Castle Valley America
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They asked me if I would go down and find it [the uranium deposit] with my geiger counter, and find it I did. It made them so happy they put my name on the claims. . . . We mined five tons of ore, slid 200 pounds at a time down a rocky slope in a tin bath tub to the place where we loaded it into a truck. Now, that doesn’t sound like much, but by the time we got through we didn’t ever want to try it again.¹
—Owen McClenahan, businessman and author

World War II ushered in another chapter in Castle Valley’s saga of extractive industry. The American military machine needed more and more minerals to fight Nazism, Fascism, and later the Communist threat. Castle Valley had plenty—some known, some forgotten. The transition from a diversified economy—stock-raising, farming, and mining—to almost complete mining domination marked the mid-twentieth century, spurred by the Great Depression, intensified by World War II, and solidified during the Cold War. Particularly World War II firmly entrenched new, government-sponsored corporations that gradually acquired local wagon mines (now truck mines) and bent Castle Valley industry to national requirements and distant market demands, ignoring local ramifications. After the war, as America sought to build bigger and bigger bombs, people explored Castle Valley in the heat of uranium fever, a siren for many, a chimera for most.

Once America entered World War II, virtually everyone worked, and they worked a lot longer. To fuel outside factories working around the clock, coal production doubled: from 3,576,000 short tons in 1940, to 7,119,000 short tons four years later. Coal miners got deferments because industry needed fuel and mines put on extra shifts. The fourteen small mines in Huntington Canyon formed a cooperative (in a traditional pattern) to handle large orders. To get their output to market as gas rationing took hold, men constructed a new route, known as the Burma Road for
its sharp curves and steep grades, to connect with the nearest railhead at Mohrland. As Vernon Leamaster wrote, “The building of this road again brought out the cooperation of the mine operators as they had to arrange for the maintenance of the road after it was completed.” The Leamaster and Co-op mines in Huntington Canyon even received federal and state permission to run diesel-powered equipment underground—an apparent first for Castle Valley, and an application so uncommon that it remained without federal safety standards until the late 1990s.²

Individuals were also affected. After working a lifetime in the mines, Slovenian immigrant Frank Kraync, Sr., had retired at age sixty, considered too old to mine. Then World War II started. “At age sixty-five,” joked his daughter, Hilda Kraync Yoklovich, “he was no longer too old to work—he was young again. The Standard Coal Company hired him, and he worked there until his retirement at the age of seventy.”³ Clifford Smith, a long-time miner raised on a farm near Wattis who had been blackballed after the Strike of 1933, was welcomed back in the coal and learned to run the hoist that pulled the cars in and out of the mine. “The war was going full blast,” he remembered, so “I had to run enough coal to have empty cars for the night shift to load. . . . I worked 16 to 19 hours a day until 1947.”⁴ This grueling schedule “caused a considerable increase in accidents,” remembered Dr. J. Eldon Dorman, who had arrived as company doctor for Consumers in 1937 and gone on to specialize in ophthalmology. “I saw many severe eye, head, and facial injuries as a result of this mad effort to mine more coal at all costs.”⁵ Underweight and therefore unable to get into the military in World War II, “Doc” had joined the Civil Air Patrol and become part of the Price Flight, training at the Price Municipal Airport, moved twice since its 1919 founding. By 1940, with approval of the Civilian Aeronautic Authority, the airport had become part of the national defense system. Members of the Price Flight learned to fly, learned to march in formation under the direction of Pacific war veteran “young Bill” Lines, and eventually won the statewide marching contest.⁶

Those who trained the local workforce also worked incredibly long hours. At Carbon College, Leonard Shield spent a full year teaching double shifts: welding from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and war production classes from midnight to 8 a.m.⁷ Likewise, Shefton Gordon, a long-time Hiawatha miner and later foreman, worked as a Carbon College instructor in the daytime and a mining instructor and foreman at night. At the mine, he trained “all those fellows from Oklahoma and Arkansas . . . taking care of those.”⁸ Gordon’s workforce represented one of the major mass migrations in American history: the westward exodus of Midwesterners in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Driven out by technological unemployment and the depression-era Dust Bowl, hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children traveled west. Many went to California, becoming the despised Okies of John Steinbeck’s novel, The Grapes of Wrath, a stereotype created largely by Californians for
their own purposes. Those who came to Castle Valley included non-stereotypical Jeanette McAlpine, who left Oklahoma in 1935, coming to Rains in Spring Canyon with her mining engineer husband and their two children. A highly educated woman, she later became a mainstay in Carbon County’s cultural events. In 1945, future teacher Nadine Marx came to Hiawatha with her parents at the railroad’s expense (later deducted from her father’s wages), part of a group of “defense Okies” who filled wartime jobs. They augmented the “jump in the number of miners from 2,600 to 3,800,” noted by Dorman, who treated a good many of them in his career.

Not only miners, but women and children voluntarily supported the war effort. Denied sugar, candy, new furniture, nylon hose, fabrics, and a host of other items, women used little ration books with their many-colored stamps to purchase available goods. These ration stamps had expiration dates, and storekeeper Ross Boyack remembered the pandemonium at his men’s shop “when shoe stamps neared the expiration date. Customers not wanting to lose the use of the shoe stamps, rushed in, bought shoes regardless of size, color, or style. They would return in a day or two to exchange the shoes for a better choice and size.” To help in the face of limited food availability, Mrs. Viola Ross of Castle Gate bought one of the state-accredited victory cooking schools to Price to help women maintain proper nutrition during rationing. Throughout Castle Valley, female Red Cross units got busy. For example, Molen women, under Ella Beach, “salvaged all clean newspapers and boxes. Every tin can was opened on both ends with the covers folded inside and then crushed flat. These were hauled to the railroad shop in Price,” recalled Lucy Hansen Nielsen. The women also knitted socks of all sizes from wool provided by the Red Cross; washed, dried, and packed white cotton cloth for bandages; and organized nursing classes to learn how to treat common ailments.

With men overseas, households adjusted. Stecky Holdaway moved back in with her mother at Hiawatha; her husband had shipped out to the front, and her father worked over at Mohrland. She made the move, she said, since “I knew that Hiawatha was a better place [than Price] to raise my kids when I didn’t have a husband to help me. And it turned out to be just that.” The Boy Scouts also supported the war effort. The Hiawatha troop collected scrap metal from long-abandoned Mohrland. Helper’s Troop 271 not only collected waste paper, but developed their own mobilization plan to direct residents to shelters if necessary as part of the burgeoning national emphasis on civil defense.

According to historian Karen Anderson, the long duration of World War II created another more profound effect: it altered societal views and behavior of American women. Women entered jobs previously considered only for men, and when the reserve of single women dried up in 1943, employers actively recruited married women. Whether for patriotic reasons or because of psychological and financial gains, women responded. “At the wartime peak in July 1944, 19 million women were employed, an increase
of 47 percent over the March 1940 level,” wrote Anderson.\textsuperscript{17} Castle Valley, with its huge demand for labor, reflected this national pattern. Beginning in May, 1943, an all-female road striping crew consisting of supervisor Alma Anderson, Ruth Minere, Sylvia Branch, Tillie Anderson, Jessie Williams, and Edith Richmond, all of Price, got busy in Price Canyon. The work lagged in October because military requirements delayed the delivery of basic paint materials including white lead and uranium.\textsuperscript{18} Women also started work on coal tipples in 1943, after the Utah Industrial Commission relaxed its gender restrictions. That November the first twenty-nine women began picking boney (rock) out of the coal as it slid by on the tipple’s conveyor belts.\textsuperscript{19}

Castle Valley’s people, no matter what their age, gender, or backgrounds, felt united by a common patriotism. Many local men served in the military: 2,375 from Carbon County; 803 from Emery County.\textsuperscript{20} A few women served, too, including Velma Frances Juvan Cole, the daughter of Slovenian immigrant John Juvan of Spring Glen. She had joined the Navy, serving at the bureau of personnel in Washington, D.C. Betty Avery of Kenilworth joined the Marines.\textsuperscript{21} Ann Bishop of Sunnyside joined the SPARS, the women’s branch of the Coast Guard, but received a medical discharge after a belated diagnosis of rheumatic fever. (She later married Ted Self, and became the founder of the first local school for handicapped children, now the Ann Self School.)\textsuperscript{22} Twenty descendants of Anna Draper Tidwell of Wellington served in various branches of the military—grandsons, great-grandsons, grandsons-in-law, and a single great-granddaughter who was an army nurse.\textsuperscript{23} At home, the miners at Royal staged a wildcat strike because they wanted the American flag to fly over the mine portal where they worked, rather than over the company office, seat of the bosses.\textsuperscript{24} People lined up to buy war bonds from Jack Dempsey, who briefly returned to his old haunts near Coal City and made appearances elsewhere throughout the valley.\textsuperscript{25} Residents also supported the unknown soldiers in transit who came through on the Rio Grande, just as they had since the Spanish-American War. When troop trains stopped in Wellington, the children ran over to talk to the soldiers and offered to mail letters for them. Helper townspeople fed under-supplied, recent graduates from the Hoffman Island Radio Officer School who pulled into the depot in 1943. “I don’t know how the [troop] train got word [out],” emotionally recalled a veteran decades later, “but when we pulled into the station, there were people all around with all kinds of food.”\textsuperscript{26} Folks at home thought often about the soldiers at the front. “Most of the boys that I had taught in my first four years . . . were old enough to go to war,” remembered Eva Westover Conover. “They were everywhere—the Suez, Rome, Germany, England, on about every Pacific island and I would listen every evening to the radio news about the war where my boys were. And I would cry and worry about them.”\textsuperscript{27} Greek immigrants Angelo and Effie Georgedes worried, too, when they heard that their son, John, had been captured in battle as the Allied troops fought south from Normandy.
into France. Fearing that John had died, Angelo nonetheless kept selling war bonds just as enthusiastically as before, and was later greatly relieved to hear that John, taken prisoner, had been released in time to help liberate Paris. Bill Hall, son of Mohrland’s postmistress, came back with the Congressional Medal of Honor. A Naval Reserve pilot from the carrier *Lexington*, he had dropped a bomb down the smokestack of a Japanese battleship in May 1942 and returned a day later to fight twelve Japanese planes, bringing three of them down despite his own severe wounds. Consequently, he became one of five Utahns to receive this highest military decoration, and “one of the few who ever received that decoration and lived to wear it,” according to his childhood friend, Nevin Wetzel.

Not all the men made it home, and losses struck very deeply. For example, Huntington’s Marie Cowley, a former high school cheerleader, had married Pete Grange, the basketball captain, in June 1941. Pete was working in the Hiawatha coal mine and could have had a deferment for essential war work, but he insisted on going if called. He was drafted in August 1944, leaving behind his pregnant wife and a year-and-a-half old son. The family got news in June that he was wounded; then, nothing. Early in September her sister-in-law came in sobbing with a package of Marie’s letters sent to Pete. They were labeled “Deceased.” “This is how we found out he was dead,” remembered Marie. “They didn’t let us know . . . [that] there had been a telegram there [in Price] for quite a while and they never called or sent anyone over.” All of Huntington mourned. “It seemed like we were such a close town and to have a war hero right here. . . . it shook up everybody, not only me but the whole community.”

Many others also died, and other communities suffered. Dr. Dorman noted a “plaque listing 39 names of former students of Carbon College who were killed in World War II. There are 13 names with an ethnic lineage such as Amador, Angotti, Nogulich, Bikakis, Protopappas and Kochevar. Carbon County had a total of 87 men who did not return from World War II; one third of these had ethnic names.”

While ethnicity made little difference in most of Castle Valley, national lawmakers became preoccupied with race. China had joined the U.S. in fighting against Germany, Italy, and Japan. Consequently, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act became an international embarrassment, so Congress repealed it in 1943. In other ways, old racist attitudes had changed very little. Congress still provided a quota of only 105 for persons of Chinese descent regardless of country of origin (the only admission law based solely on race). “A Chinese born in Canada, for example, would be chargeable to the tiny Chinese quota; while a native of Canada could enter as a nonquota immigrant,” noted historian Roger Daniels. For the first time, however, Chinese could become U.S. citizens on the same basis as other immigrants. Congress also dissuaded the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), which stressed patriotic support of government policies during the
war despite their unconstitutionality, from expressing public support for this bill. The JACL’s silence, Daniels noted, meant that “Japanese unpopularity might not adversely affect that bill and so that the inevitable question of quotas and citizenship for all Asians might be forestalled.”

American Japanese suffered terribly during the war. Many people myopically lumped together Japanese-American citizens, resident Japanese aliens (ineligible for U.S. citizenship by American law), and the enemy overseas. At Sunnyside, for example, the day after Pearl Harbor, Nisei children (American-born citizens) did not come to school. When they arrived on December 9, “the class bully was extremely verbally abusive to them, especially to my good friends Henry, Harry, and Harold Nitsuma,” remembered Paul Turner. “He made it sound like they were personally responsible for the bombing.” The same attitude went all the way to the top. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, allowing the military to remove all suspected enemies from designated areas. Commanding officers used this power sweepingly. After the Federal Bureau of Investigation made an initial roundup of suspected disloyals of all nationalities, the military incarcerated all people of Japanese ancestry from the coasts of Washington and Oregon, all of California, and the southern part of Arizona. Those imprisoned totaled about 120,000 individuals, two-thirds of them U.S. citizens, ignoring their birthright: the protection of the U.S. Constitution. In 1943, the Supreme Court upheld the internment. Thirty-eight years later, historian Peter Irons discovered military intelligence reports showing that federal officials had lied to the Court to justify the imprisonment. A 1981 federal Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians concluded: “Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity, and the decisions that followed from it—exclusion, detention, the ending of detention, and the ending of exclusion—were not founded upon military considerations. The broad historical causes that shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.” Well before that, American Japanese military units—the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Infantry Battalion, and the Military Intelligence Service—had more than proved their patriotism overseas.

That belated realization did no good during World War II. As the government geared up for mass internment in early 1942, some American Japanese became voluntary evacuees. Among them was Fred Wataru Taniguchi and his new bride, Ferry (formerly Utah) Okura Taniguchi, both American citizens married in California the previous June. They sold their newly-acquired possessions for what they could get and boarded a train back to Ferry’s parents in Castle Valley. Ferry’s mother and sister had obtained a letter addressed to the U.S. military from their landlady, local businesswoman Clara Miller, guaranteeing that they would not become a public charge. (A letter from Ferry’s parents, “aliens ineligible for citizenship,” who had
As soon as she returned to Castle Valley, Ferry went back to working in the family cafe.38

Fred Taniguchi found employment as a motorman at Sweets, up Gordon Creek Canyon, where numerous American Japanese worked throughout the war. While he drove coal cars in and out of the mine, Columbia laid off all its American Japanese workers as military risks. They were also forced out of Kenilworth, and the company turned the old “Jap” boardinghouse into apartments.39 Sego Takita Matsumiya remembered that officials confiscated her father’s “old five-tube radio . . . his camera, and . . . a .22 that he used to shoot rabbits. . . . down in Carbon County before he was forced to move.” He became a share-cropper on a Bear River farm in northern Utah.40 Only two or three Japanese were still mining at Hiawatha when the war broke out. One remained throughout the war and lived in the camp’s hotel for the duration. Another, Mr. Sugihara, moved his family into Price, where unknown persons set his house on fire, trying to burn him out.41 One group of American Japanese voluntary evacuees, driven off the coast, leased 1,500 acres from W. F. Asimus, George Thurman, and the Wilson Produce Company at Green River, settling some forty families there and growing sugar beets. While 200 Green River citizens initially protested this voluntary relocation, the rest of Emery County absolutely rejected any resettlement of “the Japs.” The government forcibly located others there, however, at the old CCC barracks near the Dog Valley coal mine south of Emery where they
had to dig coal for Utah’s only concentration camp at Topaz, near Delta, at the edge of Utah’s Salt Flats. Topaz housed most of San Francisco’s Japanese for the duration, including its sizable art colony and the head of the Buddhist Churches of America, which was administered from Utah until 1945. The Castle Valley wartime experience with American Japanese mirrored that of the rest of the nation: not one single act of domestic sabotage occurred.

War also brought new corporations to Castle Valley. U.S. Steel expanded its mines at Columbia, located three miles southeast of Sunnyside. This area, originally patented by a Midwestern consortium in 1911 for investment purposes, as of 1912 was billed as “the only large veins of coking coal left in eastern Utah.” Columbia Steel Company had acquired these prospects and established a mine and camp in 1922, processing the coal to make coke and shipping it by rail to its steel-making plant in Utah County. Production had reached a million tons by the time the U.S. Steel acquired the plant in 1930. Under U.S. Steel, in the 1940s, the steel plant at Geneva became “Utah’s most significant war-related industry” according to historians Roger D. Launius and Jessie L. Embry. The company supplied its mines at Columbia with the latest coal mining equipment as wartime demand grew. It also opened another mine called Horse Canyon (just over the Emery County line) in 1942, one of the most modern in the country at that time. Five hundred new coke ovens rose at Columbia, although they saw only brief service before the war ended. Castle Valley coke exclusively supplied the $200–million Geneva plant, which turned out three-quarters of a million tons of plates and shapes for Henry Kaiser’s prolific Pacific coast shipbuilding plants, earning him the nickname “Sir Launchalot.” Kaiser himself, seeking vertical integration for his shipbuilding companies, leased the old Sunnyside No. 2 mine (closed after a disastrous fire in 1921) as well as Nos. 3 and 5, to supply his Fontana Steel plant in southern California. His seven-day-a-week schedule, remembered Frank Peczuh, guaranteed that “we could feel the blasting in the mine in our home.” Kaiser’s Fontana Steel and the Geneva plant were the “only major steel manufacturing . . . [factories] west of the Mississippi River” according to historian Gerald Nash. Both of them ran on Castle Valley coal. Without a doubt, Castle Valley, once ignored as worthless, had become the epitome of America’s role in World War II: the arsenal of democracy.

This front-line importance brought other major changes. Increased demands for manpower immediately resulted in coal camp housing shortages. The old Utah Fuel town of Sunnyside could not manage the manpower crunch; builders threw up 250 homes for 1,500 people in only six weeks at nearby Dragerton and Sunnyside. In 1942, the Defense Plant Corporation built a new, six-mile railroad spur from the Carbon County Railway at Columbia to Horse Canyon. The Sunnyside company store closed down, replaced by the new store in the new town, run by the privately-owned Price
Trading Company. This firm had long since started operating other coal camp stores, including Mohrland and Hiawatha in 1936, and Latuda in 1942. The willingness of giants such as U.S. Fuel, U.S. Steel, and Henry Kaiser to move toward privatization meant that coal camp populations were no longer “captive” in company towns. It also meant that companies no longer needed to build housing and infrastructure for what was correctly adjudged to be a brief, wartime boom. \(^{50}\) Federal money poured in to improve the area, however. The long-delayed Scofield Dam project took shape in the mid-1940s after surviving a judicial challenge and receiving a federal grant of almost $400,000, augmented by $31,000 from the Utah Fish and Game Commission. Even so, some Castle Valley homes still lacked culinary water for decades. Those in Miller Creek finally received it thanks to the formation of the Miller Creek Special Services District in 1983–1984. \(^{51}\)

In the meantime, as men flocked to fill round-the-clock shifts at all of Castle Valley’s mines, local population shifted dramatically. Between 1940–1950, Carbon County’s population increased by over one-third as 6,000 new people arrived, a quarter of those drawn to the Sunnyside district. \(^{52}\) Paradoxically, Emery County lost almost 700 people, or ten percent, as students left to join the armed services; industrial jobs beckoned elsewhere, and Castle Valley’s difficult farmland faced unbeatable competition from more fertile American valleys. These shifts made immediate impacts as the towns of Victor and Desert Lake closed down. Emery County also suffered
“the most bitterly fought consolidation battle in the county’s history,” according to historian Edward Geary. In early 1943, the county school board voted to close Central High School, which served Orangeville and Castle Dale. Students in grades nine through twelve were to be reassigned to North Emery High (for Orangeville students) and South Emery High (for Castle Dale’s). Some Central High School parents brought suit, but the court allowed the procedure for the duration of the wartime emergency. In the fall, Central High students refused to board the buses sent to remove them, and only abandoned their boycott when students from both communities could remain together at South Emery. In 1947, Central High burned to the ground.53

These local tensions fairly evaporated when Castle Valley heard that the war had ended. As Eva Conover remembered, “When news came that it was finally—for sure—over, we climbed into the pick-up, children standing in the back next to the cab, and headed for town. On the way every neighbor joined us, on tractors, walking (we picked them up), in their cars, on horse back. . . . A crowd had gathered by the post office, waving flags, crying for joy, laughing, cheering. Then, we decided to go to Emery to join them in celebrating. We hadn’t gone past the first old blue hill until we met them coming to Ferron.”54 Kenilworth had a huge victory bonfire, and the whole town gathered around, celebrating. The Price newspaper reported crowds pouring into the streets when the news first came over the radio. “Residents from the many camps surrounding Price and Helper began to arrive in these centers late in the afternoon, which increased the snarled traffic and already thick crowds.” Patrons stripped the state liquor stores completely bare. Price officials closed off the center of town to cars, “and E. M. Williams’ Carbon high band furnished music for a public dance on the pavement that lasted until after midnight.” The following day, a public victory and thanksgiving program drew hundreds. Meanwhile, all the local mines shut down for lack of miners, and rationing on gasoline and canned goods ceased. The celebrations were all joyous and orderly; the sheriff made no arrests.55

With the war over, people had time for increased recreation. In the winter, many turned to skiing. The sport had been gaining in popularity along the Wasatch Front since the 1930s, when the CCC cut roads into old mining towns such as Alta. In Castle Valley, Clear Creek had its ski lift and groomed course, as did Sunnyside. Both had rope tows powered by old car engines; at Sunnyside the power supply actually “included an old Model A Ford with an extra rim on the outside back wheel, with the back wheels in the air. The rope went around the spare rim a couple of times and was anchored on top with another rim hooked to a solid pole,” remembered Paul Turner. The mine superintendent, Bob Heers, had helped clear the hill by sending a Caterpillar crew. When Grant Turner, Paul’s brother, got his heavy clothes twisted in the winch rope and was left dangling in mid-air just short of the top pulley, Heers and his electricians installed an automatic
shutoff switch to prevent similar accidents. Turner also remembered renting several railroad cars to take students from Carbon High School and Carbon College up to the Clear Creek ski run.\textsuperscript{56} “When Clear Creek started dropping down [in population], the Josi boys and our boys, all the school teachers in town . . . built a ski lift up above Finn Canyon,” remembered Elvie Herskainen Stevens. Those Finn children could ski. “The houses . . . were built so close to one another that when the town went down, they took all the doors out . . . and those silly boys would ski from the mountain slope and go through all these doors through this house.” They could also jump—one “never even left his skis after they hit the bottom, he stayed on them.” The school principal though he could do as well, went over the jump, and broke his hips. Weino Josi was the best skier. “He could come down those hills . . . take those beautiful bends, . . . and just circle down and stop like that.” All wore hand-made skis buckled on with leather straps, the ski tips heated in the coal stove boiler until they were warm and soft so they could be bent up with the weight of a rock.\textsuperscript{57} In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Utah’s ski industry, based on its famous powder, became more commercialized and sophisticated. Meanwhile, Castle Valley’s ski runs folded together with the coal camps they had served.\textsuperscript{58}

In the immediate post-war years, as Castle Valley relaxed and celebrated, international tensions mounted. Based on a series of international conferences culminating at Yalta, Russia, in 1945, the Big Three—the U.S., Soviet Union, and Great Britain—agreed to support for a United Nations, to a Soviet offensive against the Japanese after V-E (Victory in Europe) Day, and to mediate future hot spots, including Egypt, the Middle East (especially a future Jewish state), China, and Viet Nam. Three weeks later, FDR died. Foreign policy novice Harry S. Truman became president and faced a rising tide of U.S.-Soviet misunderstanding that matured in an Iron Curtain descending across Europe, in the words of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The U.S. unilaterally ended the Pacific War on August 6 and 9, 1945 with two atomic bombs, partly fueled by Utah uranium.\textsuperscript{59}

President Truman faced difficult challenges at home and abroad. Trying to improve domestic relations, he sent Congress a new reform program which was whittled away after the Republicans won a congressional majority in 1946. Congress revised the old Wagner Act with the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 which mandated a “cooling-off” period before a union could strike. Truman vetoed it, but Congress overrode his veto. Meanwhile, coal miners struck nationwide (including in Utah), creating a coal scarcity that spurred consumers to convert to natural gas or oil for home heating.\textsuperscript{60} Truman also attempted major civil rights reforms. He appointed African Americans to major federal offices, integrated the U.S. military, urged federal prosecution in civil rights cases, attempted to eliminate lynching, and tried to overturn the poll tax, used to keep blacks from voting. These actions angered southern Democrats (or Dixiecrats) who ran Strom Thurmond for
president in 1948, giving Republican candidate Thomas Dewey hope for victory with a split Democratic vote. Truman battled on the Democratic ticket to win the presidency in his own right. In the heat of the campaign, ten-year-old Edward Geary of Huntington went with his father, the Emery County Republican chairman, to hear Dewey speak at the LDS Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, and got to shake his hand. Campaigning just as hard, Truman made a 30,000-mile whistle stop tour of the country, including Castle Valley. Geary joined other students dismissed from school to go see him, “despite my dislike for the man because . . . he was The President in spite of everything, and also because I liked trains.” Geary laughed with the rest of the crowd when Truman remarked that he had been looking out of the window and saw “one of the lovely garden spots of America.” (Geary’s father charitably opined that maybe the President had fallen asleep somewhere in Kansas.) On election night, Geary, like many, went to bed content, after early returns showed Dewey well in the lead. But California went for Truman, and Dewey lost. In later years, Geary marveled at the immediacy and reach of national politics in those days, “when a ten-year-old boy living in an obscure southern Utah village could see both major presidential candidates in person and shake hands with one of them.”

Even Castle Valley had found a spot on the national political map. Utah had already made national news in the 1950 Congressional elections as the only state where two women vied for a single seat. Republican Ivy Baker Priest ran against Democrat Reva Beck Bosone, who had begun her law practice in Helper in 1931. In 1932, Bosone had run for the state legislature and won in the Democratic landslide: the first female state legislator from Castle Valley. In 1935, she had returned to the state legislature, representing Salt Lake County, her new home, and, in 1936, she was elected a Salt Lake City judge. Bosone went from there to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1948, becoming the first woman to represent Utah in the U.S. Congress and one of only nine women in the House. (There was one woman in the Senate.) Two years later, she beat Priest. In 1952, Priest became U.S. Treasurer under newly-elected President Dwight D. Eisenhower (the first Republican since Hoover), a position she held for eight years. Bosone became a casualty of a new Red Scare. Congress, spurred by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC, authorized in 1945) and the Senate’s McCarthy hearings—televised from 1947–1954—ferreted out alleged American Communists in Hollywood and elsewhere, irreparably damaging some reputations while boosting more favored politicians. Bosone suffered accusations that she was a Communist sympathizer (quite possibly because some of her Castle Valley clients had been members of the NMU). She nonetheless remained politically active and encouraged other women to do likewise.

This new anti-Red hysteria grew, in part, from serious international problems, particularly during Truman’s second term. The U.S., following
the foreign policy of containing the Communist threat, had rebuilt Europe under the Marshall Plan and got more and more deeply involved in Asia, beginning with the Korean War (officially a United Nations police action) from 1950–1953. In 1954, two years after Truman left office, the Geneva Conference failed to bring a lasting peace to Korea, initiating events that would bring America into the war in Viet Nam. The conditions for a protracted Asian involvement began under Truman, as policy-makers simplified foreign relations into the U.S. versus the Communists. In 1947, President Truman had spurred Congress to pass the National Security Act, establishing a consolidated Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency to fight the new Cold War. Concurrently, the government had created the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and a Joint Committee on Atomic Energy to explore both military and peaceful applications. The federal government turned to South Africa and Canada for their uranium, although locals—and Europeans—had tapped deposits on the San Rafael Swell for a very long time.

The first strange rocks had been discovered in the late 1800s, but only in 1898 did the Smithsonian Institute identify them as uranium. French scientists immediately built a concentrating plant in southwestern Colorado.

As this photo from the early twentieth century attests, very little changed in uranium prospecting over the decades. When the rush arrived in the fifties, men still traveled out on the Swell, carrying canteens of precious water, found likely outcrops (foreground), and often shoveled the valuable rock into burlap bags for transportation (right, rear). Courtesy of Emery County Archives.
to process local ores, including some brought out mule-back from Joe Swasey’s Temple Mountain Mine. The Polish Nobel Prize winner, Madame Marie Curie, who had first isolated and named radium, arrived a year later and got samples. By 1904, the *Emery County Progress* invited its readers to visit the newspaper office to see “a radiograph, a recent scientific invention . . . [and] Emery County production” painstakingly devised by Ira Browning. He had created a picture of “a common-size trunk key . . . made after eighteen hours exposure” on a “photographic plate by Rotengen [sic] (or X-) rays” using minerals from his Orinoco claim, sixty miles southeast of Emery on the San Rafael Swell, which he shared with Oscar Beebe and Seymour Olsen. Only two tons of Castle Valley uranium concentrate were shipped to Europe before World War I. Although Madame Curie revisited the West after the war, receiving a gram of radium (then worth $80,000 wholesale; $120,000 retail), interest in these deposits dwindled. In the 1930s, the Vitro Manufacturing Company of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, sought uranium ore mixed with vanadium, so Moab’s Howard Balsley established one of his storage facilities at Green River to supply it. World War II created limited federal interest in these uranium deposits: in 1942, as a steel-hardening agent, and, after 1944, for its World War II atomic bomb project which culminated in the bombing of Japan. The government then became the sole buyer for the mineral, taking over the Vitro operations and its feeder storage facilities while belittling the size of Castle Valley deposits.

When the Soviets detonated their first nuclear weapon in 1949, and their Communist allies concurrently conquered China, the U.S. sought more bang for the buck. The AEC suddenly instituted an extensive national uranium survey, provided monthly maps, and offered $10,000 for a paying mine. The rush was on. The frenzy really began when a determined Texan, geologist Charlie Steen, discovered a multi-million-dollar mine in an unexpected geological formation southeast of the San Rafael Swell. Former coal camp doctor and respected ophthalmologist Dr. J. Eldon Dorman, joined the thousands who “went crazy. . . . I hocked my life. On Friday, I’d work maybe a couple of hours . . . and then, I’d take off.” Together with two other men he formed the Southern Cross Uranium Company, filing 106 claims near Hite, across the river from the uranium mill at White Canyon. People went out on the Swell in trucks and on horseback; some even flew over dangling scillenometers out of open-cockpit planes. The Emery County Recorder’s Office struggled to keep up with the paperwork: 910 claims filed in 1949, and another 410 in the first three months of 1950 alone. Among them, Ferron’s Frank Blackburn, Ervin Olsen, Elden Bryan and Thomas Worthen, all over 60 years old, staked their claims, did all their own mining, and soon “were riding around in Buicks and Lincolns,” according to Owen McClenahan. Other mines in the area included the Conrad, the mines at Tomsich Butte, and one in Hondoo Canyon found by McClenahan and Albert Hunter. Albert’s brother, dentist L. T. Hunter of
Castle Dale, had owned one of the earliest Geiger counters in the area and helped set off the boom.\textsuperscript{72}

A clicking Geiger counter did not always mean pay dirt. McClenahan reported one particularly exciting trip when “the amplified click came through too fast to count.” He and Fame and Owen Price “started to check everything in sight,” finding the hottest deposits in “low spots like gullies in the flat” as they searched their entire camping area. “Finally it dawned on us,” he wrote, “that it was fallout from an atomic bomb test at the Nevada testing ground.” They quit and returned to Castle Dale, where “it was announced that they had tested a bomb a day or two before.”\textsuperscript{73} Like the rest of uninformed America, Castle Valley simply took these deadly tests in stride.

Those lucky enough to find a genuine claim then had to find investors to pay for development such as machinery to dig tunnels and to haul out the ore on roads not yet built. Dr. Dorman recalled, “We built a road . . . and in came some big shot from Pasadena. He was supposed to be an authority. Everybody was an authority. . . . We bought a caterpillar tractor . . . and a big truck. We hauled out, I think 50 tons” of uranium, but it was high in lime content, which incurred a penalty. “We got maybe a couple hundred dollars.”\textsuperscript{74} Spring Glen’s George Rowley fared better. After showing sixty uranium cores as proof of his finds, he sold his claims for $85,000 to the Warren Oil Mining Company of Fort Worth, Texas, leaving development
work to others. Price’s Lawrence Migliaccio also prospered as principal owner of the historic Vanadium King Mines in the Temple Mountain district, among the mines he passed to his lovely, talented daughter, Brenda M. Kalatzes, still a successful mine manager. Outsider Vernon Pick did magnificently, selling his Delta No. 4 (renamed the “Hidden Splendor”—and later, the “Hidden Blunder”) for $9 million to the Atlas Corporation, but he left Castle Valley with a reputation tarnished by bad debts in Green River and “bullshitting” about his so-called death-defying prospecting trip along the trickle called the Muddy River. Emery County’s Hyrum Knight and Jesse Fox, on the other hand, never got to develop their Temple Mountain claims, losing them to the Consolidated Uranium Corporation of Temple Mountain after a year of litigation. Consolidated then brought in small loading machines, disassembled them, and lowered the pieces into holes drilled in the rock. The machines were reassembled at the face of a sizable, buried ore body—enough to support forty Anglo families at Temple Mountain and five Mexican families at North Temple, although all their water had to be trucked in forty miles from Green River by a man who also brought the mail. The cumulative output was staggering. According to USGS reports, “From 1948 through 1956 the [Temple Mountain] district produced about 261,000 tons of uranium ore.” In 1960 alone, Emery County produced more than 94,000 tons of ore, valued at almost two million dollars.

While some painstakingly dug ore, others tried selling stock. Many prospectors sold their claims to penny stock companies for part cash and part stock. Then stock company geologists came down, glanced around, and wrote glowing descriptions guaranteed to attract investors. Most buyers didn’t care about details as penny uranium stock became the rage, sometimes even handed out free with a bag-load of groceries. According to newspaper clippings from the boom, in 1954, uranium stock sales in Salt Lake hit five million shares, then seven million. Carbon County residents Francis Scartezina and Floyd Adams “formed a company called Mountain Valley Uranium” to sell stock, but made more just selling the name of their company, remembered Dr. Dorman. Commonly, “stock started at a penny a share . . . then, they’d go up to ten cents.” As stock companies proliferated, the federal Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) dispatched an investigator who infuriated the state government by trying to impose stricter requirements than those of Utah’s own Securities Commission. The SEC filed several indictments, and the stock boom ended after a little over eighteen months. But it had stimulated domestic uranium exploration, replacing a national shortage with a bonanza.

Before everything ended, some Castle Valley residents got crushed in the uranium vortex. Huntington residents Bud Nielson and Shorty Larsen and their wives had helped out Charlie Steen when he needed money, so he had pointed them to a potential uranium deposit. They sold an out-of-town entrepreneur a sixty-day option for $40,000, only to receive a later offer
of $200,000 (which they legally could not accept) for the same claims. In another case of unintended consequences, Price’s Henry Ruggeri became Steen’s lawyer and negotiated the purchase of the land for the Atlas uranium mill alongside the Colorado River. It later became one of America’s unsavory radioactive clean-up sites under the 1978 bill signed by President Jimmy Carter. The act provided federal funds for removing hazardous waste, not only at the Moab Atlas mill but at the old Green River Vitro holdings.84

During the uranium boom, the deadliest threat came from radon gases released by radioactive decay, often highly concentrated in poorly-ventilated mines. Dr. Geno Saccomanno, whose family had been the first immigrants to pay off their Spring Glen farm, became one of the first physicians to provide reliable data about radioactivity-induced lung cancer. During the Great Depression, the young Saccomanno had sold peaches from the family orchard for twenty-five cents a bushel to make money for school. He had to pay his own way through high school at Price (where out-of-town students had to pay their own room and board), then funded a biology degree in 1940 and a medical degree in 1946. By the 1950s, he was the visiting pathologist at the Price City Hospital, providing laboratory services there and in many small hospitals throughout the Colorado Plateau. During the uranium frenzy, a handful of medical professionals became concerned as uranium miners contracted lung cancer at an unusually rapid rate. In 1954, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) agreed to run a controlled study. In 1955, the Seven-State Uranium Mining Conference on Health Hazards met in Salt Lake City, with representatives from the federal government, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Idaho, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Poor-quality medical slides hampered the NCI’s attempt to gather data substantiating miners’ lung damage. Dr. Saccomanno invented a vastly improved method and machinery for making the necessary slides. He also became the director of the annual sputum cytology (cell study) program in Salt Lake City, taking yearly samples from miners and attempting to autopsy all of those who died. The first settlement awarded to a uranium widow came only in 1961, in Colorado. Although Saccomanno provided compelling statistics in the leading Utah case, the state supreme court refused to recognize the danger of lung cancer in uranium miners as an occupational hazard. Next, Utahn Esther Peterson, then assistant secretary for Labor Standards under the Secretary of Labor in Washington, D.C., tried hard to involve the federal government in adequate workman’s compensation for uranium miners during the next decade. Peterson would go on to become a prime mover behind President Kennedy’s Presidential Committee on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, but, in the meantime, she and her boss battled fruitlessly for dying uranium miners. They did succeed, however, in establishing a legal maximum amount of allowable radiation by federal law. By then, others had contracted cancer, including Orangeville’s
William Hannert who mined extensively around Temple Mountain until he died of the disease. His sons inherited his mines, but by then the uranium boom was over. In the 1960s, the United States government had become the only buyer, and it eventually authorized purchase only from ore reserves developed prior to November 28, 1958. There was no point in further prospecting.

The boom left a number of legacies. One recent journalist ascribed Utah’s status as the “fraud capital of America” to the old uranium penny stocks: “Salt Lake City had a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission office that fights investor fraud . . . by far the smallest city with such a presence.” More ominously, some holes remain near Buckhorn Wash, ten miles east of Castle Dale, where, in 1948, the War Department tried to determine “the action of an atomic blast on underground habitations,” according to local mining man Arthur E. Gibson. “The public is aware of the fact that tests are being made,” he wrote in 1948, “but results of any tests will remain a secret for the present.” Only through persistent efforts by Price mortician and former Emery County resident Greg Fausett did concrete facts emerge a half-century later. In identifying a site for NORAD, the federal front line of defense against nuclear attack, the government had built a series of gigantic tunnels (some 20 feet high and 150 feet long). Fausett discovered they had then detonated huge dynamite charges above them to gauge the effects. Local men, including Arthur Cox and Max Jensen, were hired to cart away the dislodged rock and brush in wheelbarrows but sworn to secrecy. At least one man was killed when rainwater rose in a higher tunnel and broke through a debris dam to flood a lower tunnel where men were working. Morrison Knudsen Company, a major World War II contractor, assumed control of the project, today known as the MK Tunnels and used for teenage parties.

The uranium boom had other repercussions. Aside from its tests, the national government developed a greater appreciation of the strategic importance of the Colorado Plateau. Historian Arthur Gomez noted that federal monies soon financed many more access roads for strategic purposes that were later utilized by tourists and other outdoor recreationists. However, lone prospectors, not federal officials, ultimately had the biggest effect on much of the remote San Rafael Swell. The old prospector’s adage, “Beaten trails are only for beaten men” spurred would-be uranium developers to sculpt dozens of jeep tracks into this geologic dome, now usable by those attracted to its scenic wonders. Building a road in the Swell often meant creative use of a bulldozer in steep canyons on brittle sandstone. Owen Price was one of the best road-builders, though it sometimes appeared that his “bulldozer was going to roll down the mountainside,” remembered McClenahan. “At the last, second, he could stop and back up for another load.” In another spin-off, Dr. Geno Saccomanno, remembering his own hard struggle to fund an education, took some of the pro-
ceeds from his uranium-related medical innovations and established a $2.5 million endowment fund in 1991 for residents of Carbon County, Utah, and Mesa County, Colorado, which still benefits numbers of students at the College of Eastern Utah.\textsuperscript{91}

Despite certain improvements, the post-war economic boom left Castle Valley out in the cold. The national commercial boom did not penetrate this far, neither did the regional pattern sketched by historian Gerald Nash, who claimed that World War II had liberated the “colonial economy” of the American West from sole dependence on the exploitation of raw materials.\textsuperscript{92} While Utah as a whole reaped diversification through the establishment of ten major military establishments and subsequent support industries, Castle Valley merely changed masters.\textsuperscript{93}

Those masters owned the coal mines. In 1950, Emery had sixteen truck mines (down from twenty in 1947) and one rail mine; Carbon had thirteen truck mines (down from sixteen in 1947) and twenty-three large, rail mines. By 1966, each county had but ten producing mines, total, with Carbon County’s Mutual Mine slated to close by the end of the year.\textsuperscript{94} Production dropped in response to national markets which had less and less use for coal. In 1958, the two counties together produced 5,222,000 short tons, a performance approached only once, in 1961, as total coal tonnage hovered in the mid-four millions into the 1970s.\textsuperscript{95} As one business analyst explained, “with the release of resources at the war’s end, railroads throughout the nation began a modernization drive,” turning out 21,000 new diesel locomotives between 1945–1955. By 1958, steam locomotives equaled “less than 2 percent of total railroad freight haulage.” He also pointed to another problem for coal producers: “Coal had lost markets to oil and natural gas not only because the fuels were cleaner and more convenient, but because of lower prices and seeming abundance.” As a result, coal’s competing fuels increasingly generated most of the electricity in the United States.\textsuperscript{96}

Towns died. “It got to where there was no kids,” remembered Margaret Marzo Ariotti. “And if there’s no kids, you just don’t have this [togetherness]”—no picnics, no holiday celebrations, no big community events.\textsuperscript{97} Based on census data, the 1950s saw the demise of Clear Creek, Columbia, Consumers, Kenilworth, Latuda, Peerless, Rains, Rolapp (formerly Cameron, or Royal), Spring Canyon, Standardville, Sweets, and Wattis.\textsuperscript{98} As the 1950s gave way to the 1960s and 1970s, mines struggled and died. Miners listened daily to radio KOAL (originally KEUB, established 1937) for the mine report, broadcast daily at precisely 6:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.:

With the co-operation of the following coal mines and through the courtesy of Price City, we bring you the mine report. Mines working tomorrow are Castle Gate, Columbia, the Geneva Mine at Horse Canyon, Hiawatha, Kenilworth, Latuda, Peerless, Rains, Royal, Spring Canyon, Standard, Utah Fuel at Sunnyside, and Wattis.\textsuperscript{99}
Sometimes, fathers were working underground during the mine report. Children then had the responsibility to listen in and tell their returning fathers if there were work tomorrow. If the mine worked and an able-bodied miner failed to appear, he was usually fired. Half a century later, many of those children, grown to late adulthood, can still rattle off the names of then-working mines in perfect order.

Agriculture also faltered after reaching its maximum potential by 1940. In the late 1950s, the federal government proposed to reduce the number of grazing allotments. Although this reduction affected the nation as a whole, Utah became the lightning rod for tension for two reasons. First, a unidentified highly-placed official in the LDS Church accused the federal government of “tyrannical” practices, equating proposed range management limitations with days when mobs “burned, raped and murdered” the fleeing Saints. Second, Ezra Taft Benson, Mormon Apostle (later LDS Church President), was the Secretary of Agriculture, accepting President Eisenhower’s cabinet appointment only after receiving permission from LDS President David O. Mackay. In the heat of the grazing controversy, Secretary Benson made a conciliatory trip to Utah in February 1958, calming the public with assurances of local autonomy. Federal range studies done from 1962–1967 indicated severe overgrazing, however, and the government subsequently reduced allotments by fifty percent. By then, the agrarian towns of Lawrence, Molen, Rochester (or Moore), and Woodside had all disappeared from the census as well, since the tiny handful of residents in each location got counted with larger neighboring towns. Highly agricultural Emery County lost almost twenty percent of its population (from 6,304 to 5,137) as over one thousand people moved away between 1950–1970. Between the economic assaults on mines and farms, Carbon County lost even more. Population plummeted from a total of 24,901 in 1950 to 15,647 two decades later. Better than one-in-three people left.100

In this dismal economic climate, the attempt by one of their own to close Carbon College came as an unprecedented shock. Republican J. Bracken (“Brack”) Lee, a Price native, had served six terms as mayor of his home town before beating incumbent Democrat Herbert Maw for Utah governor in 1948, when Truman won the presidency in his own right. Lee had campaigned on the promise that he would run the state “just like my own business, on a sound basis, for the benefit of the people,” which for Lee meant less spending, reduced taxes, and a balanced budget.101 This strategy soon earned him national recognition in such magazines as Time, Life, and the Saturday Evening Post and he won a second term in 1952.102 Lee began to take issue with newly elected and wildly popular Republican president Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was reelected in 1956. According to historians Louis Galambos and Joseph Pratt, “Eisenhower set the tone for what would become an era of good feelings toward business” while Lee carped about federal spending and the national debt. Lee continued cutting Utah
state services, beginning with the salaries of public school teachers, then proposed the closure of Carbon College and the return of the other three state-run junior colleges to the LDS Church.103

Castle Valley residents fought back with a “Save the College Committee” spearheaded by Emery County native Gomer P. Peacock. College supporters had only sixty days to gather 33,000 signatures—more than the entire population of Castle Valley—to get a referendum on the next ballot. The committee formed an alliance with Weber College which objected to losing its secular status. CEU student body president Dominic Albo, Jr., mobilized as many local people as he could. Price businessman Angelo Georgedes hired two petition-carriers and paid their expenses to go to three counties to collect signatures. Many Castle Valley residents returned to former hometowns carrying petitions. When the deadline came, over 56,000 names had been collected. In the November 1954 election, voters rejected closing Carbon College by almost four to one and refused to return the other colleges to the LDS Church by a three-to-one margin. As the newspaper noted, “Despite the fact that the schools are located in comparatively small and widely separated communities, the trend even in heavily populated areas was strongly against the bills.” For many of the campaign’s participants, this success marked their lifetime achievement. Lee’s popularity dwindled, and in 1956 he lost in the Republican primary.104

Even while Lee’s short-sighted, anti-education campaign flourished, Castle Valley’s school population began shifting due to business decisions. As company towns closed down, people left the area or drifted to established centers like Price, Helper, Castle Dale, and Huntington. This was a gradual process, and, for a while, children of families who had not yet relocated were bussed from the fading camps to schools in town. Classrooms there became overcrowded, and a new, ambitious building program resulted. In the Sunnyside district, Kaiser Steel, while reducing its workforce at the nearby mine, donated land it no longer needed for East Carbon High School. U.S. Steel had sold off many of its houses constructed in 1946, but it, too, joined Kaiser in donating money to build the school and a swimming pool in 1959. The same year, a new high school was constructed in Price to house approximately 900 students in three grades (later expanded to four), a move which separated it physically from its former housing at Carbon College.105 In a final gambit of the education shuffle, also in 1959, Carbon College became a branch of the University of Utah, permanently ending the drive to close it.106

One more change awaited the local college. In 1965, thanks to a bill co-sponsored by all the state legislators from Carbon and Emery counties, it officially became the College of Eastern Utah. Among its co-sponsors, Emery County representative Eva Westover Conover mirrored another change in Castle Valley and the United States. She represented a new wave of feminine leadership, identified by President Kennedy’s Council on the
Status of Women, chaired by Utahn Esther Peterson. “No year since the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 can be compared to the period October 1963 to October 1964, in terms of new opportunities offered to women,” said the first Council report. Originally encouraged to run by Reva Beck Bosone, in 1963, Conover became the first woman to represent Emery County in the State Legislature (and the second to represent Castle Valley, after Bosone) serving until 1967. Conover’s determination emerged in her campaign, as a local man extolled her opponent as “the best man for the job.” “That may be true,” she replied, “but I am the best person for the job.” Once in the legislature, Conover surprised some of her colleagues with the breadth of her knowledge—speaking intelligently on bills regarding education, agriculture, coal mining, wilderness, BLM land, forest reserves, soil conservation, water rights, and so on. She explained, “I’m a former school teacher. My sister and brother are teachers. Many of my friends’ husbands work in the coal mines. I taught school one winter in a coal camp, and became good friends with the mine foreman who used to tell me what was needed in the mine and what the miners needed. Men collect at our home for the ride to and from the canyon and talk cow talk.” How could she not know? Trying for a third term in 1966, after redistricting included Grand County with Conover’s district, she lost by some 500 votes.

In part, the redistricting that led to Conover’s defeat resulted from the dwindling population in Emery County. By 1970, it had one of the lowest per capita incomes in Utah. Job-hungry people moved away; only the elderly remained. Or, as more vividly put by Edward Geary, describing his native Huntington between 1955–1965: “the median age was over fifty. The high school was closed, the old meetinghouse demolished, and the Prickly Pear Flat was littered with empty houses, sagging barns, junked cars, and dead trees.” What would become of Castle Valley?