I REMEMBER
THE GRAFFITI
OF UTAH
Some of the oldest graffiti in the state was scratched into a huge rock at Newspaper Rock State Historical Monument. The prehistoric Utahns who criss-crossed this area at the edge of Canyonlands National Park produced a multitude of petroglyph writings plainly visible today. They used the rock as a bulletin board or newspaper to record happenings such as hunting, encounters with other peoples, and the presence of game in the area.

I was impressed with the quality and quantity of these petroglyphs when I was returning from an adventurous foray into the Needles area of Canyonlands National Park. Under State Monument status, these writings are being preserved so that future visitors can enjoy this unique type of primitive art.
Higher Ed also had its graffiti proponents. . .

The Utah universities and colleges produced graffiti on a grand scale. On the mountain slopes behind their campuses, the "U" and the "Y" many years ago cleared large areas on which they painted huge whitewashed block letters representing their schools. These school emblems are high on the mountain and can be seen from most parts of the valley. They have been unmistakable landmarks for many decades. This purely western practice has also been adopted by high schools at numerous locations throughout the state.

Brigham Young University,
Provo
When I was a student at the "U," we held annual student treks up the mountain to paint our great letter to keep alive a valued tradition of painting it and keeping it bright and bold. It gave me a sense of pride whenever the "U" received a new coat of whitewash; conversely, I considered it a sacrilege at those times when the freshmen, secretly and under cover of darkness, gave the "U" a dousing of green paint.

University of Utah,
Salt Lake City
Kilroy was here.......

The graffiti on the rock outcroppings at Wendover were produced by servicemen stationed at Wendover Air Base during World War II. They left their mark, so to speak, to remind us of the intense military activity that flourished here for several years, then ceased abruptly. Except for these graffiti, there are almost no indications that an airbase with 13,000 personnel, planes, hangars, equipment, buildings and runways really existed here.

I recall driving through Wendover a few times during this period and seeing the highway lined with servicemen thumbing their way to Salt Lake City.
Your name in mud

Some years ago when Interstate 80 was built across the area near the Salt Flats, many thousands of tons of stones were placed under the roadbed for stability over the soft muddy terrain.

About 30 miles east of Wendover, as the crow flies or as Interstate 80 takes you, there are myriads of names reposing on the surface of the mud on either side of the road. They were placed there by graffiti-writers who borrowed stones from the face of the road embankment and arranged them to spell out their names for all motorists to see.

This autograph gallery helps to break the monotony of the drive along this section of the highway and sets one to wondering how many people were involved in its creation.