



WHAT (WE THINK) HAPPENED

To begin with, the Cache Valley would become a geological and climatic phenomenon.

It would be a valley to die for.

Back in Triassic times, about 250 million years ago, North America moved west, bumping up against the floor of the Pacific Ocean. The continental plate crumbled along its western edge, and the oceanic crust began to slide down into the hot mantle of the earth. The compressed western edge of the continent crammed into the fractures we call thrust faults, while the oceanic floor, jammed underneath, served to raise a welt, to elevate the continent further.

Meanwhile, heat was building. Steam and molten basalt rose from the sinking oceanic plate, melting granite magma. The raised welt was weakened, until it slid toward the east, creating the Rocky Mountains. Later, two microcontinents would join to form the Cascades and British Columbia. Millions of years of volcanic action followed, and volcanic activity continued to develop eastward as the continent drifted west over this new oceanic trench.

Lava blanketed the bed of the Columbia Plateau, in what we now call southeastern Oregon. Meanwhile, the basin and range areas of the Rockies began to develop southward. Seismic activity suggests that these north-pointing faults, these chips out of the mountains, are still expanding the valleys, pulling the mountains apart as the whole system moves east at the same rate as does the volcanic hotspot that formed Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park. This hotspot, and the ongoing basin and range faulting processes, have created hot springs in the southeastern Idaho region, some of them carbonated.

The “basin” of this area formed when the Cascade Mountains rose to block the drainage of water west to the Pacific.

An oddly tropical climate may also have been caused by the Columbia Plateau’s meteorite. The Ice Ages that followed that period brought still more precipitation to the region, with land near the ice sheets receiving generous moisture. Streams and rivers began to flow, and huge interior lakes formed in what is now Nevada and Utah, to drain these streams. Until about 15,000 years ago, near the end of what geologists call the Pleistocene Epoch, Lake Bonneville covered much of northwestern Utah and a good portion of southeastern Idaho. This inland sea, which in some places was nearly 1,000-feet deep, had no outlet, so the water backed up in pools and bays around the hills of the Wasatch Range.

What we now call the Cache Valley, in southeastern Idaho, was once the floor of the northernmost and easternmost bay, and the recipient of rich sediment.

When its walls could no longer hold these great waters, the Bonneville basin overflowed, sending a massive torrent of water crashing through the weak spot we now call Red Rock Pass. The spill water cascaded along Marsh Creek, into the Portneuf River, and then (north and west of present-day Pocatello) into the Snake River, scrubbing out the canyon walls we still see there, and dumping, among other items, several massive basalt boulders we now call *Massacre Rocks*. The floodwater crashed west, creating the Columbia River Gorge.

Once the Cache Valley had been drained empty, the Bear River found its oddly circuitous course: north from Utah into Wyoming; then west into Idaho’s towns of Montpelier and Soda Springs (where it is damned at the Alexander Reservoir); passing Bear Lake; then south to Preston, Idaho; then back into Utah, passing Tremonton; ultimately spilling into the Great Salt Lake.

Salt Lake is what’s left of Lake Bonneville, and two ancient water levels can be perceived in the “bathtub rings” on the mountains surrounding Salt Lake. The higher ring is the sea level at the time of the flood; the one 300 feet below that is the new sea level, created a few weeks later when water levels stabilized. About seven thousand years after the flood, a dry period reduced the water to contemporary levels, causing dozens of other less visible rings. The two major bathtub rings are actually benchlands, sandy deposits created by the ancient shores of Lake Bonneville, complete with still visible dunes and “beaches.”

Stand on the benchlands east of Salt Lake City and look down into town, and you're looking at an empty ocean floor. A dead sea.

The Bonneville Flood occurred roughly simultaneously with the last Ice Age fifteen thousand years ago. Continental ice sheets enabled a migration, across the Bering Strait, of "Pleistocene mammals," and—some say—the northern Asians who hunted them. The giant elephants, mammoths, and bison, and their predators crossed from Siberia to Alaska; then, to avoid the encroaching ice fields, traveled east and south. The peoples of southern Idaho arrived about fourteen thousand years ago, fishing the abundant waters, and hunting the supersized animals. Some scientists theorize that, because these peoples entered North America via the frigid north, the parasites and microbes that cause disease may not have survived the journey. Consequently, millennia later, the immune systems of the descendants of these hyper-healthy voyagers may have been more vulnerable to disease imported from Europe.

Eight thousand years ago, the climate began to dry, and the rivers and streams began to recede along with the great lake. Of the many valleys carved into southeastern Idaho and northeastern Utah by faults and water, the Cache Valley was the lushest. It was green and, compared to other regions, rainy; and it boasted hot springs that could warm people in winter. Ample buffalo and other large game grazed nearby.

The people who shared the bounties of this prized valley, while other valleys dried into desert, were lucky people indeed.

An immediate difficulty for European American anthropologists studying Native American history is the question of who was where when. It is not the only way to organize the history of this region, but we European Americans tend to see history that way, perhaps because our society is organized around private property, and around the boundaries that must perforce exist in order to maintain private property. This presupposition makes for a cumbersome discussion of what was.

Actually, native groups were divided by geographical and climatic circumstances, which circumstances affected food supply. Geographical overlap of habitat "boundaries" was inevitable. Two or more groups might utilize an area or a food supply, sometimes happily, sometimes not. And power shifts caused permeable boundaries, as well; according to Merle W. Wells, the mid-eighteenth century saw

Shoshone domination of a vast area of the Great Plains, this because the Shoshone's southwestern relatives helped them obtain and adapt to the horse more quickly. But a smallpox outbreak in 1781 curtailed this power just as their Plains neighbors, the Blackfeet, obtained firearms from the French. By the time Lewis and Clark visited Sakakawea, who was a Lemhi Shoshone, Shoshone boundaries had retreated west toward the Rockies.

Cultural anthropologists have found it easier, then, to locate on a map the placement of language stocks and families—distinct languages that could be mutually understood. The Shoshone language is part of the Numic family, which is part of the Utaztecan stock. Prior to European invasion, the Utaztecan language stock extended from (what we now call) western Wyoming to western Oregon; from western Kansas to eastern California; from northern Oregon and north-central Idaho to central Mexico. Not all of these inhabitants spoke in the exact same way; but, for instance, the Bannock Indians, who now share the Fort Hall Reservation with the Northern Shoshone, speak a dialect closely related to Northern Paiute. Bannock and Paiute are both of the Paviotso language, which is also part of the Numic family. Thus, the Bannock and the Northern Shoshone could communicate with one another, and often shared resources in southeastern Idaho—and shared the work of resisting the white emigrant invasion. On the other hand, the Nez Percé peoples of northern and western Idaho speak a language that is part of the Penutian stock. Anthropologist Deward E. Walker, Jr. points out that the difference between the Penutian and Utaztecan stocks can be roughly compared to the differences between the Sino-Tibetan and Indo-European stocks in the Old World. Which is to say, they were unable to communicate easily.

Such vast differences in linguistic practice are the result, Walker says, of thousands of years of separate developmental paths caused by geology, climate, and other factors. These linguistic differences might explain the fact that while the Shoshone and Nez Percé shared some lifeways and resources, they did not unite to resist the invasion by Europeans of “Idaho,” but instead responded separately, and therefore, possibly, less effectively. But how did they share resources, given the language differences? Walker reports that native peoples were able to speak several languages. Children were sometimes exchanged so that they could learn various languages, and Chinook Jargon, a lingua franca, developed in the Northwest, so as to enable commerce. Further, and as popularly portrayed in old “Western”

movies, an extensive sign language existed between nations. Natives responded to new European languages similarly. When the French arrived, native inhabitants of northern Idaho often learned French; French loan words appear in the Kutenai, Kalispel, Coeur d'Alene, and Nez Percé languages.

Spanish loan words are present in the languages spoken in southern Idaho because their shared Numic language family made for a cousinlike relationship between the Shoshone and the Ute, the Paiute, the Gosiute, and the Comanche. The Comanche gained access to Spanish resources after New Mexico was colonized in 1598; the horse, brought to the Western Hemisphere by the Spanish, quickly traveled north, on a trade route of shared languages.

And so, in the beginning, there was the shifting of tectonic plates. But there was also the word.

Since geology and climate defined food supply, they also affected tribal organization. The Shoshone, a Great Basin culture, organized itself into small bands led by the male members of the bands; the social practices of the bands differed depending on the resources to be found where they were located. Because the Great Basin is primarily a high-mountain desert area, bands frequently moved between various food and water sources, traveling to higher elevations in summer and lower elevations in winter, a nomadic practice that made the Shoshone one of the most ecologically efficient of the North American peoples, and perhaps, therefore, the most vulnerable to invasion, since they needed a vast habitat to sustain this efficiency. Staple foods included pine nuts and grass seeds; other foods included roots, cacti, insects, small game, and occasionally large game, including buffalo. Desert Shoshone interacted typically only with their closest neighbors, preferring, Walker says, a democratic, pacifist response, rather than war. Religious practice was also linked to the tenuousness of survival, with seasonal rituals intended to increase food supplies and individual vision quests intended to locate a tutelary spirit.

But northern Shoshone groups, living in the greener areas of southern Idaho, were, by Great Basin standards, rather wealthy. Those along the Snake River utilized the salmon runs and had access to game, birds, and edible plants. Northern bands were larger and several bands often united to consolidate power and resources. By the early eighteenth century the northern and eastern Shoshone were rich in horses, which sparked a cultural “efflorescence,” as anthropologists

call the explosion of cultural change and adaptation that occurs when two cultures meet. The horse, attained from the Spanish, did little for western Shoshone groups who lived on land too dry to sustain a horse's grazing needs. But in the north and the east, the migratory cycle could expand even farther on horseback, to as much as 1,200 miles per year; and band members did not have to move as often to obtain food, since food could be brought back to camp. Thus, meat became more frequent in the northern and eastern Shoshone diet.

The horse also meant that class differences began to develop according to horse ownership, and that the bison may have been hunted, as some academics believe, to near extinction in some areas. Some estimate that by the time of European American invasion, there were one or two horses per person, in a region whose population density was about one or two people per 100 square miles—a significant impact on that region's fragile, arid ecosystem.

Increasing game scarcity may have contributed to incursions farther and farther east into the Plains, in search of more bison, heightening contact—and hostilities—with the Plains peoples. Contact resulted in the adaptation of Plains war practices, such as counting coup—in which one warrior would claim conquest by touching (thus humiliating) an opponent, and both would ride off to fight another day—and the elevation of leaders based on successes at war. And, with the horse, the Spanish practice of scalping traveled from Mexico to the Basin and the Plains peoples. French trappers were with the Plains peoples in 1742 when they first encountered the Shoshone, known to the Plains peoples as the Snakes, possibly because the Shoshone painted snakes on sticks to frighten their Plains enemies. The Snake River was thus (mis)named for them in 1812. *Shoshone* is their word for themselves, and translates to “The People.”

Most of southeastern Idaho received about 15 inches of rain per year, but the Cache Valley, shared by several groups, including the Northwestern Shoshoni, was the recipient of perhaps 8 more inches annually, making the area particularly valued for its rich game and vegetation. And those hot springs were especially appealing in winter.

(*Shoshoni* is the spelling the Northwestern band uses to refer specifically to themselves. *Shoshone* refers to the related groups sharing the Numic language.)

The foods of preinvasion Shoshone groups were diverse, with nutritional values often much higher than contemporary foods.

According to Walker, seeds may have come from over one hundred plants, including wild wheat and oats. Meat could be had from groundhog, jackrabbit, cottontail, porcupine, prairie dog, rodents, and badger. Merle W. Wells reports that communal rabbit and sage hen drives were often organized, as were antelope drives. Bird eggs were also used at times, as were grasshoppers, crickets, ants, and larvae. In southeastern Idaho, groups with horses relied less on small game and, using tools made of bone, dug camas root, wild carrot, and potato. These roots were vastly more nutritious than today's domesticated carrots and potatoes. Deer, mountain sheep, and bear were also hunted. Some Shoshone groups organized buffalo jumps, in which buffalo were herded toward cliffs over which they tumbled to their deaths.

Food gathering defined the work of seasons—and gender roles—but the research of anthropologist Martha C. Knack suggests that while labor was divided between men and women, the work of both was equally valued, minimizing sexism. Women labored through spring, summer, and early fall to gather berries, seeds, nuts, roots, and insects. Men assisted in the important pine nut harvest. Harvesting tools, such as seed beaters, were manufactured by women from basketry materials such as grasses; seeds were transported in conical baskets. Sagebrush was also woven to make containers for foods that were stone-boiled in baskets covered with rawhide. Seeds were pounded and roasted in basket trays; berries were mashed and sun-dried in patties; roots were baked in earth ovens and formed into sun-dried loaves; meat was either broiled on an open fire or sun-dried. For the men, spring brought the game hunt; boys tended the horse herds. Women assisted in hunting by setting traps for small game. Preparation for winter was of primary concern in late fall, when meat would be drained and cached, or stored, in dry, protected spots in areas—such as the Cache Valley—where the people intended to spend the winter. Winter was typically a time free from food gathering; occasionally bands would gather to share supplies and religious rituals. During this period, women manufactured food containers and harvest equipment.

Summer was the season of intertribal trading. According to Wells, the Shoshone played an important role in hosting one of three major summer festivals; others were at the Mandan villages on the Missouri River in North Dakota, and at the Cascades and the Dalles settlements on the Columbia River in Oregon. Available for barter were

Nez Percé and Walla Walla horses, Pacific coast seashells brought by Umatilla and Cayuse intermediaries, Shoshone buffalo hides and meat, and cedar tepee poles brought by Cheyenne and Arapaho bands. The Crow came seeking wives, Wells says, making the festival a marriage market as well as a commerce fair.

Groups tended to be identified by their dominant food source: for example, mountain sheep eaters, squirrel eaters, sagebrush eaters, camas eaters, and buffalo eaters. This practice may have contributed to the European American habit of denigrating some of the poorer Shoshone groups, who lived in the Nevada and California deserts, as “Diggers.”

Northern Shoshone peoples lived in conical grass huts made of thatched grass or bark, until extensive contact with the Plains peoples resulted in a transition to lodges made of skins. Sunbreaks and windbreaks made of local vegetation, such as willow or sage, were common means of extending shelter beyond the lodge. Sweat lodges and menstrual huts were commonplace.

In prehorse times, women wore only sagebrush dresses and men wore only leggings and breechcloths. But Walker reports that the eighteenth century found the horse-rich Shoshone-Bannock groups outfitted in the buckskin dress common to the Plains groups. A long, fringed shirt was made for men from the skin of deer, antelope, or bighorn sheep; and fringed leggings were at times decorated with scalps. Men wore fur caps. Women decorated dresses made with deer, antelope, or bighorn hides, using porcupine quills for ornaments, and making a girdle of dressed leather; their leggings were shorter; and they wore basketry caps. Both wore robes from the skins of bison, antelope, deer, or bighorn sheep. Fur-lined moccasins were sometimes stuffed with sagebrush bark.

Before the horse, northern Shoshone groups were organized in patrilineal bands; that is, the bride moved in with her husband's family after marriage. Democratic leadership was provided by experienced male family heads. The horse resulted in larger bands and a more specialized leadership, Walker says, although most people continued to spend most of their lives with the three-generation grouping of their families. Leaders were elected from councils comprised of male family heads and prominent warriors, and retained their office only as long as they retained the favor of their people. Their leadership resulted in orderly social organization, but was not nearly as sta-

ble as the leadership of the Plains groups. Leadership was somewhat hereditary, but a leader's authority varied from band to band with the willingness of the people to be led by that leader; typically, Shoshone band leaders acted only as advised by their councils. People unhappy with their leaders often simply, and freely, switched bands.

But a leader's authority was not questioned during the hunt, and as bison hunts extended into Blackfeet and Crow territories, warrior societies developed in support of specific leaders. Membership was based on heredity and feats of bravery. Among the leaders, there was little hierarchy; each thought of the others as equal. But a caste system deepened primarily around the horse and around leadership: an upper class of leaders and horse owners, a middle class, and a small underclass of slaves obtained through trading or raids.

According to Wells, the notion of "chief" was one imposed by European invaders, who often identified, or even presumed to appoint, the chief with whom they preferred to deal. Followers were typically unimpressed by these appointments.

Walker reports that during pregnancy, a woman's diet was supervised by elder female relatives, limiting food primarily to roots, and beverages primarily to heated water. This kept the fetus from growing too large to deliver easily. She took care not to violate taboos. At the time of birth the mother was relocated to a special house where she was tended by midwives, who had special powers, as well as numerous female relatives who employed herbs, prayer, and manipulation to assist her. The baby's father sometimes bathed and fasted from the time of birth till the loss of the umbilical cord, which would be buried with a prayer for the child. A new mother would remain in isolation for several weeks.

A new baby spent the first year of its life in a cradle board, carried on its mother's back or attached to her saddle; after that year the mother carried the infant on her back in a fur for another year; at age two the child was weaned. Fathers were rarely involved in caring for the baby through infancy. Sometime during infancy, the child would be named, without ceremony, and might gain a nickname later. When the child began to walk, it was cared for by siblings, cousins who were addressed as Father and Mother, and especially the grandparents—all of whom rarely resorted to spanking the child for fear of breaking its spirit. In fact, Walker reports, if a boy child were to strike his father, it would be taken as a sign of his future bravery. Children

were often questioned about their dreams, since dreams were thought to indicate what a child would become. Wells suggests that, because children were raised primarily by their grandparents, old ways remained intact, making Shoshone culture resistant to change.

Girls had a brief adolescence. At the first sign of puberty, they were ushered to a special house and instructed for days on matters of marriage and family life by elder women. During this period a girl was not to consume meat, but only roots, and preferably only water. Her behavior throughout this time was carefully controlled, since it was thought that that would determine her future personality. At the end of this period, she donned new clothes and emerged to confront her courtship period. She would be married soon after.

Boys had a more gradual period of adolescence, during which they would become increasingly involved in hunting with older men and with their peers. There might be a ceremony at the time of a boy's first game kill, and eventually he would join raids into the Great Plains. If he did well, he might join a warrior society, marrying at about age twenty.

A marriage might have been arranged in infancy, or later; but elopements were also common. Adult supervision of courtship was minimal at formal dances, and premarital sex was not forbidden. A boy might play a flute outside a girl's lodge, and she might come out to join him if she liked. He might announce his choice to his family, who would ask an older relative to negotiate a sort of dowry; or, less frequently, the girl's family might initiate the contract. The groom's family, Walker says, would present the bride's father with a gift of horses if both families were satisfied that the relative wealth of each was acceptable. At the time of the ceremony, the bride's family would reciprocate the gift.

Marriage was permitted between first cousins; the distinction between cousins and siblings was faint, with the name "brother" often used for both. Polyandry, the marriage of a woman to more than one man, was practiced at times by brothers. Both of these practices declined when the introduction of the horse made travel and search for other partners easier. Polygyny, the marriage of a man to several wives, may have increased after the introduction of the horse, perhaps due, Walker surmises, to the practice of slave trading. Mature men, rich in horses, used their wealth at times to gather several wives, forcing younger men to partner with very young girls, or women captured from other native groups. The caste system also motivated

younger men to capture as many horses as possible from other peoples, by way of increasing wealth and marriage possibilities—and it also motivated younger men to abduct married women. The latter was less acceptable, but the couple faced the choice of living in exile, or making a settlement of horses sufficient to appease the insulted husband. Divorce, according to Walker, was easy to obtain, but he does not report whether women were permitted to initiate a separation. Levirate, or the practice of compelling a widow to marry her deceased husband's brother, was also practiced, since the life expectancy of men involved in hunts and war was short. A man might find himself, late in a long life, married to all of his brothers' wives.

But remarriage would occur only after the required yearlong mourning period that might involve the slashing of legs and the cutting of hair. It was not permissible to speak the name of the dead. Family and friends helped the spouse bathe and dress the deceased in his best, tying him in a robe. Usually the corpse was buried at a nearby spot, the head reaching to the west. Rituals were performed by shamans to protect the survivors from the ghost. Then a feast was shared and the deceased's property was distributed.

Walker explains that Shoshone religious practice is similar to that of other Native American groups, with myths designed to support the themes of "immanent justice, bravery, generosity, and repression of emotion. They also emphasize individual autonomy and resistance to centralized authority as well as dependence on supernatural power which was thought to determine one's fate" (158).

Members of the natural world had souls of their own, and people were thought to be part of a vast community of beings that included all of nature. Flora, fauna, birds, fish, stars—any of these could define a person's destiny, and often appeared in visions and in communication with shamans. Vision quests in isolated areas, such as mountaintops, were conducted by children after years of parental instruction. Children hoped to find the appropriate tutelary spirit and attendant personal power, which might also be located by observing a person's abilities and character. The quests involved fasting, exercise, cold baths, and vigil. If a vision did not appear, the quest would be made again. Results of visions were not shared with the band for fear of weakening the power of the vision. Symbols of the power might be carried in a bag, and rituals might later be performed to strengthen the power. If a person abused his power or spirit, bad

things could happen, including death. But a soul was judged more by a person's observance of rituals than by how a person lived; an individual was punished on earth for their behavior, and for the offense of spirits or loss of supernatural power. At death, elaborate steps were taken to be sure that the soul reached the afterworld, which was construed as a continuation of the earthly world.

Walker notes that ritual and political authority were thought to be the same. A politically skilled person was considered to have strong supernatural powers. Hence, religious ritual was an affirmation of political authority, and reinforced loyalty to the band. Ceremonial dancing was a key expression of religious and social values. The most important dance was the circle dance, performed in the spring as a grass dance. Songs accompanied the drums and the dance, which inaugurated hunting season. A rabbit dance, when men dressed as rabbits and performed individually, excluded women; women of some Shoshone groups performed a scalp dance, dressing with eagle feathers or beaded costumes and dancing around a pole decorated most likely with the scalps of Nez Percé or Blackfeet. The ghost dance, designed to rid the country of whites, reached the Shoshone in 1889; and in the twentieth century, some groups of Shoshone adopted the Plains practice of war dancing, as well as sun dancing, another ritual that excluded women until the World War II era.

As Knack and others have observed, many natives of North America defined "individual" in the context of the community. Personal relationships were not defined hierarchically, although some people had more influence on the community than others did. Personhood was gender-free in many nations. The individual was not seen in opposition to society, but rather in the service of society, with full recognition of the necessity of interdependence for community—and thus individual—survival.

Further, natives of North America typically had two notions of racial category: us, and all others. "Us" can include anyone who is a friend. "All others" can include unfriendly natives of other nations, or Europeans. In encountering an unknown Other, the Shoshone typically responded as treated. Unless they or their resources were threatened, they would tolerate this new presence and share resources, often, as noted, adapting the more useful lifeways of the new presence.

Lewis and Clark met the Lemhi Shoshone in 1805; from 1810 on, northern bands of Shoshone consistently encountered Europeans,

beginning with fur trappers. For the most part, the populations of Shoshone and Scots and French-Canadian trappers blended without too much trouble, with many of the men taking wives and building families and trade relationships. Some Shoshone groups joined the hunt for beaver skins, which they traded for beads, blankets, needles, iron tools, guns and ammunition, and perhaps alcohol; Brigham D. Madsen in his book *The Shoshone Frontier and the Bear River Massacre* points out that this period can be described as a time of wealth and friendship among the “us” (Shoshone) and the “others” (all other native peoples, and the various European groups).

But mountain men held their rendezvous—trade festivals—in the Cache Valley and many insisted on wintering there, which meant that the Northwestern Shoshoni suffered the earliest and most sustained cultural impact of the Europeans. Tensions ran high, and in 1832 a fight broke out at the rendezvous at Pierre’s Hole when an Iroquois member of a white trapping party incited a fight between the Nez Percé and the Gros Ventre. Beaver were almost trapped out by then anyway, but nonetheless, Captain B. L. E. Bonneville built a post near the Lemhi Shoshone in western Idaho that year; and in 1834 Nathaniel J. Wyeth started Fort Hall, just north of present-day Pocatello, unwittingly providing a handy supply stop for future European emigration. By 1840 most mountain men could no longer support themselves, and some began to work as guides for the earliest white emigration parties. The Shoshone returned to big-game hunting to subsist and to trade with the slowly increasing numbers of emigrants, who passed through the Fort Hall area each summer with little thought of staying, accustomed as easterners were to pastures greener than the mosquito-ridden desert of southeastern Idaho.

This mutual tolerance between the Shoshone and the immigrants was not to last. George Stewart has estimated that in 1849, 22,500 people and 60,000 animals crossed the country on their way to California; by 1857, the total would climb to 165,000 people and 1 million animals. George Fuller’s count for travel to Oregon between 1842 and 1852 is 18,287 people and 50,000 animals. Madsen adds that the discovery of gold in Montana led to the opening of the Montana Trail, north from Salt Lake City, in 1862. Traffic on all three trails would continue to be heavy throughout the century, even after the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869.

Almost all of this traffic ran north of Salt Lake City, around the Great Salt Lake, directly through Northwestern Shoshoni and

Northern Shoshone territories. Madsen's conservative estimate has a final total of about 240,000 emigrants and 1.5 million animals traveling through the heart of the Shoshone-Bannock habitat, camping on the Portneuf or Snake Rivers, cutting Shoshone firewood, interrupting Shoshone forage, and grazing their stock on Shoshone pastureland. The Shoshone did not interfere at first, but particularly difficult for them was the annual return trip from hunting grounds in Wyoming and Montana, and the sight of their profoundly damaged winter grounds: clear-cut trees, blackened campfires, stunted grasses devoid of their precious seeds.

Madsen mentions a report made by the superintendent of the Fort Kearney, South Pass, and Honey Lake wagon road. F. W. Lander, on February 18, 1860, refers to a petition signed by emigrants who were perturbed to have been charged—by Mormon settlers—5 to 25 cents a head per night to graze livestock from Salt Lake City north to the Bear River. Based on those figures, Madsen calculates that if the Shoshone had charged for use of pasture, as their Mormon neighbors did, they could have been paid \$222,750 for the 1.485 million animals who chewed up their lands.

The U.S. government neglected a compelling self-interest to adequately manage this increasingly conflicted region, this heart of red-white encounter. The Shoshone were perplexed by the forty-second parallel line drawn through this area, dividing the Utah Territory from the Oregon Territory, which resulted in some cousins—those south of that line—receiving much attention and “presents” from the Indian agent in Salt Lake City; and those north of the line receiving no attention whatsoever, since the nearest Indian agent resided many hundreds of miles away in what we now call Oregon. When Oregon was granted territory status in 1849, Northern Shoshone bands found themselves under the sudden, and uninvited, supervision of the federal government, although apparently few funds were ever appropriated to execute this supervision, perpetuating the north-south imbalance in subsidy.

Interest in rising to this responsibility was sparked only when the Shoshone began to resist emigrant incursion with violence. The Ward Massacre of nineteen emigrants by Boise-area Shoshone in 1854, for instance, resulted in a visit by agent Nathan Olney, who counted the Northern Shoshone as numbering about three thousand people. Beyond this, agents in Oregon knew almost nothing about the

Shoshone. Consequently, and as F. W. Lander wisely warned his superiors, the Shoshone remained uncompensated for the use of their lands even while their more warlike neighbors, the Lakota and the Cheyenne, had been paid annuities for many years. Pasturelands were slowly being ruined, driving big game from Shoshone reach. In 1861, matters worsened when the Washington Territory was cut out of Oregon, to include Idaho. The new territorial office, in Olympia, was even farther away. Madsen reports that the Washington superintendent's annual report for 1862 included a map displaying a vast nothing, which the superintendent had titled, "Unexplored."

At the time of the Civil War, fifteen hundred Northwestern Shoshoni lived in the Cache, Weber, and Malad Valleys. Bear Hunter's band totaled about 450 people, primarily in the Cache Valley.

While most U.S. citizens have heard countless stories about the Oregon Trail, most know far less about a busy route developed just before California's gold rush: the Mormon Trail. Mormonism, which now encompasses several denominations, was founded by an itinerant water diviner named Joseph Smith, Jr. in 1830 in upstate New York. That region was then rife with a religious fervor that birthed several similar sects, including Millerites, Campbellites, and other millennialist faiths. Smith, who was the recipient of several visitations, or "angelic visions," as a child began meeting with a "personage" named Moroni in 1823. ("While I was thus in the act of calling upon God . . . a personage appeared at my bedside. . . . He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. . . . Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning" sections 30–32). Moroni sent Smith to a hill near his home, where, according to Steven L. Shields, Smith found several artifacts, including plates that appeared to be of gold, and which bore an ancient, engraved narrative. Smith, who had been endowed by his god with a special ability to translate the plates, published his translation as *The Book of Mormon* in March 1830. It was Smith's belief that he had been called to effect a restoration of the real church established by Jesus Christ, which had been lost over the ages.

Interestingly, the vast majority of Smith's codified precepts addressed the necessity of accumulating wealth.

The gold plates, which later disappeared, tell the history of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and the wars between the Lamanites and the Nephites, two “tribes” descended from Abraham. When Lehi and his sons—the worthy Nephi, and the wicked Laman and Lemuel—fled Jerusalem in 600 B.C., they journeyed to South America and there divided into two competing factions. God cursed the Lamanites with dark skin so that they could be distinguished from the righteous people, the Nephites, who had light skin. The Lamanites took Nephi land, wars ensued, and thousands were slaughtered on both sides; a feud drove both peoples through North America, culminating in the final battle in New York state, where Moroni became the last Nephite survivor. The plates Moroni left had the purpose of restoring the good Nephites to their rightful place, and to bring those blessings to the Lamanites. Indeed, a condition of Christ’s second coming was the conversion of the Lamanites and their restoration as “white and delightsome people” (2 Nephi 30.6; recently revised to read “pure and delightsome”).

Westward emigrating Mormons, then, understood the natives they encountered in their travels to be the Lamanites of prophecy. And the Lamanite–Nephite relation, as they knew it, was a complicated one. The dark-skinned Lamanites were brothers to the Nephites, but the prophet Micah also warned that these brothers should be feared, too: “ye shall be in the midst of them who shall be many; and ye shall be among them as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he goeth through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver” (3 Nephi 20.16). This antithetical relation of legend—brothers to be feared—would be replicated in reality.

The Book of Mormon, as recited by Smith, also betrays an abiding concern with record keeping. My abridged concordance provides a list of forty-seven references to records, primarily urging a person to keep records (as in 3 Nephi 23.11: “And Jesus said unto them: How be it that ye have not written this thing”); but also urging the concealment of records from enemy outsiders, or the exposure of records to friends; and finally, insisting that a record be truthful. As historian Will Bagley has pointed out, Smith and Mormonism (unlike earlier forms of Christianity) came centuries after the arrival of the printing press, and “[t]he Lord’s instruction to Latter-day Saints to keep personal journals sounded a call that even the semi-literate answered as best they could, creating a wealth of first-person accounts describing

almost every aspect of the creed's trials and triumphs" (qtd. in Bigler 11). David S. Reynolds would point out further that early- and mid-nineteenth-century literacy rates among whites in the United States were as high as 90%, and that book production rates enjoyed vast increases from 1830 to 1850, signaling a general cultural affirmation of written culture; these factors doubtless contributed to this surfeit of documentation.

Smith's first church was founded in April 1830, and grew quickly when he moved to Kirtland, Ohio, in 1831. David L. Bigler writes that Smith's followers encountered resistance from their new neighbors when they formed "an illegal bank," and ultimately "flooded the area with worthless money" (26). Coincidentally, Smith's god decreed at that time that Independence, Missouri, was the real "Center Place," the "land of Zion," and the "New Jerusalem" (26). He ordered that a temple be constructed there, and subsequent colonies were established in Missouri in the 1830s.

It would be in the 1830s, in Missouri, that Smith would begin to consider the usefulness to the young church of a practice that would be called "polygamy." (Since women were not permitted multiple husbands, the correct term is *polygyny*.) The Mormon church had quickly become popular with women utopians, not least because social service, ghettoized in other religious organizations as "women's work" and often viewed as threatening to church hierarchies, was made part of the Latter-day Saints (LDS) church structure. Service by women was restricted to traditional divisions of labor, but was revered. Consequently, the sex ratio tilted in favor of women. Diaries and letters suggest that Mormon women were conflicted in their views of polygyny; some found it a cross to bear, while others were grateful for the companionship and the opportunity to share domestic duties. Mormon doctrine had it that a woman's greatest glory was to bear a large group of children; and that the place of a man in the hereafter was dependent on the number of children he sired.

Throughout most of its history as a "polygamous sect," only about 10% to 20% of Mormons consistently practiced polygyny; in particular, upper-class men were encouraged to marry multiple times. But neighboring "gentiles," as Mormons call non-Latter-day Saints, were hospitable neither to polygyny nor to the loss of economic power, and Mormon communities in Missouri were consequently disrupted. In 1838, Smith organized a paramilitary organization he

called the “Danites,” or “Avenge Angels,” whose task it was to take vengeance on Missouri enemies.

In October of that same year, Governor Lilburn W. Boggs of Missouri sent in the militia to rid his state of Mormons, who, he ordered, “must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace” (qtd. in Bigler 27). The militia ransacked the town of Far West, murdering eighteen Mormon settlers and stealing property. According to official Mormon history, “The chastity of a number of women was defiled by force; some of them were strapped to benches and repeatedly ravished by brutes in human form until they died from the effects of this treatment” (qtd. in Brownmiller 126). This brutality is known to contemporary Mormons as the Haun’s Mill Massacre.

The rape helped convince many of the Latter-day Saints to abandon Missouri. Stephen C. LeSueur, in *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri*, points out that the memory of Haun’s Mill, and the desire to avenge it, would linger powerfully for decades among Mormons.

Smith clearly needed a place where his people could live unmoled by state leaders and their militias. He extracted from Illinois Governor Thomas Ford a promise of sovereignty for Nauvoo, a town Smith’s people would build. Nauvoo would enjoy, in Ford’s words, “a government within a government, a legislature with power to pass ordinances at war with the laws of the State; courts to execute them with but little dependence upon the constitutional judiciary; and a military force at their own command” (qtd. in Bigler 27). Bigler reports that, in return for sovereignty, Smith promised Ford that he could control the votes of his LDS followers in Ford’s favor. North of Quincy, then, Smith and an apostle from Vermont, Brigham Young, set their people to draining a mosquito-infested swampland that would soon become one of the largest towns in Illinois. Smith’s followers, according to Shields, “proceeded to build a magnificent city in which they merged government, business and religion in a unique blend of society. . . . There the Latter Day Saints prospered and grew numerically, with converts pouring in from all over the United States and England” (Shields 48). Given its city–state charter, Shields says, Nauvoo “became a political entity that ultimately could have controlled the state of Illinois” (48).

But Smith pushed his sovereignty a bit too far, and the city became a refuge for counterfeiters and thieves who attacked nearby towns with, Bigler reports, “little fear of arrest” (28). But “most

alarming” to Nauvoo’s neighbors was the Nauvoo Legion, which numbered four thousand men in an era, Bigler reminds us, when U.S. Army regulars totaled only eight thousand; thus Smith was, in effect, the “highest ranking military officer” in the country (28).

The short-lived Mormon prosperity of Nauvoo came to an end in 1844. Smith was staging his third-party run for the U.S. presidency when, in June, he shut down a dissenting newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*, whose first issue advocated separation between church and state. Smith and his brother Hyrum, under arrest in the Carthage jail, were killed by a mob.

Smith had not planned for succession, and for the next twenty years, groups splintered and formed around various leaders. Ultimately, Brigham Young, who at the time of Smith’s death was in Boston directing Smith’s presidential campaign, would prove to be the most successful leader. He ignored advisers who suggested that the Mormons head for California, concluding rightly that California would become a popular destination. After consulting John C. Frémont’s writings on routes to California, and after talking to Father De Smet, he convinced a large number of people to follow him to a third Zion, in a valley in the Rocky Mountains, beyond the control of U.S. government, owned by Mexico and so arid that non-Mormons would not want it. Today, the second largest surviving denomination, founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. and called the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is headquartered in Independence, Missouri, and has about 250,000 members worldwide; Young’s group is currently one of the most rapidly growing religious organizations, with about 20 million members worldwide and far-reaching political, and particularly economic, influence, including a massive portfolio of corporate assets, and ownership of media outlets in all major American cities.

Federal officials preferred to avoid an outbreak of violence in a fourth Mormon state. President James Polk, in an apparent attempt to gain the loyalty of Mormon men to the United States, and thereby avoid the brewing conflict between the church and the government, enlisted five hundred Mormon men in 1846. The Mormon Battalion was deployed to the Mexican War. Brigham Young interpreted this alliance as a conspiracy to kill off Mormon men, but ultimately, these veterans would later serve as seasoned leaders of Young’s own forces.

Brigham Young’s exodus from Missouri was an impeccably organized, systematic emigration of hundreds, then thousands, of people.

Young organized the pioneers into pseudomilitary units of ten people each, providing unit leaders with the title of “captain.” But his best-laid plans were thwarted by weather and disease, and on April 17, 1847, a smaller advance party leaving the Elkhorn River was sent ahead of the rest. This advance party comprised 141 white men; three slaves—Oscar Crosby, Green Flake, and Hark Lay; three women—Harriet Young, Clara Young, and Ellen Kimball; and two of Harriet Young’s children. The party were of U.S., British, Canadian, Irish, and Scots nationality. Rather than follow entirely the Oregon Trail, Young opted for the north side of the Platte River to avoid competing with non-Mormon emigrants for pasture and other resources. From Hasting’s Cutoff, his party followed a trail toward Salt Lake, cut the year before by the Donner–Reed party; it was the delay caused by cutting that trail which had resulted in some of that party perishing in the Sierra Nevadas. As it was, Young’s own party was plagued by unpleasant encounters with Missouri citizens who also crowded the Oregon Trail.

The difficult journey was completed by July. Toward the end, most of the party suffered from an odd illness referred to as “mountain fever,” though today’s doctors speculate that it may have been caused by ticks. Young contracted it in the final two weeks of the trip, and sent ahead a final advance party on July 12, to continue on the Donner–Reed Trail and find the best route through Weber Canyon. The pioneers cut through Echo Canyon, rather than attempt what would become known as Donner Mountain. The advance party of thirty-nine men, including two of the slaves, entered Salt Lake Valley on July 22, 1847. Young would follow with a last group of eight carriages, led by Wilford Woodruff, on July 24.

Several free blacks, members of the Mormon church, emigrated to Utah with their white brethren; and many more slaves, held by a group of Mormon emigrants known as the Mississippi Saints, attended their owners on the second pioneer wave in 1848. By the end of 1848, there were about fifty African Americans, most of them slaves, residing in Utah.

The living conditions of both European masters and African servants were dire that first winter, which may have forced some whites to share humble quarters and scant food with blacks. While slaves and free blacks were at times considered helpmates to whites in these difficult emigration conditions, relations returned to that of apartheid after that first winter. Slaves still feared the corporal punishment uti-