HISTORICAL GRAZING ON THE ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST

A Research Contract between the USDA, Forest Service, Intermountain Region, and the University of Utah's American West Center

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In August 2010, the Forest Service contracted with the University of Utah's American West Center to research the early settlement history and use of livestock on lands that are now in or adjacent to the boundaries of the Ashley National Forest. The purpose of the report that follows is to provide documentation supporting the earliest historic use of water for livestock, as well as to deepen understanding of early settlement and grazing in Utah. As this project began, the Ashley National Forest had only partial documentation about grazing on forest lands prior to 1905 (the year Congress transferred control of the nation's forest reserves to the newly created Forest Service). In 1903 water rights in Utah were required by statute.

The various forest reserves that would ultimately combine to form the Ashley were also created around the same time. The area that now comprises the Ashley National Forest began as the Uintah Forest Reserve in 1897. The forest reserve greatly increased its territory when the government added over one million acres from the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation in 1905. The Ashley National Forest was officially designated in 1908, which at the time comprised the south and east facing slopes of the Uinta Mountains.[1]

Over time, the forest boundaries were altered. In 1953, the Forest Service changed the borders of the Wasatch, Uinta, and Ashley national forests. As a result the Ashley National Forest took in the Rock Creek and Duchesne River drainages from the Wasatch National Forest. Further south, Tabby Mountain and the northwest slopes overlooking the Strawberry River Valley, including the Avintaquin Creek drainage, were taken from the Uinta National Forest. Between 1966 and 1968 Tabby Mountain and Phil Pico, a peak in the Henry's Fork region, were

[1] The spelling "Uinta" is used when referring to the Uinta Mountains, Uinta Basin, Uinta River, and the Uinta National Forest. The spelling "Uintah" is used when referring Uintah County, the Uintah Forest Reserve and the Uintah-Ouray Indian Reservation. See John W. Van Cott, *Utah Place Names*: *A Comprehensive Guide to the Origins of Geographic Names* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 379-380.

removed from the forest and are now under the jurisdiction of the State of Utah. When the Flaming Gorge Dam was completed in 1968, the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area was designated as part of the Ashley National Forest.[2]

The report that follows details the evidence that American West Center researchers found to substantiate grazing in the areas that now comprise the Ashley National Forest prior to 1905. Supplementing this narrative is a database—included in hardcopy form as an appendix and also provided electronically as an Access database—that details the results of the historical research conducted between August 2010 and May 2012. The database indicates which archives the research team visited, which specific documents, collections, boxes, and folders, or websites they consulted, and whether those sources yielded "positive" (evidence of grazing) or "negative" (no evidence of grazing) results. There are also "contextual" sources providing some information about grazing activities, but does not specify who was involved or where they were grazing in the Ashley National Forest. A fourth appendix provides entries from Utah State Brand Books prior to 1900. Registered brands prove who owned livestock in the vicinity of the Ashley National Forest, but do not specify whether these individuals ranged on the forest. Scanned images of applicable documents are embedded in the electronic version of the database and provided as printed images in the appendices where practicable. The sources are organized by the repository, location, and source name. The research team views the database as of equal importance to the narrative report for two reasons. First, it serves as a critical resource should documentation become necessary for water rights validation. Additionally, it can also be used to guide further research if the Forest Service decides to continue this project in the future.

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[2] Ashley National Forest. "History of the Forest." http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet/!ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gjAwhwtDDw9_AI8zPyhQoY6BdkOyoCAGixyPg!/?ss=110401&navtype=BROWSEBYSUBJECT&cid=STELPRDB5123073&navid=150140000000000&pnavid=150000000000000&position=Feature*&ttype=detail&pname=Ashley%20National%20Forest-%20History%20&%20Culture, Accessed 12 July 2012.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

The development of grazing around the Ashley National Forest, in many respects, is a snapshot of what occurred throughout the American West. Several groups of people were attracted to the region's diverse landscape which allowed grazing to continue year round, from the upper mountain elevations on what is now the Ashley National Forest land during the summer months, to the lower, semi-arid grasslands that lay just outside the forest's boundaries during the winter. Native Americans, explorers, trappers, government agents, Mormon settlers, outlaws, large commercial ranchers, and small independent homesteaders each came to the area throughout the nineteenth century and utilized the available grazing lands.

Owing to the diverse history of grazing in northeastern Utah, research into early grazing required the use of both traditional and non-traditional historical research methods and sources. Most ranchers within the current boundaries of the Ashley National Forest made their home in the small settlements along its periphery. Many of these ranchers did not own title to the land within the forest; instead they grazed their herds on open public lands. Pinpointing locations where these ranchers ranged their livestock required the compilation of primary records. Personal accounts, such as journals, memoirs, and oral histories, proved the most valuable sources in verifying grazing locations on the Ashley National Forest and in documenting who was involved. Family and local histories also paint a broader picture of the region's grazing history, although not as reliable as the personal accounts. From its inception, the LDS Church encouraged its members to keep journals. As a result, hundreds of pioneer and early settlers' journals are available in the collections of the LDS Church History Library and Archives, the LDS Family History Library, and the Utah State Historical Society. Further, family histories and biographical sketches of early pioneers, many researched and published by the Daughters of

Utah Pioneers, are rich with names and locations of ranchers. County histories, such as the centennial histories produced by the Utah State Historical Society in 1996, also contain evidence, although not always detailed, about individuals involved in stock-raising. Other personal accounts can be found in the holdings and archives at the University of Utah, Utah State University, and Brigham Young University. The University of Utah, for example, houses the Uintah Basin Oral History Project which is a series of interviews from early Vernal residents recorded during the late 1970s. It includes important details regarding the grazing locations utilized by early settlers.

Government records also proved valuable in fleshing out the region's grazing history. Utah Brand Books from the late nineteenth century identify many ranchers who owned livestock in the region, although they do not include details regarding locations where those individuals ranged their herds. Nonetheless, branding records can be easily cross-checked with other sources that identify grazers within the forest. Some of the most useful government sources were records from the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation. A great portion of the Ashley National Forest was once part of the Indian reservation until 1905. Because the Commissioner of Indian Affairs held jurisdiction over that land prior to that time, official government reports and grazing permits provide direct evidence of grazing activities.

Another rich source of primary government records relating to grazing on the Ashley National Forest is the U. S. Forest Service. Although most of the records were created after the Ashley National Forest's designation, they do offer valuable information about who was grazing during the forest's early years. The early ranchers who grazed on the Ashley were the same people who grazed there before it became a national forest. The Region 4 Office of the U. S. Forest Service contains a wealth of information in its History Collection. Court cases litigated

by the Ute Indian Tribe from the mid-to late-twentieth century contained documents relating to Ute individuals and families who herded livestock in the study area prior to the establishment of the national forest in 1905. Additionally, court papers contain some grazing permits and references to white settlers who began to move in during the late nineteenth century. Documents, correspondence, and reminiscent accounts describe individual ranchers from the Ashley Valley, primarily near Vernal, and larger ranching operations that came from Wyoming during the summer months and ranged in the Green River drainage in what is now the northern Ashley National Forest. The Regional Office also retains several maps that are clearly labeled and color coded showing the names, region, and type of livestock used by permit holders in the early years of the Ashley National Forest. Likewise, the Ashley National Forest Office in Vernal, Utah contains several files on early grazing in the forest, including permits and histories of particular areas within the forest.

A pattern of grazing activity on the Ashley National Forest prior to 1905 emerges from these various sources. Settlements surrounding the forest became the bases of operations for many ranchers who took advantage of the available public lands. Cattle and sheep ranching became a primary economic activity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for the communities surrounding the Ashley National Forest.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE REGION'S HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

The Ashley National Forest is located atop the majestic Uinta Mountains which lie above a diverse and colorful landscape. The mountains overshadow a broad basin to their south that was first home to the Ute people and later to European settlers. To the north are the high Wyoming plains which thousands of migrants crossed as they travelled along the famed Oregon, California, and Mormon trails. The Green River enters the mountainous region through deep canyons, before meandering into the Colorado Plateau to the southeast of the Ashley National Forest. Narrow canyons along the river's path provided shelter to both explorers and outlaws. In 1869, Major John Wesley Powell explored this region. On May 30, 1869, Powell's expedition left the grasslands of Wyoming and descended into a canyon with steep cliffs rising sharply 1,200 feet above the river, the rock changing from red sandstone to grey capstone. The canyon's resemblance to a large fire inspired Powell to name it Flaming Gorge.[3] The diversity of landscape from the tall alpine peaks down to the semi-arid valleys and canyons below them made the region in and around the Ashley National Forest a popular site to graze livestock year round.

As Powell and others before him had discovered, the Uinta Mountains and the Green River formed natural barriers that divided the region into separate areas of settlement surrounding what would become the Ashley National Forest. The largest populated region was the Ashley Valley on the southeastern side of the Ashley National Forest, in what is now Uintah County, Utah. The Ashley Valley formed the eastern rim of the Uinta Basin where rivers forming in the mountains drain south and east toward the Green River. These streams water the thirsty desert landscape and give life to the several communities within the valley. On the north

[3] John Wesley Powell, to Chicago Tribune, 2 June 1869, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 15 (1947): 75-76.

side of the valley is the Diamond Mountain plateau, situated mostly outside of the national forest, which became a popular grazing location. The valley extends to near where the Green River exits what is now Dinosaur National Monument. The red sandstone cliffs offer a stark contrast to the Ashley National Forest's green peaks.

The Uinta Basin west of Ashley Valley and south of the Uinta Mountains offered another region for human inhabitants. For centuries Native Americans dominated the basin's western portion. Fremont Indians called the basin home for centuries, but abandoned the area long before the first European explorers arrived. Their presence, however, is confirmed through the petroglyphs, small structures, tools, and other material evidence that they left behind. Since that time Native Americans have had a constant presence in the region. In 1861, as the U. S. Civil War began, much of the Uinta Basin was designated as an Indian Reservation by President Abraham Lincoln.

The basin's climate can be classified as semi-arid desert. The average annual precipitation is around nine and a half inches, which is about an inch more than the Ashley Valley. The average rainfall in the Uinta Mountains where the Ashley National Forest mostly resides is over twenty-five inches per year.[4]

The Strawberry River Valley, on the southwest edge of the basin, was a popular grazing location for Indians and non-Indians alike. The southern portion of the Strawberry River Valley was later transferred from the Uinta National Forest to the Ashley National Forest in 1953. When the Dawes General Allotment Act forced the sale of several reservation lands in the early

[4] Desert Research Institute, Western Regional Climate Center, Duchesne, Utah, climate information from data gathered between 1 April 1906 and 30 April 2012, http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/cliMAIN.pl?ut2252 (Accessed 24 May 2012); Desert Research Institute, Western Regional Climate Center, Vernal Airport, Utah climate information from data gathered between 11 November 1894 and 30 April 2012, http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/cliMAIN.pl?ut9111 (Accessed 24 May 2012); John D. Barton, *A History of Duchesne County* (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, 1998), 9.

twentieth century, new Anglo-American settlements turned the Uinta Basin into Duchesne County, Utah.

The Henry's Fork and Flaming Gorge Region, just north of the Ashley National Forest, encompasses what is now Daggett County, Utah. This area was easily accessed from overland trails that went through what is now southwest Wyoming, but the Green River canyons and mountains make travel to the Ashley Valley and Uinta Basin regions difficult. As the Green River travels east from Flaming Gorge, it enters a small valley that sits on the border of Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming known as Brown's Park. The valley became a popular gathering spot for Native Americans and later beaver trappers. By the late nineteenth century, the area became popular among ranchers as well as outlaws seeking refuge from law enforcement officers.

The Ashley Valley, the main portion of the Uinta Basin, and the Daggett County region formed the three key areas of settlement around the Ashley National Forest. By the time the Ashley National Forest was established, several small communities and homesteads existed along its border in these three different regions. Raising livestock was the preeminent agricultural activity in all three areas. Those areas naturally served as bases for most of the grazing activity that occurred in the forest prior to 1905.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE REGION

The region's human history is as rich and diverse as its geographical landscape. The Fremont were the first human inhabitants within the vicinity of the Ashley National Forest. Fremont Indians mostly engaged in hunting small game and gathering native plants. As their territory expanded southward, they developed trading relationships with the Ancestral Puebloans south of the Colorado River. Archeological evidence suggests that the Fremont began leaving the Uinta Basin around 1000 A. D. They disappeared completely from Utah around 1300 A. D., around the same time that the Ancestral Puebloans abandoned their settlements around the present-day four corners region. The Fremont left behind an abundance of archeological evidence, such as pit houses, pottery, baskets, tools, and pictographs.[5]

Around 1100 A. D., Numic peoples arrived in the region in the wake of the Fremont's retreat. As the Numics dominated the Great Basin and Rocky Mountains, they gradually broke into separate groups. Two of the most prominent of these groups, the Utes and Shoshones, settled in the region around the Ashley National Forest. Utes and Shoshones proved adaptable to the region's varied and harsh landscape. They developed technologies that allowed them to maximize collection of plants and game. Ute and Shoshone history changed significantly, however, when they gained access to Spanish horses during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The horse allowed them to expand their territory, hunt larger game, and broaden trading relationships with other Native groups in the West. The introduction of horses also made these Numic groups the first livestock grazers in the region.[6]

[5] Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place*, Rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2007), 36-39; Robert S. McPherson, "Setting the Stage: Native America Revisited," *A History of Utah's American Indians*, Forrest S. Cuch, ed. (Salt Lake City: Utah State Division of Indian Affairs and Utah State Division of History, 2000), 12-13.
[6] Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place*, 39-44; McPherson, "Setting the Stage," 14-17.

Fathers Francisco Atanasio Dominguez and Silvestre Velez de Escalante were perhaps the first European explorers to traverse the area around the Ashley National Forest. The fathers led a small group of Spanish missionaries in the hope of opening a route between New Mexico and Monterrey, California in 1776. Led by Ute guides, the group crossed the Green River near the present day site of Jensen, Utah. They trekked across the Uinta Basin and noted the availability of game and presence of grasses, rivers, and streams that might make permanent settlement of the region possible.[7] Despite these favorable observations, European settlements would be delayed for another century.

During the early nineteenth century, beaver trappers converged on the region. Though these trappers brought limited livestock to the region, their presence is indelibly connected to the region's history. In 1822, General William H. Ashley formed a trapping business that employed several men who would later be well-known explorers of the American West, such as Jim Bridger, Jedediah S. Smith, and William L. and Miton G. Sublette.[8] Many prominent landmarks in the region were soon named after members of Ashley's company. Henry's Fork, for example, was named after Ashley's business partner Andrew Henry. Ashley himself became the namesake for Ashley Creek, Ashley Valley, and later the Ashley National Forest.[9]

Ashley realized that the distance from markets for furs and supplies was the biggest challenge his company faced. Many of these trappers in the West were over a thousand miles from the nearest settlement where they could trade their furs and replenish their supplies. Ashley proposed that all of his company meet along Henry's Fork. The first of several rendezvous took place on July 1, 1825, and attracted not only Ashley's men, but several others from the rival

[7] John D. Barton, *A History of Duchesne County* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1998), 18-20.
[8] Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah, The Right Place* revised ed. (Salt Lake City: Gibb Smith, Publisher, 2007), 61-62.
[9] John W. Van Cott, *Utah Place Names*: *A Comprehensive Guide to the Origins of Geographic Names* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 14, 183.

Hudson's Bay Company, a group led by Etienne Provost, Native Americans, and others. These trappers frequented Brown's Park, and other streams along the Green River drainage that extended into Ashley National Forest.[10]

Some of these mountain men also established a few permanent outposts in the region. William Reed, Denis Julien, and Jimmy Reed, three French trappers who came from Taos, New Mexico, established a trading post at the confluence of the Whiterocks and Uinta rivers in 1828. In 1832, the three men sold their outpost to another French trapper, Antoine Robidoux, who first came into the Uinta Basin in 1824, possibly with Etienne Provost, who also came from Taos. Antoine and his brother, Louis, were actively involved in establishing trading posts throughout the Rocky Mountains in the 1820s. Robidoux expanded the Reed trading post into the small Fort Uintah that operated for roughly the next twenty years buying and selling not only furs, but also other goods such as guns, powder, traps, knives, tools, blankets, beads, whiskey, and even Indian slaves. Robidoux also traded horses, which made him perhaps the first non-Indian livestock producer in the region. Kit Carson also temporarily started a trading post along the Green River. Brown's Park became a popular location for trading and selling horses, furs and other supplies. One of the last rendezvous of the trapping era was held in Brown's Park in 1842 and attracted trappers from all over the west as well as Utes, Shoshones, and even a few Navajos.[11] The trapper era at the base of the Uinta Mountains ended in the 1840s when demand for beaver pelts dropped and Indian troubles forced Robidoux to abandon his fort.[12]

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[10] Alexander, *Utah, The Right Place*, 62, Michael W. Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County: A Modern Frontier* (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, 1998), 15-33.

[11] Doris Karren Burton, *A History of Uintah County: Scratching the Surface* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1996), 62-71.

[12] Burton, *A History of Uintah County* , 62-67; Barton, *A History of Duchesne County*, 31-34; Clifford Duncan, "The Northern Utes of Utah," *A History of Utah's American Indians,* Forrest S. Cuch, ed. (Salt Lake City: Utah State Division of Indian Affairs and Utah State Division of History, 2000), 185.

The arrival of Mormon pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 marked perhaps the most significant expansion of Euro-American settlement in the Great Basin and Rocky Mountains. Their leader, Brigham Young, established scores of colonies throughout Utah and the Inter-mountain West. Many of these colonies were established for specific economic purposes, out of an overarching desire among Mormons to become self-sufficient. Livestock played an important role in Young's economic vision. While many Mormons held small private herds, most of the larger herds were Church owned and cooperative herds. Many Mormon ranchers utilized the forested area that is now encompassing the Uinta, Wasatch, and Cache national forests.[13]

While Mormons quickly established livestock grazing in the forested regions of the Wasatch and western Uinta Mountains, as well as other locations near their colonies, they waited several decades before utilizing the Ashley National Forest region. In 1861, Brigham Young sent an exploring party to the Uinta Basin to determine the feasibility of a permanent settlement. Young hoped that colonies in the area would strengthen Mormon claims to the eastern edge of Utah Territory. He also wanted to confirm reports from earlier explorers of "fertile vales, extensive meadows, and wide pasture." However, the surveying party, having explored the valleys between the Wasatch Mountains, Uinta Basin, and all along the Green River for several days, returned saying that such fertile areas "were not to be found." Furthermore, the party reported that the land "is entirely unsuitable for farming purposes, and the amount of land at all suitable for cultivation extremely limited." They opined that the entire region was a vast "contiguity of waste" that was only valued as a hunting ground for the Utes, "and to hold the

[13] For information regarding Mormon grazing activities around the Uinta, Wasatch, and Cache national forests, see Tim Glenn and Laura Hutchings, "Historical Grazing on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests," (Salt Lake City: American West Center, University of Utah, 2010).

world together." As a result Young abandoned any plans for permanent settlement near the Ashley National Forest.[14]

While Mormons delayed settlement around the Uinta Mountains, others saw potential in the area and began to take advantage of the abundant rangeland. Government agents stationed at the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation and others that came from Wyoming established homesteads and ranches throughout the Ashley Valley, Uinta Basin, Henry's Fork, and Brown's Park beginning in the 1860s and 1870s. Mormons would also get involved, but not until the 1870s.

[14] "Uintah Not What Was Represented," *The Deseret News,* 25 September 1861. Also quoted in Burton, *History of Uintah County,* 83 and Barton, *A History of Duchesne County,* 49.

THE ASHLEY VALLEY

The grazing era for the Ashley Valley began in the late 1860s, and grew in the 1870s when a conglomeration of government Indian agents, entrepreneurial ranchers, and Mormon pioneers converged on the area. Settlements that were established during this time became the base of operations for grazing activities that extended beyond the valley. The availability of open land allowed many ranchers to maintain their residence within towns and run their livestock along the periphery. The most popular grazing locations outside the Ashley Valley included Taylor Mountain, Diamond Mountain, Blue Mountain, and the grasslands along the Green River. Taylor Mountain is now located entirely within the boundaries of the Ashley National Forest. Several streams, such as Dry Fork, Ashley Creek, and Brush Creek, whose headwaters lay deep within the Ashley National Forest, provided natural pathways for ranchers to lead their herds during the summer months. Diamond Mountain lies to the north of the Ashley Valley, with most of the plateau lying outside of the eastern boundary of the Ashley National Forest. Some of the popular grazing sites along the Green River adjacent to the Ashley Valley were Jones Hole and Island Park. Jones Hole is located along the eastern slope of Diamond Mountain. Island Park is now located within Dinosaur National Monument. The only popular grazing location along the Green River within the boundaries of the Ashley National Forest is in the Flaming Gorge country, which is covered in the Daggett County section. Another popular grazing range, Blue Mountain, is southeast of the Ashley Valley along the Utah Colorado border, just south of what is now Dinosaur National Monument and far outside the Ashley National Forest.

During the 1870s and 1880s livestock grazing expanded, establishing itself as a primary industry within the Ashley Valley. The official state branding books for the 1880s listed several

registered brands for the communities of Ashley Fork, Vernal, Jensen, and Whiterocks.[15] N. J. "Nick" Meagher, whose father opened a bank in Vernal in the early 1900s, estimated that Uintah County, which included the Ashley Valley, supported between 12,000 and 14,000 cattle and up to 180,000 sheep during the early years of the twentieth century.[16] Although it may be difficult to ascertain everyone who took livestock onto the forest from the valley below, personal accounts, such as journals and oral interviews, do give evidence of some ranchers that did cross onto the current forest boundaries. Other secondary sources, such as family and local histories also provide evidence of who used the Ashley National Forest for grazing.

The Ashley Valley's proximity to the Uintah Indian Reservation encouraged many government agents in the region to raise livestock. Pardon Dodds may have been the first non-Indian to settle and graze his livestock in the Ashley Valley since the trapper era. Dodds started as an Indian Agent at the Uintah Indian Reservation. Stationed at the reservation's headquarters at Whiterocks in 1868, he oversaw government efforts to promote farming among the Utes. Within a year, a small community of non-Indians was established at Whiterocks, just south of what is now the Ashley National Forest. In 1873, after his service as an Indian agent, Dodds partnered with Morris Evans to drive their personal herds eastward along Ashley Creek. Evans reportedly had a herd of 2,000 head of cattle.[17] Sue Watson remembered her father, Henry C. Ruple, working as an Indian agent at Whiterocks before starting a small cattle herd and slaughter

[15] See Division of Animal Industry's Brand Books, 1849-1930, Utah State Division of Archives and Records Service, Salt Lake City, http://archives.utah.gov/digital/540.htm, Accessed 10 July 2012. Individual entries for brands registered near the Ashley National Forest are included in the source database.

[16] N. J. "Nick" Meagher, Jr., interviewed by Mike Brown, 10 February 1978, Folder 2, Uintah Basin Oral History Project, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Doris Karen Burton indicated that by the mid-1890s, there was more than 50,000 sheep in the area. See Burton, *History of Uintah County*, 111.

[17] Ashley National Forest, "The History of the Forest," http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet/!ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gjAwhwtDDw9_AI8zPyhQoY6BdkOyoCAGixyPg!/?ss=110401&navtype=BROWSEBYSUBJECT&cid=STELPRDB5123073&navid=150140000000000&pnavid=150000000000000&position=Feature*&ttype=detail&pname=Ashley%20National%20Forest-%20History%20&%20Culture, Accessed 12 June 2012; Burton, *History of Uintah County*, 84-85; Jim Fazio, "Men on the Mountain: A Historical Look at the Vernal Ranger District." (1967; Vernal, Utah: Ashley National Forest, n.d.), 12.

house to sell beef to soldiers, possibly those stationed at Fort Duchesne in the 1880s. During the time that Watson's family owned cattle, they split their time at Vernal and Island Park.[18]

Shortly after Dodds and Evans settled in the Ashley Valley, other ranchers moved into the area to take advantage of the open rangeland. John Blankenship, who arrived in the area around the same time, and others that followed throughout the decade, later helped establish the town of Ashley.[19] Ike Burton, and Robert Snyder were among those early ranchers whose livestock grazed within the current boundaries of the Ashley National Forest. Burton settled near the mouth of Brush Creek, which partially runs through the national forest, and also ranched along Diamond Mountain.[20] Snyder also had a herd that roamed Taylor Mountain within the forest, as well as Diamond and Blue mountains, on the outside.[21] Dan Mosby was another resident who ranged in the mountains west of the Ashley Valley. Several of the Ashley National Forest landmarks where Mosby's cattle grazed were named after him, including Mosby Mountain, Mosby Creek, Mosby Sink, and Mosby Park.[22]

By the end of the 1870s, Mormon settlers began trickling into the Ashley Valley, having long forgotten the unfavorable reports several years earlier. A. C. Hatch encouraged other ranchers to join him in the valley after he came from Heber City with a herd of cattle. Hatch founded the A. C. Hatch Cattle and Horse Company. He ranged his livestock throughout the region, such as along Ashley Creek and the Green River and started the A. H. Ranch on Blue Mountain. Hatch's cattle herd reportedly reached in excess of 2,500 head. He also had a ranch at

[18] Sue Watson, interviewed by Mike Brown, 15 August 1977 and 8 December 1877, Folder 3, Uintah Basin Oral History Project, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
[19] Burton, *History of Uintah County*, 85.
[20] Dick and Vivian Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country: The Story of Daggett County, Utah* (Denver, Colorado: Eastwood Print and Pub., 1978), 82.
[21] Jim Fazio, "Men on the Mountain: A Historical Look at the Vernal Ranger District." (Vernal, Utah: Ashley National Forest, 1967), 12.
[22] Burton, *History of Uintah County*, 109; Van Cott, *Utah Place Names*, 259.

the base of the Uinta Mountains at what was at the time part of the Uintah Indian Reservation, which he likely used to range his herds on the Ashley National Forest. He also took advantage of the thousands of wild horses roaming in the nearby hills and bred thoroughbred and other blooded horses.[23]

Another early Mormon rancher in the Ashley Valley was Teancum Taylor, who lived at Dry Fork. Taylor encouraged more families to settle Dry Fork through offering land and the use of water. The small town of Dry Fork lies at the mouth of the canyon carved by the creek of the same name that extends into the Ashley National Forest. About a decade later, Taylor left Dry Fork and moved to Deep Creek.[24] Taylor Mountain on the Ashley National Forest is named after Teancum and his brother Alma.[25]

Several Mormon communities were established throughout the Ashley Valley in the late 1870s. For example, several families established the town of Jensen on the southeast side of the valley where a ferry crossed the Green River. The largest Mormon community in the region today is the city of Vernal, located on the "bench" above the town of Ashley. In 1878, David Johnston, Jeremiah Hatch, and Alva Hatch moved their families onto the bench. The following year, concerns about migrating Utes from Colorado in the wake of the Meeker Massacre motivated other families to "fort-up" in Vernal for better protection. The conflict began when some Utes rose up against government agent Nathan C. Meeker's ranching policies. Many of

[23] Burton, *History of Uintah County*, 108-109, 117; Fazio, "Men on the Mountain," 12; Ashley National Forest, "The History of the Forest," http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet/!ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gjAwhwtDDw9_AI8zPyhQoY6BdkOyoCAGixyPg!/?ss=110401&navtype=BROWSEBYSUBJECT&cid=STELPRDB5123073&navid=150140000000000&pnavid=150000000000000&position=Feature*&ttype=detail&pname=Ashley%20National%20Forest-%20History%20&%20Culture, Accessed 12 June 2012; J. F. Minniss, United States Indian Agent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 13 August 1883, in "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1883," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883), 138.

[24] Burton, *History of Uintah County*, 86.

[25] Van Cott, *Utah Place Names*, 365; Fazio, "Men on the Mountain," 73.

the Uncompahgre and White River Utes living in Colorado were able to earn a modest living herding horses, cattle, and sheep. Meeker, however, believed the Utes should raise crops instead. Meeker also ordered the Utes to slaughter some of their horses claiming their herds had grown too big. Some of the angry Utes killed Meeker and the other Indian agents at the White River Agency and then resisted the military force sent to quell the conflict. Even though many Utes remained neutral in the conflict, and prominent leader Ouray even opposed fighting federal authorities, the Uncompahgre and White River Utes were forced to relocate to the Uintah Reservation. The Uintah Reservation was already well established west of the Ashley Valley, and the Utes living there had not shown any indication of violence toward the valley's Anglo-American residents. Ashley Valley residents' fears toward the Colorado Utes were also unrealized, although their concern helped swell Vernal's population.[26]

Although the Meeker Massacre worried the early ranchers, the Uinta Basin's climate proved to be a more formidable challenge to livestock herds. In 1879-1880, severe winter storms accompanied by extreme cold swept over the region during what locals called the "hard winter." As much as three quarters of all cattle perished, many frozen stiff while standing. Many small ranchers lost nearly everything. According to historian Doris Karen Burton, several ranchers suffered heavy losses, such as Sterling Driggs Colton, Lycurgus Johnson, Nathan Davis, Isaac Burton and his sons, Teancum Taylor, Joseph Hardy, and Alf Johnson. Burton also noted that James McKee, who lived in the valley for several years and owned the most cattle didn't lose much of his herd, possibly because his cattle had been acclimated over several previous winter seasons.[27]

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[26] Fazio, "Men on the Mountain," 13; Barton, *History of Duchesne County,* 57-60; Duncan, "The Northern Utes of Utah," 195-196; Burton, *History of Uintah County,* 87-90. Vernal went through several names including Jerico, Hatch Town, and Ashley Center.

[27] Burton, *History of Uintah County,* 109.

Robert Bodily, a man whose herds grazed on the mountains northwest of Vernal which is along the southern boundary of the Ashley National Forest, described the desperate situation many early ranchers suffered during that "hard winter." Bodily first arrived in the Ashley Valley with a small cattle herd the previous year. The mild weather of his first foray into the valley tricked Bodily into believing that warmer, dryer winters were the norm. Bodily returned to the valley during the fall of 1879 with his family and a small herd. He commented that a little snow fell on November 2, 1879, the day his family arrived at the fort. By January about six to seven inches of snow were on the ground, which was followed by a slight thaw. Any hope of early spring, however, was dashed when cold weather dropped the temperature again and storms dumped over two feet of snow. Bodily remembered many of his cattle and horses died immediately despite his best efforts to bring them down from the little mountain west of town. Feed was also scarce since grasshoppers had decimated the hay crops the previous season and new settlers had depleted stored supplies. At the end of March, between eighteen and twenty-four inches of snow remained on the ground and Bodily thought that the strong winds would finish off what few cattle he had left. When spring finally did break, Bodily and other Ashley Valley residents were able to access supplies to save themselves and their starving livestock.[28]

Sterling Driggs Colton was another of the pioneers that came to the Ashley Valley during the "hard winter" and suffered heavy losses. According to his daughter, Ethel Colton Smith, Colton explored the periphery of the valley during the spring of 1879, including locations now in and near the Ashley National Forest such as Dry Fork, Brush Creek, Taylor Mountain, and Diamond Mountain. He decided to bring his family to settle the area after discovering an abundance of irrigation water and grazing land. After the Coltons arrived in the valley on

[28] Robert Bodily, journal 1844-1937, pp. 26-31, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.

November 13, 1879, they bought some land near Ashley Creek from a Mr. Brooks. The first struggle, however, was procuring enough feed for his livestock since there was little available because of the rapid population growth that year. His herd at Brush Creek had been severely diminished as a result of the harsh winter, and his horses that did survive were in poor shape. During the spring thaw, Colton moved his recovering herd to the ranges on Taylor and Diamond Mountains to graze throughout the summer before returning them to the valley that fall.[29]

The "hard winter" of 1879-1880 did little to discourage the inflow of new ranchers into the Ashley Valley. Throughout the 1880s, Ashley Valley accommodated a steady stream of new residents, many of whom came for the area's ideal range land. Charles Slaugh recalled that his father, Benjamin Slaugh, settled in Vernal around 1884 and ran cattle along the Green River. Slaugh himself hauled freight for the Two-Bar Ranch and maintained a small herd until 1918.[30] William McKee, according to his son Harvey McKee, arrived in the valley in 1885 and started a small ranching operation on Diamond Mountain while residing in Jensen. Although most of the Diamond Mountain plateau is outside of the Ashley National Forest, a tiny portion is in the forest.

Harvey McKee explained that the entire cattle and sheep industry thrived on the availability of open land. McKee said, "It was just first there, first served" on the land since there were few homesteads in the rangelands outside the Ashley Valley.[31] Although Slaugh and McKee do not explicitly state whether they took their herds into the Ashley National Forest lands, they illustrate how the availability of open land around the valley encouraged many

[29] Ethel Colton Smith, "A Brief Story of the Lives of Sterling Driggs and Nancy Adeline Wilkins Colton," 8-13, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.
[30] Charles Slaugh, interviewed by Diedra Northern, 1 November 1977, Folder 2, Uintah Basin Oral History Project, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
[31] Harvey McKee, Interviewed by Mike Brown, 8 September 1977, Folder 2, Uintah Basin Oral History Project, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

ranchers to come into the area during the late nineteenth century. It creates the distinct possibility that those ranchers ranged their livestock on land that later became the Ashley National Forest or at the very least passed through it.

Sheep soon overtook the cattle industry in the Ashley Valley in the 1880s. Sheep were preferred to cattle because they were easy to care for and were better able to weather seasonal changes, such as the "hard winter." The Caldwell family is credited by some locals for bringing the first sheep herds into the area. Thomas Caldwell had a small herd in Naples, just southwest of Vernal. Robert Bodily recalled briefly leasing a few sheep from Caldwell, and grazing them on Diamond Mountain. Though Diamond Mountain lies mostly outside of the Ashley National Forest's eastern boundary, it is possible that the Caldwells and Bodily used forest lands on their way to Diamond Mountain. Caldwell later sold his sheep to Isaac Burton and Ben Chestnut who continued to range them on Diamond Mountain. George Young and C. S. Carter also brought large sheep herds into the area.[32]

Ralph Siddoway recalled that his father, William H. Siddoway, started off as a farmer in the Ashley Valley during the 1890s, but was soon drawn to the forest lands on Taylor Mountain. William Siddoway partnered with Al Johnston and started a lumber business. Siddoway ran the lumber mill on Taylor Mountain, while Johnston sold the lumber in the valley, until Johnston sold his share to Siddoway. Around 1900, Siddoway's interest turned to the sheep business on Taylor Mountain. He sold his sawmill to devote time to growing his herd. According to his son Ralph, Siddoway was interested in ranging his sheep on Taylor Mountain because the open public land made it possible to own livestock without needing to own any land himself. When

[32] Burton, *History of Uintah County*, 111; Briant H. Stringham, "B. H. 'Bry' Stringham: A Biography," p. 35 Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah; Bodily, journal 1844-1937, p. 37.

William died in 1950, Ralph remembered that his father still held permits with the U. S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to range his sheep.[33]

Among the most significant ranching families in the Ashley Valley was the Stringhams. Briant H. Stringham became a prominent political leader and advocate for the sheep industry in Vernal throughout the twentieth century. Briant's grandfather and namesake, Briant Stringham, Sr. arrived in Utah with Brigham Young's vanguard company in 1847, and was among the first Mormon livestock ranchers in the territory. Briant Sr. died in 1854 after suffering from pneumonia which he contracted after falling in the Great Salt Lake while ferrying sheep to Antelope Island. Briant's father, Philip Stringham, established a homestead in Ashley Creek Canyon, just north of the valley along the current borders of the Ashley National Forest. Philip Stringham started with a small herd of cattle but traded his cattle for sheep after rustlers from Brown's Park stole several cattle in the vicinity. He bought his ewes from his son-in-law Joseph Hacking. When Briant was sixteen he took a job for two months overlooking some of Hacking's herd on Diamond Mountain. At the age of sixty-five, Philip turned over his 3,000 head to his sons Briant, Irving Ray, and Phil, Jr. Briant eventually bought out Phil Jr.'s share and expanded his flock and hired several sheep herders. He ranged his sheep in the winter just west of the valley, and then drove them up toward Diamond Mountain for spring and fall. Over time, he branched out to ranges on the east side of the Green River in Colorado.

Briant Stringham ran his large herds throughout the entire region, often garnering permits to range them deep within the Ashley National Forest, even along King's Peak in the Uinta

[33] Ralph Siddoway, interviewed by Mike Brown, 10 February 1978, Folder 2, Uintah Basin Oral History Project, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. A chart in the U. S. Forest Service's Region 4 Office History Collection documenting Ashley National Forest grazing permit holders lists another one of William H. Siddoway's sons, Wallace Siddoway as a permittee. See "History of Cattle Permits Past and Present, Ashley National Forest," Chart, Uintah-Ouray Indian Case, 1906-1978, Ashley and Wasatch National Forests, Book 3, Box 71, R4-1680-2007-0033, Region 4 Office History Collection, U. S. Forest Service, Ogden, Utah.

Range, Utah's highest mountain. Forest Service permits dating to the late 1930s support Briant's recollections; his autobiography and oral interview suggest that he used forest lands throughout his life. Briant also served as president of the Utah Wool Growers Association and was elected to several boards and committees on a local, state, regional, and national level.[34]

The story of the Ashley Valley is only part of the greater Uinta Basin settlement that occurred in the late nineteenth century. The bulk of the Uinta Basin that lies west of the Ashley Valley was also viewed as valuable rangeland as more people were exposed to it. The presence of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation, however, restricted grazing access into that portion of the basin and the forested region along the Uinta Mountains' southern slopes.

[34] Stringham, "B. H. 'Bry' Stringham: A Biography," pp. 12, 24, 35-59; B. H. Stringham, interviewed by Mike Brown, 10 August 1977, Folder 3, Uintah Basin Oral History Project, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City; Legal Papers: Agreements, Leases, and Permits, Folder 11, Box 6, Briant H. Stringham Papers, 1940-1980, Special Collections, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan.

THE UINTA BASIN

The portion of the Uinta Basin that dominates what is now Duchesne County was the last area around the Ashley National Forest that saw significant ranching activity. The basin's geography provides some ideal grazing conditions. The basin is nestled between the forested Uinta Mountain peaks to the north, and the semi-arid Tavaputs Plateau to the south. Runoff from these higher elevations feed into several small streams before uniting with the Strawberry and Duchesne Rivers that flow through the heart of the basin before making its way to the Green River. Before the waning decades of the nineteenth century, Native Americans dominated the basin's human history. Evidence of Fremont Indians exists throughout the Tavaputs Plateau, such as the petroglyph panels in Nine Mile Canyon. After the Fremont disappeared from the region around the 1300 A.D., Utes and Shoshones entered. The basin later became the permanent home for many Utes when the government created the Uintah Indian Reservation in 1861.

Even though few non-Indians made the Uinta Basin their home prior to the twentieth century, those that did recognized its grazing potential. As previously mentioned, Fathers Francisco Atanasio Dominguez and Silvestre Velez de Escalante travelled through the Uinta Basin in 1776 with the assistance of Ute guides. After crossing the Duchesne, Lake Fork, and Strawberry rivers, Escalante recorded, "There is good land along these three rivers that we crossed today, and plenty of it for farming with the aid of irrigation—beautiful poplar groves, fine pastures, timber and firewood not too far away, for three good settlements."[35] Despite Escalante's favorable opinion, the basin remained devoid of any permanent non-Indian settlements for well over a century. Trappers and explorers all temporarily stopped in the basin, but few stayed. The only exception was the trading post the Reed brothers and Antoine Robidoux established on the eastern end of the basin near the confluence of the Whiterocks and

[35] Quoted in Barton, *A History of Duchesne County*, 20.

Uinta Rivers. The trading post operated until about 1844 when Ute attacks forced Robidoux to abandon it.[36]

Robidoux's flight from the Uinta Basin proved that the Utes had a dominant, if not tenuous, hold over the entire region. Their superiority was challenged and began eroding once Mormon settlers entered the Great Basin in 1847. Although Brigham Young declined to settle the Uinta Basin, Mormons did encroach on the Ute homeland and popular grazing areas. Within a decade of the Mormon arrival, they established settlements around Utah Lake and in the Sanpete Valley, two major Ute strongholds. Although Young made overtures toward good relations with the Utes, several skirmishes broke out between the two parties. The Walker War of 1853 and 1854 was perhaps the most notable of these violent conflicts, resulting in scores of casualties on both sides. Brigham Young initially sought to diminish Ute hostilities by establishing Indian farms at Spanish Fork in Utah County, and Corn Creek in Millard County. The farms were designed to be a place for Utes to gather and learn Anglo-American farming methods. The farms failed to address the Utes primary concern, which was the loss of their open land.[37]

Government agents realized that the Indian farms were a wholly inadequate solution to the growing concerns of Utes and settlers alike. Indian populations were dwindling rapidly due to communicable diseases, lack of available water and land, and violent conflict. Mormon settlers were also rapidly encroaching on Ute homelands, further displacing the Utes. When Brigham Young turned down plans for any Uinta Basin colonies in 1861, Indian agents saw an opportunity to create a reservation there. The basin's relative isolation and Mormon leaders' lack of interest convinced these agents that the place was ideal for a Ute reservation. One Indian

[36] Barton, *A History of Duchesne County*, 31-34.
[37] Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place*, 110-117; Duncan, "The Northern Utes of Utah,"187-189; Barton, *A History of Duchesne County*, 44-48.

agent, Jacob Forney reported in 1859 that roughly 1,000 Utes were already residing in the basin.[38] In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln signed an executive order setting aside over two million acres in the Uinta Basin as an Indian reservation. Three years later Congress voted to confirm that order. Utah's Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Oliver H. Irish, with the assistance of Brigham Young, pushed many Ute leaders to cede their traditional homelands and relocate to an Indian reservation in the Uinta Basin during a council held at Spanish Fork in 1865.[39]

Although many Ute leaders agreed to relocate, others resisted government and Mormon pressures to do so. In the early 1860s several violent conflicts arose throughout Utah. Local and national leaders used them to further justify moving the Indians onto the reservation. On January 29, 1863, Colonel Patrick Conner and his California Volunteers stationed at Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City carried out a massacre of several hundred Shoshone along the Bear River near the present-day city of Preston, Idaho. Though Shoshones were not relocated to the Uintah Reservation, the incident left an indelible imprint on local Indian relations. Indian relations in Utah Territory further deteriorated after the creation of the Uintah Reservation with the outbreak of the Black Hawk War. Ute leader Black Hawk organized a series of raids against several Mormon communities throughout Utah between 1865 and 1868. Cattle and other livestock were often the primary targets during Black Hawk's raids. Mormon militias answered violence with violence, resulting in several casualties as a result of skirmishes and a few pitched battles.[40] The end of the Black Hawk War hastened the relocation of Utes throughout the Utah Territory.

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[38] Barton, *A History of Duchesne County*, 42.
[39] Duncan, "The Northern Utes of Utah," 189-190; Barton, *A History of Duchesne County*, 48-49.
[40] Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place*, 142-146; Mae Parry, "The Northwestern Shoshone," *A History of Utah's American Indians*, Forrest S. Cuch, ed. (Salt Lake City: Utah State Division of Indian Affairs and Utah State Division of History, 2000), 33-44; See also John Alton Peterson, *Utah's Black Hawk War* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998).

Grazing history within what would eventually be called the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation is significant since most of the ideal grazing lands later comprised a portion of the Ashley National Forest. The government did provide the Utes some communal livestock which were grazed on reservation lands, part of which is now part of the national forest. Indian agents stationed in the basin usually reported on efforts to grow Ute herds in their annual reports to the commissioner of Indian affairs. Most of these herds were used for the benefit of the entire Ute population. As a result, their reports were void of any specific individual Utes who grazed livestock. The agency did, however, report distributing a few small cattle herds to individual Ute families to watch over.[41]

Also, as previously reported, government Indian agent Pardon Dodds was one of the first non-Indians to use what is now national forest lands for grazing purposes. When Dodds was appointed as the first Indian agent for the Uintah Reservation in 1868, the Indian agency's headquarters were on the foot of Tabby Mountain, near where the town of Tabiona is, and was part of the Ashley National Forest until around 1966-1968. Dodds later moved the headquarters southeast to the confluence of Rock Creek and the Duchesne River, before moving it to a third location at Whiterocks, near the historic location of Fort Robidoux and a few miles south of the current Ashley National Forest border. While many Utes used the Strawberry Valley and other western portions of the reservation for hunting and camping, most Utes resided in close proximity to Whiterocks. Despite the new influx of Utes from throughout Utah, their population actually dropped to around 800 during the winter of 1872-73.[42] The reservation's population more than doubled when Uncompahgre and White River Utes from Colorado were also forced to

[41] T. A. Byrnes, United States Indian Agent, Uintah and Ouray Reservation, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1 September 1889, "Fifty-Eighth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1889 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), 279.
[42] Burton, *History of Uintah County*, 7; Barton, *History of Duchesne County*, 54-57.

move to the Uinta Basin following the Meeker Massacre. Many of these Colorado Utes had experience grazing large livestock herds.[43]

Despite the government's efforts to make the Uinta Basin a territory only for the benefit and use of Utes, non-Indians coveted reservation lands for grazing, some of which became a part of the Ashley National Forest. As more settlers flowed into the nearby Ashley Valley, ranchers from those communities encroached upon Indian lands since they were not overgrazed. Indian Agent J. F. Minniss reported to the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1883 that Pardon Dodds maintained a ranch on what was then reservation land. Additionally, as previously mentioned, A. C. Hatch had started a ranch on the reservation and intended to move "a large band of horses and cattle to this ranch" likely as part of the ranching company he founded.[44]

Those wanting to utilize Indian lands needed a permit from the federal government or faced a fine from the local government Indian agent. Historian Floyd A. O'Neil noted that residents from Heber, just west of the Uinta Basin, were illegally grazing on the reservation, likely in the Strawberry Valley, a part of which is now on the Ashley National Forest. Reports from the Indian agents at the Uintah Reservation to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs often referenced the difficulty they had enforcing grazing policies among non-Indian trespassers. For example, Indian agent Robert Waugh reported in 1890 that he sent B. B. Leamans to the Strawberry Valley to remove non-Indian ranchers and collect grazing taxes. Ultimately,

[43] Barton, *History of Duchesne County*, 57-58; Duncan, "The Northern Utes of Utah," 195-197.
[44] J. F. Minniss, United States Indian Agent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 13 August 1883, in "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1883," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883), 138.

Waugh's agency collected $2,175 in taxes and fines, although the specific violators were not reported.[45]

In 1899, Indian Agent H. P. Myton collected fines from the following non-Indian trespassers, some of whom came from the Ashley Valley: A. F. Adams who had 2,000 sheep, A. B. Adams who trespassed with 3,500 sheep, Heber and Thomas Barratt with 1,500 sheep, Andrew Austin with 2,300 sheep, Thomas Austin with 2,300 sheep, Enos [spelling of this surname is difficult to decipher on original source] with 4,000 sheep, W. E. French with 4,000 sheep, Clegg and Nelson with 4,500 sheep, W. H. Caldwell with 2,300 sheep, and Charles I. [spelling of this surname is difficult to decipher on original source] with 2,200 sheep. Although the fines did not identify where these trespassers' herds were found, some of the Ashley Valley residents identified, such as Caldwell, were known to graze in and around what is now the Ashley National Forest.[46]

Indian agents eventually opened bidding for a select group of permittees to range on the reservation after Indian leaders obtained permission from the Secretary of Interior to lease the land to non-Indians.[47] Preston Nutter was perhaps the most well-known permittee on the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation. Nutter had a lifelong love of horses, cattle, and the open range. He launched his ranching empire near Montrose, Colorado in the 1880s. By that time Nutter had served as a member of the Colorado State Legislature and operated a freighting company. After

[45] Robert Waugh, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in "Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1890," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890), 215. See also "Fifty-Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1888 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), 219; "Fifty-Eighth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1889 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), 279-280; and Duncan, "The Northern Utes of Utah," 199-200.

[46] Receipts for Paying Trespass Grazing Fees, 1899, Uintah and Ouray Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

[47] For the contemporary policy for obtaining grazing permits on Indian reservations, see "Fifty-Eighth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1889 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), 30-32.

selling his company in 1886, Nutter started his large commercial cattle operation out of Grand Junction, Colorado. Although he initially ranged his herds in the Colorado River regions of southeast Utah, Nutter was familiar with the Uinta Basin through supplying Fort Duchesne with beef. In 1892, Nutter bid $100 for the Strawberry Valley Range. The U. S. Department of Interior, however, rejected Nutter's bid and another $250 bid by Heber City resident James Clyde because they were too small. The following year Nutter formed the Strawberry Valley Cattle Company with the help of a New York businessman, Charles F. Homer, and other investors. The company acquired a five-year lease permit to graze on the Strawberry Valley region of the Uintah and Ouray Indian reservation. The 1893 Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs identified a five-year lease permit to graze on 675,000 acres on the western end of the Strawberry Valley. The permit was awarded to "Chas. F. Homer, of New York," for $7,100 per year. Homer's bid was accepted over those from White and Sons Company of Salt Lake City, James Clyde, and J. T. McConnel. Homer later sold that lease directly to the Strawberry Valley Cattle Company. The Strawberry Valley Cattle Company extended its lease for another year in 1898 at the same rate of $7,100. During that time, Nutter used the Strawberry Valley in the summer months, and then moved his cattle down to the warmer Arizona Strip during the winter months.

Red Moon, an Uncompahgre Ute who grazed hundreds of horses in the Strawberry Valley, confronted Nutter on one occasion over the boundaries of the territory he was allowed to graze. W. Jones Bowen, a man who worked for Nutter, remembered the cattleman ranging his herds in, "those lands in the former Uintah Indian Reservation that drained from the west and south sides in to the Duchesne River including from the West Fork of the Duchesne around to Anthro Mountain," which is part of the Strawberry Valley region of the Ashley National Forest.

After his lease expired, Nutter moved to Nine Mile Canyon, between Price and Myton, making that location the headquarters of his entire operation. Even after the Ashley National Forest was established, Nutter continued to use the forest's land to graze his large cattle herds, though he initially resisted following Forest Service grazing regulations. William Mitchell Anderson, Ashley's first supervisor, recalled a few run-ins with Nutter.[48]

After the Strawberry Valley Cattle Company's lease expired, the government awarded more grazing permits. The 1900 Commissioner of Indian Affairs report identified three more five-year grazing leases to "Charles S. Carter, 280,000 acres, annual rent $7,000; James W. Clyde, 320,000 acres, annual rent $8,275; Murdock and Clyde, 100,000 acres, annual rent $3,205.[49] Tim Glenn and Laura Hutchings also identified other ranchers in the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation around the turn of the twentieth century. Daniel Gull, working for B. F. Saunders, paid Preston Nutter to graze sheep on his Strawberry Valley lease in 1896. John Austin and the Heber Land and Livestock Company reportedly leased land to graze 150 to 200 thousand sheep on the south and west sides of the Duchesne River, which might have included

[48] Virginia N. Price and John T. Darby, "Preston Nutter: Utah Cattleman, 1886-1936," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 32, No. 3 (1964): 232-252; Craig Woods Fuller, "Land Rush in Zion: Opening of the Ucompahgre and Uintah Indian Reservations," (Ph.D. Dissertation: Brigham Young University, 1990), 92-111; Robert Waugh, Indian Agent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 10 July 1893, "Sixty-Second Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1893," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), 318; Glenn and Hutchings, "Historical Grazing on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests," 33-34; W. Jones Bowen quoted in Glenn and Hutchings, "Historical Grazing on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests," 34; "Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898: Indian Affairs," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), 59; William Anderson "William Anderson-Ashley National Forest First Forest Supervisor" (Vernal: Ashley National Forest, n. d.), pp. 4-6, http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsm9_002322.pdf, Accessed 13 June 2012; Cristina Bailey, "Preston Nutter," (Vernal: Ashley National Forest, August 2004), http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsm9_002238.pdf, Accessed 13 June 2012; Cristina Bailey, Tami Merkley, and Byron Loosle, "William Mitchell Anderson: First Ashley National Forest Supervisor," (Vernal: Ashley National Forest, 2003), pp. 1, 11-15, http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsm9_002076.pdf, Accessed 13 June 2012.

[49] "Annual Reports of the Department of Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1900: Indian Affairs, Report of the Commissioner and Appendixes," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900), 80.

the southwest Uinta Mountain portion of the Ashley National Forest and the same range used by Nutter.[50]

The opening decade of the twentieth century ushered in dramatic changes to the Uinta Basin. The Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation's territory was reduced to open up more land inside the basin for non-Indians and protect the forested lands in the highlands surrounding the basin. Policy makers in Washington sowed the seeds for the reservation's diminished area several years earlier. The General Allotment Act of 1887, also known as the Dawes Act after Senate Indian Committee Chairman Henry L. Dawes of Massachusetts, allowed the federal government to sell portions of reservation lands to non-Indians. The Act was part of a federal policy to end communal reservation lands and encourage private Indian land-ownership and agriculture. The government distributed pieces of the reservation to individual Indian families and all the excess land was then placed in the public domain and opened to homesteaders. In the years following passage of the Dawes Act, 111,000 acres were distributed to Ute families, with over 300,000 more acres reserved for hunting, grazing, resource development, and reclamation. The rest of the reservation, over a million acres, was then made available through the public land office. The available land, mostly desirable for agriculture and grazing, started a land rush to the Duchesne River Valley in 1905.[51]

The federal government also implemented policies to conserve public lands in danger of overuse and exploitation. Many government officials were concerned about the rapid population growth, excessive timber harvesting, and overgrazing of America's forests. The Forest Reserve Act of 1891 granted the president of the United States power to establish forest reserves, which became the forerunners to the U. S. Forest Service and national forests. In 1905, President

[50] Glenn and Hutchings, "Historical Grazing on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests," 28, 33-34.
[51] Duncan, "The Northern Utes of Utah," 202-206; Barton, *History of Duchesne County*, 95-110.

Roosevelt expanded the boundary of the Uintah Forest Reserve to include the southern slope of the Uinta Mountains, which later became a major portion of the Ashley National Forest. Over a million acres of the forest's expansion came directly from the Indian reservation, restricting the Ute's access to some of their prime grazing sites in the Uinta Mountains.[52]

The General Allotment Act and the expansion of the forest reserve prompted protests and legal challenges both nationally and locally. The United States Supreme Court affirmed the federal government's authority to disperse tribal lands in their 1903 decision, *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock.* A group of 321 Utes, under the leadership of Red Cap, protested the loss of their grazing and hunting lands and left the reservation with 1,100 horses and about 50 cattle in 1906. They hoped to find refuge with the Sioux in South Dakota. Two years later the dejected Utes returned to the Uinta Basin since the Sioux were not able to accommodate them and they were unable to make a living in South Dakota.[53]

The Utes also filed several legal challenges over their original land rights. Copies of several documents from these challenges are found in the U. S. Forest Service's Region 4 Office History Collection in Ogden, Utah. One of the rights the Utes wanted restored was access to grazing lands on the Ashley National Forest. One of those documents, the minutes of a council held between United States Indian Inspector James McLaughlin and members of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation on May 18, 1903, identified the names of individual Utes who worried about the loss of rangelands. One of the Utes attending the council, Wanrodes, said he and Henry Harris, David Copperfield, John Duncan and others used the mountains for their horses to graze. He also claimed to personally range cattle along Rock Creek and north of the Strawberry

[52] Duncan, "The Northern Utes of Utah," 207-208; Barton, *History of Duchesne County,* 143-144.
[53] Duncan, "The Northern Utes of Utah," 205-206; Barton, *History of Duchesne County,* 96-97; Floyd O'Neil, "An Anguished Odyssey: The Flight of the Utes, 1906-1908," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (Fall 1968): 315-327.

River.[54] Other documents point to a 1906 agreement between the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation that allowed the tribe to graze 1,200 head in the forest reserve without a fee in exchange for rite of passage for non-Indian grazers that needed to pass through the reservation to reach their permitted territory within the forest. Acting Indian Agent, Captain C. V. Hall, wrote to the U. S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs and identified the following Utes who were allowed to graze on the forest reserve: Henry E. Harris, Rose Daniels, Nephi Lehi, Bob Ridley, John Duncan, Big Tom, Uncle Sam, Jim Atwine, Charley Mack, William Wash, Tooroorooso, Square John, John Starr, Pearank, Terras, James Randlett, Frank Bannocky, Grace Wash, Joe Arhi, Rough, Green Stick, Bill Woods, Tapoots, Mountain Sheep, Towanta, Wanrodes, Sokmikent, Bill, Joe Henry Kodge, Joe Bush, Tonegats, Jasper Pike, and Jesse Copperfield.[55]

As a result of the General Allotment Act, several non-Indian communities were established in the Uinta Basin after 1905. The rapid growth also led to the creation of Duchesne County, Utah. Although grazing and agriculture were prominent industries within the new county, they lie beyond the scope of this report since it occurred after the forest reserve was established.

[54] Minutes of Council Held at Uintah Agency, Whiterocks, Utah, by James McLaughlin, United States Indians Inspector, with the Uinta and White River Ute Indians belonging on the Uinta Reservation, Utah, in documents for *The Ute Indian Tribe v. The State of Utah, Duchesne County, et al.*, Folder 2, Box 81, R4-1680-2009-015, Ute Tribe Court Cases, Region 4 Office History Collection, U. S. Forest Service, Ogden, Utah.

[55] Captain C. V. Hall, Acting U. S. Indian Agent, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 10 May 1906, book 1, box 71, R4-1680-2007-0033, Uintah and Ouray Indian Case, 1906-1978, Region 4 Office History Collection, U. S. Forest Service, Ogden, Utah.

DAGGETT COUNTY

Although Daggett County was initially part of Uintah County, it remains an isolated area separated by the Uinta Mountains and the Green River canyons, which make access to the Ashley Valley difficult. The county is best reached from the southern Wyoming plains where overland trails brought thousands of emigrants and livestock westward. The two major grazing areas in Daggett County were the Henry's Fork River drainage and Brown's Park. As mentioned previously, several explorers and trappers penetrated the country throughout the eighteenth century, attracted by its availability of small streams, timber, and grasslands. George Y. Bradley, who accompanied John Wesley Powell in his 1869 expedition, noted that the region where the Green River connected with Henry's Fork could support vast herds of cattle. He claimed that over a thousand head of cattle wintered in the valley the previous year.[56] Although few settlements were established in this region, some homesteaders and squatters came for its ranching potential.

Henry's Fork was the first area of Daggett County utilized for ranching. The Henry's Fork River skirts the northern edge of the Utah and Wyoming border before emptying into the Green River at Flaming Gorge. The river is fed by many small tributaries that have their headwaters in the high Uinta Mountains, currently on national forest land. Throughout the nineteenth century, small ranching operations ran their cattle throughout the Henry's Fork drainage and into the northern benches of the Uintas. Judge William Carter ran a very large cattle operation near Fort Bridger. He opposed Mormon jurisdiction of the range and successfully lobbied to remove the Green River area from Utah Territory, transferring it to

[56] George Y. Bradley, journal, 30 May 1869, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 15 (1947): 32.

Wyoming. Carter's massive herds of Oregon shorthorns and Texas longhorns reportedly started several smaller operations along Henry's Fork.[57]

Jack Robinson, Phil Mass, Jim and John Baker, and Ike Edwards were also among the first to ranch cattle in this region near the Ashley National Forest.[58] Mass had a ranch near the modern town of Manila on Montoya Meadows. His stock had a winter range on Phil Pico, ten miles west of Manila and summer range north on Phil Mass Mountain, southeast of Lyman, Wyoming. Phil Pico was initially part of the Ashley National Forest until it was transferred to the State of Utah around 1966-1968.[59] Robinson also wintered his stock along Henry's Fork, as did many who lived in the Green River and Fort Bridger areas of southwest Wyoming.[60] During the closing decades of the nineteenth century, a few individuals living in those areas of Wyoming registered their brands in Utah, an indication that they ranged their livestock in Utah, likely on the Ashley National Forest lands in Daggett County. The ranchers involved included Green River residents James Gadsden, Ambroise Merrier, and W. B. Land.[61]

After Philip Mass made his permanent home in the Henry's Fork area, others soon followed. George "Dutchy" Stoll, Elijah "Lidge" Driskell, and George Finch settled the region in the late 1860s. Driskell and Stoll were former soldiers under Col. Patrick Conner, who carried

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[57] Dick Dunham and Vivian Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country: The Story of Daggett County, Utah* (Denver, Colorado: Eastwood Print and Pub., 1978), 97-98; Michael W. Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County: A Modern Frontier* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1998), 84.

[58] Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 82; Dunham and Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country*, 101-106.

[59] Dunham and Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country*, 81; Ashley National Forest. "History of the Forest." http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet/!ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gjAwhwtDDw9_AI8zPyhQoY6BdkOyoCAGixyPg!/?ss=110401&navtype=BROWSEBYSUBJECT&cid=STELPRDB5123073&navid=150140000000000&pnavid=150000000000000&position=Feature*&ttype=detail&pname=Ashley%20National%20Forest-%20History%20&%20Culture, accessed 12 July 2012.

[60] Dunham and Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country*, 98-101.

[61] *Book of Recorded Marks and Brands: Embracing all the Marks and Brands Recorded from December 9, 1874 to December 31, 1884* (Salt Lake City: Salt Lake Herald Job Department, 1885), 52, 126; Utah Brand Book, January 1885 to December 1888, 64. According to Michael W. Johnson, et al. Abroise Messier had a homestead on Henry's Fork. Though Merrier and Messier are likely the same person, the actual spelling of his name is difficult to determine. See Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 87.

out the Bear River Massacre. Finch was the half-Shoshone stepson of Driskell. Driskell and Finch started a cattle ranch near the mouth of Henry's Fork in 1868 and later founded a horse ranch at Birch Springs in Dry Valley. Stoll brought his family and forty cows to Burnt Fork, near Philip Mass, the next year.[62] Over the waning decades of the nineteenth century, other homesteaders in the Henry's Fork region of Daggett County included: Shadrach "Shade" Large, Charley Davis, William Large, Henry Perry, Robert Hereford, Zeb Edwards, Garibaldi Gamble, George Solomon Benjamin Hill, Adam Stillwell, Joe Steinaker, James Widdop, Charles Wyman, Clark Logan, Bill Felshaw, Frank Easton, Si Eardley, Alec Hayden, Jimmy Hauser, Bill Harvey, and Dave Washam.[63] John Mackey was also a prominent rancher after he bought out many of the smaller sheep ranchers in 1906. These newcomers' proximity to the Ashley National Forest creates the distinct possibility that their cattle ranged on future Forest Service land, although there is little specific evidence to situate them precisely.[64]

Brown's Park was perhaps the most popular grazing spot within the region. Although only a small portion on the valley's western edge is on the Ashley National Forest, the valley became an important location for the entire region's grazing history, and a starting point for many ranchers who took livestock onto the forest. The park straddles the current borders of Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming. The open narrow valley where the Green River exits out of Flaming Gorge became a refuge for wildlife and people alike. Although Shoshones and Utes had frequented the valley for centuries, the first non-Indians to use Brown's Park were trappers who used it for caching supplies and for rendezvous. Brown's Park also became a popular stopping

[62] Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 85; Dunham and Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country*, 106-107. Burnt Fork has its headwaters along the border of the Ashley National Forest and the Uintah-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Birch Springs starts on Phil Pico, which is now outside of Ashley National Forest.
[63] Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 86-88.
[64] Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 97-98.

point for drivers taking herds into California throughout the 1850s. W. A. Peril, for example, wintered 1,100 Texas longhorns in 1854 before pressing on the California Trail through Fort Bridger.[65] During the last half of the nineteenth century, Brown's Park became a gathering spot for an eclectic group of homesteaders, squatters, commercial ranchers, and outlaws.

When John Wesley Powell made his second trip down the Green River in 1871, his crew noticed several people using the valley for grazing cattle. Several ranchers used the park to winter their cattle. Captain Francis Marion Bishop recorded running into men named Bacon and Harrell that ran an "immense herd of cattle" of nearly 8,500 head in Brown's Park. Col. J. J. Meyers planned to winter 3,000 head along the Green River Basin near Brown's Park that same winter. Additionally, George Baggs grazed about 900 head between Brown's Park and Evanston during the winter. Baggs sold that herd to William Crawford, who, along with J. S. Hoy, wintered them again at the park in 1872. Hoy also recorded Texans Asa and Hugh Adair, Mr. Keiser, and Mr. Gibson wintering their longhorns in Brown's Park. W. G. Tittsorth was another overland herder that took advantage of the park's shelter during the winter of 1874-75.[66]

Large commercial companies and family-owned operations drew herds of various sizes to the park. Frank Goodman, who was part of the first Powell expedition, returned to settle in Brown's Park. J. S. Hoy and Valentine had unfulfilled aspirations to run a large operation on the park's east side. John Jarvie, whose ranch is still maintained as a historic site, started a small store and ferry crossing on the Green River. John's son Tom Jarvie, who maintained the family's ranch after his father's death in 1909, had permits to range on the Ashley National Forest, once being cited for overstocking his allotment. Albert "Speck" Williams and Tom Davenport, both

[65] Don D. Walker, "Longhorns Come to Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 137.
[66] Charles Kelly, ed., "Captain Francis Marion Bishop's Journal, August 15, 1870-June 3, 1872," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 15 (1947): 170; Walker, "Longhorns Come to Utah," 137-139; Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 84.

African Americans, ran Jarvie's ferry for several years. Billy Tittsworth, Charlie Crouse and Aaron Overholt started a horse ranch on upper Pot Creek. Ralph Chew ran cattle along the Green River in Brown's Park between 1902 and 1904. He delivered them to the Green Cattle Company at Slater, Wyoming, north of Cheyenne so they could be marketed. Years later, Ralph bought 560-570 head of sheep, and 60-70 cows, which he summer ranged further south on Blue Mountain. Jimmie Reed, Auguste Archambeult, Dr. John Parsons, James Warren, Griff and Jack Edwards, Jimmy Goodson, Harry Hindle, Herbert and Elizabeth Bassett, George Law, Isom Dart and others all made Brown's Park their home in the late 1800s and early 1900s.[67]

Greendale was a small ranching community on the west side of Brown's Park that now lies entirely on the Ashley National Forest. Lewis Allen was the first settler in Greendale, but later moved to Vernal in 1893. The town's namesake was William Riley Green, who, along with his sons Sanford, John and William, homesteaded there around the turn of the century. Even after Greendale was added to the national forest, some continued to settle the region under the provisions of the 1906 National Forest Homestead Act. For example, Sanford Green successfully filed for a homestead on July 4, 1907. The Swett family also homesteaded in Greendale and operated a ranch on Forest Service land throughout most of the twentieth century. Elizabeth Ellen Swett and her son James Swett both filed for nearby homesteads in 1909 near the Forest Service's Green River Ranger Station. Elizabeth filed for the homestead on behalf of her son, Oscar, who was too young to own his own homestead, being only eighteen at the time.

[67] Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 89-93; Earnest C. Hirsch, interviewed by Thomas G. Alexander, 10 April 1984, Jackson, Wyoming, p. 9, Box 10, R4-1680-92-0024-91, Region 4 Office History Collection, U. S. Forest Service, Ogden, Utah; Ralph Chew, interviewed by Roy Webb, 12 January 1978, Folder 1, Uintah Basin Oral History Project, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Oscar, along with his wife Emma Eliza Osiek and nine children, ran the ranch until 1968, just a few years after the completion of the Flaming Gorge Dam.[68]

The current town of Dutch John, which was built for workers involved with constructing the Flaming Gorge Dam in the 1950s, also lies entirely on the Ashley National Forest on the western portion of Brown's Park. The community was named after John Honselena, a horse trader that moved there in the early 1860s and ranged in the area around Red Canyon and Summit Springs. Local historians Dick and Vivian Dunham suggested Honselena was killed by a posse from the Ashley Valley when he was caught trying to steal Ike Burton's stock on Diamond Mountain, although they do not specify when that event occurred.[69]

Honselena's possible tragic end while caught stealing cattle is but one small footnote in Brown's Park's colorful history for accommodating outlaws. The park's relative seclusion and proximity to other popular grazing areas made it the ideal hideout for many rustlers. These bandits gathered stray and stolen livestock into the park and often used the nearby hills to graze their ill-gotten herds. Briant Stringham recalled that his father switched from herding cattle to sheep because of the constant threat from thieves operating in the area.[70]

Cleophas J. Dowd was one of those early ranchers on the Ashley National Forest land who had a reputation of suspicious behavior. Dowd reportedly made his way to Brown's Park in the 1870s or 1880s after shooting a man in a California saloon. Dowd squatted in the western edge of Brown's Park, near Greendale, Sheep Creek Canyon and further west where the mountain that bears his name lies on the Ashley National Forest. Dowd also ran several fine

[68] Swett Family Oral Histories, 1989-1991, Special Collections, Utah State University, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan; Eric G. Swedin, "The Swett Homestead: An Oral History, 1909-1970," (Master's Thesis: Utah State University, 1991); Carolyn Toone, "Our Mountain Home: The Oscar and Emma Swett Ranch," (Master's Thesis: Utah State University, 2010); Lynne Ingram, "History of the Greendale Area," Flaming Gorge Ranger District, May 1995, Ashley National Forest Office, Vernal, Utah.

[69] Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 88, 211-212; Dunham and Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country*, 92-93; Van Cott, *Utah Place Names*, 119.

[70] B. H. Stringham, interview, 10 August 1977, Uintah Oral History Project.

horses and mules in the area and protected his territory with his sharp shooting. Zeb Edwards, who was an early resident of the Henry's Fork region, was one of Dowd's most trusted friends. Some of his horses were rumored to have found their way in the hands of the infamous Wild Bunch and the Powder Springs Gang. Dowd was also suspected to be friends with Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, and involved in the Wild Bunch's illicit activities in the region. Dowd was later murdered in 1897 by Charles Reaser, who had worked for him.[71]

Other notorious and infamous characters operated out of the Brown's Park region. Tip Gault was an outlaw who led a gang of thieves that used the park to hide stock taken from emigrant trains passing through on nearby trails. Gault was later killed by a Wyoming rancher named Hawley who he had victimized. Other Brown's Park rustlers caught in the act were met with swift frontier justice, such as Henry Skaggs and Charley Powers. Another one of the park's first residents was Juan Jose Herrera, also known as "Mexican Joe," who had a history of cattle rustling, getting into fights, and even organized an armed resistance group known as "Las Gorras Blancas" against Anglo ranchers in New Mexico. Juan and his brother Pablo reportedly lived in Brown's Park intermittently since the 1850s. Asbury B. Conway, a friend of Herrera, came to the park in 1871. Conway lived on both sides of the law. He was an attorney by trade, but also had a habit of collecting other ranchers' cattle. After he left the park, he became the Chief Justice of the Wyoming Supreme Court in 1897. In the late 1870s, Matt Warner, who worked as ranch hand for Jim Warren's ranch on Diamond Mountain, recalled Warren accumulating several unbranded cattle and providing some to his hands in exchange for their silence.[72] Conner Basin, which is located on the Henry's Fork region of the Ashley National Forest, is named for two

[71] Dunham and Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country*, 279-283, 351-52; Ingram, "History of the Greendale Area," 1; Van Cott, *Utah Place Names*, 115. Ashley National Forest Landmarks Dowd Mountain, Dowd Hole, and Dowd Creek are all named for Cleophas J. Dowd.
[72] Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 89-91, 105-111.

brothers, Sam and Al Conner, who were horse thieves who ranged in the area south of Phil Pico. The two were killed there in the small basin by a local posse.[73] John Jarvie was also murdered on July 8, 1909 by men from Rock Springs who robbed and ransacked his store. Jarvie's body was found in a boat eight days later and twenty-five miles down the Green River.[74]

Range wars also motivated small Brown's Park ranchers to steal from larger commercial operations who threatened to take over their range. For example, in the 1870s, the Middlesex Land and Cattle Company from Wyoming tried to force out several small ranchers. Few of the park's ranchers sold out to Middlesex, even after threats of violence. Jack and Griff Edwards were two that did sell, but they used the money from their cattle to buy a large sheep herd to strip the grass north of the park to make a natural barrier in an effort to slow the company's encroachment into the valley. Some smaller ranchers like J. S. Hoy, Charley Crouse, and Billy Tittsworth retaliated by taking cattle from the company. Elizabeth Bassett, Madison "Matt" Rash and Isom Dart also took stock from Ora Haley's Two Bar Ranch, which approached the park from Colorado. Before Dart settled in Brown's Park, he was an outlaw under the name of Ned Huddleston. In 1900, Matt Rash was found dead from two gunshot wounds in his cabin on Cold Spring Mountain. Dart was killed shortly thereafter, while other small ranchers soon left the area. The park also became a battleground for the often violent clashes between sheep and cattlemen. The Snake River Stock Growers Association used extralegal means to clear sheep off of range which they felt entitled to within Brown's Park.[75]

The most notorious residents of Brown's Park were Butch Cassidy, Elza Lay, "Sundance Kid" Harry Longbaugh, and Matt Warner, who comprised a band of outlaws known as the "Wild

[73] Van Cott, *Utah Place Names*, 89; Dunham and Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country*, 95-96.
[74] Dunham and Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country*, 283; "Open a New Door, See the Past: John Jarvie Historic Property," promotional pamphlet, Vernal Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, Vernal, Utah.
[75] Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 92, 96-99, 111-115.

Bunch." Brown's Park was one of many hideouts used by the infamous bandits along the "Outlaw Trail." The park's other settlers provided safe haven for the gang and were often rewarded for their assistance. For example, the Wild Bunch provided a share of stolen goods transported from Rock Springs, Wyoming to Vernal to John Jarvie, who operated a small store and ferry across the Green River. Jarvie later distributed the booty to other residents. The Wild Bunch's outreach to local residents paid off, and Brown's Park became a reliable hideout for them to conduct their illicit operations.[76]

While Daggett County attracted people of all stripes, ranching was the activity that tied all of them together. Henry's Fork and Brown's Park, portions of which are now part of the Ashley National Forest, were well-suited for small family-owned operations and large commercial operations, cattlemen and sheepmen, legitimate businessmen and outlaws. Though conflicts inevitably arose, each group was able to carve a small niche on the open range. From their small towns and homesteads, these ranchers of all types utilized the area in and around the Ashley National Forest.

[76] Johnson, et al., *A History of Daggett County*, 115-118.

THE ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST

Grazing history in northeastern Utah was forever altered in the early twentieth century, as it was throughout the entire country. As previously reported, the president of the United States had the authority to establish forest reserves as a result of the Forest Reserve Act of 1891. Over the next several years, the federal government began implementing grazing regulations to protect the forests. Several forest regions throughout Utah in particular were increasingly vulnerable to overgrazing and were therefore set aside as forest reserves in the century's first decade. The area that now comprises the Ashley National Forest began as the Uintah Forest Reserve in 1897. The forest reserve greatly increased its territory when a presidential proclamation added over a million acres from the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation in 1905. The Ashley National Forest was officially designated in 1908, which at the time comprised the south and east facing slopes of the Uinta Mountains. The next big change in the forest's territory came in the mid-twentieth century when the northwest slopes overlooking the Strawberry River Valley and the Avintaquin Creek drainage, were taken from Uinta National Forest in 1953. Flaming Gorge was also added in 1968, after the dam's completion.[77] Forest Service sources during the first decade of the twentieth century identify several individuals and groups that ranged their livestock on the Ashley.

Because overgrazing was one primary motivation for establishing the national forests, the Forest Service's chief grazing officer Albert Potter went to Utah in 1902 to assess the land conditions first hand. Potter spent most of his time touring the Wasatch Ranges that now encompass Uinta, Wasatch, Cache, Manti, Fishlake, and Dixie national forests. Although he did

[77] Ashley National Forest. "History of the Forest." http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet/!ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gjAwhwtDDw9_AI8zPyhQoY6BdkOyoCAGixyPg!/?ss=110401&navtype=BROWSEBYSUBJECT&cid=STELPRDB5123073&navid=150140000000000&pnavid=150000000000000&position=Feature*&ttype=detail&pname=Ashley%20National%20Forest-%20History%20&%20Culture, Accessed 12 July 2012.

not tour the main portion of the Ashley National Forest in the Uinta Mountains, he did briefly venture into the Strawberry Valley portion of the forest on August 7 and 8. Potter noticed a considerable change in the rangeland once he crossed the border into what was then part of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation. Lease restrictions kept the reservation's land protected from overgrazing in stark contrast to the unregulated, and heavily trampled lands on the outside. He recorded in his journal, "There is good grass and plenty of weeds and browse. The country shows the difference restriction of grazing makes in range conditions."[78]

While there he ran into several ranchers who received permits to graze both sheep and cattle on the Indian Reservation. Potter noted that some of the reservation lands were leased by Heber Stockman, and a "Mr. Chas. Carter." He also mentioned running into a Mr. Clyde who was "dipping a band of sheep under the direction of Mr. ___ and Mr. Townsend, inspectors of the Bureau of Animal Industry." He later stopped by the camp of Mr. Adamson, who was running 3,000 sheep on a seven to eight square mile range on the reservation. Potter noted that the dry weather reduced the feed supply, and as a result the "Sheep were not looking extra well."[79]

After Potter's sojourn in Utah's forests, the government created new grazing regulations that directly affected those in and around what is now the Ashley National Forest. The *Vernal Express* reported several of the permit process changes. Many of the changes were to identify who was grazing on the forest reserve, as well as restrict permitted herd sizes and range areas. The *Express* informed its readers on December 20, 1902 that the government would divide the forest range, allowing separate areas for cattle and sheep. These restrictions were likely

[78] Albert F. Potter, "Diary of Albert F. Potter, Former Associate Chief of Forest Service: July 1, 1902-November 22, 1902," pp. 13-14 (entries for 7-8 August 1902), Special Collections, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan.
[79] Potter, "Diary of Albert F. Potter," 13-14. The name "Mr. ___" appears in the original source.

implemented to avoid conflict between the two groups.[80] A week later, on December 27, 1902 the paper stated that the local Wool Growers Association would be eliminated from issuing permits, which would now be given under the direction of the Supervisor of the Uintah Forest Reserve.[81] The following spring, when ranchers were preparing to take their herds into the reserve, the *Express* published a letter from Forest Supervisor D. S. Marshall stating that those wishing to range on the reserve would need to complete the proper application and make sure their herds do not exceed the stated size on the permit. Permittees were also required to report any violators of the new regulations.[82]

Despite the new regulations, several individuals applied for and received permits for their livestock to graze on the forest reserve. As previously reported, many early ranchers in the forest continued to range their herds there, such as Briant H. Stringham, Preston Nutter, and the Jarvie Family. Information about early permits provides a good clue as to who was ranging within Ashley National Forest prior to its creation. The *Vernal Express* reported on July 4, 1903, that the following Vernal sheep growers received permits on what was then the Uintah Forest Reserve, some of whom have already been mentioned in this report: Frank Steinaker, F. L. Young, John A. Workman, H. W. Woolley, Park Livestock Company, Joseph Engberson, George A. Perry, John S. Hacking, Joseph P. Hacking, William Beeler, A. A. Hatch, W. L. Allen, J. H. Mease, George C. Jalins, W. E. French, Willard Williams, William Wotbeck, Geo. W. Pack, W. H. Burton, W. P. Coltharp, John C. Bates, Geo. D. Merkley, Walter M. McCoy, W. H. Siddoway, James Hacking, Enos Bennion, E. D. Samuels, W. G. Caldwell, Louis Kabell, S.

[80] "Division of the Range," *Vernal Express*, 20 December 1902.
[81] "Rules Governing Reserve," *Vernal Express*, 27 December 1902.
[82] "D. S. Marshall Writes to Forest Ranger Sylvanus Collett," *Vernal Express*, 5 May 1903.

R. Bennion, Owen Bennion.[83] The Ashley National Forest Main Office in Vernal also has copies of permits dating back to the forest's initial years. John H. and Edward Evans of Vernal received permits to graze their herd of cattle and a dozen horses between 1903 and 1905.[84] Additionally, the U. S. Forest Service issued permits to Boneta residents F. W. Bench, Taylor Tidwell, and Ed Stewart to graze their small cattle herds in 1910 and 1911.[85]

The new grazing restrictions implemented by the Forest Service did create some conflicts with ranchers accustomed to the unregulated open range. Preston Nutter, for example, resented being told how to run his large operation by Ashley's first forest supervisor, William Anderson. Anderson, however, refused to be intimidated by Nutter and his men, who eventually accepted his authority.[86] Other rangers developed good relations with those ranching in the forest. Dan Pack, who was a ranger on the Uinta National Forest in the early 1900s, recalled a close association with Jim Phelps who ran a large cattle operation at Beaver Creek, not far from Kamas. Pack patrolled the forest in and around the Grandaddy Lakes area, now in Ashley National Forest, and it is likely that Phelps ran cattle in the region as well.[87] Over time, ranchers complied with the Forest Service's grazing restrictions, and accepted the ranger's authority to enforce them.

When the Ashley National Forest was established by President Theodore Roosevelt on July 1, 1908, its purpose was to conserve the resources and natural beauty that John Wesley Powell had recognized when he explored the region four decades before. The phrase "Land of

[83] "Move Onto the Reserve," *Vernal Express*, 4 July 1903.
[84] Grazing permits for John H. and Edward Evans, 1903-105, Historical Info for establishing diligence or WUC rights on Ashley N'/F, Ashley National Forest Office, Vernal, Utah.
[85] Grazing Permits for F. W. Bench, Taylor Tidwell, and Ed Stewart of Beneta, 1910-1911, Grazing Permits, History Grazing File, Archeologist File cabinet, Ashley National Forest, Vernal, Utah.
[86] Anderson "William Anderson-Ashley National Forest First Forest Supervisor," 4-6.
[87] Dan Pack, autobiography, 1946, Box 74, R4-1680-2008-0078, Region 4 Office History Collection, U. S. Forest Service, Ogden, Utah.

Many Uses" can be found on the signs welcoming people to Ashley National Forest. Grazing is one of those many uses still ongoing within the forest. The forest's history, however, illustrates how many people used the forest for grazing. Prior to 1908, many of the ranchers appreciated the availability of open land because it allowed them to range their livestock without holding titles to large land tracts. Many of them came from communities and homesteads just outside the forest, but followed the streams and open meadows that led onto the forest. The unregulated open range threatened to deplete the grasses or unalterably damage the land, making it unusable for future ranchers. Many generations that followed the first ranchers of the late nineteenth century continue their family's legacy by using the forested rangelands in and around the Ashley National Forest.