



JEDEDIAH SMITH, THE MAN WHO OPENED THE FAR WEST

BY MILTON VONDAMM

Jedediah Smith has earned his place in history because he elevated the early understanding of the Far West, the land beyond the Continental Divide. His travels were geographically more extensive than either the Lewis and Clark or the American Fur Company's far West expedition¹. This article lists his accomplishments, summarizes and illustrates his travel routes, and complements these glimpses with descriptions of selected incidents. It concludes with descriptions and pictures of the typical guns that would have been carried during the 1820's.

Jedediah Smith was an American fur trader who traveled and mapped the far West beyond the Continental Divide in the 1820's. He was murdered by a band of Commanche Indians in 1831, at the age of 32, before his detailed journals and map(s) could be published. Thus he faded from public view within a year of his death. It was not until 1918 that historians began to tell his story.

The Setting



Jedediah Smith's travels

This article will be easier to follow with a brief look at the enormous geographic areas Captain Smith covered during his eight years in the West. The first year and a half involves his experiences on the Missouri River. Two incidents stand out as examples of the courage, energy and leadership potential of this twenty four year old young man.

He was on the beach and one of the last men to withdraw from the deadliest encounter between trappers and Indians in the history of the western fur trade, the Arikara Massacre. He also volunteered to travel by land, over one thousand miles upstream to

deliver a directive from his employer William Ashley to Ashley's partner Andrew Henry for help to deal with the consequences of the Massacre.

The second area involves Smith's route to Crow wintering grounds in 1823-24. Now leading a fifteen man, trapping brigade, "Captain" Smith travels West from Fort Kiowa on the Missouri River to the eastern slope of the Wind River Mountains. During the trip he saves two men's lives and is attacked by a grizzly bear.

Third, he leads his men through South Pass, travels North, and becomes the first American to directly encounter a Hudson's Bay Company Brigade, serving notice that the Americans were coming, a chilling threat to pending negotiations between Britain and the United States over the Oregon Territory national boundary.

Fourth, Jedediah circles the entire area West of the Continental Divide over a three year period involving contacts with native tribes that had never seen a white man, or even horses, covering deserts, mountains and forests that had never felt a white man's footprint. Among his firsts include the first American to reach California by land, the first known person to cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the first person to cross the Great Divide from West to East, and the first non native person to pass between Oregon and California. Notable incidents will include the second and third most serious losses of trapper lives by Indians during the western fur trade period.

Jedediah Strong Smith was a unique Mountain Man

Jedediah's family roots are traceable back to about 1630 in North America. He was born in January of 1799 in Bainbridge, New York. At the age of eleven his family relocated to Erie County, Pennsylvania, where a neighbor and local doctor named Titus Simmons recognized Jed's potential and tutored him in reading, writing and mathematics. The Smith and Simmons families moved to Perrysville, Ohio in the fall of 1816. This is where Jedediah spent his formative teen years, honing his outdoor and hunting skills in the rugged countryside and spending time with Delaware Indians. He also became interested in the Lewis and Clark expedition, possibly inspired by the 1807 journal of a member of the expedition, Patrick Gass, who was a

neighbor in the area. Jedediah's ambitions soon surpassed the modest business and farming activities practiced by his father and brothers.

Smith was raised in a conservative Christian family and was reserved by nature. There is information from peers that provides some reliable insights about who he was as a person, although his actions speak louder than personal comments. William Ashley referred to him as very intelligent; Robert Campbell said he was efficient; Joe Meek testified at a hearing that Smith was truthful and a gentleman. During his extensive travels, usually as the leader of a group of trappers, his actions portray a strong sense of purpose, unusual endurance, perseverance, and concern for his men. Letters home following the loss of nearly all his men in 1828 and 1829 reflected a sense of failure, modesty and a depth of religious need to be forgiven, as well as concern for the welfare of his parents and siblings.

Jedediah Strong Smith was hired by General William Ashley to join his 1822 expedition as a hunter at age twenty three. His whereabouts and activities from the time he left home to the time he joined Ashley's fur trade expedition from St. Louis to the Rocky Mountains indicates he spent time along the Mississippi River between Rock River and New Orleans.

Accounts of his accomplishments and travels are primarily based on two manuscripts of his lost journals that were prepared by Samuel Parkman, a literate friend who witnessed the signing of his will and accompanied Smith on his fatal commercial trip to Santa Fe. The first manuscript was discovered in 1934 and edited and published by Maurice Sullivan, and covers Smith's second trip to California and beyond from July 13, 1827 to July 3, 1828. The journal temporarily fell into Indian hands during the massacre of Smith's men at the Umpqua River in Oregon and only portions of it seem to have been recovered. A daybook kept by his clerk, Harrison Rogers, is another source.

The second manuscript was made available to historian George Brooks in 1967 after having been found in an attic. It covers Smith's first trip to California from August of 1826 to July first 1827.



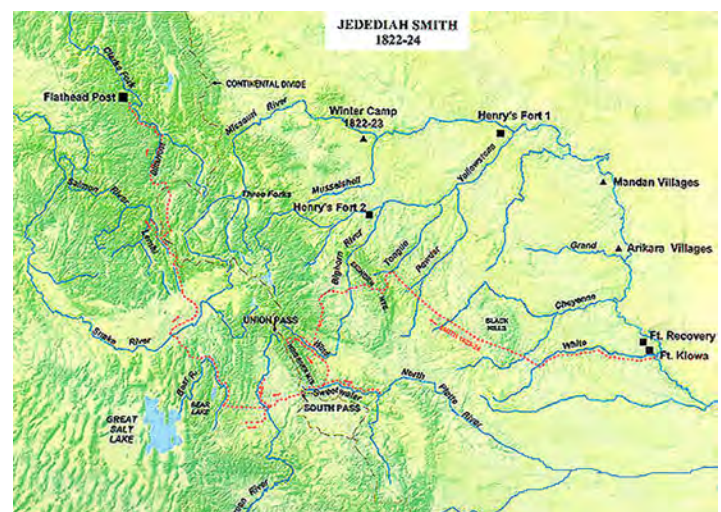
Jedediah Strong Smith

The travels of Jedediah Smith and his men 1822-24

Smith was hired by General William Ashley as a hunter to accompany men under the command of Ashley's experienced partner, Major Andrew Henry. The two men served in the militia during the War of 1812 and their ranks were informally continued after the war. Jedediah ascended the Missouri River to the mouth of the Yellowstone River and hunted and trapped under the command of Andrew Henry. It is not known what rifle he had, but he did purchase a US military pistol from Ashley's stores. Henry had several horses stolen by the Shoshone Indians and he sent Smith down the Missouri to locate General Ashley to trade for replacements. Thus, Smith was with Ashley and his 1823 expedition when one of the fur trade's most famous massacres occurred. This was the Arikara Indian attack on Ashley's men that were guarding horses that had just been acquired by trade. About fifteen of Ashley's men were killed in the surprise attack that lasted only a few minutes and eleven more were wounded, two critically. Smith escaped injury.

Ashley retreated about 50 miles downstream to reorganize. Many of his new men quit and returned to St. Louis. Ashley's remaining men participated in the subsequent retaliation along with the Army and Sioux Indians.

The "Arikara Massacre" incident led Ashley to introduce an overland system of annually supplying trapping parties that remained in the mountains full time and returning with the year's furs. This led to the famous Rendezvous System. The new policy began with Ashley deploying his remaining men from Fort Kiowa, located on the Missouri, into two groups. The main party, led by Major Henry, returned to the Northwest to their fort at the mouth of the Yellowstone River.



Jedediah Smith 1822-24

Just eighteen months after being hired, and not yet twenty four years old, Jedediah was placed in command of the second group, a small party of eleven to fifteen trappers who were directed to the Southwestern Wind River area of the Rocky Mountains to

winter with the friendly Crow Indians and establish a trading and trapping presence. This turned out to be an all star group that included such future famous mountain men as Tom Fitzpatrick , William Sublette and James Clyman.

Along the way the, now Captain Smith saved the lives of two of his Brigade who had fallen behind the group who were desperately searching for water. They were badly dehydrated. Once water was found, he returned to them and brought them back to good condition.

A few days later, Smith was mauled by a Grizzly bear. The group had been traveling on foot, leading their horses along a narrow defile when Smith emerged from some brush and came face to face with an enraged bear. It grabbed Smith by the head and threw him down before the bear could be killed. Jed suffered broken ribs and had his scalp torn off from his left ear to his right eye. As the stunned men stood around him he called for someone to get water to wash his wound and Clyman to get his needle and thread and sew him up. Jim Clyman did his best but couldn't save his left ear. Smith then mounted his horse and led the men to a camp, where he recuperated for several days until he could travel further.

Smith's party had a fall hunt in the Powder River area and then reached and wintered with the Crows along the Wind River, and in March of 1824 the group left the Crows and attempted to cross the Rockies at Union Pass,² but the snow was too deep. The Crows described an easier route at the South end of the Wind River Mountains. There, at 7550 feet above sea level, lay a flat plain, about 20 miles wide, that became known as South Pass. Smith led his party through the pass, crossing the Continental Divide, into prime beaver country in the Green River Valley. ³ Smith split his dozen men into two groups, the second being led by



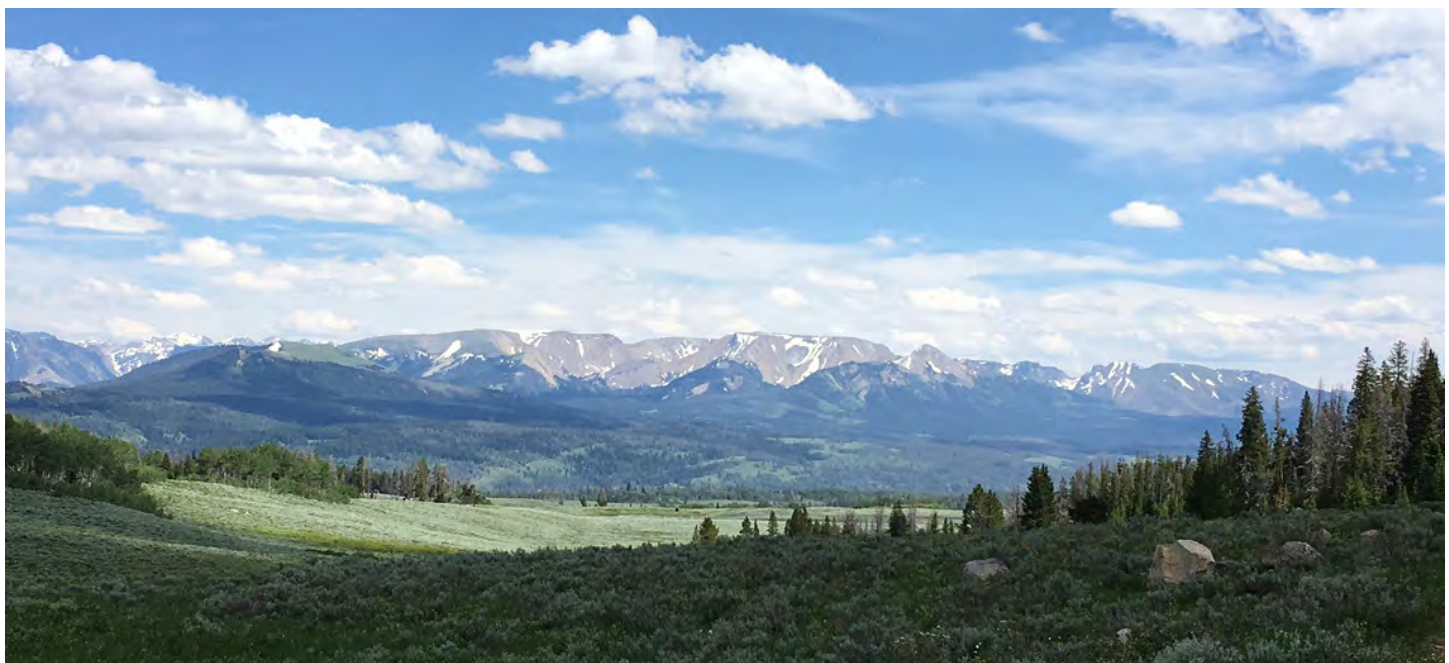
South Pass

Thomas Fitzpatrick. Both parties were very successful and, as prearranged, were reunited in June, 1824. Fitzpatrick and two men transported the furs part way to Fort Atkinson, but had to cache them when their bullboat was destroyed. Following their June meeting, Smith, and his remaining eight men, crossed over to the Snake River and rescued a group of Iroquois trappers, receiving their furs for safe passage to their Hudson's Bay Company's Flathead Trading Post. Smith and his men spent the winter at the post and met Peter Skene Ogden, the best brigade leader from Fort Vancouver.

1825-26

The Americans and Canadians maintained a civil but awkward relationship and both groups trapped their way south during the spring of 1825. Ogden's clerk characterized Jedediah as a sly, cunning Yankee.

Thomas Fitzpatrick wrote Ashley a progress report that informed him about the beaver rich Green



Union Pass at the Wind River Mts



1825 The First Rendezvous

River, and in November of 1824 a supply train was dispatched to what became the first Rendezvous at Burnt Fork on the Sweetwater River in July, 1825.⁴ Jedediah and his men arrived at the Rendezvous with the results of his small brigades 1825 trapping season. Major Andrew Henry, General Ashley's second in command, had resigned and left the mountains and Jedediah accepted a partnership interest for the 1826 Rendezvous. He accompanied Ashley and the annual fur harvest to St. Louis via the Big Horn, Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers arriving in October of 1825. Jedediah began the return trip west in less than one month but problems of bad weather, desertions and supply issues brought Ashley to rescue the stalled pack train. In June of 1826 the supply train reached the 1826 Rendezvous site in Cache Valley, the Bear River area North East of the Great Salt Lake. Ashley had followed the North fork of the Platte River, which was to become part of the Oregon trail.

General Ashley, had married while in St. Louis and sometime during the 1826 Rendezvous he decided



1826 Rendezvous

to leave the traveling to others and function as a middleman, purchasing furs and furnishing supplies. He sold his fur trade company to Jedediah Smith, David Jackson and William Sublette, who became precursors to the famous Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

The logistical annual Rendezvous format of supplying trappers living full time in the West in exchange for their furs was now defined and tested. Many areas both West and East of the Continental Divide had been explored, beaver were still abundant, and prices were still high. The stars had lined up for this new partnership and they became wealthy during the next four years. General Ashley stayed at home and enjoyed his new wife and growing public responsibilities. Ashley was eventually elected to congress.

Captain Smith sheds light on the far West, 1826-29

The three partners divided their efforts into three parts. David Jackson was to lead the trapping efforts in the Rocky Mountains and related tributaries, William Sublette, in addition to trapping, was responsible for bringing in supplies to an annual Rendezvous and transporting the annual fur harvest to St. Louis, and Smith was to seek new areas to trap. Jedediah undoubtedly warmly embraced his challenge because of his interest in exploring and recording his observations. There has also been some speculation that he wanted to explore California for the US Government, based on his friendship with George Rodgers Clark, provide an American presence in the Oregon Territory, and possibly discover a location suitable for a fur trading seaport North of Mexican Territory.

Jedediah left the 1826 Rendezvous area on August 7 and headed southwest with 18 men and twenty eight horses, three of which were loaded with dried buffalo meat. He traveled from river to river in this stark desert country and eventually had trouble finding food and water. The Indians were friendly and willingly traded some provisions, mainly corn, pumpkins and melons for trade goods such as knives, tools, beads and rings. The Mohave Indians were particularly helpful and the brigade recuperated at their village for several days, picking up two guides to lead them to California. Hunting yielded an occasional Antelope or Mountain sheep.

The party reached a California farmhouse on November 27 and the men were invited to gorge themselves with the rancher's beef. A few days later Father Jose Bernardo Sanchez graciously received them as guests at Mission San Gabriel in the Los Angeles basin near what is now the city of Pasadena. He celebrated Jedediah's deep religious beliefs even though Jed was protestant, not Catholic.

The always-proper Jedediah reported his presence to the nearly nonexistent Mexican authorities, much to the horror of the Commandant. The Mexicans apparently believed that the great desert to the East would prevent Americans from reaching California. Author-

ities also could not understand why someone would want to come to California to trap beaver and Smith was suspected, perhaps correctly, of being a spy for the US Government. The indecisive Commandant did not want to risk issuing a passport for Smith and his men if his superiors might not approve. However, after about a month he finally allowed the brigade to immediately leave California, but to follow the same horrendous desert trail that brought them there.

Smith started to return on his original trail, but Mexican maps were vague about their eastern boundary. So Jed eventually turned north and explored the tributaries flowing west from the Sierra Nevada mountain range into the San Joaquin River basin. This southern half of California's spectacularly fertile area was called Tulare and was about 275 mile long between what is now the city of Bakersfield and Sacramento. In Smith's time much of this area was a marsh, fed by the melting snow flowing down several rivers. The land was rich but not yet farmable, but there was an abundance of elk, deer antelope, otter, beaver, grizzly bear, and wildfowl. Native peoples lived there but the Mexicans remained closer to the coast and referred to the perpetual ribbon of white along the Sierra Nevada mountain range as the "chalk" mountains.

The Smith Brigade worked their way deliberately along the foothills, trapping and exploring. By April 1827, Smith realized that he had to attend the July Rendezvous site in Cache Valley and he had no idea how to get there, or how long it would take.

He lost time in a failed attempt to penetrate the Sierra Nevada Mountains with all his men and their baggage and furs because the snow in early May was impenetrable in the northwestern route he tried. His party returned to a more southern camp near Oakdale, along the Stanislaus River. No white man had ever crossed the Sierra Nevada's. Smith established a base camp for his men and told them he would return with supplies by mid September. He took two men, six horses and two mules and crossed the mountains in eight days, discovering a passable route through



1827 Rendezvous

the mountains to Walker Lake in Nevada where they camped about June 1. They then traveled the next month, again, the first to do so, across sweltering and desolate Nevada and Utah deserts, nearly perishing in the process. For a second time he saved the life of one of his men by burying him, except for his head, then finding water and returning three miles to revive his companion.

The three men arrived at the Rendezvous on July 4th more dead than alive. The knowledge he subsequently shared about an overland route to California, the Sierra Nevada Mountains and crossing the Great Divide was invaluable to, not only the American trapping community, but to future western immigration.

Smith began his second trip to California only nine days later, on July 13, 1827, with 18 men, to bring supplies for his men that were left behind and to continue their trip north. The second trip's journey nearly circled the entire far West from the Great Salt Lake to southern California, then North to the Columbia River, East to Montana's Flathead Lake, then South to the August, 1829 meeting of the three partners near the Grand Tetons at Pierre's Hole on Henry's fork of the Snake River.

The long absence of over two years yielded invaluable



Reunion at Pierre's Hole

information about the geography West of the Continental Divide. However, the cost in human life was great as only two returned from a total of 32 men who were under Smith's command at the beginning of his two trips to California. Indians had killed a total of 26 men in two separate incidents during his second trip, and the other four were dismissed, elected to settle in California or Oregon or just vanished. Smith and Arthur Black were the only returning survivors to meet David Jackson's party near Flathead Lake in Montana in March of 1829.

THE TWO ATTACKS

The first attack was on the Colorado River and was initiated by the previously friendly Mohave Indians. Smith's party had followed a route from the Salt Lake region that was similar to his first trip, also arriving

in need of recuperation. After having camped with their village for two days, Smith was in process of rafting trade goods, other supplies and equipment, and swimming the horses to the West side of the river when the Indians attacked and killed ten shirtless and unarmed men of Smith's party and captured two Indian women who were waiting on the beach to be ferried to join their companions. Only later was it learned that Ewing Young led trappers from Taos a short time after Smith's first visit, had killed some Mohave Indians and hung them from trees and the tribe was seeking revenge.⁵

Smith's party was now reduced to eight men, one wounded, and five guns. Their equipment, trade goods and supplies were lying on a sandbar near the West bank of the river. In his journal Smith estimates that from 500 to 800 Indians were now crossing the river to surround and attack his remaining group. Their horses were gone so they threw anything that would sink into the river and spread out the trade goods they couldn't take to gain time while the Indians distributed their bounty.

At the water's bank there was a thick stand of young cottonwood trees. He directed his men to make lances with small straight branches and their butcher knives. He told his men to shoot no more than three guns at a time and to not fire until they were sure to hit their target. A small group of Indians advanced ahead of the main body, about a hundred yards away, and the two most accurate riflemen fired and, as Smith later reported, two of the tribe "ate the dust." Astonishingly, the entire tribe turned and ran and did not pursue the men.

The men, now on foot and with only limited provisions, made their way across the Mohave Desert to the San Bernardino Mountains in nine days, relying on Smith's first trip experience to find water. After recuperating at the same cattle ranch, Smith and five of his men travelled North along the Eastern edge of the San Joaquin valley to the Stanislaus River where he was reunited with his original party.

Smith received a skeptical reception by Mexican authorities when they were informed of his presence,



The Mojave Desert

and it took over two months of negotiations to get permission to leave. The help of American merchant ship Captains, led by Captain John Cooper, who posted a bond, was critical. He exchanged furs for supplies and purchased approximately three hundred horses and mules, in addition to the fifty for his own party, intending to drive them to the 1828 Rendezvous and receive five times his purchase price. He was also determined to complete his circular trip by traveling north to the Columbia River. He had no information about the distance, terrain, or any established route since no one had ever done it and native inhabitants had limited knowledge beyond their own domains.

Near the end of December 1827, the party was finally assembled, but struggled nearly four months trapping the rain soaked San Joaquin and Sacramento River tributaries. On April 7 Smith's party was nearing the northern end of the Sacramento Valley and Jedediah and two men had a second close call with a bear. Their clerk had already been recently mauled and was recovering. The three men had killed a bear and were approaching it and had not bothered to reload their guns when a second bear that was lying next to the first rose and charged. Smith and the man behind him jumped sideways into a creek and the third man, armed with only a military musket, but with it's bayonet attached, thrust the bayonet into the animal's neck and it staggered off the trail and died.

By April 11, 1828 Smith was far enough up the Sacramento Valley that he now realized that he faced mountain ranges wherever he continued. There was a major Indian trail along the Sacramento River that he may not have discovered. Similarly, if he had turned northeast he would have had a way through the Sierra Nevada Mountains over rolling hills with good water and frequent meadows in the direction of the Pit River. Instead, he decided to go west to the coast, the worst possible choice with a herd of over 300 horses and mules. He wanted to go to the Columbia River and perhaps he was looking for a harbor for transporting supplies and furs if the partners wanted to establish a trading base in the Oregon Territory. He climbed to an outlook and observed a depression in the coastal range to the Northwest that he may have felt would lead to the Ocean and possibly the best route north to the Columbia. He was wrong. He was about to embark on a 225-mile odyssey through an inhospitable unknown wilderness.

Smith and his men, furs, supplies and animals headed west- northwest for sixty-seven miles over rolling hills until the terrain became steeper with increasingly dense brush. He then turned north and discovered Hayfork Creek that led to the South fork of the Trinity River that flowed north to meet the main Trinity River and eventually the Klamath. This was a one hundred thirty-nine mile virgin wilderness route from hell that took six weeks to navigate. Progress was sometimes limited to one or two miles a day through dense pine,

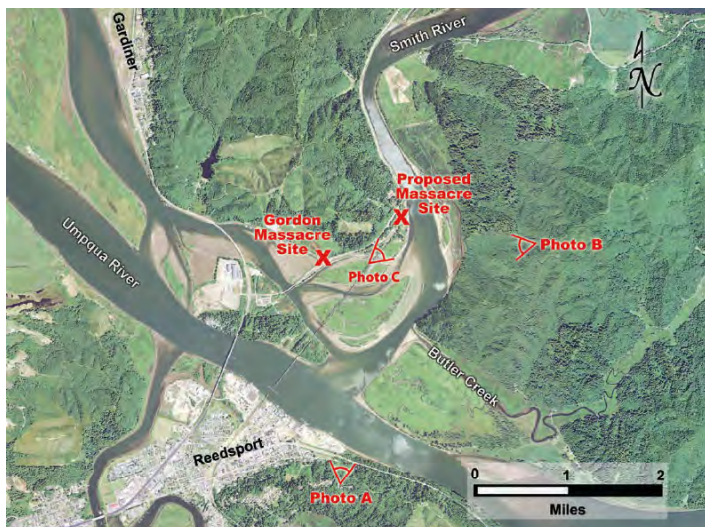
oak and brush over rocky terrain and along narrow hogback ridges. No white man had ever traveled along these narrow Indian foot trails.

The highest elevation was only about 1,500 feet above sea level, but hunting was generally poor, and meadows with sufficient grass infrequent. The men suffered extreme fatigue, it was very cold, and the animals were undernourished, weak and suffered from battered hoofs. Local tribes of natives occupied portions of the area and this was their first contact with white men and horses/mules. Although generally friendly and willing to trade for food, they were frequently shooting at horses with their bows and arrows, thinking the animals were for food, not transportation. The party emerged from the dense rugged mountains on Jun 8, 1828, and eventually reached the ocean.

However, reaching the coast did not provide an endless path along the beach. His party had to zig zag between the shore and inland places that had grass and animals to hunt. After traveling about five more weeks, they arrived on at the mouth of the Smith River, which empties into the larger Umpqua River, about eleven miles from the ocean.

This is the site of the second massacre that reduced Smith's party from eighteen to four and the loss of all of the animals, furs, supplies and equipment at the hands of the Kelawatatset Indians.

This tragedy, so close to the end of their trip to the



Umpqua Massacre

Columbia River, involved a lapse in judgement by his clerk, Harrison Rogers, who had been directed to keep Indians out of the camp. Jedediah Smith and two of his men left early with an Indian guide who had a canoe, to go upriver to plan the next day's route. The men in camp were vulnerable because they were extremely fatigued and Rogers did not follow orders to exclude natives who had been acting strangely. The day before a chief had been embarrassed in front of his men for being forced to reveal the hiding place of an axe he had stolen and was seeking revenge, but a higher chief had forbid any retaliation. A large

number of Indians wandered into camp and the higher Chief mounted Arthur Black's favorite horse while Black was holding a rifle that he had been cleaning. Black ordered the Chief to get off the horse and at this second insult this Chief signaled approval to attack the trappers. Eleven of the twelve men in camp were killed within moments. One man escaped and reported what had happened. It was Arthur Black.

Black found his way to The Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vancouver and was joined by Smith, Turner and Leland the next day. The Chief Factor, John McLaughlin, cordially received them and Smith remained at the Fort through the fall and Winter. An HBC party was sent south with Smith to peacefully recover as much of the stolen property as they could, but aside from an undetermined number beaver pelts,⁷ thirty eight horses, three guns, plus the valuable journals of the trip, not much else was returned.⁷ In the spring of 1829 Jedediah and Arthur Black traveled to Flathead Lake in Montana where Smith met his partner David Jackson. They had a successful trapping season and met William Sublette near the Grand Tetons on August 5th, 1829, that was mainly for men associated with the Smith, Jackson, Sublette Partnership but included some free trappers, about 175 men in all.⁸

HOME BECKONS

Smith, finished with dangerous and weary exploring, feeling homesick, and needing to focus on improving his financial position, led a dangerous but successful trapping expedition into Blackfoot territory. Later joining David Jackson, who also had a successful hunt in the Snake River area, to the June, 1830 Rendezvous on the Wind River, close to South Pass. In the meantime, William Sublette had transported the partners previous years furs to St. Louis, arriving in February, disposing of the furs, outfitting, then leading the return journey's pack train back to the mountains. This return trip was another historic first because this 1830 Rendezvous supply train used wagons to convey the merchandise and supplies to the Rendezvous, not pack animals. Interestingly, the men also brought along a milk cow that walked the nearly 2,400 mile round trip.

After Sublette arrived with the supply train, Smith



1830 Rendezvous

and his partners sold out to a newly formed Rocky Mountain Fur Company headed by Tom Fitzpatrick, Jim Bridger and others. As it turned out, the decision to sell was fortuitous because the future did not meet expectations as more rivals were arriving, beaver were getting scarce, and prices were beginning to soften. When the Rendezvous had ended, the three former partners transported their furs to St. Louis, arriving in October. They had already paid off their debts and now sold their furs for a small fortune.

Smith shared his financial success with his family, buying two farms near Harm, Ohio, and a home on Federal Street in St. Louis, and offered to give money to his brothers, especially if they wanted to further their education. He also bought a rifle and two pistols from Phillip Creamer. He became drawn to the profitable merchandise trade with Santa Fe and purchased and outfitted ten freight wagons and led his wagon train with two brothers along the now established Santa Fe Trail in 1831. They were accompanied by a second ten wagon train led by his two former partners pursuing a similar venture. Tom Fitzpatrick joined them and explained the need to purchase a portion of their merchandise to supply his Rocky Mountain Fur Company at the next Rendezvous. Jackson and Sublette agreed to supply two thirds of Tom's needs and Jedediah the other third.⁹

The trail was considered to be relatively safe from



One of Jedediah Creamer Pistols

Indian conflicts, especially with over 80 men driving the two trains. However, Smith had run out of luck. This was a drought year and watering holes were scarce. It was decided to take a shortcut from their location at the Arkansas River to the Cimarron River and Jedediah and Tom Fitzpatrick decided to ride ahead to search for water. Only Tom returned. The men split up and Fitzpatrick never saw Smith again. They searched for Jed but did not find him. Austin Smith announced Jedediah's death in a September 24 letter home, nearly four months later. He said that Comanche Indians had killed Jed. Many variations concerning what happened have been told without verification. William Sublette mentioned in a letter that Comanche's had killed Smith, and Josiah Gregg, who was a month behind Smith on the same trail, reported that a Mexican buffalo hunter who visited him en route told him that an important trader had been killed by Comanche.¹⁰ Jed's brothers acquired his Creamer rifle and pistols, allegedly from Mexican traders in Santa Fe. They were the source of information about who killed him.

Before leaving on this fateful trip, Smith made a will

and named his former boss, General William Ashley, as executor of his estate. Ira Smith successfully sued General Ashley to become the executor to distribute the assets. While in St. Louis, Jedediah had made arrangements for his journals and map(s) to be published, but for unknown reasons, perhaps associated with the change in Executors, the publication of his journals and map(s) never happened, despite an 1840 announcement-seeking subscribers in the Missouri Gazeteer. If it was not for transcripts made by Samuel Parkman, Jed's friend and clerk on the Santa Fe trip, there wouldn't be any original source information about his travels, because the original journals that covered his explorations have never been found and are believed to have been destroyed in one or more fires.

CONCLUSION

Jedediah Smith significantly expanded the understanding of the size and topography of the far west, including the Great Basin. His travels and contact with the Mexican authorities and the Hudson's Bay Company served notice and concern that the Americans were about to expand their migration all the way to the Pacific Ocean. His courage, strong character, determination and respectful demeanor earned him respect as a unique Mountain Man. However, in trying to serve both the business interests of his partnership, his compassion to explore, and perhaps to serve his country, he may have overextended himself. As their leader he was responsible for the death of nearly all of his men and that weighed heavily on him. Leaving ten of his men, unarmed, on a riverbank surrounded by hundreds of Indians, purchasing three hundred horses and mules driving them into mountains no white man had ever travelled without any knowledge about the geography and conditions, and camping next to an Indian tribe whose demeanor was bothering him were, in hindsight, unfortunate decisions. Not bringing any furs or other assets to bolster the finances of the partnership until their final year as partners placed a financial strain on David Jackson and William Sublette. History has honored Jed appropriately as a great pathfinder, but this was accomplished at a great price.

GUNS OF THE FAR WEST FUR TRADE

As a practical matter there was no uniformity to the guns used by trappers when they first began to travel to the Rocky Mountains. Trappers who were also the best hunters soon learned to favor a large caliber rifle to deliver the shocking power to bring down large game such as buffalo, grizzly bear and elk. Trappers and camp workers who brought their personal weapons brought whatever they owned, fowlers, military muskets smaller bore rifles, Indian Northwest fusils. They were all flintlock and it soon became clear that they had to have reliable locks, strong stocks and, at least for the hunters, large bores.

Interestingly, the preferred long arm of the early western Hudson's Bay Fur Brigades at Fort Vancouver was the Brown Bess musket. The introduction of the American rifles was received with mixed receptions.

By the 1830's, the specification for a fur trade long arm, issued by the American Fur Trade Company, was a rifle weighing nine and one half to ten and one half pounds with a forty two to forty four inch barrel of from forty eight to fifty caliber, a checkered grip, a stock of maple or sugar tree and a thumb piece insert.

Not much information is available about the guns ordered by General Ashley for his men. We do know that they were allowed to carry their own personal arms and that Ashley stocked rifles that could be purchased on a credit on wages or furs. He refers to getting guns east of the Appalachian Mountains and he sent letters during buying trips from Lancaster, PA. In the 1820's it is likely that rifles came from Lancaster makers and probably Henry Derringer in Philadel-

phia. Pictured are rifles by Dickert-Gill, three by Henry Derringer, Peter Gonter, Christopher Gumph, Henry Gibbs, an unmarked Henry and a rifle with a Tryon barrel and Henry lock. The rifles and Indian trade fuzils Ashley purchased were most likely supplied by the American Fur Company via the St. Louis firm of Pierre Chateau & Co.

Phillip Creamer was a local, St Louis and Illinois, blacksmith who made guns of the highest quality. General Ashley owned a Creamer and so eventually did Robert Campbell who served his early fur trade years under the General.

Assumptions have been made that Hawken rifles were involved with the Rocky Mountain fur trade. Although they had shops in St. Louis during the 1820's, they did not make commercial rifles during the flint-lock period. Ashley did have business relations with them, but probably to make metal items such as traps, horseshoes, tools and perhaps gun repair work.

FUR TRADE TYPE RIFLES

DICKERT-GILL: This classic fur trade type rifle was made in Lancaster, PA, has a shortened barrel forty inches long, weighs eight and one half pounds, and is fifty caliber.



Dickert-Gill rifle

GEORGE TRYON: Tryon was a Philadelphia gunsmith who purchased his business in 1811 and had a close working relationship with J.J. Henry, making rifles for the Indian and fur trade markets, This is a smaller caliber rifle, thirty eight caliber, with a forty five inch barrel weighing ten and one half pounds. It has a Tryon barrel and a Henry lock.



Tryon/Henry rifle

HENRY GIBBS: Gibbs made "Lancaster" model rifles for the fur trade, starting in 1830. This rifle has a forty inch Barrel, is fifty four caliber, and weighs nine and one half pounds.



Henry Gibbs rifle

HENRY DERINGER: Although Deringer made rifles for Indians under U.S. Contracts, From 1808 to 1837, this rifle fits the profile of someone ordering big bore rifles for the west. It has a forty four and one half inch barrel, is fifty six caliber, and weighs eleven pounds and has an early Deringer patchbox style.



Henry Deringer Fur Trade rifle

HENRY DERINGER: This a very rare and early Deringer rifle, circa 1813. The barrel has a 44 inch octagonal barrel of .49 caliber and weighs eight and one half pounds.



Henry Deringer Indian trade rifle

HENRY DERINGER: This unique relic has a " K " inspector's mark on it's twenty eight inch barrel of .54 caliber. It has a serpent side plate and deep trigger guard. A perfect trapper gun to strap on while setting traps.



Deringer Indian or trapper gun

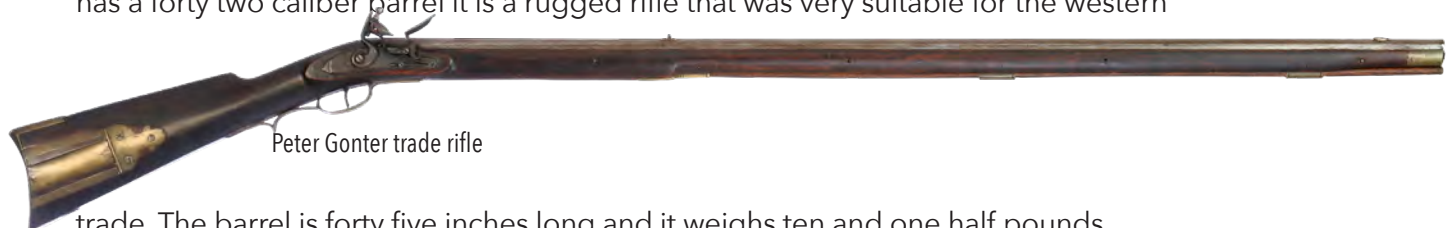
CHRISTOPHER GUMPF: A circa 1800 - 1820 rifle by Lancaster gunsmith Christopher Gumpf. It has a forty one and one half inch barrel of forty eight caliber and weighs



Christopher Gumpf trade rifle

nine and one half pounds.

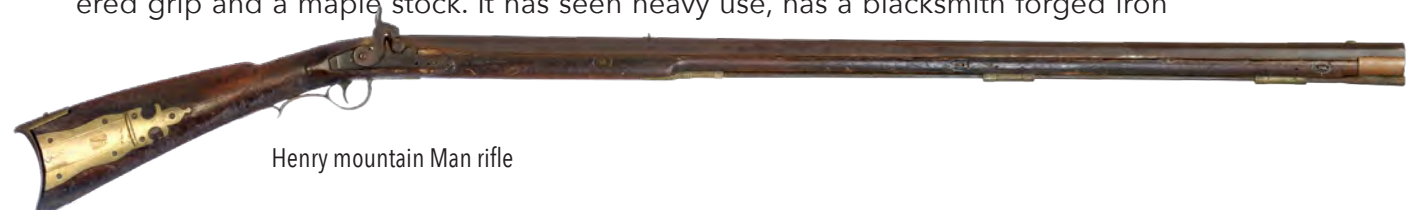
PETER GONTER: He was another Lancaster gunsmith and was part of the Dickert De-Huff consortium that included C. Gumpf and Jacob Dickert. Although this rifle only has a forty two caliber barrel it is a rugged rifle that was very suitable for the western



Peter Gonter trade rifle

trade. The barrel is forty five inches long and it weighs ten and one half pounds.

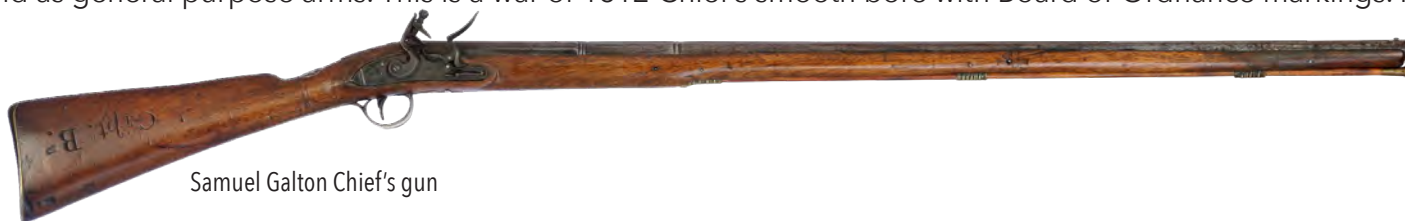
UNMARKED HENRY: This is a classic mountain man rifle that meets the mountain standards; .50 caliber, a forty two inch barrel, it weighs ten pounds, has a checkered grip and a maple stock. It has seen heavy use, has a blacksmith forged iron



Henry mountain Man rifle

ram rod, and was converted from flintlock to percussion during its working life.

SAMUAL GALTON: Trapping Brigades carried a few fowlers, Indian trade fusils or Chief's guns for hunting and as general purpose arms. This is a war of 1812 Chief's smooth bore with Board of Ordnance markings. It



Samuel Galton Chief's gun

is .60 caliber with a thirty six and one half inch barrel and weighs five and one half pounds. CAPT B is carved on the stock.



Henry military musket

HENRY MILITARY MUSKET: Jedediah Smith's Brigade carried at least one military musket and this is a war of 1812 arm made in Philadelphia under an 1808 contract. (Fig 24)

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Endnotes

1 The Astorian's (John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Co.) 1810-14

2 John Jacob Astor's Astorians route in 1811.

3 South Pass became the key to wagon travel through the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and Robert Stuart crossed it returning East in 1811.

4 This first Rendezvous primarily included about 120 of Ashley's men. It lasted one day and included 23 Hudson's Bay Company free trappers with 500 beaver.

5 *The Taos Trappers*; David J. Weber 125

- 6 Letter from Governor Simpson to Jedediah Smith on December 26, 1828 says 700 beaver pelts were recovered, but McLoed's journal counts about 500.
- 7 In return for his cordial treatment, Smith advised the HBC where to trap in California, including a map of what had been learned about terrain.
- 8 Dale Morgan's *Jedediah Smith and the opening of the west*, Page306
- 9 Fitzpatrick purchased nearly \$6,000 worth of supplies from Jackson, Sublette and someone representing Smith's estate, to be paid in fur in the Fall. Leroy Hafen's *Broken Hand* page 99.
- 10 *Commerce of the Prairies* Josiah Gregg, pages39-40, 2001 The Narrative Press