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The Rest is History

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I cringe when I hear someone say, "History teaches us...." I know I’m about to get a moral lesson that has little to do with the past and everything to do with the speaker’s vision of the present. But that’s OK. History is the story we tell ourselves about ourselves and about others. It’s a cultural creation, an interpretation of "facts," repeated and refashioned by each generation. In Utah our history surrounds us. We in turn surround our history in a protective phalanx, fearing the frontal assault only to be flayed by the snipers we arm with our lack of candor.

by David Lewis
Mormons question the ability of non-Mormons to adequately tell the story of their history. They fear losing control of their history, of having faith tested by frank or unflattering accounts of their past. Mention Mountain Meadows and watch the involuntary eye twitch give way to massive rationalization beyond all necessity. As Brigham Young noted of the approaching railroad, "It is a damn poor religion that can't stand one railroad," and by analogy, a damn poor society that can't stand a more inclusive history. The same critique can be made of non-Mormons who see historic conspiracies at every turn. All of us seem to suffer from a lingering sense of persecution that has robbed us of our humor, the ability to laugh at ourselves and our all-too-human past the way we giggle at, say, contemporary Californians.

Let's make one thing clear as we celebrate this second century of statehood: Utah history is a much bigger, more inclusive story with all the triumph and tragicomedy of a joint Cecil B. DeMille/Quentin Tarantino production. If we keep telling ourselves about ourselves in the same "cricket history" format, then we limit our understanding of the past, of the richness and diversity that is Utah's heritage. That was the version I heard in the Ogden city schools, in LDS Sunday school and seminary classes, and what I seem to be hearing in our ongoing centennial celebration—the mantra of pioneers, polygamy, and persecution. My suggestions for recognition may seem overly critical to some, even negative, but they are part of the story, the sour to balance the sweet. We need to reconsider what history teaches us, what we teach history, and what we relay to a new generation who will in turn re-evaluate our past and present.

Consider where it all starts. 1896? 1847? 1830? Nah, by then it's all over but the shouting. Utah's history is geologic, prehistoric, mythic. It's Precambrian, Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic, the story of compression, upward warping, tectonic extension.
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fault-block tilting, basins falling, plateaus rising, river incision, volcanic gurgling, and erosion. A Pleistocene ice age advances and retreats. A huge lake fills and then spills its waters into the Portneuf, Snake, Columbia and on to the Pacific. Utah’s history becomes basin and range, Colorado Plateau, and Rocky Mountain high.

Into that natural history add humans—a procession of Old World emigrants if you ask archaeologists or Mormons, indigenous residents if you ask native peoples. Paleo-Indians, Desert Archaic peoples, Anasazi and Fremont agriculturists all traveled through and took up residence here. Yet in our history we treat them more like artifacts and cultural categories than human beings. They become Danger Cave, Hovenweep, and Newspaper Rock. They lay on museum shelves as stone blades, woven sandals, broken pots, clay dolls, and charred corncobs. The fact is they lived and died here, worked and sweated and cried as they altered this environment to meet their material needs and desires. Theirs was a very human existence in this shared landscape, one we can appreciate if we pause to listen to our own genetic material. They were our original pioneers.

Then there are the Numic peoples—the Nuciu (Ute), Nimi (Shoshone), Newe (Goshute), Nuwuvii (Paiute)—and later the Athapaskans—the Diné (Navajo). Their oral traditions connect them with this place and with all creation. Southern Paiutes know how darkness rubbed against water and conceived light; how the myth-time animal beings dove down to bring up earth from the ocean floor to create land. Utes recognize how Wolf, their culture-hero, and Coyote ordered this world, creating the tortured landscape, the seasons, death, and human beings. Navajos mark the emergence of First Man and First Woman into this fourth and final world—“You say there were no people / Smoke was spreading.” Each has a culturally comprehensive world view and history every bit as functional, every bit as rational as biblical creationism or book-of-mormonism.

By the time Euro-Americans stumbled into the region, these native peoples had already written their history on the land. They moved through known environments, taking advantage of what was at hand, encouraging what was scarce or lacking. They minimized their risk of subsistence failure by diversifying, moving, observing, and altering the land, helping to create the microenvironments so important to the next set of Utah immigrants. They traded widely, connecting Mexico and the Southwest with the northern plains in a movement of goods and horse flesh and slaves that enriched them materially and culturally. They would have laughed at the Euro-American idea of Utah as wilderness—howling or pristine—but laughing would have been impolite. It was their land, and it was wrested from them in the name of God and market capitalism. Our celebrations make passing reference to their lives and then speed on like Sam Brannan hauling butt back to California in

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In 1889, a group of Hawaiian converts to the Mormon Church established what was surely one of Utah’s most unusual colonies.

Named Iosepa (Yo-see-pa) in honor of LDS Church President Joseph F. Smith, the Tooele County colony was founded as a self-contained enclave for the seventy-five or so initial immigrants to arrive in Utah. The mile-square townsite included a grocery store, common water system and, later, a small reservoir for picnicking and swimming.

But the harsh winters, the scarcity of water, and a disastrous outbreak of leprosy began to work against Iosepa. The town’s population fell from 250 as young men sought work elsewhere and others returned to Hawaii.

In 1917, the few remaining residents sold out to the LDS Church. According to Stephen L. Carr’s “Historical Guide to Utah Ghost Towns,” about all that remains of Iosepa today is a row of inoperable fire hydrants surrounded by sagebrush where the streets were once laid out.
1847 after failing to convince Brigham Young that Modesto was closer to paradise than Salt Lake.
There is a lot of truth to the adage, "Utah, Gateway to Nevada"...or California. Utah's early history is replete with people crossing the state to get somewhere else, anywhere else. The Spanish kept looking for a viable passage between Santa Fe and Monterey. Franciscan fathers Dominguez and Escalante penetrated the heart of Utah in 1776, searching for the mythic Rio Buenaventura, which connected this unknown interior with the Pacific. It was a myth that died hard. Along their 2000-mile, 158-day journey, the good fathers took stock of potential settlement sites and "gave [the Indians] to understand, although they did not wholly believe it, that we were not here for what they thought, or carried goods for trading." They fabricated a story about searching for a lost padre "lest they took us for scouts intending to conquer their land after we had seen it." It wouldn't be the last time Utah Indians heard such lines. At Utah Lake, Dominguez and Escalante promised the Utes they would return with more priests to establish farms and churches, to provide for them body and soul. The Utes humored them with a few Jesus-Maria's and told them about a lake many leagues north whose waters "are harmful and extremely salty" so that "anyone who wet some part of the body with them immediately felt a lot of itching." But the Utes warned that around this lake lived a nation of "bewitchers"—an assessment of Salt Lakers still in currency among some Utah County residents. The padres headed south.
Imagine how different Utah history would be had Dominguez and Escalante succeeded in reaching California and had their superiors extended missions and presidios northward. Provo and Salt Lake might have been the Santa Fe and

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Taos of the north, cosmopolitan trade center and artist colony as old as the American Revolution. The fleeting fur trade, the colorful rendezvous, the adventures of John C. Frémont, and the early overlanders hacking a wagon road to the Wasatch Front and across the west desert would all have been irrelevant. The Donner Party might have stopped for dinner at Spanish Salt Lake rather than at Donner Lake. Overall, our history would have been tied to Spain, the Catholic Church, and the peoples of the borderlands. Utah wouldn’t have been an inviting place for a religious cult fleeing the exuberance of Jacksonian America.

And that is the story of our Mormon pioneers, the next in that long line of immigrants passing through the “Zion Curtain.” Product of a religious revival know as the Second Great Awakening, Mormonism was a conservative collectivist response to the intense individualism of Americans steeped in the ideology of revolution and republicanism. Born in enthusiasm and millennialism reared on prophesy and persecution, coming of age through migration and cooperative kingdom building, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints intentionally set its members outside the national mainstream. Moving west was supposed to be the final step in cultural separation, but it was just the beginning.

The initial Pioneer Company crossed the plains in 1847, not over a trackless prairie, not alone, but along a route traveled by more than 12,000 California- and Oregon-bound immigrants, in the midst of 5,400 crossings that same year. Nevertheless, they marked the path for later Mormon companies, possibly pioneering the paper plate inscription technique so common in our canyons today—plates tacked to road signs, marking the sites of family reunions and ward outings. “Peterson, Turn Here!”

Brigham Young said, “This is the right place. Drive on,” and some wanted to, but the majority hunkered down. Wilford Woodruff “gazed with wonder and admiration upon the vast fertile valley...clothed in the heaviest garb of green,” while Orson Pratt noticed that “the grass had nearly dried up for want of moisture,” and that the drier places were “swarming with very large crickets about the size of a man’s thumb.” William Clayton was “happily disappointed in the appearance of the valley of the Salt Lake,” while Harriet Young, one of three women in the Pioneer Company, was more direct: “This day we arrived in the valley of the great Salt Lake. My feelings were such as I cannot describe. Every thing looked gloomy and I felt heartsick....Weak and weary as I am, I would rather go a thousand miles farther than remain in such a forsaken place as this!” But she didn’t.

Mormons set about transforming this forsaken place into the right place, uprooting sagebrush and Indi-
ans with about the same level of concern. They selected the beehive to symbolize their collective industry, but the beaver dam might have been more appropriate. When it came to damming and diverting water to make the desert blossom as the rose, they were “the Lord’s Beavers.” Mormons redefined community through their collective land use and water rights. They inspired John Wesley Powell, Colorado River explorer and U.S. geographical survey chief, to propose a new federal system for distributing resources in the arid West. But Powell’s intensely democratic vision fell as short as democracy did in theocratic Utah, the victim of Washington politics and the reality of too much greed and too little water. Twentieth century irrigation boosters ignored Powell, interests unrelated to Utah agriculture dammed his beloved Colorado River, and we celebrated by naming the puddle after him—the ultimate perversion of his vision for rational resource management based on an idealized Utah model.

In 1848 Utah settlers plowed and planted and, as John Steel lamented, “the crickets came by the thousands of tons.” Thomas Kane described them as “Wingless, black, dumpy, swollen-headed, and bulging eyes in cases like goggles, mounted upon legs of steel wire and clock spring, and with the general appearance that justified the

...crickets and grasshoppers were a staple of some western Numic groups. Roasted or dried, crushed into meal, baked into cakes, added to stews, or just crunched whole, they were nutritious, delicious, “desert lobster.”

Mormons in comparing them to a cross between a spider and a buffalo.” Seedling crops disappeared. All would have been lost, the story goes, had it not been for the arrival of gulls who devoured the crickets, flew to the lake to do the technicolor yawning, and then returned for more. The Seagull Miracle wasn’t recognized as such until years later. In fact, many Mormon diarists failed to mention the gulls at all. Seen in another light this superinfestation was not much of a miracle; rather it was a missed opportunity.

Consider for a moment that crickets

WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE

Women in Utah gained the right to vote in 1870, a year after Wyoming earned the distinction of being the first territory to do so. But Utah women had to earn suffrage twice.

Two forces prevailed in persuading the territorial legislature to give women the right to vote. Women’s rights advocates on the East coast were certain that, given suffrage, women would help outlaw polygamy. Brigham Young and other LDS leaders, on the other hand, hoped that enfranchising women would dispel the notion that Mormon women suffered indignities because of plural marriage. At the time, no women were allowed to vote in the United States.

But in 1887, Congress passed the Edmunds-Tucker Act, the final act in a long string of anti-polygamy legislation. Among its provisions was one abolishing women’s suffrage.

For the next eight years, and particularly in 1895, when Utahns were writing the state constitution, women fought to regain the suffrage they had enjoyed. Critics claimed that granting women full citizenship would distract them from being good wives and mothers. Some Mormons feared the move would double the voting strength of Gentiles. In the end, women’s suffrage was not even put to a separate vote, but included in the Utah Constitution.
and grasshoppers were a staple of some western Numic groups. Roasted or dried, crushed into meal, baked into cakes, added to stews, or just crunched whole, they were nutritious, delicious, "desert lobster." Sun-dried grasshoppers are calorically 60 percent protein, 10 percent carbohydrate, and 2 percent fat by weight, containing roughly 3,010 calories per kilogram. Recent tests conducted on caloric hunting-gathering efficiency found that, on average, one person collecting grasshoppers for one hour from windrows of dead insects washed up along a lake shore could gather 272,649 calories per hour. Think of that as 149 Wendy's Bacon Double Cheeseburgers, 102 Dairy Queen Super Chili Dogs, 89 McDonald Big Mac meal-deals (a #1 for those in the know), 49 slices of Pizza Hut Supreme Pan pizza, 4 cases of beer, all the caffeine-free Diet Coke you want, a pack of WintO'Green Lifesavers and a few Tums (you'll need those). In other words, one person in one hour could gather enough calories to feed four people for a month—an energy efficiency well beyond any Mormon crop.

Seen from another perspective, the miracle was this "manna" from heaven, but it was culturally misinterpreted. Hence, no Cricket Monument, just more cricket history.

Like Mormonism, Utah began territorial life outside the national mainstream. Brigham Young and the Council of Fifty ran a theocratic territorial government. They rebuffed appointed officials, distributed land without legal recognition or title, and treated Indians to the proverbial open hand-mailed fist. They emphasized farming over mining, spent their cash freighting in Saints rather than merchandise, instituted their own monetary system and alphabet, and revealed in their polygamous and cooperative commonwealth. In a divided nation, Utah was a slave territory by choice and Democrat because there was no choice. Republicans reviled the "twin relics of Barbarism"—slavery and polygamy—and Utah had both.

It's surprising that it took a decade for the federal government to stumble to the realization that Mormon Utah was in rebellion. In 1857 James Buchanan sent an army to straighten out Brigham Young and his rabble, but Young deftly sidestepped the knockout blow, welcoming the new governor and army after teaching them the meaning of winter in Wyoming. In the midst of the Civil War, Young professed Utah's commitment to the Constitution, while prayers went up from the tabernacle for the Union's downfall. Republican Abraham Lincoln sent a second army under Colonel Patrick E. Connor to ride herd on what Connor termed a "community of traitors, murderers, fanatics, and whores." From Fort Douglas, Connor fixed his cannons on the Lion House, and Young in turn fixed higher prices on fort provisions. Round One to Brother Brigham, so Connor marched out to slaughter 240 peaceful Shoshones along the Bear River on a cold January day in 1863—the bloodiest of all Indian massacres in the West.

Round Two belonged to Connor, at least in part, for he generated the mining boom that Young so feared, enriching a generation of non-Mormons and ultimately dividing the Mormon economic elite. But his desire to attract
"loyal gentiles" and wrest control of Utah through the ballot box fell short. While the presence of the army and the growing number of non-Mormon miners and merchants might have been a thorn in Young's side, it didn't challenge his basic political control and it ultimately fattened his followers' wallets. It's the same story today. Utahns benefit from the presence of federal lands and military installations and pork barrel water projects even as we resent that presence. We blame the influx of "outsiders" for our "growth" ills even as they enrich our economy and society. And from the looks of the governor and state legislature, this presence hasn't changed the nature of political control.

The story of Utah's desperate struggle for statehood is an old one. Polygamy always takes the spotlight in the telling—righteous men and women facing persecution for following God's law, rather than prosecution by a nation shocked at the sexual deviancy of a territory. But the more important issue was Utah's political naïveté. Nationally, Mormons sided with Democrats, the party of secession, the South, and states' rights, a party without real political power in a Republican-dominated federal system. But even then the Democrats didn't want them. Locally, Utahns divided politics along religious lines, creating the People's and Liberal parties which lacked national affiliation. Politically, Utahns cut themselves adrift in a world where partisan politics was their only hope for protection. To top it off, the cooperative nature of Mormon economic organization in an age of unrestrained capitalism and corporate greed concerned everyone. Key critics included a growing number of enterprising Mormons who desired the luxuries too much retrenchment always elicits. External political pressure, internal dissatisfaction, and corporate economic collapse generated a manifesto, and Utah began its painful delivery into the twentieth century.

In the midst of it, all Brigham Young died, and as Bernard DeVoto so aptly put it, "Pygmies succeeded him." Husband to fifty-five, father to fifty-seven, the practical founder of a church, patriarch to a territory, Young was a commanding figure in western history. He was a man of faith and a man of business, a champion for an ideal and people ridiculed around the world. He was one of the last great orators in a church forged in evangelical revivalism. His was not the lifeless monologue that so permeates religious epistles today. People didn't doze off during his fiery sermons.

Young knew how to laugh at himself and at others, to cajole them to see things his way or get out of the way. He was a bully, profane and earthy, a man who knew a good curse and when and how to use it. "Go to hell and be damned" he told apostates and gold-rushers, Connor and Corrine. Of Territorial Governor Stephen Harding he said, "If you were to fill a sack with cow shit, it would be the best thing you could do for an imitation." And he was probably right. Contemporary practitioners pale in comparison, missing

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1900

SCOFIELD MINE DISASTER

One of underground miners' worst fears was realized on the morning of May 1, 1900 when accumulations of coal dust ignited inside the Winter Quarters Number Four mine near Scofield and caused a massive explosion.

Official tallies left 199 dead, making this the most lethal mining disaster, until that time, in American history. The victims were brought out through ankle-deep dust and their bodies placed in company buildings, the local Mormon chapel, and the schoolhouse. The supply of coffins ran short in Utah and some were sent from as far away as Denver.

The Pleasant Valley Coal Company gave each victim's family $500 and covered all burial costs. One hundred forty-nine of the dead were interred at the Scofield Cemetery. The remainder were sent home for burial.

The Scofield mine disaster prompted calls for greater safety and better treatment for miners.
the humor of their puny profanity. "Oh my stinkin' flippin' heck!" is one of those evocative phrases to be savored for its erudition and "value-positive" quality, but Young would have laughed. In the end we belittle the essence of Brigham Young when we recognize him only as prophet or frontiersman. His complexity mirrors the ambiguities inherent in Utah history and society. Pygmies did succeed him, and Utah has been the poorer for it.

Utah's was a breach birth despite all doctors' efforts and pronouncements. Church leaders divided congregations between national parties to project the appearance of bipartisanship and to assure outsiders they didn't control Utah politics. Ever submissive to church authority, members obeyed after being assured that one could be a Republican and still get into heaven. Polygamous marriages continued despite a second manifesto. Utah bucked tradition by becoming the third state to recognize a woman's right to vote. With leaders such as Emmeline B. Wells and Charlotte Godbe Kirby, Utah women led the fight for national suffrage and equal rights in the 1860s, but in the 1880s they divided along religious lines, sacrificing the vote to prevent Mormon domination. Statehood closed that wound but did not heal it. In 1896 Utahns elected progressive Democrat Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon the first female state senator over her polygamous husband Angus. She fought for a state board of health, nurse training, compulsory education for the deaf and blind, and laws to protect workers' health and safety against a flood tide of conservatism.

But the days of Democrats and progressive legislation and female politicians were numbered. As the church's "New Lights" turned their backs on communalism and polygamy, they joined with non-Mormon entrepreneurs to lead Utahns into a conservative pro-business corporate mentality. After 1905, a coalition of powerful

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**1901**

**BUTCH CASSIDY DISAPPEARS**

With the noose threatening to close around his throat, Utah's most famous outlaw fled to South America. Butch Cassidy, Robin Hood of the fast-disappearing frontier who reputedly never shot anyone, found his legend had grown to such a dimension that life was no longer safe. Dogged by Pinkerton detectives and federal marshals, afraid that his hideouts in Wyoming and Utah no longer provided refuge, Cassidy pulled a last few jobs in Wyoming and Montana to build a nestegg. Then he vanished.

Accompanied by Harry Longabaugh (the Sundance Kid) and Sundance's partner, Ethel Place, Cassidy boarded a steamship in New York City and set sail for Argentina. They settled in a remote mountainous region, where they posed as ranchers until a lack of funds and possibly a need for excitement prompted them to return to robbery.

According to some reports, Butch and Sundance were killed in a shootout with Bolivian police in 1908. Other historians believe the two returned to America and lived under assumed names. Either way, their legend endures.
If you’re on the lookout for a unique environment you can call home, Centennial is the place. Set among more than 4,200 acres of verdant, rolling foothills, this magnificent locale is ideally situated. Centennial is a high quality, master-planned residential community, midway between Salt Lake City and Provo. In every detail Centennial satisfies time-honored needs for beauty, security and value. At the same time, it offers all the comforts and conveniences of 21st century living. [Contact the developer, Centennial Management, Inc., or one of the homebuilders listed below, for more information about locations, prices and models.]
Republicans called the “Federal Bunch”—Apostle/Senator Reed Smoot, church president Joseph F. Smith, Susa Young Gates, and governors John C. Cutler and William Spry—virtually directed Utah politics. Once again, Utah began its descent into one-party politics. A century later, Utah Mormons have to wonder whether they can be Democrats and still get into heaven. Our penchant for one party politics has and will continue to hurt us nationally. Until we internalize the benefits of a balanced system, Utah will continue to be ignored by both parties—we will remain the political Rodney Dangerfield of states.

Statehood found Utah’s economy undergoing fundamental change as well. While Utah society remained rural and agrarian, the Beehive was giving way to the mine and smokestack. Between 1890 and 1910, mining out-paced agriculture as Utah’s leading industry. Smelting and refining followed close behind, bathing Wasatch Front orchards and residents in a killing sulfur dioxide haze. Ah, the smell of progress! Daniel Jackling and the Utah Copper Company began hollowing out Bingham Canyon. Over the hill in that other part of Utah—a region largely ignored in Utah history, tied more directly to Colorado than Salt Lake—Utah Fuel Company and the Denver & Rio Grande Western mucked out millions of tons of low sulfur bituminous coal. Utah seemed hell bent to catch up with industrial America.

While Utah remained largely English in ethnicity and language, a new work force of ethnic miners fired this industrial transition—the next in that procession of immigrants across Utah history. Utah already had its own ethnic enclaves, the result of foreign missionary work and the ultimate segregation of these Mormon Scandinavian, Scotch, Swiss, German, and Pacific Island peoples as they failed to “Americanize” to the “Mormon” norm as rapidly as expected. Their separate communities and persistent ethnic identities belie the myth of the American melting pot and Mormon inclusiveness. Then there were the resident Utes, Navajos, Paiutes, Shoshones, and Goshutes, shuffled off to the margins of Utah land and society. Likewise Ogden’s African-American community, an outgrowth of the railroad, led a rich if segregated existence.

But this new ethnic work force was different. It was non-Mormon, southern and eastern European, industrial. These workers were never intended to fit in or stay although many tried and did. They were brought in to replace unionizing Anglo-American miners and in turn were replaced as they learned the necessity of unionizing to protect their health, safety, and livelihoods. It was a procession of Finns, Italians, Slavs, Greeks, and later Mexicans, men with families who worked and sweated and died in Utah coal and metal mines. The daily body counts read like foreign directories, punctuated by the 246 killed at Scofield one day in 1900, and 172 killed at Castle Gate in 1924. Bingham was like a different country within

![Rainbow Bridge Discovered](special_collection/university_of_utah_library)

**1909**

The 1909 “discovery” of the world’s largest stone span says as much about the importance of recognition in our culture as it does about exploration. Nonnezoshi, as it was known to the Navajo, was already familiar to many of the local Indians when two competing expeditions teamed up to officially discover it. Traveling east over Navajo Mountain from John Wetherill’s trading post at Oljato, the Cummings-Douglass party discovered the bridge on August 14, 1909. For years afterward, Dr. Byron Cummings and William Douglass battled over which of them had spied Rainbow Bridge first.

In 1927, the still-simmering debate was settled by Indian trader-guide John Wetherill, who had also been along on the Cummings-Douglass expedition. Wetherill erected a plaque dedicated to the party’s Paiute guide, Nasjabeagain, “who first guided the white man to Nonnezoshi.” Today, the waters of Lake Powell allow easy access to the the formerly remote site and Rainbow Bridge is a popular tourist attraction.
Union members scattered Joe Hill’s ashes in every other state, true to Hill’s wish not to be caught dead in Utah.

We received a cultural wake-up call in 1926. Ogden-native Bernard DeVoto penned his infamous “Utah” for The American Mercury. His was an attack of the crass consumerism, the pro-business anti-intellectualism, the narrow-minded bigotry, the prohibitionist morality, the inane provincialism of the nation as a whole, but Utah was his icon. Utah, he said, was founded by “staid peasants whose only distinguishing characteristics were their servility to their leaders and their belief in a low-comedy God.” Once Mormons and Gentiles quit fighting, Utah became even more boring. “How am I to suggest the utter mediocrity of life in the new Utah?” DeVoto asked. No artist of any quality remained among these “pious cowherds” once they had the train fare out—“the Mormons would damn him as a loafer and the Gentiles would lynch him as a profiteer.”

1915

DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT

Supported by a commission from Andrew Carnegie, charged with finding dinosaur bones to fill Carnegie’s new museum in Pittsburgh, paleontologist Earl Douglass succeeded beyond anyone’s imagination.

When he began scouring eastern Utah in 1909, Douglass was dealing with an area that had previously yielded few bones. But before long, he had come across the first of his many finds, a row of Aptosaurus vertebrae. During the next 15 years, he shipped 700,000 pounds of bones back East.

But Douglass almost lost many of the specimens to private collectors. Dismayed that others were digging for profit, he attempted to file a mineral lease on the site, only to find that bones were not considered minerals. Stymied, he turned to his benefactor.

Prompted by Carnegie’s considerable personal clout, President Woodrow Wilson created Dinosaur National Monument in 1915. The monument was expanded to its present size of 200,000 acres in 1938.
Joseph Smith. Like everyone else, they “talk only of the Prophet, hogs and Fords.”

While DeVoto won few friends in Utah, he championed the western landscape as its preeminent literary critic, essayist, and historian. Writing in the 1940s, DeVoto pointed out that Utahns and westerners in general were their own worst enemies. They had received countless benefits from the government in terms of reclamation projects and low-cost grazing, timber, and mining rights, yet had been ineffective stewards of the public domain. Still they cried, “Get out and give us more money.” Worst of all, they were being duped into siding with corporate resource raiders against federal control, against their obvious long term best interests. DeVoto found ample evidence all around him; so did some of Utah’s more far-sighted leaders.

By the 1920s, Utah’s range land and watersheds were seriously overgrazed, logged, and mined, but the special interests wanted more, they wanted state control. Between 1930 and 1932, Utah Gov. George H. Dern and Utah State extension director William Peterson were instrumental in turning back national proposals to transfer the public domain to states. They systematically weighed the economic, political, and ecological variables in rejecting this first “sagebrush rebellion,” and were vindicated as Utah and the nation plunged into a decade of drought and depression. In the 1940s the same special interests tried to circumvent federal management of grazing and forest lands, but this time DeVoto waged his own war to save the West from itself. He fought the special interest land grabs and the big dam foolishness that gripped the West, that circumvented John Wesley Powell’s vision of an agrarian democracy, that threatened our national parks and forests, our public treasures.

The issues DeVoto raised about our relationship with the land and federal government continue to be pertinent since we periodically jump on that rebellion bandwagon. The federal government manages sixty-four percent of Utah’s lands, is one of Utah’s largest employers, and returns at least twenty percent more money to the state than we pay in taxes—a per-capita federal tax burden second-lowest in the nation. We complain about federal regulations, but our state’s mismanagement of school trust lands is evidence that local control is not always best. Get out but give us more we whine. Today our governor is the leader of yet another states’ rights rebellion, the fourth reincarnation of a bad idea repackaged in the rhetoric of republicanism. Our representatives espouse wise use yet seek unregulated use for the few. Polls indicate the public disagrees, yet we re-elect the worst of them. The land that draws us together also divides us. Problem is we’ve been there before, weighed the costs, found these ideas legally and economically lacking, and led the fight to stop them. Now we’re following as outsiders try to save the West from itself. Oh Bernard, where are you now?

In the past fifty years, Utah has been transformed along with the West and the rest of the nation. We have benefited from an explosion of federal military installations, industries, and jobs. We housed German and Italian POWs
and Japanese-American internees. Now we house the IRS. We tend eleven national parks and monuments and warehouse the nation’s nerve gas. We dig in a uranium frenzy and caught the fallout from open air testing. We’ve become connected with interstates, fiber optic cables, and satellite dishes, and isolated by censorship, stereotypes, and fear. We have become a conservative stronghold, until recently able to elect a few Democrats for balance. We have never been short on “visionary” leaders in Utah and never lacked for our Stringfellows, Howes, and Waldholtzes. We’ve witnessed hot slick rock and cold fusion, artificial hearts and mammoth lake pumps, community volunteerism and Micron-sized shams.

Above all, Utah has grown. Since 1950 we have tripled in population. While many continue to think and act and legislate as if Utah is a rural agricultural state, we have made the transition from an agrarian to mining to high tech urban society. Less than three percent of our land is agricultural, supplying less than thirteen percent of our subsistence needs on a good day. We are eighty-seven percent urban, the nation’s sixth most urban state. Tourism has become our largest employer, second only to defense-related industries in terms of revenues. As we dream Olympic dreams and “benefit” from federal base closures, that shall pass.

Statistically Utah is the youngest state in the nation with the highest birth rate, most children per capita, highest average household size, and the 48th lowest per-capita personal income, leaving us with the highest per-household tax rate in the nation to fund schools with the highest student to teacher ratio. Despite a seventy percent LDS majority, Utah boasts almost six percent more working mothers than the fifty-eight percent national average, a divorce rate above the national average, one in five children living in poverty, and a reported rape rate exceeding that of New York City. We like to blame “newcomers” for all our ills, but our population explosion is internal. While Utah’s cost of living is ninety-three percent of the national average, our wages are fifteen percent below average. Add to that a ten percent tithing burden for LDS Church members, the use of those funds to support a worldwide church, and an estimated export of $50 million annually by families supporting missionaries outside Utah—a capital leak that weakens our economy. At ninety-three percent “Caucasian,” we are the thirteenth most-white state. And, oh yes, there is that mysterious four boxes of Jell-O annual per-capita consumption, raspberry and lime leading the Beehive State flavor favorites.

On the eve of our statehood centennial, Governor Michael Leavitt proclaimed that “Utah is the most American of states.” Never let reality confuse rhetoric. Utah was founded and grew in isolation from the national mainstream, remaining isolated by censorship, stereotypes, and fear. The “Americanization” came unwillingly at the point of a political bayonet. When Utah joined the national mainstream it was only because that mainstream was widening to accommodate other marginalized groups. Utah didn’t fit in, it was fitted in. But now we wrap ourselves in patriotism and the flag (“do

MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR BROADCAST

The Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir is the featured attraction each week in the longest-running continuous radio network program in the United States. The program, “Music and the Spoken Word,” first aired on KSL radio on July 15, 1929. Now the choir’s 320 voices, which appear live every Sunday morning at Salt Lake City’s Temple Square, are carried by some 500 stations around the world.

The official choir of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir traces its history to the arrival of 85 Welsh converts in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. The choir leader, John Parry, was invited by Brigham Young to perform for the forthcoming general conference. The debut was impressive, and the choir ranks soon swelled.

The choir first toured the East Coast in 1911. Their appearances, though somewhat controversial because of anti-Mormon sentiments, drew crowds of music aficionados and received critical acclaim.
not burn please"), secure in the knowledge that July 4th is just prelude to the real event of Pioneer Day. We’ve never fully recognized the necessity of church-state separation and never fully surrendered the idea that human laws are second to God’s laws. For seventy percent of Utahns that law stops at Temple Square, or maybe up the street where ninety percent of our legislators are LDS, but not in Washington, D.C. In our moral paternalism, we protect the public from its own values and constitutional rights—drinking, gay clubs, abortion, pornography—even past,” wrote Wallace Stegner. “The rock the fathers planted was the future; the crop the sons harvest is the past....Maybe it is lucky that all of man’s immortals are either past or future, and never present.” In this centennial year Stegner’s words still resonate. We look back to honor a past founded for the future, ignoring the dynamism and diversity that frames our present. Likewise we envision the future through our pioneer heritage to ease our fears and to mask our inability to confront the present. Our past looms large, safe, and unified in comparison when it never was to the people living it. In that light, we should embrace our discordant present as both past and future, celebrate what unites and divides us. We may never become a single Utah (that might make us even more boring), but we can be more honest and open in our differences, laugh at ourselves a little more freely, and trust in the land that defines us. 

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"Take it as a general rule all over the Mormon Country that the people who started out a hundred years ago to build a future have built instead a past."

— WALLACE STEGNER

though we resented similar federal treatment in the nineteenth century. Utah is a diverse state, yet too often diversity becomes a question of whether one is Mormon or non-Mormon. Utah remains peculiar; it remains two states one hundred years later. "Take it as a general rule all over the Mormon Country that the people who started out a hundred years ago to build a future have built instead a