

MYSTERY, MONSTERS, MURDER, MYTHS, AND MAYHEM: UTAH LAKE FOLKTALES

This lesson plan has been created as a resource for seventh grade teachers to teach the new core standards to their students. It integrates language arts and social studies standards in a meaningful and fun way. To see which specific standards are addressed, please refer to them below.

OBJECTIVE:

The students will be able to:

1. Define folktales as the stories passed down from generation-to-generation and reflect the values and experiences of a culture.
2. Identify audience and purposes for the stories, suggesting how these stories are considered folklore.
3. Analyze mystery stories using the plots of existing stories with an emphasis on scene over summary of events, suspenseful details, and atmospheric mood.
4. Generate and use oral storytelling techniques and purposes (suspense, surprise endings, audience participation, etc.)

STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

7th Grade Language Arts

7.RL.2 Reading Literature Standard 2:

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

7.RL.3 Reading Literature Standard 3:

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

7.W.3 Writing Standard 3:

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

7.SL.6 Speaking and Listening Standard 6:

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

7th Grade Social Studies: Utah Studies

Standard 1: Students will understand the interaction between Utah's geography and its inhabitants.

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- Objective 1:** Investigate the relationship between physical geography and Utah's settlement, land use, and economy. Read and interpret a variety of maps.
- Identify the physical features and regions of Utah.
 - Compare and contrast the relationship between physical features and regions to settlement, land use, and the economy.

- Objective 2:** Examine the interrelationship between Utah's climate, location, landforms, and life. Describe how latitude, elevation, and distance from the ocean influence Utah's climate.

Indicators:

- Explain how mountains, valleys, and bodies of water affect climate.
 - Assess how climate influences life in Utah.
 - Explain how natural forces shape the living environment and landscape.
 - Investigate how natural forces shape the local environments.
 - Predict how natural forces affect environments; e.g., earthquakes, volcanic action, mudslides, flooding, erosion.
- Objective 3:** Assess how natural resources sustain and enhance people's lives. Recognize the impact of water, minerals, wildlife, and forests on people.
- Distinguish between renewable and non-renewable resources.
 - Analyze how natural resources improve the quality of life.
 - Assess the importance of protecting and preserving natural resources.
- Objective 4:** Examine how people affect the geography of Utah. Identify Utah's counties and cities.
- Assess how people change the landscape.
 - Examine how altered landscapes affect people.

Standard 2: Students will understand the contributions of Native American Indians, explorers, and Utah's pioneers.

Objective 1: Examine the contributions of Native American Indians to the culture of Utah.

- Identify prehistoric and historic Native American Indian groups.
- Examine the interrelationship between each culture and its environment.
- Investigate spiritual, artistic, architectural, and oral traditions of Utah's Native American Indians; e.g., languages, storytelling, pottery, basketry, weaving, beadwork, and dwellings.
- Identify how Native American Indian heritage influences Utah today.

Objective 2: Investigate the importance of explorers to Utah's settlement.

- Explain the contributions of the Spanish, government, mountain men, and scientific explorers.

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- b. Identify other explorers who contributed to our understanding of Utah.

Objective 3: Describe the significance of pioneers in Utah history. Explain the reasons for the Mormon migration to Utah.

- a. Explore the pattern of Mormon settlement throughout the West.
- b. Recognize how the Mormon pioneers' heritage influences Utah today.
- c. Investigate the contributions of Utah's "new pioneers," i.e., ethnic/multicultural/religious/scientific/technological groups.

Standard 5: Students will understand the diverse nature of Utah's peoples and cultures.

Objective 1: Assess the cultural diversity of Utah. Recognize the unique lifestyles of various cultural or ethnic groups in the local community.

- a. Explain the role of immigration in changing Utah society.
- b. Research the ways people maintain and preserve cultural identity; e.g., language, custom, holidays, tradition.
- c. Explain the issues immigrants encounter in adapting to life in Utah.

Objective 2: Investigate the contributions of Utah's religious and ethnic groups, including Native American Indians. Identify Utah's religious and ethnic groups.

- a. Explain the reasons Utah's religious and ethnic groups settled in Utah.
- b. Explain the benefits each ethnic and religious group adds to Utah's society.
- c. Investigate how Utah's religious and ethnic groups adapt and interact.

Objective 3: Assess the diverse cultural and recreational opportunities available in Utah. Examine Utah arts opportunities in the areas of dance, music, theater, and visual arts.

- a. Investigate recreational opportunities in Utah.

TEACHER BACKGROUND:

Folk tales are cultural artifacts of a people; stories showing what they value and how they interpret the challenges of life. Even though the stories may be true, when they reflect the values of a culture, and when they are passed down from generation-to-generation, usually orally, they are considered folklore. Utah Lake has a series of stories (some of which are true!). These have intrigued generations of people who live around the lake because the stories tend to show the world what we think and value, and because these stories have mystery! This unit of instruction uses these stories to intrigue students as well as teach them aspects of folktales and the folklore of Utah Lake cultures.

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TEACHER MATERIALS:

- Online articles that offer more stories and information
 - [Mysterious Monsters Inhabited Utah Valley Water](#)
 - [The Meandrous Monster Migrates to Utah Lake](#)
 - [Fishermen Find Utah Lake Monster](#)
 - [Maybe There Is a Monster In Utah Lake](#)
 - [Water Monster USA, The Utah Lake Monster](#)
 - [The Utah Lake Monster](#)
 - [Utah Lake Monster Legend](#)
 - [Utah Lake Monster Story](#)
 - [Murder at the Lake: The Pelican Point Story](#)
- Additional Links on Folklore
 - [Sea Serpents and Lake Monsters: Legends or Myths, or Reality?](#)
 - [Bear Lake Monster](#)
 - [Great Salt Lake Monster](#)
- Copy of the [Pelican Point Mystery](#), published in the Daily Herald on Jan 13, 2007.
- Example of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” restructured for oral retelling (see supplemental material).
- Overhead or computer-projected worksheet to fill out, demonstrating how “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” story in the supplemental material is a mystery.

STUDENT MATERIALS:

- Copies of the Utah Lake Monster stories
- Copy of the Pelican Point Mystery
- “Retelling the Crime” Worksheet

PROCEDURE:

1. Students get into groups to facilitate jigsaw reading of the Utah Lake monster stories -- the first configuration of the groups allows each group to read a different story, then in the second configuration, group members divide out so each new group has a member who has read a different story. Share stories, retelling the important parts.
2. In a debriefing, have the students brainstorm the reasons these stories are being told. What elements of folklore do these stories show? (Community values, ways to deal with problems, a desire to be entertained, or even frightened, etc.) Ask students why these stories would be passed on from generation-to-generation. Help them define “folklore” and “folk tales.”
3. Students will spend time retelling the monster stories as oral folklore as a practice for

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retelling the murder story later.

4. Retell the “Murder at Pelican Point” story (reading or summarizing the details). Ask students to conjecture possible endings. What makes it a mystery? (The listener knows early on who murdered the boys, but there are still parts of the story we don’t know, such as motive or what happened to the murderer in the end.)
5. Ask the students: How would it be presented if it were on a TV show (like Masterpiece or PBS Mysteries)? What information needs to be withheld from the reader to make it a murder mystery? Go over the genre of mysteries and outline a simple story’s plot to make it fit (i.e., “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” as a Whodunit). See example below.
6. Have the students work in groups to restructure the Pelican Point Mystery into a folk tale story without giving the murderer away until the end by filling out the worksheet. They will use this as a prompt for the narrative retelling of the mystery.
7. Have students practice retelling the story to each other, working toward suspense and playing on the mystery of what may have happened. Show them they have now added to the tradition of oral folklore with this local story!

ASSESSMENT:

- Determine how well students understand the characteristics and value of folklore by quizzing them on the elements of folklore and folk tales.
- Assess student understanding of the mystery genre by how they have re-written the storyline of the Pelican Point Murder, as well as assess group efforts to retell the story.

EXTENSIONS:

- Continue collecting examples of local folklore -- material (physical items, like foods and landmarks), customary (actions, like ceremonies and habits), and oral (anything spoken, like stories and greetings). Show how we have a rich cultural heritage here in the valley by the history of unique folklore and the blending of different cultures.
- Have students interview and collect oral stories from older members of the community, particularly those living along Geneva Road and close to the lake. What were their experiences with Utah Lake? What are the stories of their grandparents and early settlers of the region?
- Use the mystery story genre to have students write their own mysteries from other folk tales of the region.

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- Have an in-class “Folktale Fest” by assigning the Utah Lake Monster stories to be retold as mysteries as well as the Utah Lake Murder story. Make a booklet of the (written) retold stories for everyone.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:

- Any of Brunvald’s books about urban folklore: *Vanishing Hitchhiker*, *Broiled Again*, *The Mexican Pet*
- Short mysteries that can be read-aloud and discussed, such as Sobol’s *Two Minute Mysteries*

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Retelling of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” as a Mystery

Frank Fox was called over to the Bears’ residence one morning to investigate the break-in. He was told someone had pilfered food, destroyed furniture, and upturned the bedroom. Mr. and Mrs. Bear and their son Junior had been on a pre-breakfast excursion when the break-in occurred, and had not touched the crime scene upon discovery of the crime.

When Mr. Fox arrived, he calmed down the Bear family who were awaiting him outside of their cottage, noticing the door was left ajar. Mr. Fox got their statement. Mr. Bear told him they saw the door wide open; it was the first sign they saw upon returning that something was wrong. They had gone in, noticed stolen food, broken furniture, and the ram-sacked bedroom.

Apparently, there was no sign of forced entry, but the Bear family regularly left the door unlocked when gone. Mr. Fox entered, careful not to disturb anything. He found several clues: the food was only touched at Mr. and Mrs. Bear’s places, but Junior’s bowl was empty. Nevertheless, the criminal was a sloppy eater; chunks of porridge littered the table and Junior’s spoon was on the floor. Smudgy fingerprints were on the tablecloth. Mr. Fox noted this in his crime notebook.

Nearby, in the sitting room cushions had been slung onto the floor from Mrs. Bear’s chintz-covered reading chair. Mr. Bear’s leather recliner had been slung back in the lowest position and evidence of porridge footprints showed someone had jumped on it. But the real mayhem appeared in the corner, where a bundle of spindles and split wood appeared. It was Junior’s chair. The perpetrator may have been small enough to sit in the small seat, but obviously plump enough to break it. Mr. Fox sketched the crime scene in his notebook, labeling the damage.

Upstairs were other signs of mischief. Pillows, quilts, and even mattresses were askew. Sleep number settings were changed on the two adult beds, and it was obvious someone had jumped on both. The little trundle bed in the corner was also disturbed, but the pillow was still there, covers thrown back. Someone had made a fast break, probably when the Bears returned. Mr. Fox peered closely at the pillow, saw it was slightly dented, and noted a blond hair. He wrote it down in his little notebook.

He and Junior borrowed chairs from the kitchen and sat down with the Bear family. He explained what might have happened as he reconstructed the crime from the clues at the scene. He said some hungry neighbor who knew the morning exercise habits and schedule of the Bear family, broke into their house, sampled the food (leaving a mess at Junior’s place), played on the chairs, (inadvertently destroying one). This unknown person jumped on the beds (except for Junior’s). The clues suggested the size and intent of the criminal -- small, but fat and blond, someone too young or sloppy to care about table manners, clutter, or making his or her bed. In fact, Mr. Fox could infer the entire profile of the perpetrator -- a cunning, vengeful, overweight blond child, used to getting his or her way.

Upon hearing this news, the Bears were shocked. Mrs. Bear bear-hugged Junior while Mr. Bear rose up in a growl, “I will never leave my door unlocked again!” They all thanked Mr. Fox and invited him for lunch, which Mr. Fox politely declined.

However, the case remained opened because the perpetrator who broke in and destroyed the Bear property was never found.

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Worksheet for Retelling the Crime:

Instructions: Answer the questions about the mystery so you can have an outline in retelling the story. As you retell it, turn it into a narrative (sequence of events) that also answers these questions. Use plenty of important details, suspense, and possibly a scary atmosphere.

1. Who is telling the story? Have a character (detective, sheriff, etc.) try to puzzle out the mystery. This becomes the “eyes” or the point of view through which the story is told.
2. What seems to be the problem? Present the crime after the fact with someone relating the details. Describe the first thing noticed about the crime scene.
3. What seems to have happened? Suggest means, motive, and opportunity in the mystery as the detective creates a theory of the crime.
4. What parts seem to be unsolved? Was the perpetrator ever found? Were the reasons for the crime ever discovered? Is there enough circumstantial evidence to nail the criminal? Suggest what and whom the clues suggest, but what is still a mystery. You may need to leave part of it up to the listener/reader.

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Murder at the Lake: The Pelican Point mystery



Amber Foote, The Daily Herald | Posted: Saturday, January 13, 2007 11:00 pm This story appeared on page A1 .

http://www.heraldextra.com/news/murder-at-the-lake-the-pelican-point-mystery/article_5576286e-8ecd-5ddf-b7c3-9d5e13a73b16.html

Utah Lake has long been a venue for industry and recreation, from the now-quiet steel yards and factories hugging its east side, to the numerous resorts and harbors which have sprung up and faded from its shores over the last century. But few remember that due west across the lake from Geneva Resort near the now- abandoned mining and farming town of Pelican Point, one of the most nefarious and publicized murders in Utah history occurred in 1895. IN APRIL OF THAT YEAR, newspaper headlines throughout the state shouted descriptive

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headlines: "Most Atrocious Crime In Utah's History," "The Deed Of A Monster" and "A Ghastly Find"-- when the first of three male bodies washed ashore from the thawing waters of Utah Lake near Pelican Point. Two more bodies were found five days later in close proximity to each other and about three miles down shore from the first. All three men had been shot through the head with a .38-caliber pistol, with one body carrying an additional bullet in the chest.

The young men, all cousins, were Albert Enstrom, 22, of Eureka; Alfred Nelson, 17, of Lakeshore; and Andrew Johnson, 20, of Benjamin. They had been killed while sleeping in the cabin where they tended livestock near Pelican Point. Their bodies had been loaded into the back of a wagon which was then driven out onto the frozen lake behind a team of horses, and their bodies were dumped through a hole cut in the ice. The murderer had then loaded the wagon with the boys' goods -- quilts, food, guns, and tools -- and disappeared.

Upon discovery of the bodies, the victims' families revealed that the three had been missing since Feb. 17. It was supposed that they had gone to Arizona for a few weeks. Not until April 15, 1895, was the boys' true fate discovered. The bodies, even after two months, had been eerily well preserved in the icy waters (only their faces were unrecognizable, and officials presumed that the young men had been killed soon after their arrival at Pelican Point.

The case pulled a variety of law officers from around the county, most notably Sheriff George Storrs from Provo.

The Suspects

THE INVESTIGATION that ensued produced a string of suspects who were examined and interrogated:

The first was Oliver Slade of Lehi.

Slade had a lawsuit pending against the stepfather of victim Albert Enstrom. Enstrom's family had once lived in another cabin at Pelican Point, which was owned by Slade and were evicted for non-payment just months before the murders. Slade brought a suit for damages against Enstrom's stepfather for destruction of property. It was for a hearing on this suit in Lehi, that Enstrom, Nelson, and Johnson were last seen on Feb. 15, 1895. Slade was released from suspicion just days into the investigation because of lack of evidence and his reputation for being a peaceful citizen.

The eye of suspicion next moved to members of the victims' own families. Harry Hayes, Albert Enstrom's stepfather, was at the center of a whirlwind of accusations and rumors. Eyebrows rose at Hayes's nonchalant attitude and lack of emotion

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concerning the disappearances and deaths. He displayed what many believed was suspicious and inappropriate behavior during the investigation. Adding grist to the rumor mill, witnesses told investigators that Harry's relationship with Albert was rocky; the two were often on bad terms. It was reported by several different witnesses that they had heard the two arguing quite violently at times and had even seen Hayes threaten Enstrom with a gun. Hayes's apparent apathy toward the crime and his reputation for being, as a newspaper reported, an "eccentric and mean old cuss," combined with circumstantial evidence to make him the primary suspect. Authorities conjectured that Hayes had acted out of spite with the help of his natural son, George, who had been visiting his father from the East. George, however, was cleared upon the discovery that he had left the territory and returned to Connecticut before the murders occurred. His innocence was further reinforced by the discovery of the dislike George had for his father as a result of the abuse he had suffered under his hand.

William Tyril, Porter Rockwell's grandson and stepfather to victim Andrew Johnson, was next under the microscope. He was suspected of having acted with Hayes in the slayings. Tyril was also said to have been on bad terms with his stepson Andrew.

A possible motive for the murders was that two of the young men, Enstrom and Johnson, had been bequeathed the property and cabin at Pelican Point by their mothers, who were the wives of Hayes and Tyril. The property was being held in the mothers' names, and it was thought that Enstrom and Johnson had plans to assert their rights of ownership.



Authorities suspected that Hayes and Tyril had been coveting the property and livestock and had murdered all three young men before they could take the land for themselves. Again, there was insufficient evidence, and Tyril was cleared of wrongdoing.

Hayes then became the sole suspect.

The lawman

GEORGE STORRS was elected as Provo sheriff approximately one year following the murders and became a key player in Hayes's fate and the outcome of the case in general. In later years, Storrs documented the investigation of the Pelican Point murders in his personal journal and related that the case against Hayes was "woven about him so strongly that there was no one at that time but thought he was guilty beyond a reasonable doubt." Storrs also noted that the amount of circumstantial evidence against Hayes was weak to the point of being "ridiculous."

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Despite efforts by his attorney, Hayes was tried and convicted of the murders and sentenced to be hanged on June 16, 1896. Storrs had taken office just two weeks before Hayes was to be noosed and felt an acute interest in the case. He noted, "[W]e had the gallows all ready, the rope with the knot in it already made up ... and everything was in readiness for the execution." The night before the hanging was to take place, Storrs locked himself in with the prisoner intending to get Hayes to admit guilt for the murders. Storrs interrogated Hayes all night; Hayes responded with intermittent crying, swearing and seriousness, but always proclaiming his innocence. Storrs was convinced that Hayes was "as innocent of the crime as I was" and took up the matter with Gov. Heber Wells. Storrs told the governor that if he would commute Hayes's sentence to life imprisonment, Storrs would find evidence to prove his innocence. Thus began a lifelong commitment by Storrs to bring the real killer to justice.

Storrs began his search by compiling a list of all the items that were said to have been stolen from the ranch at Pelican Point on the night of the murder. Items such as chains, crowbars, pitchforks, guns, ammo, food, quilts, and a team and wagon -- among many other things -- were included on the list. He sent out a circular with these items to every police officer, post office, and constable he could around the "country."

Three months later, Storrs received a lead from a man in Mapleton who stated that he had helped unload many items on the list from a wagon into a cabin at the mouth of Spanish Fork canyon. The cabin was being rented by a man by the name of James Weeks, who shared it with his wife, Jennie, and small daughter. The Mapleton man told Storrs that Weeks and his family had brought the wagon and items to the cabin. Upon seeing a photograph, Storrs remembered that he had arrested Weeks a year earlier for cattle rustling just days after the Pelican Point murders had been committed. Weeks was released on bond but disappeared.

Stolen goods

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL of stolen items from the cabin, Storrs found that they had been sold by Jennie Weeks and purchased by various people in the area.

One by one, he began locating the purchasers of the goods in an attempt to positively identify the items as belonging to the murdered youths. In doing so, Storrs drove to Lake Shore and showed the mother of one of the victims several different quilts he lined up on a fence. She failed to recognize any of them until an old-fashioned blocked quilt made of remnants was brought out. She screamed, "That is my boy's quilt!" She had an identical one at her home. She also described a Spencer rifle with identifying marks on the stock and sights that had been owned by her son. A rifle was then brought out and examined by Storrs and found to match the description. Storrs followed up on other items that had been sold, including the missing wagon. Positive links were made to Pelican Point. The team of horses also was located -- their remains, that is. More than a year had elapsed since the murders. The horses were found shot dead in a gully.

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There was no doubt that Weeks had been in possession of all the wares taken from Pelican Point, and Storrs was convinced that Weeks was responsible for killing Enstrom, Nelson and Johnson. He learned that, upon breaking bond, Weeks had left the cabin at Spanish Fork on a horse and headed for Colorado.

Storrs began his manhunt by following a trail that was more than a year stale. In Colorado, Storrs met an old settler who claimed that Weeks, using the name C.T. Case, had worked for him for several months the previous year. He said that Case had moved on to Cripple Creek, Colo.



Guffey, Colorado; circa 1890-1900. The citation is: Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, X-9227.

The sheriff came into Cripple Creek during the Labor Day celebration and sat down on a bench to observe the townspeople. He bought a copy of the Denver Republican and was astounded to see a photograph of Weeks with the lines, "C.T. Case, Attorney at Law and once king of Freshwater ... now in jail at Guffey for the murder of William Crampton." Incredulous at this timely discovery and shocked at the announcement of another murder committed by his suspect, Storrs immediately hired a team and buggy and drove to Guffey, Colorado.

There he found that Weeks, a.k.a. Case, was in the custody of a Pinkerton agent in Chicago, and the Guffey sheriff had gone to pick up the prisoner. While waiting for their arrival, Storrs took time to collect information on Case's activities and dealings in the area. Storrs learned that Case had gone into the small mining camp of Freshwater to offer his services as an attorney. The miners saw him as an enterprising man who could help jump-start their camp and turn it into a profitable town. Through banquets and engaging

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speeches, Case won their confidence and trust-- and, cunningly, an interest in their mining claims.

Two brothers by the name of Crampton, however, were not taken in by Case's ideas. In an effort to win them over, Case went to their home on Jan. 17, 1896, where an argument ensued with William Crampton, who was alone at the cabin. Case ended the argument by killing Crampton. He then went to the justice of the peace, reported that he had been at the Crampton place and observed blood on the floor, which led him to suspect foul play. Case even rounded up a search party to investigate" the murder, volunteered himself as coroner, and wrote the official verdict of murder, killer unknown.

Case soon left the area and traveled east where he took up residence at the Sea Shore Hotel and began writing for the Chicago Times. He also found a woman, a local postmistress, and he was engaged to marry her, though he was still legally married to Jennie Weeks.

Young witness

UNFORTUNATELY, FOR CASE'S SCAM, a young boy in Freshwater, Colo., told local authorities that he had seen Case kill Crampton and that Case had threatened his life if he told anyone. A large reward was offered for Case's capture, whereupon the Pinkerton agent apprehended him in Chicago.

After waiting for several days back in Colorado, Storrs was disappointed. The Guffey sheriff showed up without Case in custody. Demanding an explanation, Storrs learned that the sheriff had asked for half of the reward money for the capture of the fugitive. Unwilling to give up the money, the Pinkerton agent had simply released Case, who seemed to have the uncanny ability to elude justice at every turn.



Upon interviewing Case's fiancée, Storrs learned that Case had come to her after his release and said he was heading back to Colorado to face the murder charge of which he was innocent. She also had a letter from him, mailed from a train, stating that life was not worth living and he was going to kill himself. Whether a red herring or legitimate, that note, according to Storrs, was the "last definite knowledge we ever had of (Case)."

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Storrs went back to Utah and started a nationwide search for Case/Weeks and followed leads that took him to Oklahoma, Denver, San Francisco, Oregon, and other places. Despite his dedicated persistence over the years, the sheriff always came up empty-handed. In later years, Storrs speculated that Weeks may have actually followed through on his threat to commit suicide or else had joined the army during the Spanish-American war and lived out his life eluding the law in some foreign country.

As a side note, Weeks's wife, Jennie, had left Utah with her daughter after being abandoned by her husband. Storrs brought her back to Utah from New York to help in the investigation and search. Although she was an accessory to the Pelican Point murders by virtue of concealing her husband's crimes, Jennie had acted out of fear for herself and her daughter and was absolved of wrongdoing. She eventually became acquainted with-- and later married-- Frank Storrs, the cousin of Sheriff George Storrs. Under stress and worry because of her past, Jennie became addicted to drugs, probably marijuana, or opium. She was later divorced. It was noted by Sheriff Storrs that she died a "fearful and despondent death" as a result of her addiction.

Charming chameleon

STORRS LEARNED MUCH about the real character and background of the Pelican Point murderer. The chameleon's real name was George H. Wright, using the aliases Weeks and Case, born of one of the most prominent and refined families in Minnesota. Well educated, he began his career as a preacher, then moved on to become an attorney and later a civil engineer. He was a successful businessman, adept at fitting into any social situation.

Storrs's own encounter with Wright, as well as his interviews with witnesses, produced testimony that described Wright as charming, handsome, well spoken, gentlemanly and very intelligent.

Storrs recalled the night when he had initially arrested Wright for cattle rustling just after the Pelican Point murders. While riding into town in the sheriff's custody, Wright turned and asked Storrs if he looked like a criminal. "I replied that he did not," Storrs later related. "He had the most brilliant and powerful toned voice I had ever heard, and his language was of splendor." Storrs would never forget that for a moment he unknowingly had the Pelican Point killer in his custody.

It was never known absolutely what the motive was behind the killing of the three young men. Storrs did learn that Weeks had stopped off at the youths' Pelican Point ranch during February 1895 while on the run for cattle rustling. He had pretended to be a land surveyor and was apparently engaged in that business for several days at the ranch. Storrs suspected that Weeks had developed an interest in the livestock at the ranch and was caught in the act of theft by Albert Enstrom. It is thought that Wright killed Enstrom first, near the corrals, and then shot the other two boys as they slept in the cabin.

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Memorials

FOR MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS now, Enstrom, Johnson, and Nelson have rested side by side on the northward slope of the quiet, hillside cemetery in Benjamin. At the base of each obelisk headstone is etched the sobering words, "Said to be massacred."



Next to the three young men's graves also stands a memorial to Harry Hayes, who was wrongly convicted and later absolved of the murders after serving four years in prison. Hayes's headstone seems to capture the sentiments of one long seeking acknowledgement that he had been convicted of a crime he never committed. His epitaph reads in part: "... But truth shall conquer at the last, for round and round we run. And ever the right comes uppermost, and ever is justice done."

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Fishermen find Utah Lake Monster

http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/fishermen-find-utah-lake-monster/article_ff3ae3f-d2a5-59cc-8873-1aa5a8c5987e.html

Daily Herald Posted: Saturday, May 13, 2006 - 11:00 pm

D. Robert Carter

Not long after the Mormon pioneers settled in Utah, Ute Indians informed the new colonists that Pawapicts or Water Babies, inhabited the waters of the Great Basin. The new residents were slow to acknowledge the presence of these supernatural beings until 1868 when Joseph C. Rich, a correspondent contributing to the Deseret News, told of a type of serpent that settlers had spotted in Bear Lake.

Some Utah residents expressed belief in these unusual monsters, while others pronounced them to be a scam. New accounts of monster sightings surfaced from Bear Lake, the Great Salt Lake, Sevier Lake, Fish Lake, and Utah Lake. Some of these stories were blatantly false, while others appear to have been told by people who actually believed they had seen strange aquatic animals in Utah's waters.

After the first wave of stories flooded Utah's press, interest in the creatures briefly waned. Then in September 1870, commercial fishermen from Springville brought the monsters back into everyday conversation. While plying their trade on the shores of Utah Lake, the Dallin family found the upper left portion of the skull of some large animal. The teeth were missing, but the empty sockets showed they had been as large as those of an ox. The skull's most remarkable feature was the five-inch-long tusk that projected from the rear section of the jaw.

This strange find was judged by some of those who had examined it to be a remnant of the Utah Lake Monster. Springville correspondent for the News, Charles D. Evans, had the skull in his possession and invited the newspaper's readers to view it at any time.

That next spring another man who was likely to be taken seriously spotted the monster. On a clear, calm day, Goshen Bishop William Price was traveling south on the road west of Utah Lake when he, C.G. Webb, and another man glimpsed the Utah Lake Monster. The creature was about one mile from shore and traveling in the same direction as the men.

The Deseret News quoted Price's brief description of the creature: "It had a snakish appearance and stood several feet out of the water like a section of a large stove pipe." The bishop concluded the serpent was about 60 feet long.

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The News gave Bishop Price's claim lukewarm support. The paper printed the following comment: "Men, whom we would readily believe upon any other subject, have stated that they saw a monster, and have described it with a minuteness that has left their hearers but little foundation to dispute them."

The Daily Corinne Reporter took a much lighter-hearted approach. Referring to Price's story and relating it to a reputed monster in the Great Salt Lake, the Reporter's editor wrote, "The story invented by Bishop Price, that our monster has changed his abode to Utah Lake, is a sheer fabrication. The big fish was at Monument Point last Monday."

Monster stories dropped from the newspapers for a number of years before being briefly resuscitated again in 1877. The Deseret News finally adopted a lighter tone toward the strange creatures. Under the heading "Monstrous," the newspaper printed: "Report has it that Monsters are becoming fashionable. It was stated in Lehi recently that a huge creature of the reptilian order had been seen in Utah Lake."

By 1880, the Utah public had generally lost faith in the existence of the lake monsters. The News reported that many people were convinced the monsters were a "large species of bug, commonly known as humbug." The Utah County Enquirer mentioned that people in Utah Valley had become "apt to discredit and laugh at the stories concerning the monster that is said to inhabit the waters of Utah Lake."

But the sun had not quite set on the Utah Lake Monster's heyday. The most detailed report of its sighting in Utah Lake was soon to be made. In June of 1880, both the News and the Enquirer reported another monstrous experience.

Two truthful and intelligent young boys, Willie Roberts and George Scott, were taking a spring bath in Utah Lake near Provo. The boys had swum out a fair distance when they noticed something that looked like a dog or a beaver swimming toward them. They didn't pay much attention to the animal until they heard a lion-like roar.

Looking up, they saw a strange animal approaching them "occasionally raising itself out of the water and showing its four legs which were as long as a man's arm." The animal's head appeared to be two or three feet long, and its mouth, which looked like that of an alligator, appeared to be 18 inches wide.

The frightened boys swam toward shore as quickly as they could, and the strange animal followed, making "savage gestures." When the boys finally reached land, they turned and saw that the animal was only a few yards from shore.

Not waiting to see if the creature could travel on land as well as it did in the water, the two friends hurried home to tell their parents of their experience. The terror-stricken manner in which the boys told their story convinced their parents and neighbors that the animal the boys had seen was a monster or something equally frightful.

Neither the Salt Lake Daily Herald nor the Daily Tribune carried stories describing the sighting, but both papers later offered comments on the occurrence. The Herald's response was waggish: "Another lake monster is reported; this time from Utah Lake. Bear Lake must hurry."

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The Tribune saw a chance to poo-poo the monster, take a jab at the LDS Church, and criticize the Provo paper all in one short paragraph. The opportunity was too great a one to pass up. The Tribune printed:

"Two boys of Provo, who have partaken of the spirit of Latter day, spin a yam to the effect that one day recently while bathing in Utah Lake, a water monster with mouth wide open, made for them, chasing them out of the lake and scaring them nearly out of their wits. The Provo Enquirer gives currency to the story, and the whiskey down there is just as villainous as ever."

Two weeks later, the Deseret News printed the letter of another skeptic. David T. LeBaron, a Mormon and a veteran Utah Lake fisherman who lived in Spring Lake in Utah County, stated that he had been on the lake hundreds of times in 25 years, and he had never seen a monster. He commented:

"I have seen ... animals of almost every imaginable size and shape, also large vessels, floating logs, etc., but they always turned out to be rushes, bunches of moss, pelicans, else some kind of ordinary animal or fowl, which being magnified upon the water, multiply their proportions to a great degree. At times a rush Other Water Baby tales are more closely related to Utah Lake. Some early settlers of Utah Valley even changed Utah Water Indian tales so they substantiated stories found in the Bible. This was the case with William S. Robinson, who was a boy when his family settled in American Fork during pioneer times.

Robinson wrote: "When we came here, we heard that a great monster was in the lake. We asked an Indian about this big reptile and he said it was a fish, and told how four of the Indians were in swimming and heard a noise and saw this big fish following. It swallowed them and they had a knife and cut themselves out of the fish. You can connect that story with the story of Jonah, (from) which I think it is handed down."

Many of the Great Basin's new settlers came to Utah Valley from England and Denmark and were familiar with stories of dragons and kraken, or as we call them, sea monsters. Utah pioneers may not have been able to believe in little people who lived in the lake, swallowed humans, and carried them into the water, but it was apparently less difficult for some of them to believe in something just as chilling and dramatic. Indian tales sown on the fertile field of pioneer imagination resulted in a bounteous harvest of monster lore.

There was, however, little public comment dealing with the presence of water monsters in Utah until August 3, 1868. On that date, a letter in the correspondence column of the Deseret News sported an eye-catching headline consisting of the following four words printed in bold capital letters: "MONSTERS IN BEAR LAKE" The letter read in part:

"All lakes, caves, and dens have their legendary histories. Tradition loves to throw her magic wand over beautiful dells and lakes and people them with fairies, giants, and monsters of various kinds. Bear Lake has also its monster tale to tell, and when I have told it, I will leave you to judge whether or not its merits are merely traditionary."

The correspondent, Joseph Rich, son of Charles C. Rich, went on to say the local Indians believed Bear Lake contained a monster. They claimed that many years earlier the animal carried off Indians who were swimming in the lake. Although the monster had not been seen for many years, the Indians faintly remembered what it looked like. They said the monster had legs 18 inches long and spouted water upwards from its mouth.

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On a summer Sunday in 1868, three men and six women spotted a huge brownish animal between 40 and 90 feet long swimming in Bear Lake. It swam faster than a speeding locomotive, and ten others of various sizes swam in its wake.

Rich finished his imaginative article by teasing his audience with these words: "Is it fish, flesh or serpent, amphibious or a fabulous or a great big fib, or what is it? ... Here is an excellent opportunity for some company to bust Barnum on a dicker for the monster, if they can only catch one."

Did the clever, articulate correspondent from Rich County believe what he wrote. The answer lies in the following statement Rich jotted down about twenty years later when summarizing the many things he had accomplished at that point in his life. He wrote, "I discovered and made famous by publication in the Deseret News that wonderful first class lie -- The Bear Lake Monster."

What motivated Rich to write his now famous letter. Too many people in Utah's capital city, life on the northern fringe of the territory near Bear Lake seemed provincial and boring, and the area received few visitors during the first years of its settlement.

Rich apparently contrived to convince the people of Salt Lake City, including the woman he hoped to marry, that life in Rich County was not as drab and humdrum as they thought it was. Rich intended to attract more visitors to the area by making the Bear Lake Country the most talked about and widely known section of Utah Territory. Could his fanciful scheme succeed?

D. Robert Carter is a historian from Springville. He can be reached at 489-8256. This story appeared in The Daily Herald on page B2.

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The meandrous monster migrates to Utah Lake

http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/the-meandrous-monster-migrates-to-utah-lake/article_4adacc44-6721-541d-bca1-b7edca69069f.html

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D. Robert Carter

When the first Euro-American settlers came to the Great Basin in 1847, the Ute Indians told them stories of Pawapicts or Water Babies. These supernatural beings lured their human victims under the water, where they, too, became Pawapicts. The new colonists modified these Ute tales, and the Pawapicts became creatures the Euro-Americans had heard of in the Old Country -- kraken or sea monsters.

Very little public comment on these sea monsters surfaced until 1868, when Joseph C. Rich, a northern Utah correspondent to the Deseret News, wrote his now famous column entitled, "Monsters in Bear Lake." In this column, Rich asserted that a group of men and women saw a cluster of brownish-colored animals rapidly swimming through the lake's blue waters.

Toward the end of his letter, Rich suggested that some enterprising soul could likely become rich by catching one of these strange animals and selling it to famous circus magnate and king of the freak show circuit, P.T. Barnum. Some very important people in Utah Territory cut to the chase-- including the leader of the LDS Church and former governor of Utah Territory, Brigham Young.

President Young read accounts of the Bear Lake monster in the Deseret News, and he received several "monster letters" from a number of the faithful in northern Utah and southern Idaho. A May 18, 1874, letter from William Budge, who lived in Paris, Idaho, told of a monster sighting on Bear Lake.

Budge, William Broomhead, and Molando Pratt were returning from general conference in Salt Lake City when they spotted the monster about three miles from Lake Town. Budge reported that it swam in the lake about 100 yards ahead of the party and 20 yards from shore. At first the men thought the creature in the lake might be a very large duck, but as they drove closer, the men could tell the creature was an animal they judged to be about five or six feet long.

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The animal dived underwater and came up about 100 feet from the three men, giving them a good look at its strange countenance as it swam through the still water about as fast as a man could walk. Pratt's description read:

"Its face and part of its head was distinctly seen, covered with fur, or short hair of a light snuff color. The face of the animal was apparently flat, very wide between the eyes, and tapering to the nose with very full large eyes, and prominent ears, the ears resembling those of a horse, but scarcely as long. The whole face, in shape, was like that of a fox, but so large that the space between the eyes, equaled that of the distance between the eyes of a common cow."

Budge concluded his letter by stating, "As there has been considerable interest excited in regard to the 'Bear Lake Monster' I submit a description of what we have seen thinking it might be acceptable to you."

The letter from Budge must have interested Young. Sometime in the 1870s, the Mormon leader and Phineas W. Cook made plans to capture the wily animal and split the money gained from its sale, each man receiving half the profit. It appears Young was to furnish the equipment, and Cook was to do the work. Cook hired a blacksmith to manufacture a large iron hook, and he baited it with an ample chunk of meat. Then he fastened the hook to what must rank as Utah's strangest fishing gear. The unorthodox disciple of Isaac Walton attached the hook to twenty feet of chain cable and secured it to a buoy. The float allowed the heavy chain to sink into the water to the depth of 20 feet.

Then Cook fastened one end of a 300-yard-long length of one-inch rope to the buoy and attached the other end of the rope to a larger buoy. He inserted a small flag pole into the top of the bigger buoy and raised "Old Glory" to the top of the staff. A sinker attached to the bottom of the large buoy kept the flagpole and the flag upright.

As a final touch, Cook tied one end of a 300-foot-long length of three-quarter-inch rope to the larger buoy. He attached the other end of the rope to a tree on the shore of the lake. It is not difficult to believe that Cook's odd fishing experiment proved unsuccessful.

On August 24, 1876, the obviously disappointed LDS Church President penned a letter to Cook asking for the return of the hemp fishing line. In reply, Cook wrote that he had called on Young several times to discuss the situation. Each time he had waited in vain for a half hour to 45 minutes. Since Cook had other business in the capital, he finally left to take care of it.

The would-be monster catcher explained to Young what happened to the rope: "You furnished me rope etc to catch the serpent in the Lake at halves. I spent my time faithfully during the season but did not succeed. Dudley Merritt of Bennington came here fer it to stretch across Bear River to ferry you and your company over. I asked you afterward in the Parent Coop (ZCMI) in your City about it. You told me to let him have it fer he had well paid you fer it. .. So I shall expect you to squeeze the ace."

Exactly how the two men resolved this fishing dispute is lost in the depths of Utah's maritime history. Since Young died the next year, his demise likely signaled the end of this monstrous dispute.

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Joseph C. Rich's fish story fooled more people than just Young and Cook. A goodly number of people or it may be more accurate to say, a number of goodly people throughout the territory swallowed his tale -- hook, line and sinker. Others were more reluctant to take the baited hook. Many of the territory's newspapers cast their linotypes into these murky waters.

The Mormon-owned Deseret News somewhat reluctantly admitted that the serpent story might be true and continued to print corroborating evidence, while the Salt Lake Tribune, the paper representing Utah's gentiles, attacked the truthfulness of Rich's story. The Tribune caustically remarked concerning the monster, "He's twin brother to the devil and cousin to Brigham."

The Tribune and the Corinne Reporter knew the monster stories they printed were fictitious, and generally used them to belittle the Mormon Church, but the Deseret News and the Utah County Enquirer remained uncertain about the validity of the stories they printed.

The copious publicity, both pro and con, given to Rich's Bear Lake Monster story opened the floodgate of folklore and unleashed a deluge of water monster tales that inundated Utah from north to south. The power of suggestion is an amazing thing. It caused many honest people to watch for water monsters and find their presence in many unusual quirks of nature.

Not many years passed before all of Utah's major lakes had monsters, and their stories too were reported in the territory's newspapers. The tone of some of the stories was sarcastic, while other articles were serious.

The Corinne Reporter told of an aquatic thief on the Great Salt Lake. The newspaper stated that in 1870 many cattle belonging to the LDS Church had disappeared from Antelope Island where the church kept its herd. The Reporter suggested that some people thought a subterranean cavern connected Bear Lake and the Great Salt Lake, and that a migratory Bear Lake Monster was responsible for the disappearance of the cattle. The article ended with this gentle, but not very genteel, jab at the leader of Utah's predominant religion: "The faithful say that they (the cattle) were eaten by the Bear Lake Monster (but some people) think the whole affair an invention of the prophet to keep the people in the dark while he gets away with the cattle on the island."

Making fun of earlier Bear Lake Monster stories and hoping to gain for Corinne its share of publicity, the Corinne Record published the report of a monster located off Monument Point on the northern shores of the Great Salt Lake. The newspaper claimed that salt boilers working the night shift for Barnes & Co. heard noises from the lake and looked up to see:

"A huge mass of hide and fin rapidly approaching, and when within a few yards of the shore it raised its enormous head and uttered a terrible bellow ... (It was) a great animal like a crocodile or alligator ... but much larger ... It must have been seventy-five feet long, but its head was not like an alligator's -- it was more like a horse's."

The men ran to the mountains and didn't come back down until daylight. They were horrified when they returned to see large rocks turned over and the ground badly torn up along the trail taken by the monster. The story ended with this editorial comment mimicking Joseph C. Rich's

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first monster story: "The story is probably a hoax; however, the editor of the Record vouches for the correspondent as 'a man whose veracity cannot be impeached.' "

With tongue firmly planted in cheek, the Salt Lake Tribune also aped Rich's original story by writing that a gentleman who had recently returned from Sevier Lake reported seeing several monsters in Central Utah's salty sea. The largest animal was 50 feet long and 20 feet in circumference. Its back was visible 10 feet above water. Other, smaller species of its kind sported and spouted in the distance. The writer suggested that since a huge inland sea once covered Utah, all the territory's lake monsters were surely related.

Fish Lake was also heard from. The Sevier Stake Historical Record contains the following information about a monster in that lake: "This Lake too, has its monster, according to the Indian's report, years ago, it made great havoc with the native's papooses, but latterly it is better behaved. It is 300 feet long."

The residents of Utah County were no exception when it came to Lake Monster stories. Joseph Rich's report of a monster sighting on Bear Lake caused a few dwellers of Happy Valley to reflect upon former monster sightings on Utah Lake. It appears that settlers had detected strange creatures in Utah's Sea of Galilee years earlier, but word of these discoveries had not appeared in the newspapers. It was likely nothing but true Utah Valley modesty that kept these sightings from being reported earlier.

Toward the end of August 1868, Henry Walker, a resident of Lehi, sent a letter to the Deseret News. He claimed that in about 1864 Isaac Fox was hunting along the shore of Utah Lake just east of the mouth of the Jordan River. Fox was in the water and quietly moving around a point where some rushes grew when he heard a noise and glanced eastward toward what he supposed to be an animal.

To his fear and surprise, he saw what looked like a large snake with dark, piercing eyes and a head that looked like that of a greyhound. The frightened Fox moved toward shore, and the animal followed until it came to within 35 feet of him. It then turned and, being joined by another of its breed, swam straight across the lake faster than a man could run. Fox estimated that the creatures were about 25 or 30 feet long. The following year, a young son of Canute Peterson saw similar creatures near where Fox had seen them earlier.

Walker also stated that in 1866 a white man and an Indian were searching the lake shore about two miles east of the Jordan River for some wild hay to cut. They heard splashing in the water and thought it was their dog chasing after something. The men went into the rushes near the water to investigate. According to their story, they were startled by a creature that raised itself up about 50 feet away and "looked them full in the face." The Indian ran off and his companion retreated about 35 feet to higher ground where he turned and looked again.

He reported, "its head was a foot across and shaped like a greyhound's; and it had the wickedest looking black eyes he had ever seen. It darted its tongue out which was red and forked. The color of the 'snake' was a deep yellow with black spots."

The Deseret News responded to Walker's revelations by saying they made "a character for Utah Lake as the abode of monsters almost rivaling those in Bear Lake." The News continued, "One

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thing somewhat noteworthy with regard to both lakes, we believe, is that an Indian cannot be got to go into either, as from personal knowledge, or tradition, they believe monsters do exist in each. They say that at Pelican point, in Utah Lake, one of these monsters swallowed an Indian whole, scalp lock and all!"

While some Utah Valley people believed these stories about monsters in the lake, there were also many skeptics. Peter Madsen, a pioneer fisherman of Utah Lake, was one such disbeliever. His opinion was reported in the October 30, 1868, Deseret Evening News.

According to Madsen, there was living on Utah Lake a peculiar type of duck-like bird, he called a "hell diver." The bird, which was probably an American coot, had short wings with very few feathers and neither flew nor walked very well. It could, however, dive and stay underwater for as many as 15 minutes.

Madsen described another peculiarity of the bird: "It sometimes makes its way across the water with great velocity, flapping its short and almost featherless wings, and leaving a wake behind it that gives the appearance of a serpent dashing along." He thought it might have been this condition that led some people to believe they had seen a strange creature.

Madsen added that in the 14 years he had spent fishing the lake, he had never seen the monster. In spite of his attempt to discredit the idea that strange creatures lived in the lake, reports of monster sightings remained in circulation, although interest in the strange beasts temporarily waned.

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"Tales From Utah Valley" is now available at Borders, Pioneer Books and BYU Bookstore, all in Provo and The Read Leaf in Springville.

During the 1860s and later, some residents of Utah Valley believed strange water creatures resided in Utah Lake and its tributaries. This scene from an early postcard shows the willow-lined banks at the mouth of the Provo River.

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http://historytogo.utah.gov/salt_lake_tribune/history_matters/033102.html

Maybe There Is a Monster In Utah Lake

Will Bagley

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Everyone hates to make mistakes, but, having made one, a good historian confesses, learns humility and moves on. Last week's column credited Jacob Hamblin with naming Pipe Spring, but it was his brother, William "Gunlock Bill" Hamblin, who blasted Dudley Leavitt's pipe. Last March this column asked, "Why isn't there a Utah Lake Monster?" It turns out there is, and its traditions are even older than the famous kraken of Bear Loch.

Ute tribal lore tells that "Water Babies" haunted the lake, while a Water Indian lured the unwary to a watery death. The Utes said a mysterious creature had swallowed a man whole near Pelican Point.

After vigilant citizens spotted the Bear Lake monster in August 1868, Happy Valley residents recalled repeatedly sighting a similar creature on Utah Lake. In 1864, Isaac Fox saw a 25 to 30-foot-long aquatic reptilian while hunting near the lake's north shore. The beast, with fierce dark eyes and a hound-shaped head, chased Fox to shore and almost ran him down. The creature swam back to join a second monster, perhaps its mate.

The monsters seemed to prefer the lake's northern end, for a similar beast was spotted there the next year. In 1866, two men cutting hay saw a yellow animal with black spots that repeatedly displayed a forked red tongue. Needless to say, the two men fled before making more detailed observations.

Perhaps nothing offers more compelling proof of the existence of Utah's lake monsters than the eyewitness testimony of respected religious leaders. LDS Bishop William Price of Goshen and two fellow travelers spotted the serpent on the west shore of Utah Lake in 1871. Standing about 6 feet out of the water like a giant snake, the beast's 60-foot-long body looked like a section of stovepipe.

Young Willie Roberts and George Scott provided the best description of the monster in June 1880. Far out in the lake, a small animal resembling a dog or beaver approached them. They thought nothing about it until the creature roared like a lion, raised its huge head out of the water

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and revealed four legs, each about a yard long. The head boasted alligator-like jaws about 3 feet long. The critter chased them, making "savage gestures."

The boys' "terrified countenances" and consistent reports convinced their parents and English traveler Phil Robinson they had met the "great snake" of Utah Lake. "Does the Smithsonian know of this terror?" Robinson asked.

Reluctant to accept such a terrifying reality, professional fishers ridiculed the monster tales. Peter Madsen had never seen the beast in his 14 years fishing the lake and suggested it was actually a "hell diver," perhaps an American coot. This lame duck had to flap its wings furiously and water ski many yards to get airborne, a clumsy maneuver that could be mistaken for the wake of a sea serpent.

Such skepticism took a serious blow when, in 1870, fishers from Springville discovered the skull of a large creature with a 5-inch tusk protruding from its jaw, at last confronting lake-monster skeptics with physical evidence.

The Utah Lake monster may have been among the casualties of World War II, when U.S. Steel (now Geneva Steel) began upgrading the local air and water. We may never know the truth about that critter, but next summer I plan to conduct field studies to prove conclusively that Utah is home to the world's last surviving dinosaurs.

Historian Robert Carter, the bard of Utah Lake, described its sea monster in a Westminster College lecture last summer. Lake monster season opens April 1.

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MYSTERIOUS MONSTERS INHABITED UTAH LAKE

http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/article_b4371ccd-1775-5831-83b9-b752ef0aa7af.html

April 29, 2006 11:00 pm • [Daily Herald](#) (This story appeared in The Daily Herald on page B2.)

by D. Robert Carter

In this day and age, a cry of "Walla-la-loo-loo" wafting across the nighttime air would not cause a normal Utah Valley resident to tremble with fear. However, during an earlier time in Utah Valley, that cry would likely have sent a chill through the breech cloth of many a Shinob-fearing Timpanogos warrior. It may have also curdled the milk of nursing Ute mothers and caused numerous sleeping Indian children to unconsciously duck their heads under their animal skin covers and clutch their buffalo hide beanie babies a little closer. For that sound was the call uttered by Pawapicts, or Water Babies, whom native Americans believed inhabited the waters of Utah Lake, Provo River and other aqua pura.

There are various Utah Indian tales relating how these water beings came into existence. According to one account published by the Uintah-Ouray Ute Tribe in the book *Stories of Our Ancestors*, Pawapicts came into existence as the result of a wrestling match between a very stout man named Pahahpooch and Wildcat. It is possible that this account and other similar tales were attempts on the part of the Native Americans to explain what happened to their people who had drowned.

Before challenging Wildcat to a wrestling bout, Pahahpooch had thrown all of his other contestants and had never lost a contest. When the prearranged match began, the two grappled beside a large expanse of water. The feline creature eventually threw Pahahpooch into the middle of the lake and said, "You will stay in the water all the time now, and people will call you Water Indian."

Pahahpooch's life in the water must have been a very lonely one, and eventually he tempted or forced others into the water to become Water Indians like him. Then it became the task of the new Water Indians to lure other people into the water or swallow them and carry them into the depths. The lakes or streams into which they were submerged became the victims' homes.

Utes apparently believed Pawapicts came in various shapes and sizes. Most Ute accounts agree that they had long black hair and cried like infants. However, Ute sources quoted in Anne M. Smith's book, *Ute Tales*, variously described them either as being the size of a man's hand or as large as a three or four-year-old child. Sometimes, they even appeared in the shape and size of an alluring full-grown woman.

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These last mentioned creatures, like their human counterparts, sometimes trapped their victims by using devious methods. In one story, a young man went to the river and watered his horses. He felt overcome with fatigue and went to sleep on the bank of the stream.

When the man awoke, he became aware that someone was lying beside him. He opened his eyes and saw a seductive woman in a green dress lying next to him. He fell in love with her, and she coaxed him to go with her under the water to meet her people. His family never saw him again.

Some of the tales in Smith's book reveal personal experiences Utes had with these inhabitants of the deep, or in Utah Lake's case, the not so deep. For example, John Duncan, a Ute whose Indian name was Red Sunrise, related a story of a Water Baby that lived near Provo. Duncan said that in his youth he knew a boy who neither believed in Water Babies nor thought they were bad. He wanted proof of their existence.

Once John and his friend traveled to Utah Valley and went fishing. They saw Water Babies on a flat rock in the Provo River drying their long hair. The Pawapicts looked about the size of three-year-old children and cried like babies.

Duncan's friend, who suddenly became a believer, wanted to see the small creatures clearer, and even though the boys were afraid, they edged nearer the water. The Water Babies saw the boys, became alarmed, and dove into the river. Their long hair floated on top of the water. Then the river mysteriously began to rise and come nearer to the boys. At this point, the frightened young Utes ran away. John Duncan never saw a Water Baby again; after that experience, he may not have wanted to see another one.

When the Mormon pioneers arrived in the Great Basin, the Utes told some of their beliefs to the newcomers. These Ute tales probably helped stimulate the development of similar pioneer ghost and monster stories related to water. For example, the LDS Journal History contains an early (perhaps the earliest) pioneer reference related to Water Babies.

The Southern Exploring Expedition, led by Parley P. Pratt, traveled southward through Utah Valley in November 1849. The explorers crossed over the ridge into Juab Valley on the 29th of that month and camped at Punjun Spring. This body of water is now called Burraston Ponds.

That evening the men gathered for a camp meeting. They sang hymns and two men who were ill received blessings. Toward the end of the meeting, Indian interpreter Dimick B. Huntington told the group about Ute Indian traditions, one of which was that the spring near which they camped was bottomless.

The Journal History listing for this date tells of another Ute belief that Huntington may have told the men: "The Indians have a tradition that this spring is inhabited by a hairy being, like a child 8 years old . . . he comes up at nights, makes a noise like a frog and tries to frighten and catch Indians and draw them into this bottomless spring."

Imperfect command of the Ute language likely caused some of the Indian stories to become garbled. Also, the settlers sometimes modified stories they heard so they fit better into the Euro-American culture's realm of understanding and belief. Within a short time, the pioneers had modified this Indian tale about Burraston Ponds, and their version took on a very ghostly Euro-American flavor.

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The September 15, 1851, Millennial Star contains a description of Brigham Young's spring journey to visit some of the southern colonies in Utah Territory. This article contains a reference to Punjun Spring and shows how the pioneers modified the Indian story to better fit what they could more easily understand. The settler's version of the story says Indian traditions regarded the pond "as bottomless, and in the evening they report the slight wailing of an infant is often heard to proceed from it."

Through the years, the narrative underwent still further revision. The current version of this ancient Water Baby tale has been passed down through the Richard James Burraston family to Burraston's great-granddaughter, Karen Thorn, a resident of Springville. The Daily Herald of January 27, 2001, quotes Thorn as saying, "A story is told that a baby fell into the pond and was never found. Legend says if you go to the ponds at the right time you can hear a baby cry."

Other Water Baby tales are more closely related to Utah Lake. Some early settlers of Utah Valley even changed Utah Water Indian tales so they substantiated stories found in the Bible. This was the case with William S. Robinson, who was a boy when his family settled in American Fork during pioneer times.

Robinson wrote: "When we came here, we heard that a great monster was in the lake. We asked an Indian about this big reptile and he said it was a fish, and told how four of the Indians were in swimming and heard a noise and saw this big fish following. It swallowed them and they had a knife and cut themselves out of the fish. You can connect that story with the story of Jonah, (from) which I think it is handed down."

Many of the Great Basin's new settlers came to Utah Valley from England and Denmark and were familiar with stories of dragons and kraken, or as we call them, sea monsters. Utah pioneers may not have been able to believe in little people who lived in the lake, swallowed humans, and carried them into the water, but it was apparently less difficult for some of them to believe in something just as chilling and dramatic. Indian tales sown on the fertile field of pioneer imagination resulted in a bounteous harvest of monster lore.

There was, however, little public comment dealing with the presence of water monsters in Utah until August 3, 1868. On that date, a letter in the correspondence column of the Deseret News sported an eye-catching headline consisting of the following four words printed in bold capital letters: "MONSTERS IN BEAR LAKE" The letter read in part:

"All lakes, caves, and dens have their legendary histories. Tradition loves to throw her magic wand over beautiful dells and lakes and people them with fairies, giants, and monsters of various kinds. Bear Lake has also its monster tale to tell, and when I have told it, I will leave you to judge whether or not its merits are merely traditionary."

The correspondent, Joseph Rich, son of Charles C. Rich, went on to say the local Indians believed Bear Lake contained a monster. They claimed that many years earlier the animal carried off Indians who were swimming in the lake. Although the monster had not been seen for many years, the Indians faintly remembered what it looked like. They said the monster had legs 18 inches long and spouted water upwards from its mouth.

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On a summer Sunday in 1868, three men and six women spotted a huge brownish animal between 40 and 90 feet long swimming in Bear Lake. It swam faster than a speeding locomotive, and ten others of various sizes swam in its wake.

Rich finished his imaginative article by teasing his audience with these words: "Is it fish, flesh or serpent, amphibious or amfabulous or a great big fib, or what is it? ... Here is an excellent opportunity for some company to bust Barnum on a dicker for the monster, if they can only catch one."

Did the clever, articulate correspondent from Rich County believe what he wrote. The answer lies in the following statement Rich jotted down about twenty years later when summarizing the many things he had accomplished at that point in his life. He wrote, "I discovered and made famous by publication in the Deseret News that wonderful first class lie -- The Bear Lake Monster."

What motivated Rich to write his now famous letter? To many people in Utah's capital city, life on the northern fringe of the territory near Bear Lake seemed provincial and boring, and the area received few visitors during the first years of its settlement.

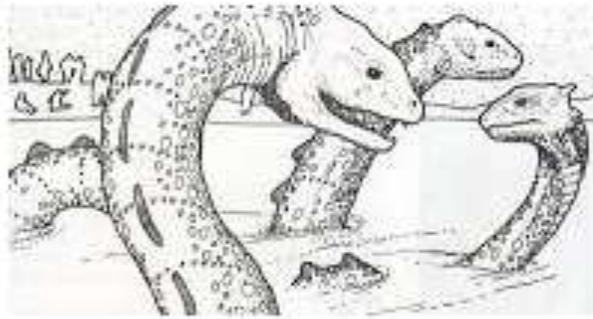
Rich apparently contrived to convince the people of Salt Lake City, including the woman he hoped to marry, that life in Rich County was not as drab and humdrum as they thought it was. Rich intended to attract more visitors to the area by making the Bear Lake Country the most talked about and widely known section of Utah Territory. Could his fanciful scheme succeed?

To be continued...

D. Robert Carter is a historian from Springville. He can be reached at 489-8256.

MYSTERY, MONSTERS, MURDER, AND MAYHEM: UTAH LAKE FOLKTALES

THE UTAH LAKE MONSTER



<http://unmyst3.blogspot.com/2009/09/utah-lake-monster.html>

Utah folklore says the state's Great Lakes house not one, not two, but five fearsome water monsters. Early Native Americans believed some lakes were cursed by "water Babies" who would coax travelers into the water to their deaths. Utah Lake, a 150 square mile body of water in north-central Utah, has a rich tradition of monsters and other unnatural creatures living in its depths. The Ute Indians told legends about evil dwarfs living in the waters of the lake. The Indians called these "water babies" because they made sounds like crying babies that lured mortals into the water where they drowned. The Ute also told of a "Water Indian" who would drag unlucky braves to their deaths. They also told of a creature so large it was able to swallow a man whole.

Local natives said the great serpents had disappeared in the 1820s but by the 1860s, white settlers were reporting incidents involving huge, terrifying, scaly creatures. The Utah and Bear Lakes in the north have had most sightings of these monsters; indeed, the descriptions of witnesses provide suggestions that these lakes each have on or a pair of twin water dragons. Reports from white settlers to the area soon seemed to confirm the tales of the enormous creature, at least. The first reported sighting occurred in 1866, when Utah settler Isaac Fox saw a 30-foot-long reptile near the lake's north shore. According to Fox, the beast chased him to shore, then swam back to join another what looked like a large snake with the head of a greyhound, which frightened him so much he fled the water. Over the years, there were frequent accounts of reputable people, including local priests, meeting the beasts. All witnesses provided the same description – that of a giant snake's body with short, trunk-like legs rising out of the water with an enormous mouth and fearsome black eyes.

In the late 1860s the idea of hunting down the monsters gained favor. Young local men tried shooting at them. Some successfully hit their targets, although no one was ever able to sufficiently wound the beasts in order to capture them. One farmer heard rustling in his garden one night. Using only his old rifle, he confronted and shot the creature, only to discover it was his neighbor's heifer. Over the following years, several more sightings occurred. In 1866, for instance, two men claimed they saw a large yellow creature with black spots and a red forked tongue. In 1870, real physical evidence was recovered when fishermen from Springville, a nearby town, found a large unidentified skull with a five-inch tuck on the jaw. The next year, the Salt Lake Herald even revealed that the monster had been caught, but what happened to the body of the captured creature is unknown.

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In 1871, two local men were out fishing on Bear Lake when they saw the monster rise from the water. They said they managed to hit the beast with shots from their rifles but the beast just swam away. A wagon train captain, called William Bridge, said in 1874 that he had also seen the Bear Lake beast. Bridge reported that the creature had been about 20 yards from shore when it surfaced from the water. 'Its face and part of its head was covered with fur or short hair of a light snuff color,' he said. Bridge also described it as having a flat face with large eyes, prominent ears, and a four or five-foot-long neck. Two boys claimed to see the beast in 1880. According to their story, they saw a creature approaching from the middle of the lake. They thought it was a dog or a beaver and paid no attention to it – until it got closer and they saw how huge it was. They claimed it roared like a lion, opening its three-foot-long alligator-like jaws and lifted itself part way out of the water. The thing had four legs, each about a yard long. The boys screamed and ran away

In any case, by mid-1880s, reports of the Utah Lake Monster ceased. Some theorize that the whole thing was a hoax from the beginning, and that lake monster hoaxes had simply fallen out of fashion. Bear Lake residents were so affected by Bridge's testimony that they decided to make a trap to capture the beast. Two prominent local citizens, Brigham Young and Phineas Cook, hatched a plan which involved little more than a giant fishing line. They linked a 300-foot-long, one-inch-thick rope to a large hook with a huge slab of mutton attached as bait. The position of the rope was marked by a buoy floating on the lake surface. Although the trap was often robbed of meat, no monster was ever caught. Lake monster sightings had fallen away so drastically by the end of the nineteenth century.

There was another sighting of the creature in 1921, followed by a brief flurry of sightings, but since then the Utah Lake Monster seems to have disappeared for good. Since then, one of the few reliable reports was in 1946 by a local Scout master who said he had seen the bizarre creature appear on the surface of the lake. The account was widely regarded to be so detailed and accurate that only the most ardent skeptic could doubt it. Local wags have also pointed out that Scouts don't lie. But some still do question the truth of the Utah Lake monsters.

In his lecture on the subject to the Utah State Historical Society, local historian D. Robert Carter said he actually believed the monster was a species of giant bug – humbug. As long as these tales have been told, skeptics of the Utah Lake Monster have been plentiful. Scoffers suggested that the witnesses were seeing nothing but floating logs or swimming birds and letting their imaginations run wild. Some historians believe that the lake monster tails was the settlers' way of adapting the original Indians myths.

(Sources: <http://www.elfmanworld.com/spookyarchive/lakemonsters.html> and *100 Strangest Mysteries* by Matt Lamy)

(Picture source: http://www.fishlakemanitobanarrows.com/images/3manipogo_artists.jpg)

MYSTERY, MONSTERS, MURDER, AND MAYHEM: UTAH LAKE FOLKTALES

The Utah Lake monster story

Wednesday, 9 September 2009

<http://cryptozoo-oscity.blogspot.com/2009/09/utah-lake-monster-story.html>



Utah Lake, is a body of water in north-central Utah, of approximately 150 square miles. The indigenous natives, The Ute told legends about the evil dwarfs or water babies living in the waters of the lake that lured mortals into the water where they drowned They also told settlers of a creature so large it was able to swallow a man whole.

Then in 1864, Isaac Fox said he saw a 25 foot long aquatic creature whilst hunting near the lake's north shore. The beast was described as having fierce dark eyes and a hound-shaped head. It chased Fox to shore and almost caught him . Fox said the creature then swam back to join a second creature in the water perhaps its mate. Henry Walker of Lehi was in

Utah Lake in 1864 when "to his fear and surprise, he saw what looked like a large snake . . . with the head of a greyhound." In the later 1860s, two men reported they heard splashing at the Lake. They spotted a creature with a head shaped like a greyhound with "wicked-looking black eyes.". The sightings continued when in 1866, two men cutting hay saw a yellow animal with black spots that repeatedly displayed a forked red tongue. Needless to say, the two men fled before making observations that are more detailed. In 1870, it was said that fishers from Springville discovered the skull of a large creature with a 5-inch tusk protruding from its jaw, but what happened to the evidence isn't clear.

It was taken more seriously when LDS Bishop William Price of Goshen and two fellow travelers spotted the serpent on the west shore of Utah Lake in 1871. He said it stood about 6 feet out of the water like a giant snake, and that the beast's 60-foot-long body looked like a section of stovepipe.

Two youngsters ,Willie Roberts and George Scott ,saw it in June 1880. Far out in the lake, a small animal resembling a dog or beaver approached them. They thought nothing about it until the creature roared like a lion, raised its huge head out of the water, and revealed four legs, each about a yard long. The head boasted alligator-like jaws about three feet long. The critter chased them, making "savage gestures." The boys' "terrified countenances" and consistent reports convinced their parents and English traveler Phil Robinson they had met the "great snake" of Utah Lake. "Does the Smithsonian know of this terror?" Robinson asked.

There was another sighting of the creature in 1921, followed by a brief flurry of sightings. Then there was a report in 1946 by a local Scout master who said he had seen the bizarre creature appear on the surface of the lake. The account was widely regarded to be so detailed and accurate that it shouldn't be doubted.(however, eye witness testimony is considered unreliable and as mistaken identity is common so there will still have been skeptical discussion about the report)

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There appear to have been no sightings reported since. Article on the monster:
http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/article_4adacc44-6721-541d-bca1-b7edca69069f.html?mode=story

So what is or was in Utah lake? It sounds like a large ferocious eel. There have been reports of giant snakes that ruled the world 10 million years ago, so there are always possibilities of some surviving one presumes. As it has not been seen for some time, it could have been a giant eel now died out. However, some think the story of the boys seeing feet points to a giant beaver. Again, it is always possible some may be surviving from the ice age. But that is cryptozoology for you.....full of possibles!

Posted by [Tabitca](#) at [03:35](#)

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Utah Lake Monster Legend



http://upighosthunters.com/Utah_Lake_Monster.html

Utah Lake, a 150 square mile body of water in north-central Utah, has a rich tradition of monsters and other unnatural creatures living in its depths. The Ute Indians told legends about evil dwarfs living in the waters of the lake. The Indians called these dwarfs "water babies" because they made sounds like crying babies that lured mortals into the water where they drowned. The Ute also told of a "Water Indian" who would drag unlucky braves to their deaths. They also told of a creature so large it was able to swallow a man whole.

Reports from white settlers to the area soon seemed to confirm the tales of the enormous creature, at least. The first reported sighting occurred in 1864, when Utah settler Isaac Fox saw a 30 foot long reptile near the lake's north shore. According to Fox, the beast chased him to shore, then swam back to join another monster in the water. Later that same year, a visitor to Utah Lake named Henry Walker claimed he saw what looked like a large snake with the head of a greyhound.

Over the following years, several more sightings occurred. In 1866, for instance, two men claimed they saw a large yellow creature with black spots and a red forked tongue.

In 1870, fishermen found the skull of a large creature with a five inch tusk. Whether it was genuine or a hoax will never be determined, since no one is sure whatever became of this important piece of physical evidence.

Two boys claimed to see the beast in 1880. According to their story, they saw a creature approaching from the middle of the lake. They thought it was a dog or a beaver, and paid no attention to it -- until it got closer and they saw how huge it was. They claimed it roared like a lion, opening its three-foot-long alligator-like jaws and lifted itself part way out of the water. The thing had four legs, each about a yard long. The boys screamed and ran away.

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As long as these tales have been told, skeptics of the Utah Lake Monster have been plentiful. Scoffers suggested that the witnesses were seeing nothing but floating logs or swimming birds and letting their imaginations run wild. Some historians believe that the lake monster tale was the settlers' way of adapting the original Indian myths.

In any case, by the mid-1880s, reports of the Utah Lake Monster ceased. Some theorize that the whole thing was a hoax from the beginning, and that lake monster hoaxes had simply fallen out of fashion.

There was another sighting of the creature in 1921, followed by a brief flurry of sightings, but since then the Utah Lake Monster seems to have disappeared for good. If it's still out there, we'll just have to wait and see if it ever re-emerges from the watery depths of Utah Lake -- or the imaginations of the nearby residents.

<http://www.elfmanworld.com/spookyarchive/lakemonsters.html>

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Spooky Morsel Archive

The Utah Lake Monster Water Monsters U.S.A.

<http://www.elfmanworld.com/spookyarchive/lakemonsters.html>

You've probably heard of the Loch Ness Monster.

Well, "Nessie" might be the most famous, but he (or she) is not the **only** lake monster in the world. Many strange creatures have been seen in bodies of water the world over -- several right here in the United States. Arkansas, Idaho, and New York are only a few places where lake and river monsters have been reported. I wrote about some of them in my book, [The Very Scary Almanac](#), but it seems there are many more. Lots of lakes in the U.S. have legends and lore about the strange denizens of their depths.

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Have you ever seen the Utah Lake Monster, or any other water monster? If so, [let me know!](#)