despite crucial issues related to water shortage veiled by promotional advertising, water continues to be problematic. County officials and developers continue to look for solutions to



the same water issues that plagued the settlers—drought and flood—issues which appear regularly in debates in the area's local newspaper, *The Spectrum*. Douglas D. Alder and Karl F. Brooks write:

The county is still an arid place. The land, weather, water, and sunshine are always dominant features. They draw visitors and new-comers and make every day stimulating, but the desert is a jealous mistress as the Anasazis found out centuries ago. So the future most likely will still be a contest between human ingenuity and nature's limitations. (xix)

Washington County needs more water as the population growth in its borders has increased 250 percent since 1990. Where previous growth spurts have caused the county to look for additional internal water sources, those sources have been almost completely tapped (Panessa). After it has developed all of the remaining water in the county, the Washington County Water Conservancy District (WCWCD) estimates that those sources will only provide enough water for the growing population through 2020 (*Water Line Summer 2006* 1). In order to provide for an expected population of over 400,000 residents, the county has proposed a pipeline to Lake Powell, well outside Washington County's boundaries. The expensive Lake Powell Pipeline has triggered debates about water use and conservation as well as population growth, increasing public awareness of the problem. Vanguard Media Group, hired by the WCWCD to disseminate information on the Pipeline project, conducted a survey of residents in which ninety-one percent of those surveyed said it was very important to have adequate water to sustain current needs. Eighty-three percent rated further development projects for the future very important, and the majority said they saw water as a vital need of the community (*Water Line Summer 2006* 1).

These debates, however, do not trickle down into people's everyday uses of water and their relationship to the land's aesthetic beauty. Lin Alder, a member of the Citizens for Dixie's Future, wrote in an article in *The Spectrum*, "We waste water. Various studies show that

Washington County's water use is somewhere between 280 and 360 gallons per person per day—the third highest in the nation according to the US Geological Survey” (Lin Alder). The myth of the oasis in the desert certainly contributes to the “waste” of water. Early citizens and Paiute Indians understood that their survival was dependent on water and that water was hard to come by in the desert. Modern residents cherish the myth of the blooming desert so much that as far as they are concerned water wastage is no longer an issue. This is a clear example, as Slotkin writes, of myths reaching “out of the past to cripple, incapacitate, or strike down the living” (5).

One example that illustrates the changing attitudes towards water in Washington County is legal regulations of the water supply. In 1909, a St. George water ordinance stated:

“If any water taker shall waste water or allow it to be wasted by negligence, such as imperfect stops or valves, or leaky joints or pipes, or allowing takes to leak or overflow, or wastefully run it through basins or other apparatus...he is guilty of an offense and upon conviction thereof shall be liable to a fine in any sum not exceeding \$25, or to be imprisoned in the city jail not exceeding twenty-five days....” (qtd. in Hafen 10)

During a severe drought in the early twenty-first century, the need for restricting water use resurfaced. Though Washington County now rarely has water restrictions, it has developed a four-stage management plan that goes into effect by city ordinance in times of extreme drought, such as in 2002. These restrictions, however, do not limit use of irrigation water for crops or drinking water, like the 1909 law. The only thing to suffer now is landscaping. Stage one of the restrictions state, “No outside use of water between the hours of 6:00 A.M. And 7:00 P.M.” (“Ordinance” 1). The first offense for a non-complier is a warning, the second a \$50.00 fine (2). Stage two restricts landscape watering to every other day and bans driveway car-washing; stage three tackles artificial fountains, waterfalls, and swimming pools; and the final stage finally sacrifices lawn watering altogether—a restriction Washington County has yet to see

implemented (2). The transformation of any type of water wastage as a crime punishable by jail time to restrictions on lawn watering between certain hours punishable with a warning represents a serious disjuncture between people and the desert landscape they inhabit.

The disconnection between public practice and the reality of water shortages often has the WCWCD on the defensive. The WCWCD devoted much of the space in its quarterly newsletter to first convincing citizens of the need to find more water, particularly through the Lake Powell Pipeline, and second to the need for conservation. Ron Thompson, the General Manager of the WCWCD writes, "Soon, however, growth *will* stress the District's ability to adequately provide water....As we continue to search for more sources of water and better ways to manage it, we once again urge you to maintain a solid commitment to conservation of this precious resource" (*Water Line Spring 2006* 1). But clearly the message is not reaching residents too caught up in myth to alter practice. The Summer 2006 *Water Line* is dedicated almost entirely to persuading residents of the need for the Pipeline. It argues against residents who believe the reservoirs will supply adequate water with the obvious (but necessary) reminder, "But we live in a desert" (*Water Line Summer 2006* 1). It continues, "Just four years ago, at the end of 2002, our reservoirs were dangerously low. Quail Creek was 33% full; Kolob was 49% full; and Gunlock was 35% full" (1). The newsletter admits, "The Colorado River is one of the last major sources of developable water in the state of Utah," but argues, "We are tapping into our current sources, but we *cannot* leave the Lake Powell water alone. It is ours and we are going to need it for future generations" (1-2). In their Fall 2006 *Water Line* newsletter, the WCWCD rages, "What is it about turning off your water that you don't understand!!!?" (*Water Line Fall 2006* 4). Recognizing the attitude of residents towards conservation, the WCWCD turns first to technological fixes to the problem—development of new resources—and unsuccessfully encourages conservation second.

Residents' refusal to recognize the limitations of a desert landscape has impacts on the community and on the land. In 2002, during a severe drought, an article appeared in the *Deseret News* revealing the residents' attitudes. "Water users in this parched desert community don't seem to be getting the message that southern Utah is in a serious drought," Nancy Perkins writes (Perkins). The article states that water usage during the drought actually increased instead of decreasing. Most of the water went into landscaping, a sign of residents undoubtedly struggling to keep their lawns green against the drought. Georgia Barker, St. George's then water conservation manager stated, "We're not sure why people aren't conserving more....None of what we are doing to educate the public seems to be working this year" (qtd. in Perkins). Residents' unwillingness to give their lawns over to the desert demonstrates that civilization is still requisite to desert appreciation.

The continued growth of Washington County based on the conquest of the desert and the increasing disconnect between the realities of living in the desert and the myths of living in a garden oasis affects not only future populations of the county, but native animals and the face of the landscape itself. Alder writes:

The impact of high-consumption living on the fragile desert landscape is a second concern of those who would limit growth. Automobile exhaust pollutes clear desert air and mars scenic beauty. Housing developments scar the landscape. Unsightly excavation on the black hill west of St. George's business district is an example. New housing units can also damage plant and animal life. Seven species of animal life in the county are officially listed as endangered and more are being considered. (357)

Early settlers were not concerned with scarring the desert landscape or with making their settlement blend in. Young's prophesy was, "There will yet be built, between those volcanic ridges, a city, with spires, towers, and steeples, with homes containing many inhabitants" (qtd.

in Alder 38). Spires, towers, and steeples provide a sharp contrast to Rich Panessa's twenty-first century idea that "The stretch of shopping malls and new homes must be built intelligently and their appearances should blend as much as possible to the landscape" (Panessa). It is this intellectual climate of aesthetic appreciation of the desert that has pulled "worldly" Silver Reef into the mainstream of development along with the rest of Washington County (Larson 428-429). Its formerly disparaged barrenness is now regaled as beautiful. Residents are clearly beginning to value, at least overtly, the desert itself more than the human "improvements" made upon it. Lin Alder writes that the controversy over a 2006 Land Bill that authorized the Lake Powell Pipeline project "reveals strong local opposition to public land sales and deep divisions about the Lake Powell Pipeline. As sprawl continues, more citizens support protecting scenic public land" (Lin Alder). Similarly, Brooks Pace writes, "The best thing Washington County has going for it is our vast amount of public land. Whether the lands have protective status such as National Forest or wilderness designation or just multiple use, they constitute what locals and visitors love most about the county" (Pace). In a state where public lands are often a point hotly contested between citizens and the government, to have citizens so heartily appreciate the desert landscape demonstrates the extreme shift in public opinion. This shift gives rise to a dangerous paradox that defies rational thought about water—the desert as beautiful and habitable without limit.

The myth of the desert oasis may have become so prevalent that it is fading in favor of the desert *needing* no oasis—at least overtly. A quick search of the area's yellow pages reveals fifty-five business names containing the word "desert," and fifty-nine containing the word "rock," which usually appears in its relation to the landscape, for example "red rock" or "black rock," while only six business names contain the word "oasis" (Yellow Pages). Residents are consciously rejecting views that favor the garden over the wilderness. The rhetoric of the Entrada advertisement reveals a similar trend. It can call its artificial pond and green grass

“colorful and unusual desert landscaping and waterscaping” because of the glorification of the desert. The desert is comfortable for residents, who may not think twice at seeing a waterfall next to a yucca plant. The refusal of citizens to stop watering their lawns during the 2002 drought demonstrates, however, that residents were not ready to accept the desert landscape (Perkins). While they consciously glorify the desert, unconsciously the old biblical views and definitions of civilization still predominate. Unwilling to give lawns over to tumbleweeds, residents demonstrated that despite their modern embrace of the desert, Eden still holds sway. The City of St. George is also unlikely to let drought get in the way of its carefully promoted image of itself as a golfing paradise. City parks and golf courses use irrigation water, which is not subject to the four-stage restrictions developed for businesses and private land owners (“St. George Imposes Water Restrictions”).

As the stress on the desert landscape and on water resources demonstrates, culturally created myths do have the power to impact the present negatively. As Slotkin states, American mythology holds those who conquered the landscape in high regard (4). This is clearly seen in the continued veneration of St. George's pioneers. But in believing the desert conquered, current residents ignore the fact that the landscape is the same as it was when it was first settled. Slotkin writes, “A people unaware of its myths is likely to continue living by them, though the world around that people may change and demand changes in their psychology, their world view, their ethics, and their institutions” (4-5). In St. George's case, residents following the myth unconsciously stand in danger of the very desert landscape they so revere.

This danger is demonstrated perhaps more readily in the river's opposite caprice: flooding. The prominent views of the landscape as an Eden, the desert as harmless and beautiful, and the Virgin River as benign, led many residents to build homes close to the river where the settlers would never have built, or areas where the river washed away previous settlements,

forcing the Mormons to relocate elsewhere. Pushed by tremendous growth and a dearth of readily developable land, developers have built in marginal areas. The Virgin and the Santa Clara still flood—large floods swept through in 1985, and again in January 2005, washing away several homes. Lynn and Jewell Cook revealed in an interview with Douglas D. Alder that when they bought their home, later destroyed by the 2005 flood, they had not considered the river a threat. Jewell Cook states, “It was called a creek—because we couldn't imagine it could ever be a problem” (Cook). A caption in the book *Portraits of Loss--Stories of Hope* created to document the flood and raise funds for those who lost their homes, states, “Young people have no frame of reference; they don't know what a flood is and it's devastating to them” (*Portraits of Loss* 20).

“New residents” may be added to “young people.” Lulled by the vision of the desert as hospitable, those without the experience of the previous struggle against the desert, or even the 1985 flood twenty years earlier, were shocked by what they *viewed* as a sudden change, but that was *really* a predictable manifestation of desert landscapes. Another resident who lost a home wrote that the river's progress towards her new home, the first to be destroyed by the flood, shocked her. “There were workers in the home that morning,” she writes. “They were prepping the floors for tile and a rock mason was laying rock inside. It's as if people were in denial that we were really in danger. Our contractor had to tell them to stop working and leave” (30). Residents' shock at the unexpected behavior of the river demonstrates that the settler's struggle with the river has long since been viewed as a thing of the past. The flood, or rather, the recognition that the Virgin still posed a threat to the numerous houses along its banks, impacted the river visibly. The riverbanks now lined with volcanic rock where it runs through the city, giving it a canal-like appearance with a tiny stream of water in the middle. Though most residents view the landscape in a non-utilitarian way, once in a while the river causes people to



reanalyze their relationship to the land.

The perpetuation of the desert myth has impacts on other human societies as well. For Paiutes, it has meant their disappearance from the mythology. Although the settlers' expectations in redeeming the Indians were not met, the settlers found ways for the myth to cover them anyway. Instead of becoming part of the redeemed landscape, its beautiful aspects that came to be revered by modern residents, Paiutes became equated with the desert's hostility. Like flood and drought, Paiutes faded as just another conquered aspect of a past landscape that has no mythical bearing on the present. In Scholl's *Utah: A Guide to the State* the word "Paiute" is only mentioned as the name of an ATV trail (242). Similarly, in Frommer's *Utah*, they are not mentioned at all. Even the word "Indian" is used only once in reference to a trail near Ogden (Laine 6). Euro-American residents of Washington County have appropriated the Paiute vision of the desert as a holy land, but without the accompanying respect for water scarcity and the unpredictability of the river. It seems that instead Paiutes have been ignored, like the harshness of the desert and the Virgin's capriciousness, as part of a conquered landscape. This perception, however, does not mean that Paiutes have disappeared. As of summer 2005, there were 829 Paiute still living in the area, facing unemployment, underemployment, and disease in disproportionate percentages (Holt xix). But, even though their populations are growing, they are merely ignored by the majority of residents, an example of what Slotkin views as another aspect of the dangerous implications of unexamined cultural myths.

Dixie has gone from being described as a bloody red desert where no one could possibly survive to a "place of extraordinary beauty and diversity" (Scholl 211). Because the settlers viewed the landscape according to their intended use of it only in taming the landscape and making a successful living off it could they perceive it as anything but a wasteland. Early settlers described the landscape in terms of a biblical hell, but believed they could transform it



through righteousness and hard work. By contrast, Paiute Indians viewed the land as a holy place all along and already had successful ways of subsisting in the Southern Utah desert. Those biblical views that drove the early settlers faded gradually over time, at least in residents' conscious attitudes towards the landscape. The relationship most residents have with the land shifted from agricultural to commercial with a particular emphasis on tourism. Today, most people who live in and visit St. George think of the land recreationally and aesthetically, largely ignoring the harshness of a landscape once dreaded by its settlers. The increased distance from the reality of the desert allows residents to view the domesticated desert romantically. The development of the desert myth in Washington County can be problematic, however, when it affects current residents' willingness and ability to cope with the limitations the settlers recognized right away. Unless the residents become more aware of the myths that unconsciously shape their way of seeing the desert and of the historical reshaping of that environment, continued population growth and water shortages will usher in a new stage of landscape attitudes in Southwestern Utah when the desert is again viewed as a hostile place of habitation.

Appendix

Figure 1: Map of Utah with Washington County in the left corner (*Home Town Locator*).



Figure 2: Early St. George (in Hafen 8).

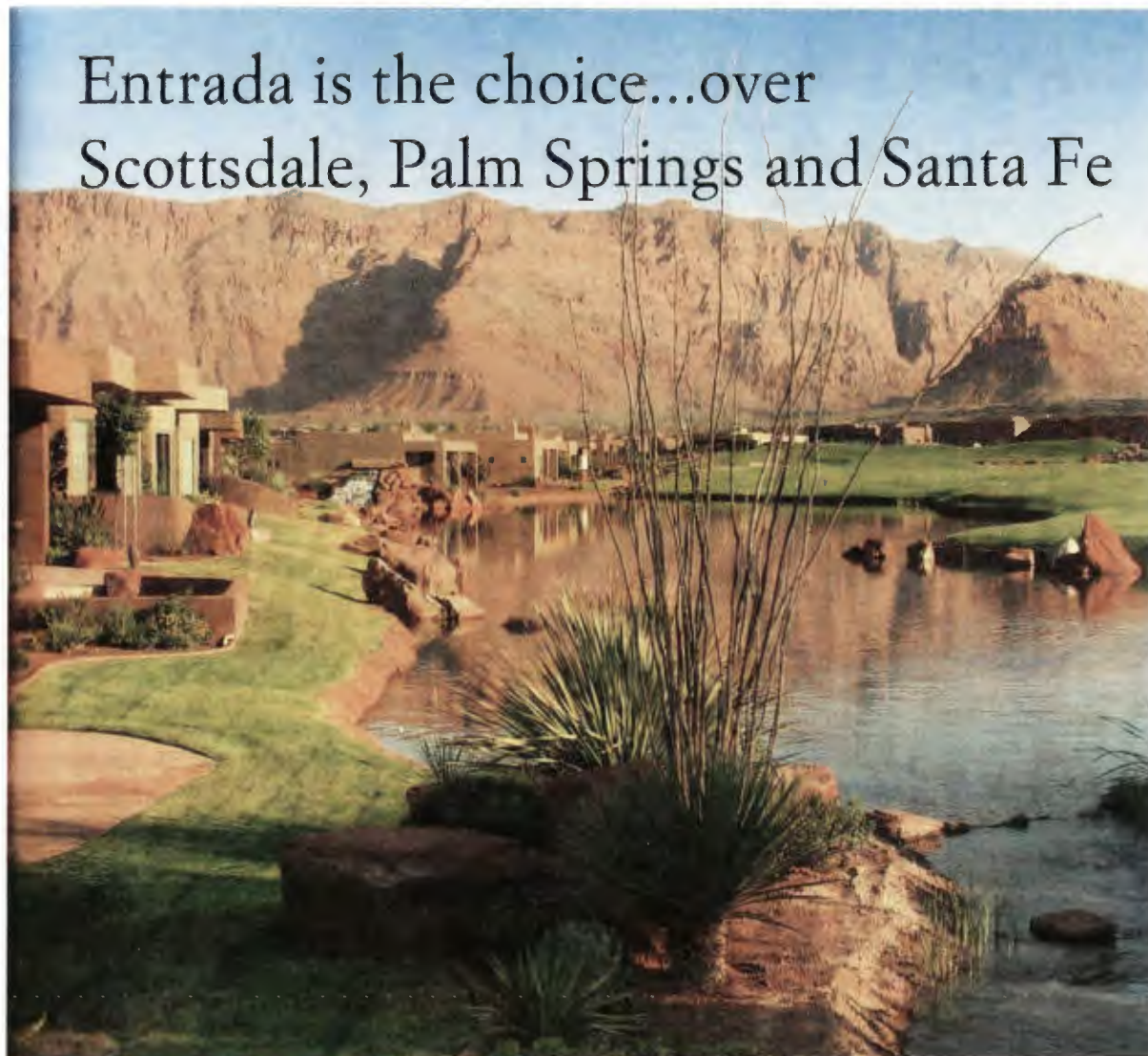


Figure 3: Cover of *St. George Relocation Guide*.

# ST. GEORGE AREA GUIDE





Figure 4: Entrada Advertisement (*St. George Relocation Guide 23*).

## Entrada is the choice...over Scottsdale, Palm Springs and Santa Fe

Only a limited number of people can forever bask in the close-up beauty of a red sandstone canyon. Having this impressive backdrop to our developments provides the inspiration for us to design and build unique and artistic homes. We employ craftsman, who are superior artisans, to make the home a true original for its owner.

We combine imaginative architecture, creative stacked natural rock, faux rock masterpieces, colorful and unusual desert landscaping and waterscaping, and unique interior finishes and design. This collaborative effort of so many artists working together creates our corporate brand, simply known as Split Rock.

[www.splitrockinc.com](http://www.splitrockinc.com) • 906 N. 1400 W. St. George, UT 84770 • 1.877.368.7232

Figure 5: Lava Falls at Entrada Advertisement (*St. George Relocation Guide 79*).

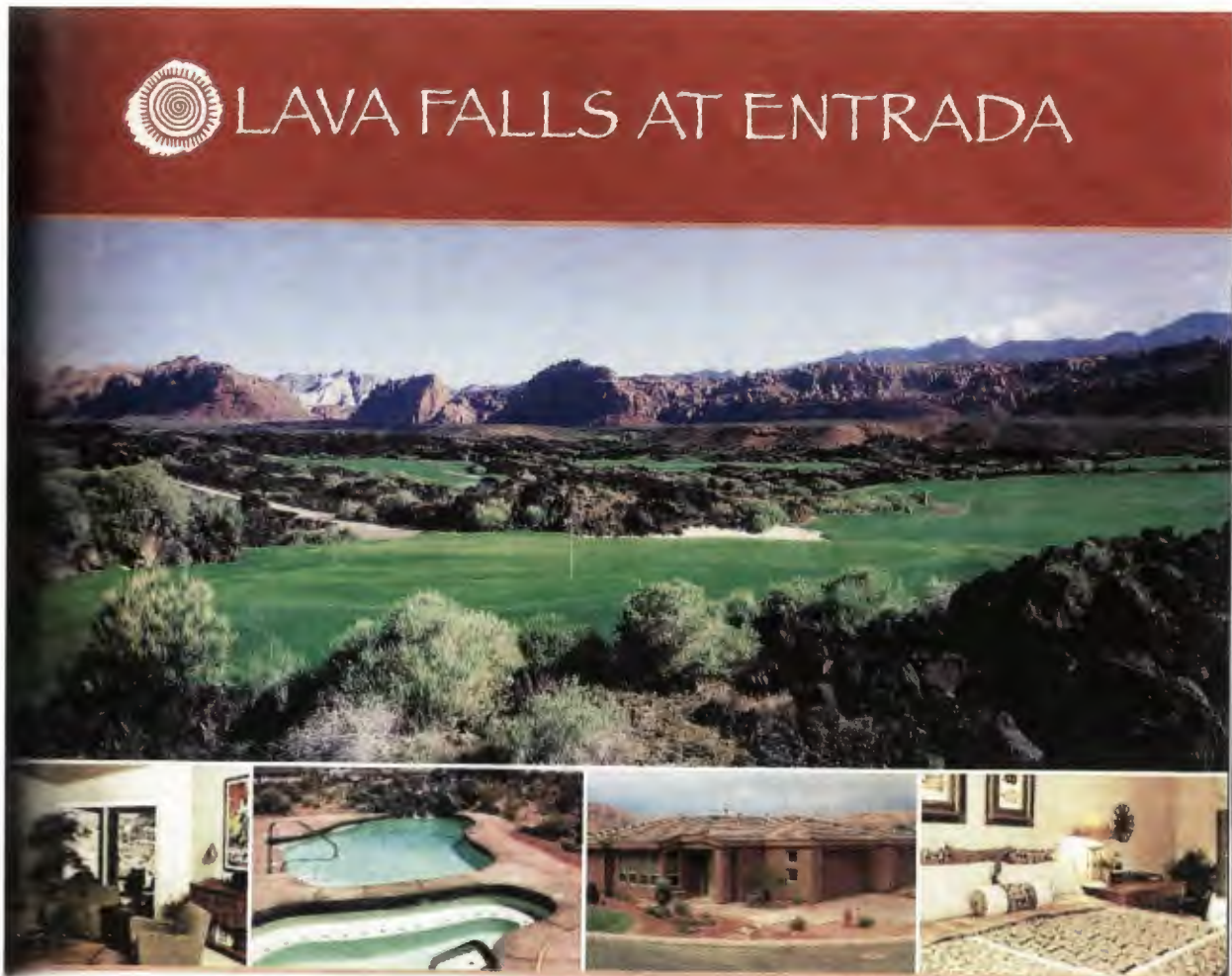
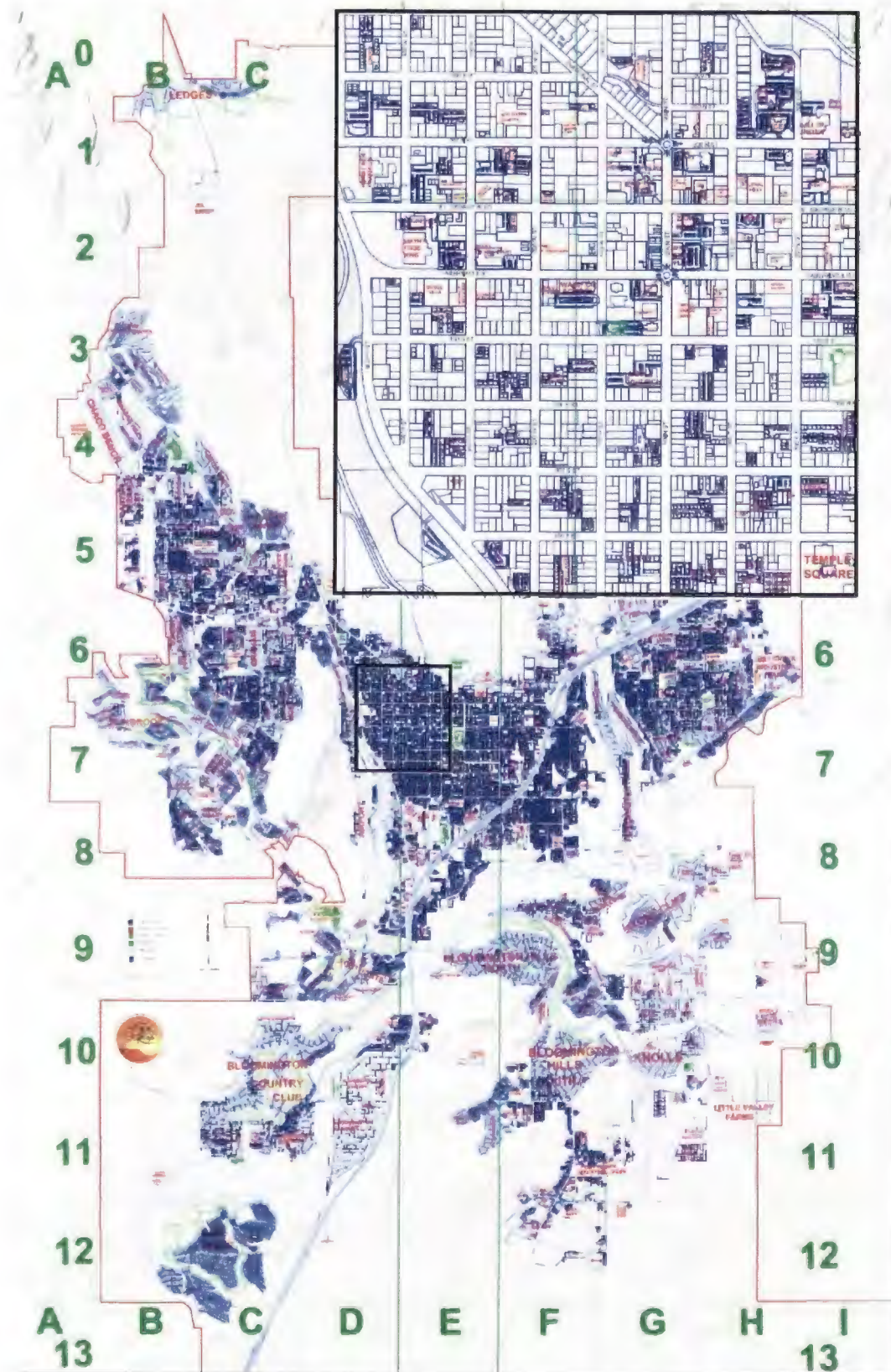




Figure 6: Map of growth in St. George, Utah. Modified from original to show the initial settlement area [see figure 2] enlarged in the upper right hand corner (*City of St. George*).



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### Author Biography

Erica Cottam was born and raised in St. George, Utah, where she has deep family roots extending back to settlement. She graduated from Snow Canyon High School in 2003 and entered Utah State University that fall as a University Club and National Merit scholar. She has spent the last four years enjoying the rigors and multifaceted connections of the interdisciplinary American Studies Major with cognate areas in History and Nature and Environment. This interdepartmental major along with her Folklore minor have allowed her to study American culture from such diverse departments as Speech, Sociology, History, English, Anthropology, and Environment and Society. She has enjoyed internships at the St. George Art Museum and the Western Historical Quarterly at Utah State University and has been the recipient of the Utah State Historical Society Award. Erica spent spring of 2006 studying abroad in the American Studies program at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. She gained valuable insight not only into the cultures of Europe as she traveled, but also gained an outsider's look at American culture through her studies at the university.

After she graduates in May 2007, Erica plans to take a year to travel, pursue internships in her field, and enjoy the American culture and environment that she has spent the past four years studying. In fall of 2008, she will continue pursuing her education in graduate school.