

## The Other Buffalo

*“The Other Buffalo: Native Americans, Fur Trappers, and the Western Bison, 1600–1860,” is an article written by Stephen P. Van Hoak. It was published in 2004 in the Utah Historical Quarterly. [Changed for easier reading using ChatGPT.] Original found at [https://issuu.com/utah10/docs/uhq\\_volume72\\_2004\\_number1/s/10188703](https://issuu.com/utah10/docs/uhq_volume72_2004_number1/s/10188703)*

During the 1820s and 1830s, Native Americans and fur trappers often moved with the seasons and ended up in the same large river valleys where the buffalo gathered. The fur trade changed the yearly routines of many western tribes. Instead of spreading out in the summer to find food, large groups of Utes and Shoshone spent their summers trading at the trapper rendezvous. These big gatherings of people and animals needed plenty of food, water, and grass for the horses, and only the large river valleys had enough of these resources. Trappers and Native Americans often hunted the large buffalo herds they found there for food—and sometimes just to clear them out of the area. By 1850, buffalo hunting had become impossible for most Western tribes because the herds had been greatly reduced.

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The seasonal movements of Native Americans and fur trappers in the 1820s and 1830s often brought them to large river valleys at precisely the same times as the buffalo. The fur trade had changed the annual cycle of many Western Native Americans—instead of dispersing in the summer in pursuit of scattered resources; large groups of Utes and Shoshoni spent their summers trading at the trapper rendezvous. Such large congregations of people and animals required an abundance of food, water, and forage, and in the West only the larger river valleys provided an adequate supply of these resources. Trappers and Indians were generally quick to slaughter the large herds of bison they typically found in these valleys, either for food or at least in one instance just to “get them out of the way...By 1850 buffalo hunting became impossible for most western Indians.