

11-80

KS 670-679



High Country News 75¢

Vol. 12 No. 15

Lander, Wyoming

Friday, July 25, 1980

Squeezing the daylights out of Zion



A pilgrim returns to Utah's
Emery County: memories
of apricots, the latterday
shadow of a blind god.

by Don Snow

THE APRICOT TREE

I grew up in a Utah family displaced to Pennsylvania, where the fires of Vulcan reddened night skies and tales of the flood haunted aging women and men.

In the 12 years we lived there, I never once saw New York, never got east of Gettysburg in fact, because our cardinal direction was west. My father saved his vacations until he had enough time for the wild drive home. Then, in our '59 pink and black pushbutton Ambassador with fold-down seats and plastic gyro cupholders, we all but flew to Utah. My sisters maintain to this day that the trips wouldn't have been bad if we'd stopped a few times to pee. But sleeping in the car, resting only long enough to gulp a picnic lunch or gorge the Rambler with gas, we raced home to the place that a peculiar breed of believers call their Zion.

Our part of Zion was where the non-believers live. Carbon County and its biggest town, Price, have long been a den of immigrant iniquity in Utah. Settled by Mormon colonists, but later by foreigners who came in waves when coal mines sent out the call for help, the Price River Valley quickly became one of the state's industrial centers. My Finnish grandfather joined the ranks in 1909. Chinese, Japanese, Italians, Greeks, Serbians, Mexicans and others also came to mingle with the fair-skinned Anglos and Scandinavians who made up the Mormon congregation. For the most part the miners were rough, dark-skinned men with customs so unlike those of the milktoast Saints that local Mormon leaders eventually came to regard them as a scourge on the land. The fear of having daughters defiled by "non-white" immigrants brought the Red Scare and the Ku Klux Klan to Utah in the 1920s.

The Price of 1960, though, was a gentle enough place, with streets almost comically wide and inviting, and a plaster-of-Paris dinosaur guarding the county library downtown. When we finally roared into the little city, it was as if we had reached another country — a sort of family heaven that smelled of tilled earth, lilacs and irrigation ditches.

I grew up in the East believing that Westerners were inherently better people — more honest, closer to the earth, tougher. In the West, a handshake was as good as a contract. Streets were wide because whole towns were generous. Everyone owned a



Utah State Historical Society photo

MORMONS IN UTAH have moved from their early agrarian communalism toward industrial capitalism.



Utah State Historical Society photo

IMMIGRANT MINERS became the most significant political counterweight to Mormonism in Utah.



In the News

Goin' fishing.

The next issue of HCN, No. 16, won't appear until Aug. 22. The staff is taking its annual opportunity to slip off into the woods.

Insecure serpents 6

Crotalus viridis concolor and its slithering, rattling cousins are being driven away by modern-day St. Patricks.

Synfuel divorce 8

ARCO and its partner in developing Colorado oil shale had an "old marriage" according to insiders. Now they're getting a divorce, and Exxon will pay the alimony.

Cabinet habitat 10

The Cabinet Mountains Wilderness area feels the footfall of maybe a dozen

grizzlies — this summer, ASARCO's drillers are treading the same path.

Energy 6

Western Roundup 11

Bulletin Board 13

Opinion 14

Books 16

Afield 16

2-High Country News — July 25, 1980

(continued from page 1)

garden and bottled peaches. Women could shoot and ride horses. The outdoors remained free and unpatrolled.

In Johnstown, Pa., though, the neighborhoods cramped together in a frightening, congested maze. Bad air boiled from the steel mills and every summer the river that had killed hundreds shrank down to a wretched yellow ribbon in a concrete gorge. Outside the rusting town the forests looked pure from a distance, but a Saturday fishing trip revealed the ugly scars gouged by strip miners and indifferent loggers. Broken bottles and spent shot-shells littered the woods. Pennsylvanians appeared to be a people who had abused their land for so long they no longer knew how to care for it.

At age nine, all of this made good sense. After all, at my Mormon grandmother's in Emery County, Utah, I could sit in the backyard apricot tree and eat until I got sick. Life seemed hilariously simple there, and the people appeared almost godlike in their blue-eyed honesty. Our short trips seldom revealed the dark side of that illusion, though stories whispered among our family hinted even to my young ears that all had not been apricots in Zion.

As I grew toward 20 the nasty Pennsylvanians became just people, and the East just another steamrolled patch of industrial America. Its greater corruption seemed to stem more from its advanced age and innately larger carrying capacity than from any traits embedded in its people. And if any place in the West appears gleefully headed down the same weary road, it's Utah, the Beehive State, where the Beehive stands for industry and industry stands for riches, progress, and the greater glory of an apparently blind God.

2

A PROFITABLE PROPHET

At 28, I'm still dumb enough to pour most of my scanty income into one of Henry Ford's bizarre dreams. Like my father, I make a Utah pilgrimage as often as possible to see the desert, the folks, the happy dinosaur in Price that to my dismay recently fell to the whims of the Chamber of Commerce.

On my last trip, racing across Salt Lake City to beat the noonhour rush, I

pass one of the town's dozens of new subdivisions, this one sporting solar collectors on every roof. A billboard leaps out: "We're Squeezing the Daylight Out of Mother Nature!" The double entendre, too priceless to ignore, causes me to nod my head. Little do I know, I'll be nodding for the entire trip.

At the Utah Historical Society, dozens of typewriters buzz like chainsaws in Utah's effort to polish the history of the American Zion. A glance at their work reveals that for the church, economic development has been akin to religious development. In fact, the two are inseparable.

When Brigham Young stumbled to

dig for roots like their indigenous neighbors, the Shoshone. Nevertheless, they stayed and built their Zion.

Unlike the businesslike Mormons of today, Brigham's pioneers were nearly all farmers whose ears still rang with the socialistic sermons of Joseph Smith. An unknowing disciple of social reformer Robert Owens, Smith taught that religious and secular life were not separate matters. The road to heaven passed through the acres of cultivated land. To achieve perfection, as manlike God once said, the Saint must help cleanse the earth of its imperfections. Cleansing consisted of growing good crops, eliminating weeds, and domes-

economy preserved the old ideals of cooperative harmony and polygamy. When they entered the factories, mines, and stores of outsiders, however, the focus of their faith began to change.

Once asked by a reporter if he honestly considered himself a prophet, Brigham replied, "I am of profit to my people." Little did he know how prophetic his words would prove in the 20th century, when the Mormon Church would rank among the 50 largest corporations in the country, efficiently running its multi-million dollar missionary program from a Salt Lake high-rise.

Just as they adapted to the basin's harsh climate, they assimilated the climate of capitalism quicker than an Arab sheik. Forty years after the driving of the golden spike, Mormon leaders sat on the boards of two dozen businesses. Joseph Fielding Smith, the Mormons' sixth prophet, brought the polish of a modern corporation to his fledgling capitalistic followers. While leading the church, he also occupied the president's chair of Utah and Idaho Sugar, Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution, the State Bank of Utah, Zion's Savings Bank and Trust, Consolidated Wagon and Machine, Inland Crystal Salt Company, Beneficial Life Insurance, and other corporations. Smith's name on their mastheads brought prosperity to gentile businessmen, who found in the naturally suspicious Saints a difficult market.

Through the next 70 years, the Mormons followed the national tendencies toward urbanization. The agrarian life that gave them strength and survival has largely been abandoned in favor of professional careers, positions in business, suburban homes in town, and speedboats on their beloved Lake Powell. Instead of giving everything they own for redistribution, modern Mormons give 10 percent, which enters the complicated investments portfolio of an organization that now collects more than \$3 million a day and owns lavish temples around the world.

From their \$34 million World Headquarters that towers above the gothic Salt Lake Temple, the Mormons more or less market their faith. The Church is the fastest growing in the world, with an annual rate of over seven percent. Its overseas rate, spurred by the expansion of the missionary program, hit 250 percent between 1960 and 1972.

The early Mormons were fine farmers but poor industrialists.



the brink of the Great Basin in 1847, he beheld one of the most awesome scenes in all the world — a fierce and forbidding land that Mark Twain would later describe as "the most rocky, wintry, repulsive waste that our country or any other can exhibit." Through the haze of "mountain fever" he picked up in Wyoming, Brigham declared, "This is the place," and beckoned his small expedition of Latter-Day Saints onward, down Emigration Canyon to the edge of the Great Salt Lake.

The congregation had been driven from its native land. At Nauvoo, Illinois, the killing of the Mormons' first "Prophet, Seer and Revelator," Joseph Smith, proved to the Saints that they would never be welcome on American's near frontier. The practice of polygamy, coupled with their peculiar economic system, made them suspect wherever they settled, first in New York, then Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa.

As they entered the Great Basin of northern Utah, the Mormons faced a land of startling severity, where the only recorded plant was the hearty sunflower whose face they found swarming with crickets. To survive they relied on the only resources they had — human labor and ingenuity.

By the end of their first desert year, an inventory found them with less than a pound of bread per person. Many were forced to wear hides for clothing and to

ticating wild land.

Under Smith's guidance, the early Mormons lived communally. Property and tools were consecrated to the church. The bishop's task was to reallocate all property on the basis of families' needs, not on their productivity. The church collected all surpluses to redistribute to the needy and to attract impoverished new members. On the near-Western frontier, the poor, the disenfranchised, the luckless gathered for the eventual odyssey.

In the basin the Mormons found freedom to build an empire based on spiritual principles. They immediately began the massive public works that built Salt Lake, the West's first planned community. Through trial and error, they discovered that only after watering the basin's difficult soil could they till it. That led to the first extensive irrigation projects built by white settlers on the Western frontier.

Brigham's powers as a secular leader were seldom questioned. He literally called forth recruits to settle the territorial outpost, which included parts of Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Nevada and Arizona. On a few days' notice, polygamous families stilled their plows in Salt Lake soil to travel as far as Snowflake, Ariz., or into Wyoming's Star Valley. Often the prophet gave them a particular mission. Some he told to start a cotton industry at St. George,



"I am of profit to my people."

Utah's "Dixie." Others were to mine iron ore at Parowan or coal at Coalville. Most were simply settlers, takers of the frontier and its native people, called "Lamanites" by the Mormons, who believe that the American Indians are one of Israel's Ten Lost Tribes.

Like Joseph Smith, Brigham dreamed of a self-sufficient Zion. But in spite of Utah's abundant resources, the promise of a diversified economy failed repeatedly. Mormons were fine farmers but poor industrialists. Zion's riches would not be fully developed until Eastern capital and expertise came with the railroad in 1869.

Church historians point out that the Mormons initially failed at industry because their motives were off-center. They were social and spiritual reformers, not capitalists. Their agrarian

In spite of the prosperity it has brought to Utah, some Mormons resent the businesslike efficiency of the church, which is maintained by a series of modern-day prophets who are remarkably similar to other corporate executives.

Janet Gordon of Cedar City claims that the influence of big business on the church has made its members super-consumers. "We are an obese people, very consumer-oriented," she explains. According to Gordon, the very spiritual teachings of the Church lead its members toward ownership, consumption and opposition to environmental causes.

She says that in the Mormon mind, the earth as we know it is a temporary state of affairs, soon to be cleansed "in the twinkling of an eye" by the re-



Photo by Don Snow

TEMPLE SQUARE in Salt Lake City, where Mormons fly the flags of a nation they once fought.

July 25, 1980 — High Country News-3

deemer. If industry makes a mess of air and watersheds, that's of little consequence.

At least one other factor makes Mormons poor conservationists. "Our ancestors practically starved to death here," she says. "While everybody in the country once went through a depression, ours was a little different." Gordon believes that the pioneers' progeny have never forgotten the early trials of the desert. Utahns thus attack problems of resource development as though they were problems of survival.

In no other state does a single organization so dominate the minds and lives of the populace. Utahns appear willing to develop almost anything at almost any cost. Even non-members share in the booster atmosphere. If not the Mormons then the energy miners and their perennial lunch-bucket optimism stand as obstacles to the fostering of conservation concerns in Utah's resource policies.

If you ask a Utahn why he welcomes new energy facilities, for instance, he'll tell you first that the country needs them and second that they keep the kids at home.

The billboard back there at Moroni

Motoring past the X-shaped buildings of married student housing, I double-take at a median strip full of green. Not grass. Vegetables. Acres of them, all neat, in a plot provided and watered by the university. Undoubtedly, part of their scanty rent pays for this service that, like the many other services at BYU, comes cheap to the believers. Suddenly proud of my heritage, I forget all about Donny and Marie.

The cucumbers, the zucchinis; the watermelons will end up as pickles; the corn, beans, peas, carrots and okra in jars; and everything will stock the fall-out shelters and pantries where every Mormon young and old squirrels away food for the holocaust. True, they grow their own for a bizarre purpose, but they also grow it to eat, and I am proud of them. They at least do not rely on corporations for everything.

Leaving campus, I pass a gang of pleasant young Indians, probably Navajos, wearing polyester. To most Provoans these kids are Lamanites, descendants of one of Israel's Lost Tribes. As such, they are the primary objects of the church's missionizing efforts. To the Mormons the beliefs of American In-



Utah State Historical Society photo
THE TRAMWAY AT HIAWATHA, around 1940. Loaded cars were lowered by cable to the cleaning plant two miles below the mine mouth. Today the tram stands idle, despite the new boom in Utah's coal fields.

stood. It nestles in the windblown sage that catches snowdrifts big as freight cars. It's the tragedy of Winter Quarters a few miles away, where 200 miners died the violent, horrible death of underground explosion and afterdamp. It's the tragedy of Castle Gate No. 2, where 174 men lost their lives. Like Mormon pioneers who abandoned farm for factory, they believed the powerful bosses, the managers, who told them it was safe to work underground. Or who told them nothing, knowing inwardly that these men had no choice.

A beer and a half later I reach Helper, named because here at the bottom of Price Canyon, helper engines were attached to trains headed north. I think of mustachioed immigrants astonished at Butch Cassidy's payday raids. I think of my grandfather herding sheep in the nearby Emery County prairie, who said that when Butch and his friends came through they always took a lamb

could flow north by rail. The discovery of coking coal at Sunnyside, near Price, boosted Utah's sputtering iron industry — one of the church's dearest dreams for economic development.

With the railroad and the coal came miners, hundreds of them. By 1900, the Denver & Rio Grande Western had claimed most of the valuable coal properties in the county and operated three mines near Price. But almost immediately the company's attitudes toward its employees spurred hatred and unrest.

The Winter Quarters explosion at 10:28 a.m. on May 1, 1900, prompted the first major labor strike in the Utah mines. Among the 200 miners killed in the blast were 64 Finns, 10 of whom belonged to a single family. The mine superintendent and state inspectors agreed that the explosion was "an act of God," and absolved the company, D&RGW's Utah Fuel Company, of all



Our cardinal direction was west.

Estates was right — they are squeezing the daylight out of Mother Nature because Father God, apparently in a Brooks Brothers suit, told them it was the only way to achieve perfection.

PROUD OUTLAW

Running through a blaze of Bonnevile heat near Orem, I see along Interstate 15 two giant symbols of Utah's prosperity. One is the oldest, nastiest mill in the West, U.S. Steel's Geneva Plant, which spews metallic filth all over Utah Lake and the homes of Provo residents. Until lately, when the Environmental Protection Agency came out of its mouse hole and asked Geneva to clean up, the plant has been a gleeful monument to non-regulation, Reagan-style government, and bland indifference to biological diversity. But that's another story.

The other symbol is a billboard plastered with the florid faces of Donny and Marie, those scions of the wholesome life advertised on TV. They look even more constipated in person than on the sign, but that too is another story, one best left untold.

I make a quick pass across the campus at Brigham Young University, where I was a student in 1969.

dians are quaint at best; at worst they are the beliefs, like all others outside Mormon gospel, of the devil. I am no longer proud. The Navajo are vulnerable game for the Mormons' attempts to homogenize all beliefs in the image of their own.

Never mind the Navajo Trail of Beauty, the Hopi Snake and Antelope dances, the ceremonial kiva, the Papago Salt Pilgrimage, the desire to remain poor and live close to the earth. Mormons believe that only they can carry the lamps of culture and truth to the quaintly backward Indians. Everyone deserves a steel mill, a white collar job, a golden plate.

Turning onto U.S. 6, 15 miles south of Provo, I feel good immediately, an outlaw from Carbon County, a direct descendant of robust men and women who challenged the prevailing authority in Utah. And lost.

I follow the winding tracks of the Denver and Rio Grande Western that in 1882 began to carry lifeblood to Salt Lake in the form of coal. Coal that cost hundreds of lives. Coal that came between husbands and wives, fathers and sons, immigrants and their homeland. Atop Soldier Summit, I feel the old tragedy that as a child I never under-

Never mind the Navajo Trail of Beauty, everyone deserves a steel mill, a white collar job, a golden plate.

and always paid the market price for it. I also think of my father, raised an Anglo farmer, laboring among the immigrant miners at nearby Standardville because even as a teenager he could afford to try nothing else. There were never enough sheep, never enough dollars for Saturday night or the grocery store.

THE SWARTHY DIGGERS

While money gathered from Brigham's congregation recruited thousands of fair-skinned immigrants from Great Britain and Scandinavia, other foreigners quietly began to appear on the Utah frontier. They came without church support and were not welcome among the saintly congregation. Yet their mission, too, was important. They came to dig the riches from the Utah mines.

Many of Brigham's pioneers nearly froze to death without firewood in the icy winters of the 1850s, prompting the church president to put out the call for coal. Ambitious Saints responded by uncovering mineable coal east of Salt Lake City, but expensive shipping snagged their efforts.

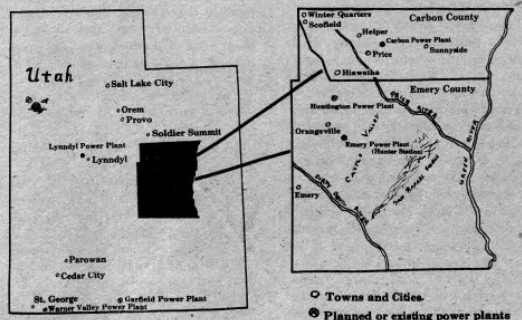
Zion had to wait until 1882 before the high quality coals of Carbon County

guilt. Money and sympathy gifts from nearby mining camps poured into Winter Quarters, but they were not enough to assuage the anger of the survivors, who objected to the policy of blasting without evacuating the mines.

Finns led the first strike in 1901, then played a large part in the bigger strike of 1903, when Carbon County miners organized to demand higher wages, an end to cheating at the weighing scales, and the discontinuance of scrip (company store coupons issued in lieu of pay).

Both early strikes failed, largely due to the church's role in opposing them. With the blessing of Joseph Fielding Smith the company hired armed guards from nearby Mormon villages to suppress the strikers. A church official announced from the pulpit of the Salt Lake Tabernacle that employment in the striking mines was available to any Saint in need of work.

Meanwhile, Utah Fuel appealed to nativistic sentiments in Salt Lake through editorials that portrayed the strikers as "the worst of the foreign element." While the church's support for Utah Fuel Company remained covert, it clearly agreed that unions must be suppressed at all costs. In 1903, that meant the calling of the National Guard to Carbon County and the decla-



4-High Country News — July 25, 1980
ration of martial law in the most radical camps.

A 1922 strike, led by Greeks, brought the Red Scare and the Ku Klux Klan to Zion. Prominent Mormon patriarchs in Price and Helper donned the white robes of racist terror and burned crosses on the hills above town. Irish and Italian Catholics, involved in the strike, answered them with burning circles. It was a nationwide strike, but again the union failed to win recognition in Utah. And again, the companies relied on the National Guard and a public relations campaign to suppress the aims of the strikers.

A 1922 cartoon from the *Price Sun* depicts Utah's mood during the strike. A swarthy miner wearing clothes labeled "Union" grimaces in a barber chair. Flying from his long hair are banners that read "Radicals" and "Violent Strikers." A light-haired Uncle Sam chops off the miner's hair with enormous shears. On the wall next to the mirror hangs a sign that reads, "Notice: If Necessary We Will Shave the Scalp Free of Charge."

After 30 years of bloodshed and bickering, the UMWA came to stay during the most violent and colorful of all the strikes. In 1933 a rival union, the National Miners Union, infiltrated the Utah camps with a message that was unabashedly communistic. NMU organizers were former UMWA leaders who had become disenchanted with the compromising policies of President John L. Lewis. They quickly found support among all nationalities in the Utah camps, but none welcomed them

with more zeal than the South Slavs.

The newest group among Carbon County miners, the Slavs received the worst housing and poorest working conditions of all. In Consumers, National, Sweet, and Latuda, they lived in clapboard shanties euphemistically called "company housing." The NMU caught fire in Serbian camps, and organizers trained hearty Slavic women as well as men in strike tactics. Many a company guard received a thrashing at the hands of mighty Serbian housewives, who shocked local Mormons with their willingness to enter the fray.

Slavic women used one special tactic that no other nationality employed. As a gesture of hostility, they bared their breasts at company guards, and offered them suck "to make humans of them." Mormon guards went running.

Fearing the power of the radical NMU, the companies and newspapers quickly came out in support of the UMWA. In a surprising turn of events, the UMWA miners began to defend the companies against other strikers. They finally came to lick the hand of their persecutors, in exchange for union recognition and better working conditions. The UMWA prevailed, and today, as bumper stickers in Price and Helper proclaim, "Utah Coal Is UMWA Coal." After three decades of strife, the melting pot finally accepted all nationalities in Utah. But a few strikers' children still remember the excitement of 1933.

Esther Rauhala, whose father came from Finland to work the mines, recalls a summer night in 1933 when she went to a dance at Hiawatha School. She

wondered at a barbed wire stockade built at the edge of the playground, where floodlights revealed a dozen men milling around inside. At home after the dance, she discovered her mother crying in the kitchen, and learned that her father Matti was locked in the wire stockade, a prisoner of the company for his role in the day's union meeting. Despite the companies' ugly tactics against the miners, management and labor eventually came to believe in a single creed of coal. Production became the byword, and bosses and miners alike came to use whatever tools were needed to dig more fuel.

Until the mid '60s, Utah led the West in coal production, but the advent of Northern Great Plains strip mining has demolished Utah's corner on the coal market. Today, Zion produces a scanty 9 million tons from underground operations in Carbon and Emery counties. But the Intermountain Power Project at Lynndyl and new facilities in Emery County will more than triple today's production. The Lynndyl plant alone will use 9 million tons a year by 1986.

Utah's miners are gleeful about such prospects. Ironically, years of labor strife taught them to trust first in companies and coal. They will be among the last to challenge Utah's role in solving the energy crisis through addition to bigger and better facilities. Labor might have made Carbon County the center of the state's Democratic Party, but there live the sort of Democrats who firmly believe that more is always better, even if it's more mining in Utah for better power in California.



Photo by Don Snow

A WOODEN HEADSTONE marks the grave of a Winter Quarters miner.

pany also contemplates a synfuels plant south of the generators. And it will be Emery County coal that fires the 9 million ton per year appetite of the Intermountain Power Project.

Resident Brannan Seely is a throwback to the days when truck farms, orchards, and cattle dominated the Emery County economy. He still owns and manages a small orchard tucked neatly along two quick bends at Huntington Creek. Above the irrigated floodplain rise hills and cliffs that receive less than 12 inches of rain a year, and hold what little water they get for only a few days. The country around the

The Mormons assimilated the climate of capitalism quicker than an Arab sheik.



I roll into sleepy Emery County at dusk, pleased to be home near the apricots again. My mind spins like a radial tire as I pay silent homage to the tree — she's still alive, but barely. No fruit again this year.

5

RASPBERRIES AND DUST

The next morning, I wake before daylight to the flashing of strobe lights through the window. I stand and stare south at the ghostly vision of Utah Power and Light's Hunter Station where the single finished unit sends flyash and blasts of the strobe into an early morning sky. Scaffolding rises high along a second stack, still unfinished. The bandaid-buff exterior reminds me of Boise-Cascade homes and double-side trailers.

Today I will search out tales about Utah's newest energy colony, little Emery County where 130 years ago a Saint named Orange Seely set out to make the desert blossom as a rose.

True to Mormon optimism and aspiration, Seely's followers saw castles in the arid cliffs that rise above the canyons. So they called the whole place Castle Valley and settled in a dozen little towns along the upland plain west of the San Rafael. The land is bitterly hot and dry, but with irrigation its famous blue-clay used to grow some of the finest produce in all of Utah.

Today it grows mostly power plants. There are two on line, a new unit under construction, and a third plant on the books. The Intermountain Fuel Com-

canyon is dry, windy and cold all winter, dry, still and blazing hot all summer. But with his gravity-fed sprinkler system, Seely makes rain when he needs it and chases off killer frosts with a mist of atomized creek.

I visit the Seelys with two intentions: to buy a flat of their raspberries and to wheedle a little information about their new neighbor, Huntington the power plant.

Zelda Seely greets me at the garage door. She wears a bonnet and ruby-stained gloves. She carries a clipboard stuffed with grubby papers. We exchange pleasantries, then she offers me an apricot picked just minutes ago. I taste it, flying back 20 years to my grandma's tree.

I ask about the raspberries, and she thumbs through three pages of names carefully listed on the clipboard. "These are all raspberry canners," she says. "Every one of them wants at least two flats. We don't have enough for half of 'em."

I am ashamed of my out-of-state license plates, which I know she saw immediately. But I remember my Carbon County birthright and my blond hair.

"Well," I reply, "looks like you got too many customers already. My mother — she lives over at Orangeville — told me you raise the sweetest berries in Utah. I was just hoping I could take a taste up to my friends in Montana, show 'em what real raspberries taste like."

She stares at me hard and blinks. In the long moment of silence, I wonder if I missed any spots shaving. Then she



Utah State Historical Society photo

A BLACK DAY in Utah's mining history. This Finn family, the Luomas, lost 10 sons in the Winter Quarters disaster.



Utah State Historical Society photo

MAY 1, 1900, workers remove a body from the Winter Quarters mine, where 200 men died in the worst U.S. mining disaster to date.

says, "Well, I s'pose I could let you have a box. After all, you're here now and eager to buy. Some of these on my list, they might of moved away by now."

While we transfer the pint boxes of berries into a cardboard crate, I ask about the power plant. "You have any trouble with flyash from the plant?" I wonder aloud. She squints at me, probably wondering what in the hell kind of question that is.

"I don't know if it's ash, or road dust or what," she says, "but we got loads of aphids on the fruit these last two years."

"Is road dust really a big problem?"

"Well, hasn't been so bad since the suit, but still there's more traffic up this road than ever, 10 times as much."

"Suit?" I ask, then realize again that I'm reminding her I'm from somewhere else. She studies my face.

"Yes, suit. We had to sue 'em a couple years back when they were building it. Their road machines out back here was throwing dust and sand all over the trees. We almost lost everything."

I ask more questions but finally see that we're done discussing the suit. As for the plant itself, she is noncommittal. They don't know its effects on their trees and berries, although the "experimental farmers" want to study the orchard soon.

They do know it's caused great changes in their community, but she seems unconcerned, as if changes are always welcome. She does volunteer that "it's a little bothersome seeing so many new folks at church, then they're gone."

I ask her what she thinks about living downwind from a major power plant, and she replies cryptically, "Well, son, without industry we'd all be dead." I immediately think of the beehives on the gates at Brigham Young University.

The "experimental farmers" are just finishing lunch when I arrive. I sit in the air-conditioned, carpeted living room of a Boise-Cascade home erected for the farm manager and his family. This year's manager is Les Young, an employee of Utah Power and Light's Research and Development Division.

I ask about the Seely orchard. Young says there's no chance of an infestation caused by flyash, especially since the Huntington Station is a model for air quality control.

"They're scrubbing for ghosts and shadows," he says. "The plant emits almost no sulfur, 'cause there's none in the coal," he explains. "Flyash gets trapped in the lectrostatic pre-

cipitators."

"All of it?"

"Well, prit' near," he assures me, then changes the subject. "You know that the air here is better than when the pioneers came?"

"How's that?"

"It's better because irrigation settled lots of the old dust," he explains. "Besides, with all of 'em using lectric heat now, there's no more coal smoke and wood ash in the valley. This power plant actually cleaned up the air. You ought to go up and see it."

I think of security guards, chain-link fences, my out-of-state car, and the spots I missed shaving. Maybe. But one more question first.

"What about upheaval in the community?"

"Sure, these sleepy little people got upset when UP&L came," Young says. "Lots of 'em didn't want the power plant, some still don't. But most of 'em came around when they saw the kind of jobs and money it brought. The kids don't leave home so much like they used to," he says with a grin.

Right. Again it's the kids. Instead of Tonka trucks, the kids will soon be playing with scale models of coal-fired power plants and nuclear energy centers.

I fire up a cigar and a beer, hoping to make a good impression at the power plant gate.

The hardhatted woman at the blockade tells me I need to find an engineer

Carbon County's Democrats believe that more is always better, even if it's more mining in Utah for better power in California.

to show me the scrubbers. "You won't have any trouble in there," she says. "They don't have a damn thing to do anyway."

Only two spots in the parking lot are marked "Visitor." They don't get many of us. Who'd want to visit a power plant, anyway? Overbearing stinky thing, like a politician with too big a cigar. Like me. Well, I think, if we can't kiss we can at least swap smoke.

Inside, one of the famous kids stops typing — maybe 26 words a minute — and asks what I want.

"I'm the one who wants to see the scrubber. The gate called in a minute ago."

She looks puzzled, as if she's never heard of the gate, then scurries off to find an engineer. While she's gone, I muse: my cover is good; I'm inside. God,

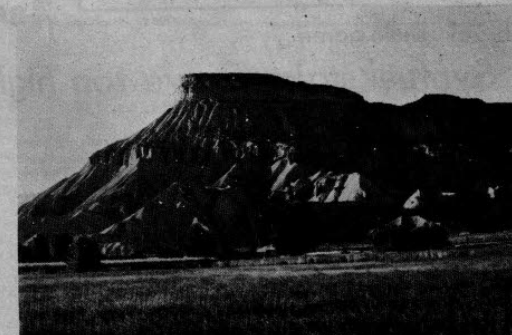


Photo by Don Snow

ONE OF CASTLE VALLEY'S CASTLES looms above a field of ripe alfalfa. Emery County, once a garden on the Mormon frontier, today offers land and water to Utah Power and Light Company.

I'm a sly fox, a wren, a forest baboon who just got the jump on Jane Goodall.

She returns and begins dialing numbers. No one answers.

Meanwhile, I notice a workman on his knees behind her desk. He's heavy, grizzled, bearded, wearing a dusty hard hat — "hard-boiled hat," my Aunt Hannah calls them — and an enormous walkie-talkie on his belt. He speaks on the phone to someone in Kemmerer, Wyo.

The fellow on the phone looks like he

strobes flashing like a junior high dance, stands heavily posted, guarded, impenetrable. I turn back toward Orangeville, heavy-hearted, a little drunk, ready to eat.

On inspiration, I head for Uncle Ray's, remembering his long brown hands, his garden, the way he holds a pair of tomatoes like delicate little children. Maybe he's still sane. I point the iron box in the direction of his spinach patch, and drive.

6

UNCLE RAY

Like all stories about development, this one goes on forever. Uncle Ray was sane when I found him. He even shouted a few halting tales about hauling apples from Orangeville to Salt Lake on wagons that lodged in mud. After 70 years of kneading blue clay, his hands are still brown and firm as wood, his faith in the Mormon gospel still unwavering.

He's the sort of homespun Mormon who kept his agrarian ideals while the church authorities became administrators. But in Utah, he represents the vast minority. And he is old.

Like the soiled East of my boyhood, Zion carries the seeds of becoming another of industry's Disneyland. Ironically, the state is the second most arid in the country and in my humble estimation the most painfully beautiful place in the world.

Its salvation could come through a sudden resurgence of agrarian ideals, but in the current world of church and market economics, that's far from likely. The fruit will continue rotting on the trees, the farms will dry up, the coal will roll from the broken earth and writhe its way to power plants from here to kingdom come. Like everyone else in this democratic land, the Mormons will eventually get what they always wanted — their own industrial empire.

I suppose if I'm ever to revel under an apricot tree again, it will have to be my own. Trouble is, I'm not sure where it will be.

Don Snow, who lives in Missoula, Mont., is a direct descendant of the men and women who challenged the prevailing authority in Utah — and lost.

Research for this article was paid for by the HCN Research Fund.



Photo by Don Snow

THE HUNTINGTON POWER PLANT was the first of Emery County's coal-fired generators. A gasification plant is also in the works.