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The Far Country: Wild Horses, Public Lands, and The Little Book Cliffs of Colorado

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THE FAR COUNTRY: WILD HORSES, PUBLIC LANDS, AND THE LITTLE BOOK CLIFFS OF COLORADO

by

David L. Wheeler

To the wild horses and to the people
who made them free

EDITOR'S NOTE

We are pleased and honored to publish the following article. It is written by David L. Wheeler, a former professor and university administrator who is now retired in Grand Junction. This article is another in a long list of publications by Dr. Wheeler, which include a book, entitled *The Human Habitat: Contemporary Readings*, and many articles and papers. His passion for wild horses and the far country of Colorado are readily evident in his work.

The staff of the *Journal* made the decision to publish this article under one cover as a special, two part volume, rather than in two separate issues. We hope you, our reader, will find this issue as enjoyable to read as we did.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Research and writing are viewed often as solitary activities conducted in a dusty archive or in a lonely garret. This may be partly true but research and writing, if done properly, entails very much more. Reliable sources of information must be found, a process taking one at times to places unimagined, people must be interviewed, objects examined and, above all, the writer must acquire a sense of the place and time that is the subject of the research. Sights, sounds, even smells, are important in order to record and to communicate what has been learned.

Learning is not a magical process, it takes work and a great deal of assistance from others. In the course of research and writing "The Far Country: Wild Horses, Public Lands, and the Little Book Cliffs of Colorado," I examined hundreds of documents, talked to scores of people who knew far more than I, and visited the wild horse area numerous times with Bureau of Land Management personnel, Friends of the Mustangs, old timers, and others who know the area. I have been there in snow and ice, mud and dust, heat and cold in four wheel drive vehicles, on horseback, and afoot. I wish to thank everyone who took the time to show me the wild horse area, and to express my gratitude to the persons and organizations who assisted me in this project.

The following Bureau of Land Management personnel were especially helpful: Richard Godwin, District Law Enforcement Ranger, who first took me to the wild horse area one December day, and while we were "temporarily detained" in mud high up Coal Canyon, pointed to a distant draw where a stream of wild horses was emerging from the shade into the sunlight, the first "broomtails" I had ever seen; Wade Johnston,

Outdoor Recreation Planner, who introduced me to Main Canyon and who often answered questions that could not wait; Douglas Diekman, Geographic Information Systems Coordinator, who supervised the preparation of maps; and to Linda Berkey, Data Administrator and Volunteer Coordinator, an endless source of cheer, moral support, and logistical assistance. I am indebted to Harley Armstrong, Geologist-Paleontologist, Wade Johnston, David Lehman, Natural Resources Specialist, and Gerald Thygerson, Rangeland Management Specialist, for helpful comments on technical aspects of the narrative.

Many people in the Grand Junction community were invaluable. Among them were: Marty Felix, the "Wild Horse Lady," an inexhaustible source of information, who offered suggestions on the narrative, provided photographs to illustrate it, and shared her extensive knowledge of the horses that inhabit the "Far Country;" Judy Cady and Bud Smith, members of the Friends of the Mustangs, who saw to it I sat straight in the saddle, and to Richard Bouse, James Cox, Marc Fry, John Hill, and Herb Milholland, long time residents of the Grand Valley, who related to me their considerable knowledge of the early days of the wild horse area.

The project would not have been possible without the resources of the following institutions: the Bureau of Land Management district, state, and federal offices; De Beque Town Hall history collection, Mesa County Tax Assessor, Mesa County Library, Mesa State College Library and Special Collections, Museum of Western Colorado Research Center, and Western Colorado Title Company. I am indebted to all.

I should also like to thank Ann Jones, my former secretary of seventeen years, who is greatly skilled, not only in typing my manuscripts, but also in reading my long hand, the one skill being impossible without the other.

FOREWORD

I thought thirty-five years of teaching, scholarship, and administration in higher education was behind me when I retired to Grand Junction in 1996. As it turned out, however, not all of it was behind me. I quickly realized I could not fish all of the time. Fearing physical and intellectual atrophy, I thought I might be restored to my former condition by volunteering at the Grand Junction district office of the Bureau of Land Management. Perhaps I could plant a tree or maintain a trail, anything to be in the field. Besides, I was certain I could find a fishing companion at the Bureau and, as fate would have it, I did. But that is another story.

Instead of trees and trails, I was presented with an opportunity to "write a history" of the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area. Not only was it an opportunity to put my research experience to use but also it was a chance to learn. Much of what I have learned about the wild horses and the area they inhabit is contained in the narrative that follows. It is about history and land and horses and their interconnectedness. It is not possible to write about horses without reference to the land they inhabit, or about land and horses without reference to history. Each depends upon the other. The specialist might be disappointed with the sweep of the narrative but the generalist, for whom it is intended, will find it useful for a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the wild horse area.

I should mention, also, that the subject of this history is officially designated as the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range but it is most usually referred to as the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area, the

term used throughout the narrative.

The narrative is introduced with the story of Dapple King, one of the most notorious stallions to have inhabited the Little Book Cliffs, and continues with a brief discussion of the multiple responsibilities of the Bureau of Land Management, the agency responsible for the care of wild horses on public lands. Next is a description of the formation and characteristics of the Little Book Cliffs and their resources, both mineral and cultural.

The narrative continues with the evolution, dispersal, and extinction of horses in the Western Hemisphere and their reintroduction by Spanish conquistadors and American colonists. Exploration of the American West and the extension of the frontier across the continent led, inevitably, to the settlement of favored places such as the Grand Valley and to the introduction of livestock. The exploitation of the range by early stockmen both in the Grand Valley and elsewhere led inexorably to the destruction of the range in many places throughout the West. The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 sought to restore the range by a number of means, including the elimination of feral herds of horses and burros grazing upon it in competition with cattle and sheep.

Decimation of feral herds gave rise to a public outcry led by Velma B. (Wild Horse Annie) Johnston and resulted in federal legislation protecting free-roaming horses and burros, and ultimately to the establishment of the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area with responsibility for it charged to the Grand Junction district office of the Bureau of Land Management. Although federal legislation protects wild burros as well as wild horses, there are no burros in the Little Book Cliffs, nor have there been for many years.

The narrative ends with a description of the mustangs, routes of access to the wild horse area, and suggestions for viewing. Following the narrative is a glossary of a few words and terms that might not be defined adequately in the narrative, and a list of suggested readings. In addition to these sources, many Bureau of Land Management documents and publications are indispensable.

David L. Wheeler
Grand Junction, Colorado
July 1, 1998

CONTENTS

DEDICATION iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS vii
FOREWORD ix
LIST OF MAPS xiii
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS xiii
CHAPTER
1. INTRODUCTION 1
Dapple King 1
Bureau of Land Management 3
Wild Horse Herd Management Areas 4
2. THE FAR COUNTRY 7
Formation 7
Characteristics 9
Resources 11
3. DAWN HORSE 15
4. HOME FROM HOME 19
Return of Horses to America 19
Age of Horse Culture 21
5. EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION 23
"Splendid Wayfarers" 25
Valley of the Grand 25
Introduction of Livestock 26
Taylor Grazing Act 28
6. THE LEGACY OF WILD HORSE ANNIE 31
Decimation of Feral Horses 32
Wild Horse Annie and Federal Legislation 33
7. ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE LITTLE BOOK CLIFFS WILD HORSE AREA 41
The Cattlemen 42
The Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area 45
Population Control 47
Adopt-a-Horse Program 50
Prison Training Program 53
Friends of the Mustangs 53

8. BUCKSKINS AND BAYS, PINTOS AND GRAYS 57
Characteristics of the Horses 57
Social Organization 58
Access to Wild Horse Area 61
Viewing 66
9. AFTERWORD 69
APPENDIX
1. INTERNATIONAL ALPHA ANGLE SYSTEM 71
2. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT STATE OFFICES AND PLACEMENT CENTERS 72
NOTES 75
GLOSSARY 89
SUGGESTED READING 91

LIST OF MAPS

Figure — Page
1. Wild Horse Area in Western Colorado 24
2. Wild Horse Area Location and Access 46
3. The Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area... 62

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Page	Caption
xvi	Stallions battling for dominance
2	Dapple King and band
5	Vigilance
6	Mt. Garfield after a late winter snow
8	The goblins
13	The Fessler cabin
14	Family band
18	A stallion named Big Red
29	On the way to water
30	Mare and fillies
36	Monument to Wild Horse Annie
38-39	Reno's band watering in Jerry Creek
40	The Three Amigos
51	Bachelor band
55	Flight to safety
56	A paint horse named Cody
60	Main Canyon entrance to wild horse area
65	Grand Valley view from Carpenter Trail
68	Sweetheart and her foal, Gypsy

His neigh is like the bidding of a monarch,
and his countenance enforces homage.

William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

Stallions battling for dominance. (Photo courtesty of Marty Felix.)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Thou wert plenty of horse.
Ernest Hemingway
For Whom the Bell Tolls

High above Grand Junction is an enchanted land unseen and unknown to many passersby below. It is a land of distant views, of sunburned sky, blue beyond any imagining, of ancient varicolored rocks, tipped and tumbling, and slashed by steep canyon walls and dry stream beds. It is a land of pinyon and juniper and gray-green sage. It is lonely and aloof yet close to routes of travel and crossroads of commerce. It is captivating yet capricious; it bids us come but does not forgive the ill-informed or the unprepared. It is silent except for the labored breathing of a solitary hiker, or the occasional airplane passing overhead, or the blowing of a wild horse for which this enchanted land, the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area, is home. Here horses roam free and unfettered. Here is the realm of Dapple King.

Dapple King

In 1975 more than fifty wild horses were driven from the open range north of Grand Junction into the newly established Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area, a federal refuge administered by the local, district office of the Bureau of Land Management. The drive would have been a complete success had not one horse, a dapple-gray stallion of exceeding speed and endurance, and of surpassing cunning, frustrated all efforts at capture. Dapple King, as he was called, remained free for most of the next eight years to wander the far country alone.[1]

Subsequent attempts to capture Dapple King ended in failure, also, but his fortune changed in 1983 when a helicopter was used to assist in the roundup. Radio transmitters facilitated communication between the pilot and the boys on horseback. When Dapple King was spotted from the air, six horsemen converged on him, driving him toward a concealed trap seven miles away. After a pursuit lasting more

Dapple King (second from the left) and band. (Photo by Darrel Arnold.)

than two hours, Dapple King thundered into the trap and a gate swung closed behind him apparently ending his freedom forever.[2]

The cowboys' triumph was more an occasion for remorse than for revelry. They had finally succeeded in catching Dapple King but the magnificent stallion had captured their admiration. Truly, Dapple King was "plenty of horse." Other horses taken in the roundup were to be adopted by private owners but Dapple King's captors had not the heart to take his freedom. Dapple King was released to the wild but, from that day to this, he has not been seen again.[3] His spirit is said to haunt the red rock canyons and the sage-brush flats, high above Grand Junction.

Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management, an agency of the United States Department of the Interior, is responsible for the nation's public lands, including those in which wild horses are found. The Bureau's mission is "to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."[4] The Bureau's mission is sweeping in scope but achieving it is made less difficult by extensive public participation and by coordination with other federal agencies, governmental units, and organizations having an interest in public lands.

The Bureau of Land Management administers 264 million acres or about one-eighth of all land comprising the United States. Most of the land, 174 million acres, is found in eleven states west of the Mississippi River. Within this vast area the Bureau has wide-ranging responsibilities for a variety of resources and land uses including energy and minerals, timber and forage, watersheds and ranges, fish and wildlife habitat, wilderness areas, archeological, paleontological, and historical sites, and wild horses and burros.[5]

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for wild horses and burros in 194 herd management areas covering 43,215,632 acres of public land in the western states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming.[6] In this area the Bureau manages about 42,000 horses and burros about sixty percent of which are in Nevada.[7] The Bureau's task is to ensure healthy and viable populations within the limits of available land. This is accomplished by counting as accurately as possible the number of horses and burros in a given management area, assessing available forage to

support them, and by adjusting populations to sustainable sizes. Excess animals are placed in the care of private owners through adoption.[8]

Wild Horse Herd Management Areas

The Bureau of Land Management administers three specially designated areas in which wild horses are primary users of public land: the Nevada Wild Horse Range, the Pryor Mountains Wild Horse Range, and the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area. The Nevada Wild Horse Range was established in 1961 as a result of a joint effort by the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Air Force, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. The range comprises 394,500 acres of desert and rolling hills within Nellis Air Force Base, better known to some people for its bombing and gunnery ranges than for its wild horses.[9] There are 526 horses on the range.[10]

The Pryor Mountains Wild Horse Range is located near Lovell, Wyoming and extends across the state line into Montana. The Secretary of the Interior established the range in 1968, after a local dispute over the fate of wild horses erupted into a national controversy. Thousands of elementary school children, their parents, and concerned people throughout the nation appealed to the Secretary to authorize a wild horse range in the Pryor Mountains. The Director of the Bureau of Land Management was sent to the area to investigate the dispute and, upon returning to Washington, D.C., he recommended establishment of the range.[11] Today the Pryor Mountains Wild Horse Range encompasses 38,013 acres and provides a home to 147 horses.

The Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area was established in 1974 near Grand Junction, Colorado. The area now occupies 36,114 acres of canyons and ridges, sage brush parks and pinyon-juniper stands in a torn and tumbled upland rising from the Grand Valley in startling suddenness. The upland provides range to more than 150 wild horses, according to current estimates. It is not, however, the only wild horse herd management area in Colorado. The distinction is shared with the Piceance, Sand Wash, and Spring Creek management areas, all located in semi-arid basins, rolling hills, and highlands strewn along the western margin of the state. Each of the areas has its own traditions, all have their attractions and points of interest, but their histories are for someone else to tell. Here is told the story of wild horses, public lands, and the Little Book Cliffs, the far country.

Vigilance. (Photo courtesty of Marty Felix.)

Mount Garfield after a late winter snow. (Photo by author.)

CHAPTER 2

THE FAR COUNTRY

'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
and robes the mountain in its azure hue.
Thomas Campbell, *Pleasures of Hope*

The Little Book Cliffs stand like a sentinel on the northern flank of Grand Junction, their barren cliffs and crags guarding the wild horse area from the trespass of civilization. The high plateau region, of which the Little Book Cliffs are a part, extends from Rifle, Colorado west into Utah.[1] The region is characterized by a wilderness of steep walled canyons, interspersed with rugged mesas, and small drainages. The southern edge of the plateau is marked by two, lofty lines of cliffs, or erosional escarpments, one descending to the other: the Roan Cliffs and the Book Cliffs.[2] Below the Book Cliffs is a subordinate escarpment, usually referred to as the Little Book Cliffs, extending from Palisade to Loma and tumbling steeply into the Grand Valley 1,500 to 2,000 feet below.[3] The prominent height above Palisade is Mount Garfield, named in 1881 by settlers to honor the recently assassinated President of the United States, James A. Garfield.[4]

Formation

From a distance the Little Book Cliffs appear to be uniform in structure, even monotonous. Closer examination belies the first impression. Southern approaches to the Little Book Cliffs cross a gently rolling desert plain interspersed with drab badlands and buttes. Many slopes above the plain are sharp and deeply etched by steep, rocky canyons. Elsewhere the slopes rise in a series of benches and slick rock cliffs which, after a new fallen snow, bring to mind a layer cake of stunning proportions, white icing drizzled on its sides. The constant play of sun and shadow, especially in the morning and in the evening, accentuate variations in rock structure and color robing the Little Book Cliffs in hues of singular beauty.

The lower slopes of the Little Book Cliffs are made of shale, a soft, bluish-gray rock formed from mud deposited in a prehistoric sea.[5]

The goblins. (Photo by author.)

Soil derived from shale is fragile and easily worn away by water and wind making it difficult for plants to take root.[6] The near absence of plant life provides an unobstructed view of the slopes enabling one to see individual layers of shale, coal, and sandstone.[7]

A hard layer of sandstone was deposited on top of the shale and coal. The sandstone outcrops along the edge of the Little Book Cliffs form an escarpment, or long cliff, of buff colored rock clearly visible from Interstate 70. The sandstone was once the beach of an ancient sea. A tropical forest grew along the beach shore. As the forest plants died and decayed, they were covered by successive layers of sand. The weight of the sand and the heat it produced changed the decayed vegetation into coal that can be seen today in dark streaks on the steep slopes.[8] The coal provides a resource for a mining operation at Cameo, adjacent to the wild horse area.

The sandstone cliffs occasionally break, tumbling down over the soft shale. The hard, sandstone boulders serve as protective caps to the shale beneath. Unprotected shale is gradually worn away leaving slender pillars of rock known as hoodoos standing above the slopes. The artistry of water and wind have carved the hoodoos into fanciful shapes resembling colonnades, castles, and cathedral spires often rising sixty feet and more above the surrounding slopes.[9]

Characteristics

High above the hoodoos is the great loneliness of the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area. Here there is a sudden, unexpected change in the landscape for which the first time visitor is quite unprepared. The desert plain and the barren slopes yield to woodland and park, to small natural bridges, caves, and grotesque sandstone "goblins," and to the deep, sun-splashed canyons of the wild horse area.

The area is divided by four major canyon systems: Coal, Main, Spring Creek, and Cottonwood. Each is bound by rocky walls towering 1,000 feet or so above the canyon floor.[10] Canyon sides provide some range for wild horses who manage all but the most precipitous terrain with agility and grace. Ridges and benches separate the canyons providing aeries for hawks, falcons, and eagles and lairs for coyotes, black bears, and itinerant mountain lions.

The canyons are drained by intermittent streams, the most dependable of which is in Main Canyon. Here Jerry Creek flows most of the year, the tinkle of its gentle flow surprisingly distinct at a distance,

the canyon walls providing amplification to the sound. Elsewhere streambeds are dry except after the melt of a snowfall or the runoff of a thunderstorm. The only other sources of water are man-made ponds and natural springs with names of curious origin, such as: Lost Judy Spring, Crazy Ed Spring, and I Don't Know Spring.

Throughout much of the wild horse area average temperatures are cooler than in Grand Junction but summer heat can be nearly as intense. Higher elevations are more moderate. Precipitation is low everywhere but increases with elevation so that the highest points in the northwest receive an annual average of sixteen inches while the lower canyons in the southeast receive about nine inches, much the same as in Grand Junction.[11] Most of the precipitation falls as snow but sudden, intense thunderstorms in summer or fall may give rise to large, temporary flows and flash floods.[12] Hard winters and drought are common in the Little Book Cliffs often placing considerable stress on the horses and other wild inhabitants.[13]

Plant life is a reflection of the soil type, the amount and distribution of precipitation, and the exposure to sunlight.[14] The lower, dryer canyons support only a discontinuous cover of browse plants such as salt brush, shade scale, and Mormon tea, and a variety of perennial grasses.[15] As sparse as this vegetation is, it provides important winter range for wild horses attracted to lower elevations not only for forage but also for shelter and water.

When days begin to grow longer and winter melts away, the canyons are as quiet as a sigh. It is as if they are holding their breath in anticipation of spring. Winter drab turns slowly to shades of green. Wild flowers sparkle blue and red, white and yellow among the rocks and along the trails. Lizards laze in the sun only to skitter away at the approach of horse or hiker. Blue birds swoop the canyons, their iridescent plumage illuminating shrubs and trees with tiny twinkles of light. The wild horses begin to move to the high country but some linger until foals are born then move on up. Others remain year around.

At higher elevations dense to open stands of pinyon pine and juniper are interspersed with sage brush parks that offer views of distant, dark mountains and sun-dappled valleys.[16] Beneath the pine and juniper is a sparse under-story of Gambel oak, mountain mahogany, service berry, and grass.[17] Small, widely dispersed stands of ponderosa pine and cottonwood lend variety to the vegetation pattern.[18] In the past, dense, overgrown vegetation was "chained" or uprooted mechanically

but, more recently, it has been removed by prescribed burns as a means of improving natural habitat and increasing forage species of plants for both horses and wildlife.

Resources

The Little Book Cliffs are likely to have remained isolated and inaccessible had it not been for the discovery there of coal, oil shale, and gas, and the establishment of leases to exploit these resources. The coal deposits extend in an arc from the vicinity of Cameo to Loma, a distance of forty miles. The thick, horizontal beds outcrop not only on the slopes rising above Grand Junction, but also on the rock canyon walls along the Colorado River near Cameo. The outcrops are visible from Interstate 70 and can be seen within the wild horse area, most notably in Coal Canyon.

Settlers found small deposits of surface coal near the frontier settlement of Grand Junction in 1881-1882.[19] As Grand Junction grew in population, the most accessible deposits of coal were exhausted and a search for more was extended into the Little Book Cliffs. A major discovery occurred in 1883 and in the year following a commercial coal company was organized. By 1910 eighteen mines were operating on the edge of the Little Book Cliffs and two mining towns were founded: Carpenter and Cameo.[20] Both towns have since disappeared but mining operations continue near the site of Cameo.

The presence of mineral resources in the Little Book Cliffs has given rise to concerns that the wild horses will be endangered if leaseholders exercise their options. Road construction, the placement of wells, drill holes, and ventilation shafts, and related activities, however limited, might alter the range, force horses into increasingly smaller areas, and disrupt their free-roaming ways. Increased human activity might diminish the wild character of the horses.[21] These concerns do not appear justified as the development of existing leases has had no discernible effect.

Man's imprint on the Little Book Cliffs preceded coal mining and gas well drilling. A variety of sites were occupied or altered by native Americans long before the west was settled. The sites include rock shelters, rock art, rock circles and scatters, remains of brushwood huts known as wickiups, and trails. Cottonwood Canyon contains a number of these prehistoric and historic sites.[22]

Ute Indians used many trails in their migration across west-central Colorado.[23] According to one early settler, "The old Utes had them a route they'd travel and then, I guess, when the white man came long they'd name it the Ute Trail. No, they knew where they's going without a name."[24] One of the Ute trails passed through the wild horse area, descended into the valley near the Gearhart Mine northwest of Palisade, and continued across Horse Mountain to Kannah Creek. Remnants of the trail are still visible near the crest of the Little Book Cliffs.[25]

When the Utes were forced to depart west-central Colorado, the Little Book Cliffs became the domain of stockmen and miners. Evidence of their presence remains in abandoned cabins and corrals, remnants of mining operations, and scattered ruins of towns. The facts of coal mining are documented and the miner's story has been told but there is more hearsay than hard, factual information about the stockmen's presence in the Little Book Cliffs perhaps because of the ephemeral nature of the activity. Miners gouged holes in the earth's surface, leaving an inescapable mark on the land. Stockmen took the grass and water but it was replenished. If they had not built cabins and corrals for cowboys or shepherds, it would be difficult to detect their presence today. In another generation or two what remains of these structures will have crumbled into dust and will have scattered in the wind that whips the far country. The stockmen's history will go with it.

The cabins and corrals were built by stockmen and homesteaders in the first two decades of the twentieth century and abandoned by the third.[26] They sheltered cowboys, shepherds, and settlers tending stock or farm fields by day and secured their horses at night. Old corrals still stand in Indian Park, Low Gap, and Monument Rock as well as in Lane Gulch where the canyon wall was used to provide sides to part of the structures. Two dilapidated cabins are in Lane Gulch and others are in the Low Gap and the Monument Rock areas. The most visually interesting structure is the Fessler cabin located on private land in Bronco Flats. The cabin was built by Austin Corcoran, an early homesteader who, in 1921, sold out to the Fessler brothers, area stockmen who specialized in sheep. The structure is a double cabin the separate parts of which are connected by a common roof with a breezeway between. A spring is nearby. The cabin is situated on a rise from which the land gently falls, providing a broad, distant view that melts into the far mountains.

The Fessler cabin. (Photo by author.)

Family band. (Photo courtesy of Marty Felix.)

CHAPTER 3

DAWN HORSE

Then I saw heaven opened,
and behold, a white horse.
Holy Bible

The earliest ancestors of the Little Book Cliffs wild horse herd evolved about fifty-five million years ago in tropical jungles then flourishing in much of the Northern Hemisphere. The ancestors of modern horses were unknown to the scientific community until naturalists found fossil remains of what appeared to be a prehistoric rodent in counties Suffolk and Kent in the east of England. Years later the remains were classified as belonging to a direct ancestor of the horse. This ancestor was given the name *Hydracotherium*, Greek for "like a rabbit."[1]

Fossil remains of the same type were found in Nebraska and in Wyoming in 1867-1868 during construction of the Union Pacific Railroad. Later, remains were found in New Mexico and in Colorado, where the animal is now thought to have originated. American scientists named the animal, *Eohippus*, meaning "dawn horse" in Greek. Positive identification of *Hydracotherium* and *Eohippus* as the same genus did not occur until the 1880s. The priority of the English discoveries and identification perpetuates *Hydracotherium* as the official scientific name of the horse's ancestor but, in the United States, the name *Eohippus* was established at an early date, became popularized, and continues in use today.[2]

Eohippus was a small animal, not more than twenty inches at the shoulder. It had a long, oval head, large eyes, and small, erect ears all set on a short, thick neck. Its teeth were adapted to browsing on tropical foliage rather than grazing on grass. *Eohippus* had an arched back and a long tail. Its feet had toes that enabled it to run swiftly over swampy ground if chased by a predator. This diminutive creature, despite its size and appearance, contained in its genetic code the possibility of becoming the magnificent animal we now call horse.[3]

Over the next twenty-five million years the descendants of *eohippus* adapted to a changing natural environment and evolved most of

the physical characteristics seen in horses today. These animals grew taller, to about the size of a small pony, with a bigger head, more powerful jaws, and a longer neck. Their teeth changed permitting them to eat grassy vegetation. Coloring similar to that of a zebra may have provided protection by confusing predators they could not outrun.[4]

The ancestors of modern horses disappeared from North America between ten million and one million years ago, the victims of an unknown catastrophe.[5] These creatures continued to evolve in Eurasian grasslands having migrated there across Beringia, a temporary land bridge spanning a sea between Alaska and Siberia. At this time all members of the horse family belonged to a single interbreeding group. As horses multiplied and migrated over Asia, Europe, and Africa individual groups became isolated from one another, ceased to interbreed and, eventually, became separate species now recognized as horses, onagers or wild asses, and zebras.[6]

Horses returned to North America sometime after 600,000 B.C. During the time they were in Asia, horses evolved all their present-day characteristics. They crossed over the Beringian land bridge and ranged over the grasslands of North America and South America. Horses were among the most numerous animals in the Americas when earliest man arrived.[7] Yet between 9,000 B.C. and 5,000 B.C. horses vanished along with other animals such as mammoths, mastodons, and saber-toothed tigers.[8] The disappearance was the result of a climate change that destroyed habitat, the depredations of man, or disease. About this time, Beringia again sank beneath the sea ending the overland migration of horses and other animals.[9]

Horses did not become extinct in Eurasia. Before vanishing from the Americas, some horses returned to the Eurasian grasslands and spread into Africa. Semi-nomadic tribesmen moved into the grasslands about 4,000 B.C. and domesticated horses for hunting and for war.[10] The raids of these people into Greece gave rise to the myth of the centaur, a creature half man and half horse.

By 2,000 B.C. tribes in the Danube River valley of central Europe had domesticated horses and, in the deep forests of northern Europe large, powerful but slow-moving horses were being bred for war.[11] Within another thousand years domesticated horses were found throughout Europe. At the same time, tribesmen from Asia were extending the horse culture over the Middle East and across North Africa. Here spe-

cial breeds of war horses were developed to withstand the rigors of a hot, dry desert climate. These horses were smaller than the forest horses of northern Europe but often possessed considerable speed, endurance, and beauty.[12]

Moors from North Africa invaded and conquered Spain in the eighth century A.D. The Moors rode fine war horses known as barbs.[13] After the Moorish conquest of Spain, breeders, particularly in the southern province of Andalusia, began to mix the barb's speed and endurance with the Spanish horse's size and power. Seven centuries of selective breeding produced the Spanish jennet or Andalusian, a distinctive horse of great fame.[14] This horse was thought to be superior to either ancestor and gave Spain the reputation of having the finest quality horses in Europe.[15] Spanish conquistadors brought Andalusians to the New World.[16] Horses escaped from or released by the Spaniards or by Indians, who had acquired horses from the Spaniards, ran wild on the plains of North America and multiplied. Modern genetic marker analysis reveals traces of Andalusian blood coursing through the veins of the Little Book Cliffs wild horse herd.[17]

A stallion named Big Red. (Photo courtesy of Marty Felix.)

CHAPTER 4

HOME FROM HOME

> He trots the air, the earth sings when he touches it, his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.
> William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

Return of Horses to America

In 1492 Spain became a major European power both on land and on sea. The Moors had been expelled early in the year and now the Spanish monarchs turned their attention to empire, outfitting voyages of exploration in search of a water route across unknown oceans to the Orient. Most notable among the early voyages were those of Christopher Columbus, an Italian navigator, who is thought to have made landfall on San Salvador, a small island in the Bahamas and who, subsequently, made three voyages to the New World. Columbus, on his second voyage, transported twenty horses suspended in slings and, in January 1494, landed them little worse for the ordeal on the West Indian island of Hispaniola.[1] After an absence of 9,000 years horses returned to the Americas.

For the next quarter century horses were cargo on nearly every Spanish ship bound for the West Indies. Ever increasing numbers were needed to accompany expeditions of exploration and conquest. Breeding farms were established in the West Indies and stocked with fine stallions and mares to supplement the number of horses imported from Spain and, later, from North Africa.[2] Nevertheless, the demand for Spanish horses so far exceeded supply that the government was compelled to prohibit shipment to the colonies in order to insure sufficient numbers for domestic use.[3] Spain became so desperate for horses, at one point in the sixteenth century, it had to import them from the West Indies.[4]

Horses bred in the West Indies were indispensable in the conquest and subjugation of native Americans. The daring Hernando Cortez landed a ragtag band of followers on the shores of Mexico in 1519 and,

within two years, destroyed the Aztec empire. His success was as much the result of the terror induced by the strange beast he rode as it was his undaunted leadership.[5] In 1521 horses returned to what is now the United States when Juan Ponce de Leon transported a number of animals from Cuba or Puerto Rico and landed them on the Gulf of Mexico coast of Florida. Pedro Mendoza reintroduced horses to the Argentine grasslands in 1535.[6] Then between 1539 and 1541 two horseback expeditions explored portions of the North American mainland: Hernando de Soto traversed the southeast from Florida to the Mississippi River while Francesco Coronado, in search of Cibola, the Seven Cities of Gold, crossed New Mexico, eastern Colorado, and Kansas.

Coronado's failure to find riches led the Spanish government to suspend exploration in the southwest.[7] Even so, the Spaniards had conducted impressive feats of exploration on the North American mainland in a remarkably short time. Superb Adalusian horses, perhaps more than anything else, made this possible. These horses had the stamina to endure long rides under harsh conditions and the strength to bear loads equal to one-quarter their weight.[8] The history of Spanish exploration in the Americas may well have been different without the Andalusian horse.

The horse was reintroduced in North America not only by the Spaniards but also by colonists of various nationalities who settled the Atlantic seaboard.[9] Horses were cargo aboard ships destined for Canada, Virginia, Massachusetts Bay, Manhattan Island, and the Delaware River valley. They came from Normandy and Brittany in France, England and Ireland, Holland and Sweden, large draft horses for work, pleasure horses for riding.[10] Horse breeders in Rhode Island developed the famed Narragansett pacer.[11] Horses were a valuable commodity in intercolonial trade and in international trade, particularly with the West Indies where large numbers were required for plantation work. Stray or abandoned horses gave rise to feral bands that roamed the frontier fringes of all the English colonies, most notably, the Blue Ridge region of Virginia.[12]

The Spaniards took renewed interest in the American southwest a few years before the first, permanent English colony was established at Jamestown, Virginia. In 1598 an expedition led by Juan de Oñate entered the upper Rio Grand River valley with 7,000 horses, donkeys, cattle, and sheep.[13] Oñate, taking possession of the region in the name of king and country, founded the colony of New Mexico.[14] He

gained control over the Pueblo Indians, established trade relations with more distant tribes, among whom were the Utes, and heard tales of the land that would become Colorado.

The Spaniards established missions to redeem the souls of Indians and ranches to sustain the needs of the colony. They planted gardens and raised cattle and horses. It became apparent, however, that there were not enough colonists to tend the gardens and to care for the stock. There was no recourse other than to rely on Indians to provide the labor. Indians were taught to break and to train horses and even to ride them, contrary to the Spanish custom of prohibiting Indians from riding.[15] Frequently, Indians escaped the missions and ranches with stolen horses, sometimes returning with tribesmen to steal again.[16] Captives taken by Indians in lightning raids on unwary ranches or villages were ransomed for horses.[17] Another source of horses were the Comancheros, men who ventured beyond the frontier to trade with Indians despite Spanish laws prohibiting it.[18]

Pueblo Indians rebelled against their Spanish oppressors in 1680 killing many and driving the survivors out of New Mexico into Texas where they remained for the next decade.[19] The Indians captured 3,000 to 5,000 horses during hostilities. While some tribes had acquired horses from the Spaniards before the Pueblo rebellion, the general dispersal of horses over the Great Plains and the mountain west is dated from 1680.[20] The period between 1680 and 1880, when Americans confined Indians to reservations, is referred to as the Age of Horse Culture.[21]

Age of Horse Culture

Horses revolutionized the lives of Indians who used them. At first horses were treated as curiosities and as ceremonial animals but, within a short time, they transformed Indian social, economic, and cultural life. Wealth and status often came to depend upon the number and quality of horses a person owned. Horses enabled some Indians to exploit the vast buffalo herds of the Great Plains changing farmers to nomadic hunters and to superb mounted warriors. Horses enabled Indians to reign supreme in their native western land for nearly two centuries after the arrival of white men.[22]

The horse culture spread northward rapidly from New Mexico and Texas along either side of the Rocky Mountains.[23] West of the mountains horses were traded from tribe to tribe reaching the Columbia River

basin of Oregon and Washington by 1710. Many places in the mountain west were not ideal for raising large numbers of horses although early travelers noted distinctive types and impressive numbers in favorable places. One place of favor was the Columbia River basin of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho where the Nez Perce developed the delightful Appaloosa, and the Cayuse owned so many horses their tribal name became associated with any Indian pony.[24] East of the Rocky Mountains, on the Great Plains, horses were traded among tribes finally reaching the Blackfeet of Montana in the middle of the eighteenth century.[25] When the first Indian rode into the plains of Colorado, the horse was returned to its prehistoric homeland. The horse was home from home.

Most Indian tribes acquired horses before feral herds spread over the West, the Indians preferring domesticated horses to mustangs that were difficult to catch and to tame.[26] Feral herds began from escaped or abandoned horses. The Great Plains provided them an ideal habitat: immense open spaces, a boundless sea of grass, adequate water, and few predators.[27] Eventually enormous numbers of horses occupied the plains.

The greatest number of wild horses was found on the Texas plains. Early eighteenth century travelers reported individual herds of several thousand and, before the end of the century, the number of horses was described as "breathtaking," some places being "completely overrun" with them.[28] Ulysses S. Grant, as a young Army officer on patrol in Texas, once looked out over the rolling plains and saw a wild horse herd extending to the horizon. Later Grant wrote that if that herd had been corralled in Rhode Island or in Delaware "they would have been so thick that the pasturage would have given out the first day."[29] By the end of the Civil War wild horse herds on the Great Plains were great in size and various in origin with bloodlines as much American as Spanish.

After the last of the plains Indian wars had been fought in the 1870s and 1880s, defeated tribes were placed in reservations. Their horses were seldom relocated with them. Many abandoned horses joined wild, free-roaming bands. In 1881, when the northern Utes were forced out of western Colorado, it is probable that some of their horses were left behind in the far country north of Grand Junction, their blood blending with that of other horses introduced at a later time and adding to the complexity of heritage in today's Little Book Cliffs wild horse herd.[30]

CHAPTER 5

EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION

They came to the Delectable Mountains.
John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*

The Ute Indians first encountered Europeans early in the seventeenth century.[1] Spanish missionaries and explorers, from their base in Santa Fe, New Mexico, probed Ute lands in what is now Colorado, seeking gold, native American converts to Catholicism, and empire.[2] Eventually one expedition reached the site of Delta, Colorado by way of the Gunnison River.[3] (Figure 1) Another expedition later continued down the Gunnison to its confluence with the Grand (Colorado) River before returning to Santa Fe.[4]

The Franciscan friars Francisco Dominguez and Silvestre Escalante set out from Santa Fe with eight companions in 1776 to find a route to Monterrey, a Spanish mission in California.[5] They followed a route taking them to the vicinity of Montrose, Colorado where they reached the Gunnison River. Continuing up the north fork of the Gunnison, they encountered Utes who led them across Grand Mesa to the site of De Beque.[6]

The expedition proceeded north into the rugged rocks of the Book Cliffs and the Roan Plateau. Escalante recorded in his journal a harrowing account of steep, perilous slopes, loose dirt, and brittle shale, referring to one height of land as "the hill of fright," as apt a description of the area today as it was more than two hundred years ago.[7] The expedition departed Colorado soon after this experience and no other explorers followed. Difficult terrain and uncertain weather, lack of converts, and failure to find gold all contributed to a diminution of Spanish interest in Colorado.[8] Although Dominguez and Escalante did not find a route to Monterrey, they did provide the first written description of the Book Cliffs and the land they traversed on their remarkable journey.[9]

Figure 1. Wild Horse Area in Western Colorado.

"Splendid Wayfarers"

The Spaniards were succeeded by "splendid wayfarers," itinerant trappers of various ethnic origins who wandered the Rocky Mountains in search of beaver.[10] The quest took many trappers by mountain pass, tumbling river, and rocky trail across Grand Mesa, through Grand Valley, and over the Book Cliffs, a landmark assuring them at a distance of the true direction of travel. The wayfarers were bound for the upper Green River country of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming.[11]

In 1828, Antoine Robideaux, a daring Frenchman from St. Louis, built a small trading post on the Gunnison River about two miles northwest of the site of Delta, Colorado. Fort Robideaux was the first trading post in western Colorado, its nearest neighbor being Bent's Fort 350 miles southeast.[12] Robideaux placed his trading post at a strategic location on a main north-south route linking settlements in New Mexico with the Green River country.[13] The post served as a supply center for Indians as well as for trappers.

In the 1830s Fort Robideaux was succeeded by Fort Davy Crockett which was ideally located at a popular place of rendezvous for trappers and traders in Brown's Hole, a mountain valley on the Green River in northwestern Colorado.[14] Fort Crockett became the center of fur trade on the western slope of the Rockies and one of the busiest trading posts in the mountains. By 1840, however, the Rocky Mountain fur trade was all but ended as a result of years of over-trapping and a change in fashion.[15] Silk replaced beaver in the manufacture of men's top hats. Within a few years, once thriving fur trading posts were no more than memories. Then, for all too brief a time, the delectable mountains belonged to the Utes again and the Little Book Cliffs reposed in slumber undisturbed by no other.

Valley of the Grand

The Grand Valley continued to be a route of travel in the 1840s and in the decades following. The splendid wayfarers gave way to adventurers, missionaries bound for Oregon Territory, occasional trade caravans rumbling the Old Spanish Trail between New Mexico and California and, in the 1850s and 1860s, exploration and survey parties searching the mountains for railroad routes to link east and west.[16] In 1853, two United States Army expeditions passed through the valley fording

the Grand (Colorado) River near the site of Grand Junction. The first expedition, led by Lieutenant Edward Beale, was destined for California; the second, led by Captain John W. Gunnison, was surveying a possible railroad route through the central Rocky Mountains to California.[17]

Members of the Gunnison expedition gave names to many of the landmarks along their route of travel. One expedition member thought the cliffs above the site of Grand Junction were reminiscent of "books on a shelf."[18] Thereafter the name Book Cliffs appeared in a report filed by members of the expedition and the "Book or Roan Cliffs" appeared on a map published by the War Department in 1861.[19] Gunnison was killed by Indians in Utah before his survey was completed but his name was immortalized by the river named for him.[20]

On September 4, 1881, at 5:00 a.m., a bugle blare announced the opening of the Grand Valley to settlement. The previous spring the last of the northern Utes had been marched out of the area under military escort to reservations in eastern Utah. The best land in the valley was claimed within a few days of its availability and, on September 26, Grand Junction, first named Ute, was laid out at the confluence of the Grand and Gunnison Rivers.[21] The Grand River was renamed Colorado River in 1921.

The Grand Valley was settled rapidly. Cattlemen, sheepmen, farmers, fruit growers, and others occupied the land simultaneously rather than in successive stages, the general characteristic of frontier settlement. The process was accelerated by an early appearance of the railroad providing connections both east and west. The population of Grand Junction grew quickly and with growth came attributes associated with civilized life: churches, schools, libraries, and other social institutions. Most frontier settlements developed in much the same way over time but in Grand Junction the process took only a few years.[22]

Introduction of Livestock

The early economy of the Grand Valley depended upon the livestock industry. Cattle and sheep were trailed into the area in the 1870s and, at first, many stockmen raised both, but eventually they specialized in one or the other.[23] The valley provided stock winter range, protection from extremes in weather, and adequate amounts of water. The surrounding highlands provided summer grazing.[24] Cattlemen thrived but

sheep raisers did not share in the prosperity mostly because of the hostility of the cattlemen with whom they competed for range.

At first sheep did not pose a serious threat. They were seasonal users of the range, drifting between distant pastures. Flocks were trailed through the Grand Valley to winter pastures in Utah. In spring they were trailed back through the valley, sometimes in large numbers, to high pastures on Grand Mesa and in the Little Book Cliffs. An early settler recalled a flock that began crossing Grand Junction's Fifth Street bridge at 6:00 a.m. and not ending until 8:00 p.m. that evening.[25] Cattlemen became less tolerant as the numbers of sheep increased and as available range decreased.

During the 1880s cattle production was stimulated by a great demand for beef in the United States and in Europe, and cattle prices responded by rising to historic levels.[26] Local demand for range and stocker cattle increased apace. It was apparent, however, that available range was not sufficient in extent to meet the demand for ever more beef. Area cattlemen responded by establishing the Western Stockgrowers Association to preserve the range for cattle and to stop the intrusion of sheep.[27]

There were several reasons why members of the stockgrowers association wanted to rid the range of sheep. Sheep deprived cattle of pasture by arriving in the high country before cattle and by ruining the pasture by close cropping the grass. Further, cattlemen were of the opinion that sheep so fouled water that cattle would not drink from it. Sheep left behind odors that repelled cattle. But among all the objections to sheep, competition for grazing land was probably most responsible for the violence about to erupt.[28]

The violence may have been precipitated by a sudden, sharp correction in the cattle market late in 1885. Prices plummeted to ruinous levels. Small operators could not continue and sold out at a loss or reduced the size of herds and took up farming. Many large operators remained in business, some even expanded their activity, but all were hurt.[29] Frustrated by circumstances they knew not how to control some cattlemen lashed out at sheep raisers holding them responsible for the problem. Between 1886 and 1910 shepherds and sheepmen were murdered without remorse and thousands of sheep were killed with clubs, axes, and knives, or rimrocked by being driven over cliffs to their destruction. Seldom were those responsible apprehended and brought to justice; rarely were they convicted.[30]

The decade between 1910 and 1920 witnessed a decline in violence on the range and a change in the stockgrowing industry. A demand for meat during World War I led to greater production in both cattle and sheep and to abuses in range land through overgrazing. This accelerated a trend toward combining ranching and farming. By 1920 the range wars were finished, free grass was gone, and the stockman's frontier was no more.[31]

Taylor Grazing Act

Up to 1934 grazing on public lands, except for national forests, was unregulated and, over the years, led to a dramatic deterioration in range quality. It became evident that federal intervention was required to stop the destruction. With passage of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934 a new system of land use was established, and grazing licenses were issued to ranchers for a fee.[32] Licensed ranchers were permitted to place a certain number of cattle, sheep, or domestic horses on public land, and regulations were issued to control seasonal land use. Cattle and sheep were given priority.[33]

Ranchers, mustangers or professional horse catchers, and federal agencies were authorized to remove wild horses from public lands in order to provide more grazing for domestic stock. Initially, efforts were frustrated by the release or abandonment of thousands of domestic horses into the wild by farmers and ranchers ruined in the Great Depression of the 1930s. At this time there were an estimated 150,000 wild horses on public lands in the western states.[34]

Overgrazing by domestic livestock was mostly responsible for the range deterioration that prompted the Taylor Grazing Act but many ranchers placed blame on wild horses. Ranchers believed their way of life threatened by horses whose numbers appeared to be out of control.[35] Horses were destroying range for which ranchers paid to graze cattle. Ranchers, and federal agencies responsible for enforcing the grazing act, regarded it imperative that wild horses be removed from public lands and proceeded to do so.[36] The unrestrained consequences of this action almost certainly would have resulted in destruction of wild horse herds had it not been for the courage of one woman dedicated to their preservation—Velma B. Johnston, "Wild Horse Annie."

On the way to water. (Photo courtesty of Marty Felix.)

Mare and fillies. (Photo courtesy of Marty Felix.)

CHAPTER 6

THE LEGACY OF WILD HORSE ANNIE

Oh, if men were more merciful,
they would shoot us before we
came to such misery.
Anna Sewell, *Black Beauty*

America's wild horses originated with Spanish missions and ranches in the Southwest.[1] These horses were descended from Spanish and, later, American stock that had been dispersed upon the Great Plains by escape or abandonment, theft or trade. Free-roaming horses, often referred to as mustangs, were ideally suited to the open, grassy plains where they multiplied in prodigious numbers. Indians tamed some of the mustangs using them to establish supremacy over much of the West until the coming of ranchers, railroads, and sodbusters ended their dominion as lords of the plains.

At this time there were about two million wild horses.[2] Stray horses often joined wild bands increasing the number and lending diversity to bloodlines.[3] Occasionally, large draft horses were turned loose intentionally, as in the Little Book Cliffs, to "breed up" or to improve the conformation of nearby bands that then might be captured and sold.[4]

The market for wild horses was stimulated by the Boer War, 1899-1902, and by World War I, 1914-1918. English, French, Italian, and American agents traveled Colorado and the West placing large orders for cavalry mounts.[5] Annual exports of American horses increased from 45,788 in 1899 to 103,020 in 1902.[6] During World War I England and France, together, bought more than one million horses from the United States.[7] After the war the market for horses was greatly depressed. Ranchers who were unable to continue in business turned their stock loose to run with the wild bands. The numbers of free-roaming horses were increased further with the abandonment of draft horses displaced by machinery in farm work.[8] By the 1930s there were more wild horses than existing range could sustain, and horses were competing for grass intended for cattle and sheep.

Decimation of Feral Horses

Ranchers considered wild horses to be pests. Horses ate grass down close to the ground and their hooves cut and trampled the range to dust. Wild stallions were a particular object of scorn, stealing and, sometimes, injuring or killing domestic horses. Although individual ranchers found their own ways to control local bands, it was not until about 1900 that concerted efforts were made to clear western ranges of the pests. A number of state legislatures, most notably Nevada, Montana, and Arizona, authorized rounding up and killing wild horses.[9]

Even more catastrophic to wild horse herds was a change in social behavior among many Americans. People increasingly began to own pets, and pets required meat for good nutrition. In the 1920s wild horse meat began to be used in the manufacture of commercial pet food. The first can of dog food was packaged at Rockford, Illinois in 1923 and, within a decade, more than twenty-nine million pounds were being produced annually, most of the food being derived from horse meat.[10] By 1935 about 200 firms in the United States were making pet food and Americans were spending more than forty million dollars annually to feed their dogs and cats.[11]

Wild horse meat was used, also, for chicken feed. Horses were rounded up and hauled by rail at a special "chicken feed" rate to circumvent the usual standard of providing care for animals en route to slaughter. Thousands of mustangs, bought on the range for a cent or less a pound, were crowded into railroad freight cars and transported without feed or water to distant processing plants. They suffered and died from over-crowding, starvation, and thirst.[12]

During the Great Depression wild horses served additional needs both home and abroad. Cooked and ready to serve horsemeat, intended as pet food, was consumed by many poverty-stricken American families for ten cents or less the one pound can.[13] Additionally, about five million pounds of horse meat was exported annually mainly to Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia.[14] The by-products were used in the manufacture of soap, glue, and fertilizer. Bones became buttons. Hides and hair were used in coats, shoes, mattresses, and baseballs.[15]

The demand for horsemeat for human consumption reached unprecedented levels during World War II and the years immediately thereafter. Inexpensive horsemeat often made up for shortages of beef and pork in American diets.[16] Tens of thousands of pounds of horsemeat

were supplied our European allies. After the war the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration coordinated efforts to provide horsemeat to underfed people in countries in which it was ordinarily a part of the diet.[17] Large numbers of wild horses were removed from western rangelands to provide these needs.

Wild horses were rounded up by commercial mustangers licensed by the federal Bureau of Land Management, the agency responsible for administering western rangelands. At the time, the official government policy was to remove wild horses from the range to protect grazing.[18] Mustangers used a variety of techniques to capture and subdue horses. Aircraft were most effective.

Pilots could locate horses from the air more easily than mounted riders could from the ground. Flying low, with sirens blaring or shotguns blazing, they flushed horses from hideaways and ran them to exhaustion to make capture easy.[19] Some mustangers nose-hobbled horses by slitting their nostrils, placing bailing wire through the slits and twisting it tight to impair breathing making escape difficult. If the nose-hobbled horse was a mare, it might be released to return to the band. Unable to breathe properly she would slow the fleeing band making it vulnerable to capture.[20]

Another means of capture was to lasso a running horse from the back of a truck. A heavy tire was attached to the lasso. The horse, in frantic effort to escape, dragged the tire until it could run no more, then capture was easy.[21] Trucks, also, enabled mustangers to reach many remote areas more quickly than mounted riders, and provided the means to move captured horses to shipping points.[22]

Some ranchers removed horses by more efficient means. Entire bands were rimrocked by being driven off cliffs, a technique reported to have occurred on Grand Mesa.[23] Wild horses were shot on sight by some cattlemen in the Little Book Cliffs.[24] Poisoning water holes was another effective technique. Wild horses had little chance to survive against the ingenuity of man and the instruments of destruction at his disposal.

Wild Horse Annie and Federal Legislation

The abuses inflicted upon wild horses gave rise to a national movement to seek federal protection. The story of the wild horse protection movement begins with Velma B. Johnston. Each day for years Velma

commuted from her ranch near Reno, Nevada to her office in town and, one day in 1950, she found herself behind a truck loaded with wild horses. She followed the truck to its destination after noting blood dripping from it. The horses were being transported to a rendering plant to be slaughtered and processed. Most of the horses in the truck had been injured, some badly, in the trauma of capture.[25]

Velma resolved that day to publicize the plight of wild horses and to prevent the kind of treatment she had witnessed. She launched a national campaign to provide federal protection for wild horses, financing the effort with the salary she earned as a secretary.[26] Velma, and her supporters, convinced the local county Board of Commissioners to prohibit the use of aircraft in gathering wild horses for slaughter.[27] That accomplished, she campaigned successfully for a state law against the practice and, within a few years, she took her cause to the United States Congress.[28]

Velma was opposed in her efforts by members of the livestock industry some of whom referred to her derisively as "Wild Horse Annie." Death threats prompted the Federal Bureau of Investigation to protect her on several occasions while she investigated wild horse abuses.[29] Wild Horse Annie, as Velma was known now to foe and to friend, wanted to prevent the inhumane capture of wild horses and to receive assurance they would be free to roam public lands. If wild horses became too numerous, she wanted them to be "mercifully thinned out, not wiped out."[30] When lawmakers were deluged with letters from grade school children imploring them to save the horses not even the powerful influence of ranchmen could prevent it.[31]

In 1959, Congress passed the Wild Horse Protection Act, better known as the Wild Horse Annie bill. The act prohibited the use of airplanes, motor vehicles, and poison to trap or to kill wild horses on federal lands.[32] Commercial mustanging remained legal, however, and airplanes still could be used to round up horses on state and private land.[33] Wild Horse Annie and her followers responded in 1965 by organizing the International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros and, soon after, the Wild Horse Organized Assistance (WHOA). These groups and others then began a concerted effort to convince Congress of the need to establish a national policy for the protection of wild horses and burros.[34]

The status of wild horses became a national issue in the 1960s. The Bureau of Land Management received more correspondence on this issue than all others combined.[35] Many Americans viewed wild horses

as a legacy of the Spanish colonial era, a symbol of freedom, a national treasure. The fact that most wild horses were descended from stock released by failed farmers and ranchers in the 1920s and 1930s did not matter.[36] Technically all wild horses in America are feral, former domestic animals that have reverted to a wild state. The distinction between wild and feral may be of little consequence now since horses reacquire wild instincts when separated from human care, and their offspring are wild by any definition.[37] Feral or wild, the issue as viewed by Wild Horse Annie and others was how to save free-roaming horses from extinction.

In 1970, Senator Clifford Hansen of Wyoming introduced a bill in Congress to authorize the Secretary of the Interior "to protect, manage, and control free-roaming horses and burros on public lands."[38] With powerful bipartisan support the Hansen Bill, known as the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act, passed both houses of Congress, and in 1971 was signed into law by President Richard M. Nixon.[39] The Act declared that "wild and free-roaming horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the west; that they contribute to the diversity of life forms within the nation and enrich the lives of the American people."[40]

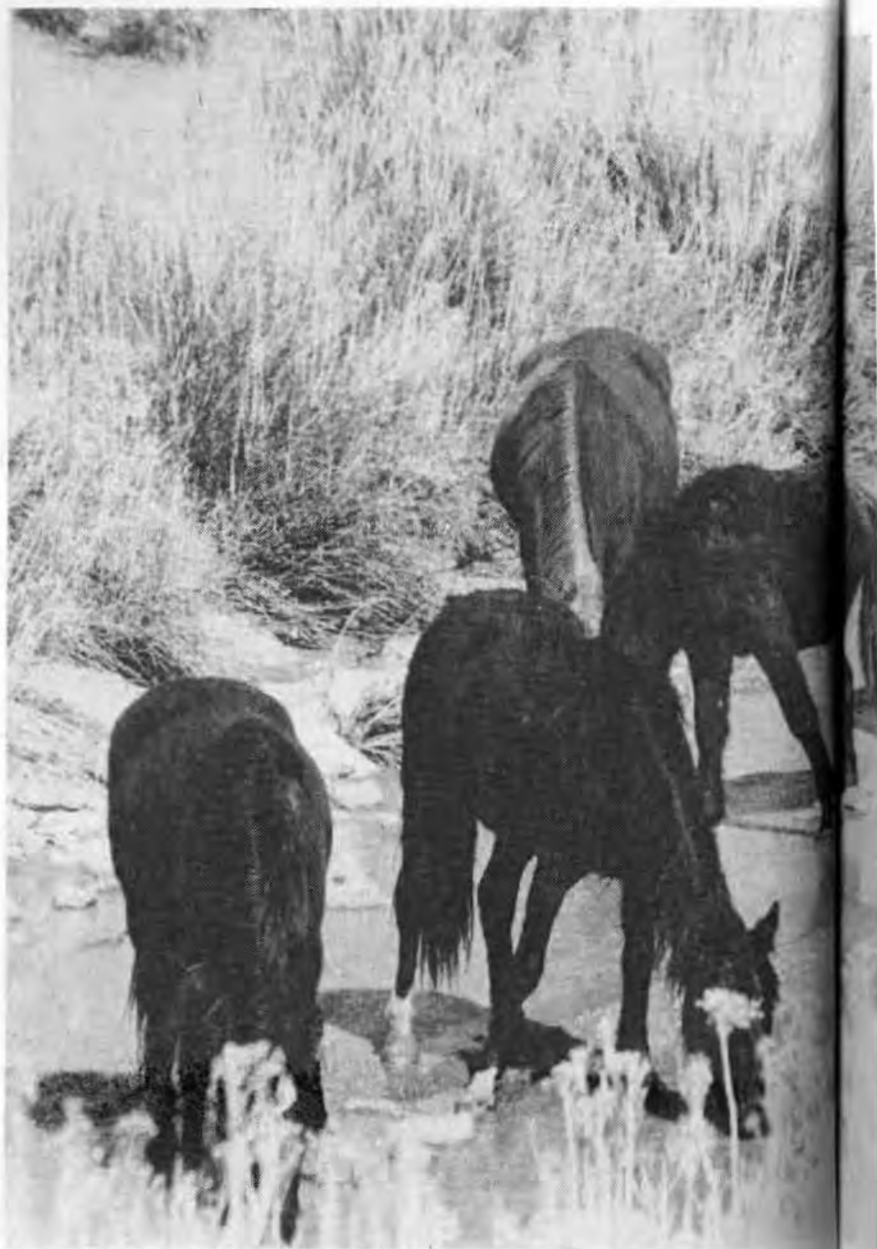
The Act recognized wild horses and burros as desirable species giving them a legal right to live on public lands along with native wild life and privately owned domestic stock whose owners leased that land from the Bureau of Land Management or the Forest Service. Killing horses in the wild or selling them for commercial purposes was prohibited. The Bureau of Land Management was given responsibility for carrying out the provisions of the Act and, subsequently, the Bureau developed a multiple use policy in which wild horses and burros, along with domestic livestock and wildlife, would have access to public lands.[41]

After passage of the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act, once threatened populations grew rapidly.[42] It became apparent that without controls the animals would overpopulate their habitat and endanger their existence unless the act was amended. Subsequently, two amendments were introduced and approved by Congress. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 1976, permitted the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service to use helicopters in the roundup of excess animals and to use motor vehicles to transport them.[43] The Public Rangelands Improvement Act, 1978, expanded the Bureau's responsibilities for the care of wild horses and burros, establishing procedures

The Monument to Wild Horse Annie, located inside the gate at the entrance to Indian Park. (Photo by author.)

for controlling their numbers and providing a means for the public to adopt them.[44]

There is a monument to Velma B. (Wild Horse Annie) Johnston in the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area. It is an unpretentious stone set close to the ground and surrounded by sage brush. The inscription on the stone commemorates the life and accomplishments of a courageous but frail woman disfigured by polio. She made thousands of Americans aware of the plight of wild horses and burros and helped save these symbols of the old West for future generations. But, despite Wild Horse Annie's dedication to these free-roaming creatures, she was often in great discomfort around them. Annie was allergic to horses.[45]



Reno's band watering in Jerry Creek.

(Photo courtesy of Marty Felix.)

The Three Amigos. (Photo courtesy of Marty Felix.)

CHAPTER 7

ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF THE LITTLE BOOK CLIFFS WILD HORSE AREA

What will happen when...
the wild horses are tamed?
The end of living and
the beginning of survival.
Chief Seattle

Wild horse populations grew rapidly in the 1970s. Growth was the result of legal protection, natural increase, and outmoded techniques of removing excess horses from the range. Horses destroyed the range in overpopulated areas imperiling their health and, in some instances, their existence. Removing horses from overpopulated areas could be a challenge especially in places having difficult terrain. Until 1976 it was illegal to use aircraft to assist in gathering horses, and the only other means was to employ cowboys. Without assistance from aircraft, cowboys could not remove enough horses from some ranges to keep up with population growth.[1]

Wild horse herds may increase, on average, at the rate of fifteen to twenty percent a year.[2] When winters are mild and forage abundant, the population increase may be as high as forty percent. The rate of increase may be as low as five percent when winters are severe and forage scarce.[3] The Bureau of Land Management does not provide supplemental feed except in extreme circumstances when total herd populations are threatened.[4] The horses are treated as wildland species subject to the uncertainties of weather rather than as livestock to be fed and sheltered. Management focuses on monitoring the condition of the horses and their habitat, maintaining productive rangeland, and removing excess horses when conditions warrant in order to ensure healthy populations.

Before passage of federal laws protecting wild horses, public controversy swirled around the animals' right to exist. With existence assured, the controversy shifted to the right of wild horses to range pub-

lic lands and the number that should be allowed to remain there. Ranchers and conservationists, in an uncommon alliance, asserted that the numbers of wild horses should be limited because they deprived domestic livestock and wildlife of forage and water. Wild horse enthusiasts believed that greater numbers of horses could be sustained on public lands because horses were not major competitors for water or forage.[5]

Wild horses do compete for water and forage and, in some places, do contribute to overgrazing and attendant problems but, on public lands, they are vastly outnumbered by domestic livestock. Poor range management can damage habitat regardless of the species grazing upon it, to the detriment of all.[6] The Bureau of Land Management's task has been to develop range management plans protecting wild horses and, at the same time, to respond to the needs of cattle ranchers who hold grazing rights on the public lands. The antecedents of the controversy over appropriate uses of rangeland in west-central Colorado originated in frontier times and continue to the present.

The Cattlemen

Squire G. "Old Man" Lane of Fruita, Colorado, was one of the first persons known to have grazed stock in the Little Book Cliffs.[7] Lane arrived in the Grand Valley early in the 1880s. He went into the stock business raising cattle and horses until about the turn of the century when he went out of business. It is possible, although some old-timers think it improbable, that some of Lane's horses escaped joining wild bands already inhabiting portions of the Book Cliffs. The Lane range was a sprawling tract said to have been bounded by the Colorado River in the east, the Little Book Cliffs in the south and west, and by Coon Hollow and Fessler Draw in the north, a tract including the present Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area.[8]

Within this tract the deep declivity of Lane Gulch was a favored place for keeping grazing stock. The steep walls of the gulch gave protection from weather and kept stock within well-defined limits. A little creek flowing through might have provided a more dependable water supply at that time than it does now. The remains of two dilapidated cabins, probably dating from the early 1900s, and several makeshift corrals give one a sense of connection with the past. Bear tracks in the soft sediment of the creek bed give one a sense of wilderness and compel an awareness of the present.

Dave Knight, a part Cherokee Indian from Oklahoma, moved onto the Lane range in 1911 and remained active there until his death in 1945.[9] Knight became a legend during his life in west-central Colorado because of his personal eccentricities, rugged individualism, and quality horses. When Knight arrived in the Book Cliffs, he brought thirty to forty mares purchased from Ira Boyce of Piceance Creek in northwestern Colorado and, it is said, two Arabian studs. The mares were "broomtails," wild horses captured in the Book Cliffs and broken for saddle use. Knight returned these horses to their home range where they became the foundation of his horse business.[10] Over the years, he added to his herd by capturing wild horses in the Book Cliffs. Knight had a horse trap in Main Canyon but there is no evidence of it today.

Dave Knight used the "garter" brand to mark his stock for identification. A hot branding iron was run high around the horse's left hind leg, close to the belly. Later, when Knight went into the cattle business, he ran the iron around the cow's entire hind end leaving a mark that was as imaginative as it was distinctive. Ownership was not a question when anyone saw stock marked with the garter brand.[11] Knight's horses were much desired by law enforcement officers and by cow outfits up and down the western slope of the Rockies.[12] Other horses were rounded up in the spring and trailed to stockyards in De Beque for shipment to midwestern horse markets, principally to St. Louis.[13] Knight also sold horses to the United States Army during World War I.

Dave Knight grazed his horses in Main Canyon, within the present Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area. He used available range to the best advantage possible by moving his horses to pasture on one side of the canyon in winter and to the other side in summer thereby ensuring adequate, year-round grazing.[14] Knight protected his range further by controlling the number of horses on it. He was as determined to protect his range from overgrazing as he was to protect his horses from theft. Knight policed his range and, on more than one occasion, a cowboy was warned not to cross the Colorado River with any of his horses, a Winchester across Knight's saddle speaking with more authority than mere words.[15]

The market for horses crashed after the introduction of the automobile and virtually disappeared during the economic depression of the 1930s. Many ranchers and farmers could not afford to keep horses. Knight began to let his horses run free and some joined wild bands, especially in the early 1940s when failing health prevented him from

attending to them properly. Knight's horses, and horses turned loose by others, became the foundation stock of today's Little Book Cliffs wild horse herd.[16]

Dave Knight's stock operation began to fall apart in the years immediately preceding his death. Horses and cattle went unbranded and multiplied, grazing the range to the point of destruction.[17] Knight died on November 9, 1945, and was buried in the Grand Junction municipal cemetery. He was survived by his mother Mrs. James Stroud of Berryville, Arkansas and by two half brothers, Charles Chittenden, sometimes referred to incorrectly as Charley Knight, of De Beque, and James R. Stroud of Berryville. Knight never married.[18] Stroud, who came west to manage Knight's estate, was considered incompetent to do so by many of his local contemporaries and, in 1959, he sold Dave's cattle, public range rights, and deeded land to W. Russell Latham of Grand Junction.[19]

Latham cleared his newly acquired range land of unbranded cattle but made no serious attempt to remove horses. At the time Latham acquired the land, 100 to 150 horses were running free on it. Most of the horses were unbranded and subject to claim by the state. Branded and claimed stock was removed under the auspices of the Bureau of Land Management leaving forty to fifty horses on Latham's range. In 1971, however, federal legislation changed the Bureau's responsibility from removing horses from public lands to protecting them.[20]

John D. Hill of Palisade bought Latham's range rights in 1972.[21] The acquisition included land that was to become the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area and the Round Mountain allotment. The Bureau of Land Management conducted a resource survey of Hill's grazing allotment soon after he acquired it. The survey revealed the range in the allotment to be in so poor condition as to be incapable of supporting more than thirty to fifty wild horses in competition with cattle and deer for available forage. The Bureau decided that only wild horses should be allowed to graze the allotment.

Hill was notified that his grazing permit would be canceled and he was directed to remove his cattle.[22] Hill complied with the directive removing his cattle in the winter of 1973-1974 but he, and other stockmen, charged that wild horses, not cattle, were ruining the range. Wild horse enthusiasts complained that range deterioration was the stockmen's fault and feared stockmen might kill the horses to regain use of the range.

Hill filed claim for all the wild horses within his grazing allotment noting that, over the years, Knight, Latham, and others had re-

leased horses there. The horses were not rounded up and transferred each time grazing permits changed hands, but the transfer of horses, whether domestic or feral, was an unspoken part of the agreement. Hill alleged the horses were his private property since they occupied the grazing allotment he bought from Latham.[23]

Hill entered into a new grazing agreement with the Bureau of Land Management in 1974. It was agreed to designate the Round Mountain allotment for cattle use only and to manage it in accordance with a plan developed jointly by Hill and Bureau personnel. The remainder of Hill's allotment, referred to as the "Little Bookcliff Horse Area," was designated for horse use only and became the responsibility of the Bureau. As a part of the agreement, Hill disclaimed ownership of all horses, branded and unbranded, in the horse area.[24] Before the end of 1974, however, Hill sold his allotment, reacquired it in 1976 and again in 1982, and finally went out of business in 1988. Hill's successor, Larry Lundgren, sold the Round Mountain allotment to Latham Ranches in 1990.[25] In 1997 Latham Ranches agreed to relinquish to the Bureau of Land Management its grazing rights to one of three pastures comprising the Round Mountain allotment. This pasture is now an integral part of the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area.

The Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area

The Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area was established in 1974 by the Secretary of the Interior in response to local and regional demands to protect the horses and to settle disputes over grazing allotments.[26] (Figure 2) One of the most outspoken advocates of protection was Howard Caudle of Grand Junction who wrote 200 letters to newspaper editors to bring public attention to the plight of the Little Book Cliffs wild horse herd.[27] The Bureau of Land Management responded to the controversy by dividing the disputed area into two parts: 27,065 acres were set aside "for continuous, exclusive use by wild horses," and 28,822 acres were reserved for seasonal use by cattle and sheep. This part of the disputed area was comprised of 17,726 acres in John Hill's Round Mountain allotment and 9,776 acres in the Fessler brothers' Corcoran Wash allotment. The Fesslers, who raised sheep on their allotment, also owned 1,420 acres in the area.[28]

Wild horses ranged free in the Little Book Cliffs at the time federal legislation was enacted to protect them. The area set aside for

Figure 2. Wild Horse Area Location and Access.

the horses was divided into five geographical zones for study purposes: North Soda, Indian Park, Monument Rock, Spring Creek, and Coal Canyon.[29] In 1974-1975, the Bureau of Land Management was authorized to spend $200,000 in the wild horse area for range facilities, water development, trails, and fences.[30]

A pole fence was built in Cottonwood Canyon to separate wild horses from cattle, and the remainder of the horse area was enclosed with pole fences in combination with natural barriers such as precipitous canyon walls, escarpments, and cliffs. By tying fence ends to natural barriers less than five miles of actual fencing was required to enclose the area, an indication of the rough terrain found there. Poles were viewed as being a safer fencing material than wire for enclosing the horses.[31]

No roads were constructed to provide access to the fence building sites. Materials were stockpiled at convenient locations on main access roads then transported by helicopter to building sites. The fences were erected, in part, by the Youth Conservation Corps, a select group of high school students. The remainder was built by contract labor. The fences were conceived of as a line of demarcation rather than as a barrier, and wild horses do escape necessitating an occasional roundup to return them to the enclosed area. Gates on major trails allow horseback riders easy access.[32]

About forty wild horses were inside the established boundaries of the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area in 1975. Fifty horses were outside the area at that time. A contract was awarded to move these horses inside. The gather began in August and lasted three weeks during which time cowboys rounded up all but four horses.[33] The renegades were led by Dapple King, ever dashing, always defiant, who eluded cowboys by taking refuge in dense pinyon stands instead of running, thus escaping detection and possible capture.

Population Control

Wild horse populations increased after enactment of laws designed to protect them. Public rangelands became overpopulated and overgrazed. The federal government responded by removing wild horses from various ranges on a recurring basis. Removal operations, organized according to "herd management plans," determine the number of horses that can be managed in a particular geographical location.[34] Wild

horses are considered in excess when requirements for forage, cover, water, and space exceed amounts available, causing deterioration to the habitat and endangering the health of the animals.[35]

The management plans also address when and how many wild horses will be removed if it should be determined there is an excess. The excess horses are offered for adoption to qualified persons or they are relocated to other areas of the public lands having wild horse herds. By law, wild horses living on public lands cannot be removed or destroyed for commercial purposes.[36]

The herd management plan for the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area establishes the number of horses to be maintained. The objective is to maintain sixty-five to 125 horses with the most favorable number being eighty. The 1996 count ranged from 140 to 150 horses and foals,[37] the approximate number in the area today. The herd increase rate is estimated to be between fifteen and twenty percent annually, a rate that can double the size of the herd every three or four years.[38] An increase of this magnitude necessitates gathers at predictable intervals. Two hundred seventy-one horses have been removed from the range since 1977 and put up for adoption.[39] Currently, removal of excess horses is the only effective way to control numbers, but in Nevada preliminary results of research into the use of a reversible, painless, and non-invasive birth control drug holds promise for the future.[40]

Gathers are scheduled usually in late summer and conducted at a time when there is minimal risk of injury or harmful effects to the health of the horses. They are not gathered immediately before, during, or immediately after foaling season. Should a horse be severely injured in a gather, it may not be destroyed by anyone other than a licensed veterinarian or a Bureau of Land Management authorized official. No injuries requiring this action have occurred among horses gathered for adoption in the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area.[41]

Gathered horses are captured in small portable traps made of round, steel pipe panels. The traps are placed on horse trails or, sometimes, at water holes. Wings of steel posts and canvas or burlap are constructed out from the trap acting much like a funnel into which the driven horses pour. The trap panels may be draped with canvas to provide a visible barrier to the horses. This serves to minimize the danger of injuries to horses running into the panels.[42]

A helicopter is used to locate horses and move them toward the trap. The pilot proceeds at a pace that tires but does not exhaust the

horses. One band may be "parked" while the pilot swings the helicopter back and forth to gather another.[43] Care is taken to move the horses without causing them to run blindly or to scatter risking injury. After the pilot herds the horses into the wings of the trap, he backs off to let the ground crew complete the capture.

The crew uses a trained "Judas" horse to lead the wild ones into the trap. The Judas horse is placed just outside the open end of the trap wings where it is held by a crew member concealed from view to the on-rushing horses. The tension and excitement among the crew is perceptible as the chunk-chunk-chunk of the approaching helicopter becomes more distinct. Next one hears what might be mistaken for the rumble of distant thunder, yet the sky is flawless, and then the wild horses sweep majestically into view, manes and tails flying, swirls of yellow dust billowing behind. The Judas horse is released at just the right moment. It leads the wild horses into the converging wings of the trap. Deep within the trap wings other crew members dash in behind the horses closing the trap gate.[44]

Horseback riders are used in support of the helicopter pilot when wild horses take refuge in heavily timbered tracts found in parts of the Little Book Cliffs. The horses refuse to be driven by the helicopter despite the skill of the pilot and the noise of his infernal machine. Riders are summoned when this occurs to drive the horses from the timber allowing the pilot to continue driving them toward the trap. Elsewhere, vegetation and terrain permitting, the pilot locates the wild horses and guides them onto existing roads or trails where the riders take over. They are careful not to press the horses but to let them move at their own pace toward the trap. The condition of the horses is watched closely. If signs of stress appear, the source is removed or the drive is suspended temporarily to permit the stress to abate. Extreme caution is taken when driving mares with foals in order to prevent separation and to avoid possible injury.[45]

The use of a helicopter, assisted by a competent ground crew, is the least difficult, most humane way to gather wild horses in the Little Book Cliffs. It is, also, the safest and most cost effective alternative available at this time. The use of riders for drive trapping without the aid of a helicopter can be dangerous to horses and riders moving over broken ground. This method increases stress on horses and lengthens the time to complete a gather. It is a costly, and sometimes futile method of trapping.[46]

Wild horses removed from the range are limited to the ones believed to be adoptable. If a horse is not adopted it may be returned to the range or taken to Canyon City, Colorado for placement in a national adoption program.[47] Selection of the horses to be returned to the range is determined by a Bureau of Land Management specialist with assistance from members of the Friends of the Mustangs, an important local support group. The selection process is guided by a concern for keeping individual bands intact, to the extent possible, and by maintaining the viability and character of the entire herd. The horses are released at the trap locations where they were captured.[48]

Adopt-a-Horse Program

The federal Bureau of Land Management began a national Adopt-a-Horse program in 1976. Excess horses removed from the range are offered for adoption to qualified applicants. Applicants must be at least eighteen years old, not have been convicted of inhumane treatment to animals, and be able to provide proper care for them. Adopters may obtain up to four horses a year. The horses remain the property of the United States government for a year after adoption, but after that, the adopter may apply for title provided the horse has been treated humanely. An adopter may return a horse to the Bureau if unable to provide necessary care or find another qualified adopter for it. Before a horse is offered for adoption it receives all necessary medical treatment; it is tested for disease, immunized, and wormed.[49] Its age and sex are noted, and it is freeze branded.

Freeze branding is a permanent, unalterable, and painless way to identify each horse as an individual. The left side of its neck is shaved, rubbed with alcohol, and marked with an iron brand chilled in liquid nitrogen. The brand uses the International Alpha Angle System consisting of a series of symbols representing the United States government as the registration organization and the horse's year of birth, registration number, and state and area of capture. (Appendix One) The hair at the place of the brand grows back white and shows the identification number.[50]

The current adoption fee is $125 a horse. The fee was implemented in 1982 to recapture part of the adoption cost, to limit adoption to individuals with financial ability to care for the horse, and to assure

Bachelor band. (Photo courtesy of Marty Felix.)

that every horse was adopted as quickly as possible after its removal from the range. The fee was set at a time when the market price for horses was depressed because of an oversupply. Today the market price, even for low quality domestic horses, is well above that charged by the Bureau of Land Management.[51] Consequently, there might be an economic incentive for a few dishonest adopters to sell their horses after they receive title.

In 1997 the Bureau of Land Management authorized a procedure allowing district managers in some areas to increase adoption fees for selected horses through competitive bidding. Under this procedure, qualified adopters bid for the most desirable horses. The bidding tends to reflect the horse's current value providing an incentive for the successful bidder to keep the horse rather than sell it after receiving title. The price received shifts a part of the cost of adoption from the general taxpayer to the successful bidder. Horses not selected through competitive bidding are available for adoption at the base fee of $125.[52]

Adopters are required to provide humane treatment to untitled horses in their care. Bureau of Land Management specialists or their designates check the adopter's facility periodically to insure the horse is not being abused. All complaints about animal care are investigated. The Bureau prosecutes adopters found in violation of laws or regulations pertaining to wild horses.[53] Adopters who provide humane care for one year may apply to the Bureau for title to the horse.

There were about 35,000 wild horses on public lands in 1997. The Bureau of Land Management removed 8,337 horses in 1997 and placed 6,993 with qualified applicants through the adoption program. More than 132,000 horses have been adopted since 1973. The Bureau provides prospective adopters with written information about application procedures, eligibility requirements, and costs. All applications are reviewed and approved or disapproved by a Bureau official. Procedures for choosing horses vary from one adoption center to another but, usually, there is a random drawing for the order of selection.[54]

Anyone interested in adopting a wild horse should write or telephone the Bureau of Land Management office serving their area to request an application. Applications are accepted in the following states with wild horse herds: California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. Some Bureau locations, prison training programs, and contract facilities have horses available year around. Adoptions occur also at temporary adoption centers throughout the nation.[55]

Prison Training Program

The Colorado Wild Horse Inmate Program (WHIP) at Canyon City offers saddle trained wild horses for adoption.[56] This program, the first of its kind in the nation, has inspired the establishment of similar programs in several other western states. The Colorado program was started in 1986 and is a joint venture between the Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Corrections.[57] The program was designed to make wild horses more appealing to potential adopters, save tax money, and provide rehabilitation opportunities for selected prisoners.

Under the agreement, the Bureau of Land Management provides the wild horses, all necessary feed, and qualified adopters at the conclusion of the training period. The Department of Corrections provides inmates who are carefully prepared in all aspects of horse care including husbandry, training, and handling, and appropriate veterinary and farrier skills.[58] Inmates earn the title of wild horse graduate trainer upon completion of the program.

Since the inception of WHIP over 3,500 wild horses have been trained for distribution throughout the United States to outfitters, law enforcement agencies, hunters, ranchers, youth organizations, and riding stables. The training period usually lasts three or four months. The current cost of $740 includes adoption fee, feed, training, gelding, and incidental care.[59]

Friends of the Mustangs

The Friends of the Mustangs, a non-profit organization, was founded in 1982 by five wild horse enthusiasts living in the Grand Junction area: Dan and "Sam" Puckett, Marty Felix, Patti Fennell, and Karen O'Rourke. The Friends now have a membership of about a hundred. Sam McReynolds, then with the district office of the Bureau of Land Management in Grand Junction, encouraged and assisted the organization in its formative years. During this time the Friends succeeded in establishing a unique working relationship between the community, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area. The relationship was formalized in 1984 when the Bureau and the Friends entered into a cooperative management agreement that has provided substantial benefits to the health and welfare of the wild horse herd.[60]

The agreement sets forth the ways in which the Friends assist in range projects, gathers, adoptions, and compliance checks. Friends aid the Bureau of Land Management in the implementation of its management plan for the wild horse area and in the construction and maintenance of various range projects. Friends have installed water tanks, worked on springs, trails, and fences, assisted in reseeding parts of the wild horse area, and have participated in horse and foal counts. During gathers Friends set up and take down corrals and assist in the capture, feeding, and watering of the horses taken.[61]

Under the agreement with the Bureau of Land Management, Friends of the Mustangs screen adoption applicants before gathers to insure that proper facilities are available for the horses and make recommendations to the Bureau. After the adoption Friends check on all horses to determine whether the adopter is in compliance with the terms of the adoption agreement. The findings are reported to the Bureau.[62]

The Friends of the Mustangs perform an important public relations function on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management and the Little Book Cliffs wild horse herd. Friends have helped educate the public about the advantages of adopting wild horses by showing mustangs and by distributing information about them at local fairs, by riding in parades, and by conducting tours of the wild horse area.[63]

The dedication of the Friends of the Mustangs to the wild horses and the services the Friends provide to the Bureau of Land Management is remarkable. The results of the cooperative management agreement with the Bureau offers incontrovertible proof that a citizens organization and a government entity can work together effectively in achieving a common goal. Both the wild horses and the public are beneficiaries of this partnership. The horses benefit from improvements to their habitat that otherwise might not occur without the hard work of the Friends. The public benefits from the pride and satisfaction that comes with the adoption of a wild horse or from the never-to-be-forgotten thrill of viewing a living legend in its natural habitat.

The accomplishments of the Friends of the Mustangs have not gone without notice. In November, 1993, the Friends received a national award from the Bureau of Land Management for exemplary service to "the most successful wild horse herd in the United States."[64]

Flight to safety. (Photo courtesy of Marty Felix.)

A paint horse named Cody. (Photo courtesy of Marty Felix.)

CHAPTER 8

BUCKSKINS AND BAYS, PINTOS AND GRAYS

Of all things wild horses love, the best is liberty.
Colorado Pioneer

Characteristics of Wild Horses

There are about 150 horses at liberty in the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area at this time. The exact number is difficult to ascertain because of the pinyon-juniper cover and the broken terrain. The horses found in the area are mostly solid in color with bay, black, and sorrel predominating but with a liberal dash of brown, buckskin, dun, gray, paint, palomino, and roan. They are not large. At maturity, they normally stand fourteen to fifteen hands (fifty-six to sixty inches at the withers) and weigh 900 to 1,100 pounds.[1] Their conformation is not equal to that of many domestic horses: they are shorter, their heads are larger, and their bodies stockier.[2] Yet many are strikingly handsome and most are sure-footed, swift, and indefatigable, qualities that many adopters find desirable.

Genetic variation in the herd is maintained by removal of selected horses and by the introduction of new horses from other Bureau of Land Management herd areas. Horses five years and younger are removed periodically and put up for adoption. By removing young horses, the genetic variation that exists in the herd remains in the animals that are reproducing.[3] Variation is maintained, also, by the occasional introduction of wild horses from other herds, a process known as out-breeding. This process serves to eliminate the undesirable effects of inbreeding and serves to maintain vigor, improve conformation, and diversify color in the herd. From the first introduction of an outbred horse in 1983 to the most recent in 1998, twenty wild horses have been released into the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area. These horses came from herd management areas in Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, and Utah.

Social Organization

Wild horse herds are organized into family bands comprised of a dominant stallion, mares and off-spring, and bachelor bands of young, unattached males. The typical family band in the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area has one stallion, two or three mares, and a yearling or two.[4] Three to five horses make up the usual bachelor band. There are twenty-five to thirty family and bachelor bands in the wild horse area today. Occasionally, a wild horse might live alone but it is a rare occurrence.[5]

Bands seldom move outside a well-defined home range encompassing a relatively small area close to familiar water sources and grazing places. Bands may share all or a part of a common range, if water and forage are ample, taking turns at watering places and rotating between grazing areas. They may even form larger bands although individual band structure remains evident. The horses do not exhibit much territoriality under these circumstances. Any aggressive confrontations that occur between stallions are more likely to be the result of sexual competition than a desire to defend territory.[6]

The stallion is the dominant member of the family band. He keeps the band together, breeds his mares, and defends them from intruders.[7] The stallion may be recognized at guard to one side of the band. At the sight of an intruder, he holds his ground and faces the threat while snorting a signal to his band to make their escape.[8] The stallion uses a variety of gestures and sounds to intimidate the intruder. He may lay back his ears, paw, squeal, and wave his head back and forth.[9] Usually this is all that is necessary. The intruder retreats and the stallion trots off to join his band as they move to less contentious ground.[10]

Occasionally, though, the intruder does not give way so easily and a battle erupts. The belligerents converge with arched necks, snorts, and squeals. They whirl and bump, bite and kick. Their combat is an impressive display of speed and strength and agility. For all its fury the fight is seldom fatal, but serious injury does occur and almost all wild stallions carry battle scars.[11] The victor runs off with the mares; the vanquished goes in search of a less vigorously defended band or joins the more congenial company of bachelors.

The senior, or lead, mare follows the stallion in the social hierarchy of the family band. The lead mare achieves this status by establishing supremacy over other mares in the band. She leads the band to

refuge, water, and grazing yet her status does not give her a right to be bred or even a priority.[12] The stallion may breed other mares in the band but he may not always breed all mares every year. There is only one lead mare, however, and other mares in the band are subordinate to her. This relationship is evident when the band is fleeing danger. The lead mare takes a position in front of the band followed by others in the order of their social rank with any young directly behind their mothers, nose to tail. The lead mare determines the direction of flight and the route to be taken avoiding obstacles that would impede progress or from which escape would be impossible.[13] While any member of the band might sound the alert to danger, the stallion is most likely to do so. After he has determined the source of danger, he confronts it or runs off to join the band, nipping at the hind quarters of laggards, until they are all at a safe distance.[14]

The senior mare also leads the band's movement between grazing areas and water. The band tends to frequent familiar places whenever conditions permit. They prefer to water in a group taking turns if the source is not large enough to accommodate all of them at once. The lead mare and her foal may drink first, the others follow in order of their rank. The stallion stands guard until all are finished, unless he is overcome with thirst.[15] If this should be the case, then order, rank, and caution have little meaning. The horses leave the watering hole together when all are finished drinking. Should the stallion attempt to drink out of turn, the lead mare is likely to drive him away until the others are finished. If two or more bands use the same watering place they usually do so in rotation unless an aggressive stallion and his band disrupt the pattern.[16] The horses water once or twice a day, early or late, depending upon the season and the heat of the day.

The wild horses of the Little Book Cliffs derive a major portion of their diets from grasses, the preferred food, but they will eat almost anything that grows should there be a need.[17] They are aggressive users of the range and are so efficient in it they can devastate an area if they become too numerous or if drought should occur. Horses will browse on bark, buds, and tree leaves as well as on shrubs if grass becomes scarce. Their digestive systems can tolerate a high fiber, low protein diet but their systems limit the amount of nutrition derived from it. For this reason horses eat an estimated seventy-five percent of the time. As horses age, years of eating coarse food may wear away their teeth, a circumstance that can lead to starvation.[18]

Main Canyon entrance to wild horse area. (Photo by author.)

If forage and water are adequate, wild horse herds grow rapidly in number. Mares are usually bred in the second year and foal in the third year. A mare's ability to produce a foal generally increases from three to seven years of age, reaches a maximum between years eight to eleven, and then declines somewhat in more advanced years. Most foals are born between April and June after a gestation period of about 340 days.[19] A mare about to deliver will move away from the band to a secluded place. Birth is rapid. It may take no more than ten or fifteen minutes, if there are no complications. A rapid birth is nature's way of minimizing the vulnerability of mare and foal to predators. When the foal is able to walk, mother and offspring rejoin the band.[20]

Foals remain with the band a year or two. They will be driven from the band when they begin to show signs of sexual activity. The mares quickly join other bands.[21] The immature stallions will follow the band, but at a distance, until they find other unattached males to join forming a bachelor band.[22] These bands are fragile in structure and fluid in composition, easily breaking up and reforming anew, making it difficult to ascertain the number that exist at any time.[23]

Bachelor bands are comprised of young stallions under the age of five, although old, dispossessed stallions sometimes join them. These bands are controlled by the most dominate stallion and exhibit patterns of behavior much like that of family bands. Usually, the leader of the bachelor band is the first to challenge another stallion for possession of his mares.[24]

Access to Wild Horse Area

The Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area is accessible to vehicles, horseback riders, trail bikers, and hikers. The main points of entry are by way of De Beque, Cameo, and Palisade, and the Carpenter and Tellerico trails. (Figure 3) There is no direct road access from Grand Junction. The access routes offer varying degrees of challenge to those who venture into the Little Book Cliffs and, for those who succeed, grand panoramas of distant landscapes.

De Beque, located at Interstate 70, exit 62, provides two routes of access to the northern portion of the wild horse area: South Dry Fork Road and Winter Flats Road. South Dry Fork Road is the better of the two access routes. It is located about four miles north of exit 62 by way of 45 Road or Roan Creek Road as it is known, also. Upon reaching

Figure 3. The Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area.

South Dry Fork Road, turn left, keeping left at any fork in the road to the wild horse area, a distance of twenty-three miles. Many visitors consider this route the most scenic approach to the area.

Winter Flats Road can be reached by turning left off 45 Road at Fourth Street and proceeding to the stop sign at Fourth and Minter streets in the center of De Beque. Turn left again on Minter passing by the Town Hall and Post Office to Second Street. Turn right on Second Street and go about a mile to V.2 Road, turn right again, and follow the signs to the wild horse area staying on the main road. At the twenty-mile marker one has the choice of entering the area by way of Indian Park or North Soda; the distance is five miles either way. The Winter Flats Road is the most difficult route of access to the wild horse area. It takes about an hour and a half from Grand Junction to reach the area by either of the two routes from De Beque. Both are constructed of gravel and dirt and, depending upon the weather, can be treacherous, even impassible, in any season. A four wheel drive vehicle is advised.

The southern portion of the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area is accessible by way of Cameo located at Interstate 70, exit 46. Upon leaving the interstate, follow the access road across the bridge over the Colorado River and continue past the power generating plant. When past the plant, take the middle of three diverging roads following the power line up the canyon about two miles to the parking lot near the junction of Coal and Main canyons. A gate marks the entrance to the wild horse area. The gate is open, usually, from June 1 to November 30 but closed and locked the remainder of the year to protect wintering wild life and spring-born foals. The road up Coal Canyon leads to near the top of Mount Garfield. The road provides a scenic route of exploration for riders, hikers, and four wheel drive enthusiasts.

Two trails provide access to Main Canyon from the parking area. The first trail follows a short, steep road to the top of a saddle separating Coal Canyon from Main Canyon. Here broad views of Grand Mesa and Main Canyon await. A large gate at the saddle top is always locked but a small gate beside it permits passage to riders and hikers. From the saddle one can follow the road into Main Canyon or angle down the slope to the canyon floor. The second trail, Spring Creek Trail, begins at a marker just beyond the Coal Canyon gate. The trail twists up the canyon side to the saddle and then descends abruptly into Main Canyon. Wild horses use this trail in passage between the two canyons. It is a narrow, steep trail. Caution is urged in using it.

The wild horse area is accessible by two hiking trails located near Palisade. Leave Interstate 70 at exit 42. Turn right at G.7 Road, the first road on the right, and follow it past orchards and vineyards,to the end, a distance of about one and a half miles. Turn right once more going through the Interstate 70 underpass to the trailheads. Parking is allowed on either side of the underpass but is more ample on the far side near the trailheads. The Mount Garfield trailhead is adjacent to the parking area. The Gearhart Mine trailhead is a short walk up the road to the right of the parking area. Both trails climb 2,000 feet above the valley. The Mount Garfield Trail is two miles long; the Gearhart Mine Trail is two and a half. The trails are steep and rough, and footing is unstable and slippery, especially when wet. The ascent is strenuous but at trail's end, the view is sublime.

The Carpenter Trail and the Tellerico Trail provide access to the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area from Grand Junction. A four wheel drive or a vehicle with ample ground clearance is recommended to reach the trailheads. The approach to Carpenter Trail begins at the intersection of H Road and 27 1/4 Road. Take 27 1/4 Road past the west end of Walker Field Airport to a point at which there are three branches in the road, three miles from the starting point. Follow the middle road four miles to the parking area near the scattered ruins of the old mining town of Carpenter. The trail begins at the end of the road. The Carpenter Trail is now considered impassable to horseback riders but the hike to the top can be a rewarding experience, providing one is in good physical condition and capable of negotiating rough terrain.

The Tellerico Trail can be reached from Interstate 70, exit 28 (24 Road). From the exit proceed two miles north to I Road, turn right one mile to 25 Road, then north one mile to J Road. Turn right, cross the canal, and follow the road about six and a half miles to the parking area and trailhead. Tellerico Trail is suitable for skilled riders with experienced horses and for hikers, but portions of the trail are very steep. Riders may wish to lead their horses in these places. Upon achieving the summit, however, rider and hiker are in wild horse country. (Both the Carpenter Trail and the Tellerico Trail cross fenced, private land and, until the Bureau of Land Management succeeds in obtaining permission from the owners to open the trails to public use, access is prohibited.)

The Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area is, essentially, trackless with but few primitive, four wheel drive roads.[25] Road grades vary from flat to thirty degrees with thirty to forty percent of the grades exceeding

Grand Valley view from Carpenter Trail. (Photo by author.)

ten percent. Soil on the roads is of a nature that powders under repeated use and erodes easily in heavy rain often turning into quagmire.[26] Winter travel is no less a problem. Snow and ice on steep grades can cause vehicles to slip and slide out of control. Deep frozen ruts jar and jolt vehicle and passenger alike.

The roads pass through a landscape little affected by man. Gas well pads and power lines are distractions in some places but old, abandoned cabins and corrals, Indian trails and campsites are attractions adding charm and historical interest. Most of the wild horse area is surprisingly isolated despite being so near the Interstate 70 corridor, and a sense of solitude, of loneliness, prevails there. The presence of wild horses adds to the perception that one does not exist in this time but in another, long ago.

The wild horse area is absent of recreation sites, camp or picnic grounds, and potable water. Visitor use is concentrated in spring and fall although a sunny winter day can be delightful. Ticks are a nuisance in spring and afternoon heat is often excessive in summer. Furthermore, summer months are notorious for swarms of gnats that fly into one's mouth, nose, and ears with amazing frequency and unerring accuracy. Visitors to the area in any season of the year should take along a basic survival kit, plenty of water, and common sense.

The major recreational activities are trail riding, hiking, camping, hunting, photography, and viewing the wild horses. The privilege to engage in these activities does not come without responsibilities: stay on established roads or designated trails in order to protect fragile soil and vegetation, respect property rights as there are a few isolated parcels of private property on the access trails to and within the wild horse area, avoid abandoned coal mines, use care in building and extinguishing fires, pack out trash, and do not harass the horses.

Viewing

The wild horses generally use the high country in spring, summer, and fall, moving in winter to lower elevations where there is less snow and where forage is more easily found. Some of the best opportunities for viewing horses occur in summer when they frequent sagebrush parks scattered throughout the area. North Soda, Indian Park, and Low Gap and, also, Coal Canyon and Main Canyon are promising viewing places. Most of the horses stay on summer range well into fall unless a

shortage of water forces them to concentrate near existing sources such as those found in Indian Park. Should winter prove to be mild, with little snow accumulation, horses may remain in the high country grazing open ground where forage is adequate to sustain them until new growth appears. Otherwise late fall and early winter months provide a good opportunity to view horses as they leave high country snow and cold in search of forage in lower elevations.

Coal Canyon and Main Canyon are primary wintering areas for wild horses but several bands remain in these canyons year around, making them among the best and most accessible viewing places. Look for horses near the gate leading into Coal Canyon, or along Jerry Creek in Main Canyon, or on high sunny slopes in either canyon. If at first you do not see them on the slopes, look even higher. You may be surprised to see them so far up and wonder aloud how they could have reached such heights. Horses make some use, also, of south facing slopes overlooking the Grand Valley, notably along Carpenter Trail and Tellerico Trail.

The wild horses of the Little Book Cliffs water once or twice a day and graze most of the intervening hours. During midday they are least active, especially in summer when they seek shade and rest in pinyon-juniper stands or in side canyons. Midday in winter will find them basking in the sun, should it be shining. When the horses are not active and when there is a sharp contrast in sun and shadow, it is easy to overlook them, occasionally at very short distances. Sometimes they can be seen more readily in retracing one's steps to get a different perspective and looking into side canyons and draws.

Wild horses are shy and should be approached with caution. Their wide angle vision and keen sense of sound and smell are likely to alert them to your presence before you detect theirs, even though they may not react immediately to your presence. If their behavior changes noticeably upon your drawing near, you are probably too close. Their natural instinct is to run should they sense a threat. But a stallion can become aggressive, and he is capable of closing the distance separating you from him with alarming speed. It is better to view the horses from a distance using a spotting scope, binoculars, or telephoto lens if you wish to have a closer look.[21]

Sweetheart and her foal, Gypsy. (Photo courtesy of Marty Felix.)

CHAPTER 9

AFTERWORD

God forbid that I should
go to any heaven in which
there are no horses.
Robert Cunninghame-Graham

Wild horse viewing is a spiritual experience satisfying a need to be in communion with creatures wild and free. There is a need in all of us to comprehend the incomprehensible whether it is the mystery of the stars, the complexities of life, or the secrets of nature. Viewing wild horses is a simple pleasure but one that allows us to celebrate their existence as well as our own. Who cannot remember their first encounter with a wild horse, who can ever forget it? When we see a wild horse, what we seek to understand becomes more understandable; some of nature's secrets are revealed to us, life seems less complicated, and the stars not so remote.

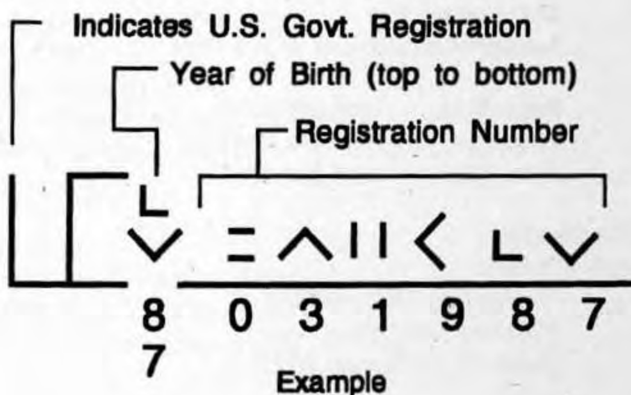
Eager as we may be to see the horses, it is important to remember that the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area is their home. We are visitors when we enter the gate separating our world from theirs. Respect the wild horse area and all that reside in it. The fate of the wild horses rests with us; they have nothing else to fear but nature.

Only we can ensure that the Little Book Cliffs remain undisturbed, that the wild horses run free, free as the spirit of Dapple King, running the red rock canyons and the gray-green parks in the far country, high above Grand Junction.

APPENDIX ONE

INTERNATIONAL ALPHA ANGLE SYSTEM

Alpha Angle Code for Freeze Mark Interpretation



APPENDIX TWO

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT STATE OFFICES AND PLACEMENT CENTERS

For more information, contact BLM office nearest you.

. ALASKA

(907) 271-5555

Alaska State Office
222 W. 7th Ave., #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599

. ARIZONA

(602) 780-8090

Phoenix District Office
2015 West Deer Valley Road
Phoenix, Arizona 85027

Kingman 602-757-3161

. CALIFORNIA

(916) 979-2800

California State Office
Federal Building - Room E 2807
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, California 95825-1889

Bakersfield 805-391-6049
Ridgecrest 619-446-6064
Susanville 916-257-5381

. COLORADO

(719) 275-0631

Canyon City District Office
3170 East Main Street
Canon City, Colorado 81212

. IDAHO
(208) 384-3300
Boise District Office
3948 Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705-5389

. MONTANA, NORTH DAKOTA AND SOUTH DAKOTA
(406) 255-2925
Montana State Office
222 N. 32nd St.
Billings, Montana 59107-6800

. NEVADA
(702) 475-2222
National Wild Horse & Burro Center
Palomino Valley
P.O. Box 3270
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. NEW MEXICO, KANSAS, OKLAHOMA AND TEXAS
(405) 794-9624
Oklahoma Resource Area
221 N. Service Road
Moore, Oklahoma 73160-4946

. OREGON AND WASHINGTON
(503) 573-4400
Burns District Office
HC 74-12533 Highway 20 West
Hines, Oregon 97738

. UTAH
(801) 977-4300
Salt Lake City District Office
2370 South 2300 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

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(307) 382-5350
Rock Springs District Office
PO Box 1869 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, WY 82902-1869

Elm Creek, NE (308) 856-4498

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411 Briarwood Drive, Suite 404
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310 West Wisconsin Ave., Suite 225
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203

NOTES

Chapter 1

[1]The study area in which the wild horses are found is written correctly as two words, Book Cliffs, or more specifically, Little Book Cliffs. Saul B. Cohen, ed., *The Columbia Gazetter of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 1:398.

[2]*Grand Junction (Colorado) Daily Sentinel,* 30 August 1983.

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[4]Ibid.

[5]U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, *Rediscover Your Public Lands* (Washington, D.C. and Denver, CO: Bureau of Land Management, 1996), n.p.

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[7]U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, National Wild Horse and Burro Program, "Herd Area Statistics," <http://www.blm.gov/whb/> (30 September 1996).

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[8]Foutz, *Geology of Colorado*, 108, 110; LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann Hafen, *The Colorado Story: A History of Your State and Mine* (Denver: The Old West Publishing Co., 1953), 23; Al Look, *1,000 Million Years on the Colorado Plateau* (Denver: Golden Bell, 1955), 22-23, 93; Paul M. O'Rourke, *A Frontier in Transition: A History of Southwestern Colorado* (Montrose, CO: Bureau of Land Management, District Office, 1992), 3.

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[10]John Perry and Jane Greverus Perry, *The Sierra Club Guide to the Natural Areas of Colorado and Utah* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1985), 89.

[11]Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Grand Junction Resource Area, Grand Junction District, *Little Bookcliffs Wild Horse Management Plan*, rev. ed. (Grand Junction, CO: Bureau of Land Management, 1992), 15.

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[13]Department of the Interior, *Little Bookcliffs Wild Horse Management Plan* (1992), 15.

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[19]Mary Rait, "Development of Grand Junction and the Colorado River Valley to Palisade from 1881 to 1931—Part 1," *Journal of the Western Slope* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 19-20.
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[21]*Daily Sentinel*, 4 September 1983.
[22]U.S. Department of the Interior, *Little Bookcliffs Wild Horse Management Plan* (1992), 18-19.
[23]John D. Hart to Loren D. Anderson, 28 January 1967, Bureau of Land Management, Grand Junction, Colorado; James Curtis, *Riding Old Trails* (Grand Junction, CO: Tom Dill, Printer, 1976), 73; Earlynne Barcus, *Echos of a Dream* (Fruita, CO: Fruita Triangle, 1983), 9.
[24]Barcus, *Echos of a Dream*, 9.
[25]Haslim, "Little Bookcliff Horse Area," typewritten manuscript, n.p.
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[1]Robert W. Howard, *The Horse in America* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1965), 3-4.
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[3]Ibid.; Jaime Jackson, *The Natural Horse: Lessons From the Wild for Domestic Horse Care* (Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Publishing, 1992), 13; Al Look, *1,000 Million Years on the Colorado Plateau* (Denver: Golden Bell, 1955), 139; Hope Ryden, *Mustangs: A Return to the Wild* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), 98.
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[15]Gilbert Roe, *The Indian and the Horse* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 143.

[16]Walker D. Wyman, *The Wild Horse of the West* (Caldwell, ID: Claxton Printers, Ltd., 1945), 30; Dobie, *The Mustangs*, 6.

[17]E. Gus Cothran to Gerald Thygerson, 22 February 1993, Bureau of Land Management, Grand Junction, CO.

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[3]Wyman, *The Wild Horse*, 30-31; Hope Ryden, *America's Last Wild Horses*, rev. ed. (New York: Lyons and Burford, 1990), 126.

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[10]Ibid., 29-30; Robert W. Howard, *The Horse in America* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1965), 18, 24, 55.
[11]Howard, *The Horse in America*, 32-33.
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[14]Ibid.
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[17]Francis Haines, "How the Indian Got the Horse," *American Heritage* 15, no. 2 (February 1964): 78-79.
[18]Roe, *The Indian*, 86.
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[20]Ibid.; Haines, "How the Indian Got the Horse," 78-79; Wyman, *The Wild Horse*, 54.
[21]J. Frank Dobie, *The Mustangs* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1952), 42.
[22]LeRoy R. Hafen, *The Old Spanish Trail* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur Clark Co., 1954), 261; Haines, "How the Indian Got the Horse," 79; James Jefferson, et. al., *The Southern Utes: A Tribal History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Printing Service, 1972), x; June Lyman and Norma Denver, comps., *Ute People: An Historical Study*, Floyd A. O'Neil and John D. Sylvester, eds. (Salt Lake City: Unitah School District and the Western History Center, University of Utah, 1969), 15; Mehls, *The Valley of Opportunity*, 76-77; Paul M. O'Rourke, *A Frontier in Transition: A History of Southwestern Colorado*, second printing (Montrose, CO: Bureau of Land Management, 1992), 46; Jan Petit, *Utes: The Mountain People*, rev. ed. (Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, 1990), 14; Purcell, *Wild Horses of America*, 6; Wilson Rockwell, *The Utes: A Forgotten People* (Denver: Sage Books, 1956), 16; Ryden, *America's Last Wild Horses*, 99-100.

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[24]Ibid., 6.
[25]Jackson, *The Natural Horse*, 13.
[26]Roe, *The Indian*, 54.
[27]Purcell, *Wild Horses of America*, 6.
[28]Ibid., 7.
[29]Ibid.
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GLOSSARY

Appaloosa. A breed of horse characterized by dark brown or tawny patches of hair over its croup and buttocks and black and white stripes on its hooves

Band. A single animal, or one stallion and his mares and offspring, or bachelor stallions

Broomtail. A wild horse, a mustang

Commanchero. Men, usually of Mexican-Indian descent, who traded between Indians and whites

Conquistador. One of the sixteenth century Spanish conquerors of Latin America

Feral horse. A former domestic horse that has reverted to a wild state

Gather. A word used for roundup

Gelding. A castrated stallion

Grazing Allotment. A designated tract of land available to ranchers with Bureau of Land Management permits or leases for grazing specific numbers and kinds of livestock

Hand. A linear measure equal to four inches used to determine the height of horses; measured from the ground to the withers, the highest part of the horses back at the base of the neck

Herd. One of more bands, usually in a specific area

Hoodoo. A pillar of rock, usually of fantastic shape, left by erosion

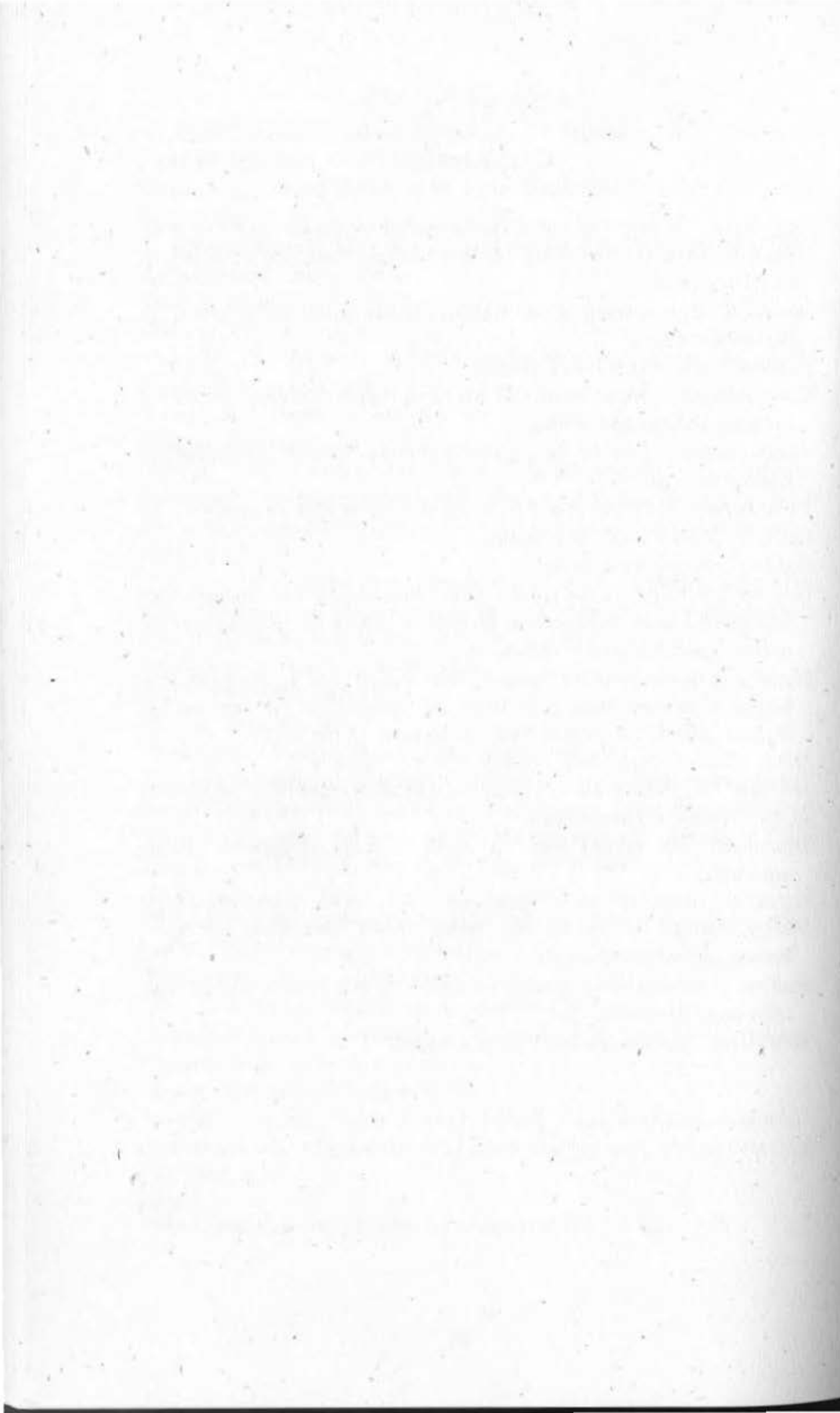
Mare. A mature female horse

Mustanger. A person who, for sport or trade, hunts and catches mustangs

Paint. A horse of more than one color, with colors usually in large patches of brown and white, black and white, or black, brown, and white; also called pinto

Stallion. A male horse capable of mating with a mare and producing offspring; also called stud

Wild horse. An unbranded, unclaimed horse



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