

# NEWSPAPER ROCK

WHERE NATIVE AMERICA MEETS POP CULTURE



AUGUST 01, 2007

## Blame Europeans for buffalo slaughter?

Researcher: [Europe drove bison slaughter](#)

The near-extinction of the plains bison in the United States has long been blamed on the advent of the railways, native overhunting and a government policy of slaughter designed to address the "Indian problem."

But a Canadian researcher has discovered that globalization was the real culprit for the decimation of the U.S. bison herd in the 19th century.

M. Scott Taylor, an economist at the University of Calgary who used international trade records and first-person accounts of the hunt, has found that European development of a cheap and easy tanning method after 1870 fueled that continent's insatiable appetite for bison hides, which could be turned into shoe soles and machinery belts.

Comment: This theory may explain what drove the demand for buffalo hides. But demand is only half of the supply-and-demand equation. The theory doesn't address who supplied the hides to meet the demand--i.e., who did the actual killing.

ABOUT ME



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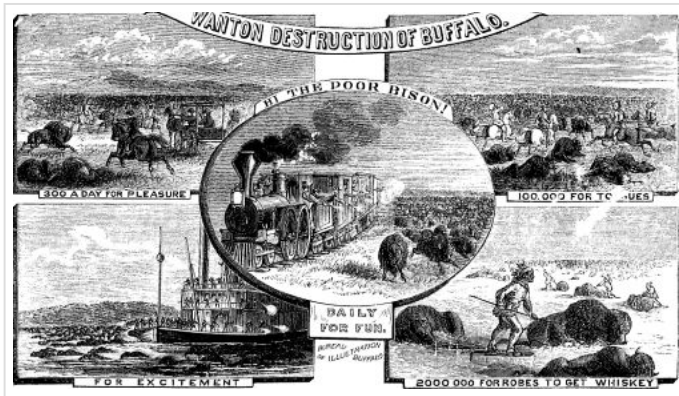
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POSTED BY ROB AT 3:49 PM

3 COMMENTS:

[russell](#) said...

Writerfella here --

And the report does not address one important matter: the bison DID NOT almost go extinct, for one particular reason. Forest bison, a subspecies of the plains bison, continued to exist in the wilds of Canada long after the plains species had been reduced to near-nonexistence. They foraged and multiplied and roamed in the hundreds of thousands on mountain slopes in Canada, UNSEEN AND UNDISCOVERED until after WWII when Canadians began to try to settle their wildernesses. Highway builders found themselves up to their armpits in forest bison and so reported same. Today, these forest bison still are there, happily gracing mountain glens with their presence and EuroMan literally can do nothing about them. Plains bison at one time were reduced to less than 1000. But bison outwitted such devastation by simply staying where EuroMan could not go. What does that mean about Native tribes, who might have done the same thing? Hmmm...

All Best

Russ Bates

'writerfella'

12:59 AM

[Rob](#) said...

The first two paragraphs of the article refer to "the plains bison in the United States" and "the U.S. bison herd." I think the researcher and the writer reported the facts accurately, even if they didn't mention

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the forest bison.

8:20 AM

[russell](#) said...

Writerfella here --

Only if SELECTED facts were regarded as the only facts could that sort of 'accurately' be so ascribed. Unlike the Canadian lynx and the American bobcat, the Plains bison and the forest bison ARE NOT GENETICALLY SEPARATE but in fact are varieties of the same species. Interesting, as well, is the fact that the argument about 'the real culprit' was made by a CANADIAN researcher rather than an American researcher. Nationalities may matter to human individuals but they matter little at all to animal species. Begging the question is the coward's refuge for hedging his arguments...

All Best

Russ Bates

'writerfella'

8:45 PM

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