



# CASTOR CANADENSIS

Newsletter of the Jedediah Smith Society • University of the Pacific, Stockton, California

FALL 2016

## SPECIAL POST 60TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

### Jedediah Strong Smith: Trails West (Part III)

By RICHARD L. DYER

#### GEOGRAPHER

**THE FIRST SENTENCE** of Dale L. Morgan's highly acclaimed biography of Smith is, "In exploration of the American West, Jedediah Strong Smith is overshadowed only by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark."<sup>27</sup> As a keen observer, he was committed to improving the maps and journals of contemporaries whose reckoning and oversights were too often a source of misguidance for the early travelers as they tried to separate fact from fantasy. Understandably, competing fur companies were reluctant to share firsthand discoveries as they filled in the areas labeled "unexplored" on their personal maps. Also, it is apparent that precise recording of topography was virtually unknown during the 1820s; hearsay and mistakes abounded about imaginary rivers, mountain passes, lakes, and deserts. However, some seasoned mountain men had surprisingly accurate mental maps to guide them—although these were fragmentary. Geography and physiography were vital to trailblazers: "they were, without exaggeration, matters of life and death."<sup>28</sup> The mental maps contained more accurate geography of the American West than all of the university geographers in the world. Smith and other explorers knew the American West as no cartographer did until the end of the century. This knowledge, as with any hard earned possession, was entrusted selectively to only a few.

Smith, however, planned to enhance these first efforts. Accurate mapping was vital to sustain discovery and development. Smith's information about western Indian geopolitics and encampments was sent to Albert Gallatin for inclusion in his "Map of the Indian Tribes of North America," which was published by the *American Antiquarian Society* in 1836. Gallatin's ethnographic map, containing Smith's valuable contributions, became the most respected Indian map for almost thirty years.<sup>29</sup> Smith also sent accurate geographic

information for the Rev. Samuel Parker's 1839 publication, *Journal of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains*. Additionally, it is known that he contributed to the 1839 map of David H. Burr, geographer to the U.S. House of Representatives. It is suspected that Burr was given access to Smith's map by Ashley before it disappeared. Finally, Charles Wilkes' 1841 map of California seems to have been influenced by Smith's geographic reconnoiters during his brigade's northward movement through the region in 1826-1827.

As a result of the South Pass and Great Salt Lake exploration, Smith put aside once and forever the myth that there was a Buenaventura River that flowed from the interior to the sea.

If there is any merit in untiring perseverance and terrible suffering in the prosecution of trade, in searching out new channels of commerce, in tracing out the course of unknown rivers, in discovering the resources of unknown regions, in delineating the characters, situations, numbers, and habits of unknown nations, Smith's name must be enrolled with those of [worldwide explorers] Franklin and Parry, of Clapperton and Park.<sup>30</sup>

After returning to St. Louis, Smith, with collaboration of Jackson and Sublette, planned to publish "a new, large and beautiful map, in which are embodied all that is correct of preceding maps. . . ." Author Winfred Blevins declared that Smith "had both qualities crucial to an explorer: The daring of a trailblazer who discovers places and routes, and the integrative understanding of a geographer."<sup>31</sup> Many westerners, including Native Americans, had intimate exposure to rivers, lakes, mountains, deserts, and trails. However, they lacked the specific knowledge and comprehension of physiography to transpose such vital information into a map. Indeed, Smith was "a genius geographer"

*Continued on page 2*

decades ahead of contemporaries.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, even while traveling in inhospitable and uncharted country, Smith's route and survival instincts were unsurpassed. He was never "lost." This is illustrated by his successful five-week trek across the Sierra Nevada Mountains and Great Basin in the winter of 1827 with two others as they endured almost insurmountable hardships.

The feat of crossing this great unknown country. . . has never been fully appreciated by historians, partly because Smith himself makes such brief mention of it, but principally because of the historians' lack of knowledge concerning that section of the west. . . . Jedediah S. Smith, crossing this desert for the first time, with no knowledge of what lay before him, achieved one of the greatest single exploits in the whole history of western exploration.<sup>33</sup>

## **ENTREPRENEUR**

### **SMITH WAS AN HEIR TO HIS ANCESTORS'**

hard work ethics. He was infrequently a man of leisure or pleasure. To the contrary, he did not indicate an interest in the usual luxuries of fine foods, liquor, tobacco, or women. His behavior and transactions were almost overmodest. To some extent, his orthodox background and frugal nature contributed to a proverbial "rags to riches" adventure story decades before the books of Horatio Alger, Jr., became such a popular formula in portraying poor American boys who ultimately succeeded. In recent years, Alger's portrayals have achieved a degree of respectability as historians, economists, and parents advocate "perseverance, honesty, oversaving and underconsumption, ability to get along with anyone and trickle-down economic theories."<sup>34</sup> Actually, much of this was Smith's Golden Rule; these ideals were his personal success formula half a century before Alger's message.

Before Smith joined Ashley and his brigade of trappers, he "could look back to the days of his green youth, when he had come to St. Louis owning the clothes on his back, a rifle, a Bible and very little else."<sup>35</sup> By 1830, when he returned to St. Louis after eight years in the wilderness, he was a young man of public acclaim and substance; the profits for the Smith, Jackson, and Sublette partnership amounted to almost \$54,000, a modest fortune for the time. So, following the example of his ancestors, Smith's share of hard-earned capital was put to work as investments in promising western

enterprises. During his expeditions to the Pacific Coast, he noted in his journal the business potential of the regions traversed. In a letter in 1827 to Joel Poinsett, U.S. Minister in Mexico City, he recommended that an enterprising consul be appointed to Monterey, California, to further American commercial interests. This must have contributed to the selection of Thomas O. Larkin as American consul in Mexican California by President John Tyler in 1843. Apparently, Smith anticipated a growing overland trade with the Mexicans; he used his brigade's furs to purchase horses in California to sell in the mountains where the animals were scarce and expensive. Ashley and Smith also considered shipping furs acquired in the Far West through California ports to East Coast merchants. Nevertheless, before pursuing this enterprise, he decided to invest some of his capital in the Santa Fe trade, using American manufactured goods in exchange for Mexican mules, hides, and furs. This was Smith's last enterprise.

## **HERO**

### **SMITH IS THE PROTOTYPE OF THE NATIONAL**

hero, an essential element in the evolution of a young country and its citizens because he exemplifies the morality and aspiration of the national heritage and conveys these virtues to following generations. "[T]he major idols of America have been men of good will." Too, it is apparent that the hero "sees what others do not. His will to action is stronger. His knowledge of what must be done to realize what he sees is surer."<sup>36</sup> He intuitively reacts to challenges while other vacillate. The hero, genuine or contrived, is a vital component of the national ethos.

To satisfy the public's yearning for adventure, historians acknowledge that Smith fearlessly experienced more ordeals and displayed more raw courage during his eight years in the American West than did most mountain men of a longer duration. "Danger and hardship became a part of the normal routine of his daily life. He escaped death at the hands of the Indians and eluded other perils of the wilderness by the narrowest of margins."<sup>37</sup>

In Morgan's biography, readers witness Smith surviving an attack by a grizzly bear in 1823 after a chance encounter near the Powder River in Wyoming. Jim Clyman described this almost fatal event:

Upon examination I [found] the bear had taken nearly all of his head in his capacious [*sic*]

mouth close to his left eye on one side and close to his right ear on the other and laid the skull bare to near the crown of the head leaving a white streak where [*sic*] the teeth passed . . . one his ears was torn from his head out to the outer rim. . . .<sup>38</sup>

The tough partisan, rescued virtually seconds before his demise, directed his men in an unruffled voice to sew the pieces together to the best of their ability while he endured the pain without benefit of anesthetics. His facial scars were a reminder of this chance encounter for the remainder of his life.

For a hero to retain his prominence through the years requires a great adventure while enduring hardships. Such an ordeal for Smith was the Southwest Expedition to Mexican California. This overland trek to the coast



*Jedediah Smith was commemorated in "A Welcome Sight" by sculptor Victor Issa. The larger-than life sculpture stands at San Dimas City Hall, San Dimas, California.*

portrays Smith as a most deserving adventurer, possessing the mettle to endure innumerable adversities.

Twice he was threatened with imprisonment by Governor Echeandia who suspected him of being an American spy. Only intervention by American sea captains who vouched for his "good conduct" released him. Too, after his hairbreadth escape from the Kelawatset Indians in Oregon, the Hudson's Bay Company trappers assisted in the recovery of stolen furs and horses, but on Jy

after a forced march in inclement weather over almost two hundred miles from Fort Vancouver to southwest Oregon. This resourceful mountain man fervently believed Divine Providence guided and protected him. He felt nothing could detract him from perilous pursuits as he experienced one of the most amazing "chronicles of physical endurance, unflagging courage and granitic purpose" in American History.<sup>39</sup>

Even in death, along the Cimarron River in 1831, Smith's heroic character is revealed. Once again he was

on the trail, leading a trade caravan to Santa Fe; while searching for water, he was surrounded unexpectedly by a Comanche hunting band. He tried to parley with the Indians. When that failed, he defended himself, killing several attacking warriors before being felled. "This is not how Jedediah Smith would have chosen to die. A man who feared God and loved peace, he never wanted to kill anyone. . . . Smith had no violence in him, for all his mighty frame and rough and rigorous life he had led."<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, in the remoteness of the Santa Fe Trail. Smith met death on 27 May 1831.

## CONCLUSION

**WHY JEDEDIAH STRONG SMITH?** More appropriately, the question is, "Why not?" For as long as there is a West that echoes with the power of myth and legend, a West that delights, there will be Jedediah Smith stepping forward, leading Americans over South Pass, crossing mountains and deserts, and facing down governors of California.<sup>41</sup>

Notwithstanding Smith's remarkable contribution to America's frontier heritage, he has critics. They direct attention to the deaths, animosity, beaver exploitation, and material losses experienced by trappers during his leadership. However, Smith is an example of courage, commitment, and perseverance. In a society that yearns for more honorable public figures, it is refreshing to review Smith's abbreviated life from which he emerged as one of America's foremost explorers, making an incomparable contribution to the knowledge of the American West. "About one thing, however, there is no question, and that is the remarkable character of Jedediah Smith which earned him the respect of his contemporaries."<sup>42</sup>



*Above is the maquette of "A Welcome sight." (Courtesy Victor Issa, Loveland, Colorado, inquiries about availability of the maquette may be made at 800-720-4772).*

### Jedediah Strong Smith: Trails West (Part III)

In conclusion, “Jedediah will continue to captivate, to inspire, to move, and reveal aspects of the human condition as new admirers learn about this extraordinary man. As the dawn of a new century approaches, Jedediah Strong Smith will not be forgotten again.”<sup>43</sup>

#### NOTES

27. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 7.
28. Berry, *Majority of Scoundrels*, 86.
29. Dale, *Ashley-Smith Exploration and Discovery of a Central Route*, 313.
30. Sabin, *Kit Carson Days*, 823.
31. Blevins, *Give Your Heart to the Hawks*, 229.
32. Lee Davis, “Jedediah Smith in Northwest California.” paper, The Jedediah Smith Society meeting, April 20, 1991, University of the Pacific, Stockton, Calif.
33. Cleland, *Reckless Breed of Men*, 84, quoting Charles Kelly in vol. 3 of the *Utah Historical Quarterly*.
34. Thomas V. DiBacco, “On Horatio Alger,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (Sept. 4, 1985): 15.
35. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 323-24.
36. Dixon Weeter, *The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero-Worship* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1941; reprinted, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), 11; Sidney Hood, *The Hero in History: A Study in Limitation and Possibility* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 323.
37. Cleland, *Reckless Breed of Men*, 58.
38. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 84.
39. *Ibid.*, 309.
40. Donald Culross Peattie, *Jedediah Smith* (Stockton, Calif.: Pacific Center for Western Studies, n.d.), 6.
41. Joseph J. Wheeler, “Why Jedediah Smith?” *Castor Canadensis* (Winter 1994): 2.
42. Brooks, *Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith* (Bison Book ed.), 27.
43. Joseph J. Wheeler, “Jedediah Smith and the Power of Myth, unpublished manuscript, 24.

*Please note the Castor Canadensis is not responsible for either the research or the opinions of the writer. Publication dates for 2016 are July 15, September 15, January 15. The editor welcomes articles for publication, please send double space, in MS Word 30 days prior to publication date by email. Editorial Committee, Ed Sieckert, Wayne Knauf, Joe Molter, Irene Steiner.*

## Editor’s Note

### From the *Castor* Editor - Ed Sieckert

The 60th Anniversary Celebration is now history with 60 plus members and guests in attendance. The conference was opened by Ed Sieckert, 60th Chairman; Jim Smith, President gave the official welcome and Dr. Edie Sparks, Chair, UOP History Dept. gave the background of the past 60 years working together and read Dr. Eibeck’s, President of UOP, letter of appreciation to the Society. Thanks to the speakers, Jim Hardee, Dr. Richard Ravalli, Jim Auld, Dr. Ned Eddins, Lee Dummel, and Nick Harrison for sharing with us their excitement on new information of the fur trade. The new Jedediah Smith monument was dedicated by Chuck Winn, San Joaquin County Supervisor and Dave Stuart, Director San Joaquin Historical Society. This monument is adjacent to the marsh pond similar to that of the time of Jedediah Smith. The California State Assembly resolution was presented by Christina Carrillo of State Senator Cathleen Galgiani’s office to JSS President Jim Smith. The map on Jed’s travels in 1827-28 in San Joaquin County was presented by Joe Molter (See article). Eager Beaver Awards were also presented to those who have provided significant contributions to the Society. I want to thank Therese Melbar, our Bakersfield member for an excellent photographic collection she captured and from which some of the photos for the 60th were used. To top all this off a great lunch was enjoyed by all and was provided by Bueno Italiano Café of Lodi.

2017 July 6 to 9 — Rendezvous to be held in conjunction with Green River Days at the Museum of the Mountain Man in Pinedale, Wyoming. See Events section for more information.



## President's Message

Thanks to each and every person who worked to make the 60th Rendezvous of the Jedediah Smith Society a resounding success. Over 50 people---half the membership---met at the San Joaquin Historical Society in Lodi, CA on October 8th for a wonderful day of learning and sharing.

Special thanks go to the Society's Treasurer (and Editor of Castor), Ed Sieckert, who took the lead on planning, organizing and executing the Rendezvous. Good job, Ed. Wagh!!

The Society's longstanding relationship with the University of the Pacific was renewed and strengthened at the 60th Rendezvous. Recalling that the historic roots of the Society are with and at the UOP, we were very pleased to be welcomed by Dr. Edie Sparks, Chairwoman of the UOP History Department. Ed Sieckert also shared with the group a wonderful letter of congratulation from UOP President Pamela A. Eibeck, Ph.D.

The Society is directing its energy toward students and scholarships, toward supporting research into the Fur Trade Era, and to reaching out to friends and colleagues across the country who share a love of history and the Fur Trade Era.

Sincerely, Jim Smith    [jim@smithandmcgowan.com](mailto:jim@smithandmcgowan.com)



## Events

**2016**

**The 60th Anniversary Rendezvous - October 8    in Photos**



San Joaquin Historical Society and Museum  
60th location



Registration table    Paige Mair (l) Pat Knauf (r)



Dave Stuart, Museum Director Welcomes JSS



Ed Sieckert, 60th Chairman  
welcomes the attendees

## Events - *continued*



Richard Dyer, Castor editor emeritus gives the Invocation



Dr. Edie Sparks, UOP History Dept Chair reads UOP presidents Dr. Eibeck's letter of Appreciation to JSS



Dr. Richard Ravalli, History professor, William Jessup



Fur trade items display- Bob Shannon



Nick Harrison, UOP Special Collections intern presents the JSS Display at the library



JSS Display board at Registration Desk



Dave Stuart receives the Eager Beaver Award from Jim Smith

## Events - *continued*



Carrie Sass receives the Eager Beaver Award from Jim Smith



Joe Molter comments on his map of Jed's travels in San Joaquin County



Chuck Winn, San Joaquin County Supervisor dedicates the JSS plaque with Dave Stuart



JSS plaque



Christina Carrillo, State Senator Gagliani's office presents the Assembly resolution to JSS president Jim Smith



Wayne and Pat Knauf talk to Chuck Winn

## Events - *continued*



Lunch at the Red Barn -  
A great lunch featured by  
Buono Italiano



Margaret Zegart,  
Jed Smith artist



Table Centerpiece



Dr. Ned Eddins receives the Award of  
Excellence



Jim Hardee receives the Award of Excellence



Troy Tuggle receives the Award of Excellence



Jim Hardee, Troy Tuggle and Jim Auld  
enjoy the day.

## Events - *continued*

### **2017 July 6 to 9 — Jedediah Smith Society Rendezvous in association with Museum of the Mountain Man, Pinedale, Wyoming**

#### **The 82nd Green River Rendezvous will be held Thursday, July 6 to Sunday, July 9 at the Museum of the Mountain Man in Pinedale, Wyoming.**

The Green River Rendezvous its 82nd, is always the second weekend of July over a 4 day period with 100+ vendors. The town will close streets and fill parks with food, live music, entertainment and more to celebrate the legendary explorers, fur trappers and Native Americans who opened commerce in the American West. See Jim Bridger's rifle at the Museum. The Green River Pageant with nightly rodeos and other activities. American Mountain Man Group puts on displays throughout the event and the the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal Presentations on Friday and Saturday are sure to inform of new and historical figures of the fur trade. Plus tours of the Green River Rendezvous site may also be available.

Jim Smith (Jim Smith ([jim@smithandmcgowan.com](mailto:jim@smithandmcgowan.com)), (406-949-1002) JSS event coordinator will have a meeting room for JSS members to enjoy breakfast (no host) and morning meeting (9:30 am) Friday July 7, 8-12 Noon. If you are not staying at the Hampton Inn check in with reception desk when you arrive to find out about the meeting room location and cost for breakfast. A reception put on by the Museum will introduce the Rocky Mountain Fur trade Journal for 2017. Suggest JSS members to join in on this reception on Thursday evening July 6.

Details to follow.

For more information on the event, see <http://www.visitpinedale.org/events/event/green-river-rendezvous>

The Museum of the Mountain Man's web site is <http://museumofthemountainman.com>; See events of the 2016 Green River Rendezvous for more details .

## **Hotel Reservations**

**Must book before April 1 to reserve a room or there will not be any space left in town. Make your reservations before the Next Castor newsletter is published in March.**

Here are a few of the hotels and phone numbers:

Hampton Inn and Suites.	307-367-6700
Sundance Lodge	307-367-4789
Baymont Inn and Suites	307-367-8300
Best Western Pinedale	307-367-6869
Wagon Wheel Motel	07-367-2871
Log Cabin Motel.	307-367-4579
The Lodge Motel	866-995-6343

## **Members' Section**

### **New Members**

Please welcome the following new members to the Society:

Mary Beth Frederick	San Francisco, CA
Donn Marinovich	Columbia, CA
Grayson Sorrels	Paradise, CA
Joe Green	Minden, Nevada
Sheri Wysong	Delta, Utah

They will be in our 2017 Member Roster.

## Members' Section

### Eagar Beaver Awards

**Irene Soler Steiner** — Soler Graphics

Irene is associate editor of the Jedediah Smith Society Newsletter *Castor Canadensis*. She has been with the Society since the 1990's when Dr. Clover hired her to work on the *Castor*/Web site. She has an amazing ability to take text and photos and organize a well-designed newsletter. She is able to work on her own with little direction and comes up with a shining product. She has totally redesigned the JSS website to achieve an eye catching, colorful and easy to navigate site. She has added a comment section where web goers can leave a message and will be answered by one of our experts. The Member Roster was started in 2015 to keep each of our members connected. She has developed the CD library of Jed Smith out of print articles and booklets in addition to the 2016 Commemorative CD for the 60th Anniversary. Irene has made outstanding contributions to the Society and continues to amaze us with her talents. Thank you.

**David Stuart**, Director, San Joaquin Historical Society and Museum

Dave has spent his career in anthropology and archeology prior to coming to San Joaquin Historical Society and Museum. He was senior archeologist for the National Park Service in Colorado. His last

assignment was Executive Director of the Discovery Museum of Sacramento.

Dave has helped us plan the 60th Anniversary of the Jedediah Smith Society by providing the Monument Boulder, Plaque Placement, Seminar Center and overall site management. He dedicated the Monument to Jed with Chuck Winn, San Joaquin County Supervisor. He has worked with JSS on several previous Rendezvous. He has a strong interest in research and has provided help to members especially in the French Camp area where Hudson Bay Company was located.

It has been a amazing to see the results he has accomplished at the museum. The new Cortopassi Building just to North of the meeting room houses interactive exhibits of the Agricultural firsts in San Joaquin County. Asparagus, Tomato, Almond, Walnuts are featured. The Holt Tractor Company of Stockton built the first Caterpillar tractor and many of the examples of this amazing tractor are available to view. Thanks Dave, for all you have done to make this Celebration of Jedediah Smith a great one to remember.

**Carrie Sass** — Sass Public Relations

Carrie Sass is President of Sass Public Relations in Stockton, California. She has 25 years of managerial, marketing and community relations experience in San Joaquin County. Carrie has worked with the Jedediah Smith Society this past year and a half and has provided significant ideas toward moving this society forward. Her ideas for developing a press kit to include contact list for newsprint, public information officers, and historical societies resulted in an email release to over 50 key organizations statewide. The idea for asking a County Supervisor and Assemblywoman to help in the dedication of the monument at San Joaquin Historical Society and Museum was successful. She wrote 10 hand written letters to key members inviting them to the 60th Anniversary. Updating our logo for stationery, business cards and letterhead and newsletters has been completed. Placing our ads into various historical societies was her idea. Her efforts have been outstanding and have brought the Society leagues ahead. We thank you for all you have done to guide us forward.



## Special Awards

The Jedediah Smith Society presented an Award of Excellence to three members who have contributed significantly to the research and publications in the Fur Trade

### Jim Hardee

For Your Outstanding Contributions to Furthering the Knowledge of the Mountain Man through the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal and as a past President of the Jedediah Smith Society

### Troy Tuggle

For Your Outstanding Contributions to Furthering the Knowledge of Jedediah Smith's pistols, publications and the Smith Bacon Collection at University of the Pacific

### Dr. Ned Eddins

For Your Outstanding Contributions to Furthering the Knowledge of Jedediah S. Smith's Travels, Rendezvous, Web Site, Researcher and Author

## Donor List

### Patron Level

Milton von Damm	Jim Stebinger
Jim Smith	Robert Gilbert

### Sponsor Level

Art Hurley	Anthony Rantz
Jim Hardee	Steve & Amanda Cottrell
Paige & Steve Mair	Ed Sieckert
Sharlene Nelson	Thomas Shephard
Mike Mc Whirter	

We thank the Donor Levels for their contributions to help provide further research and events. We also want to thank *each member* for their 2016 dues which help support the Society in the newsletter publication and Rendezvous costs, New Member Roster and the new Jedediah Smith monument. Each new member receives a New Member kit and a phone call to welcome them to the Society.

## Dues

**It is that time of year to pay annual dues.** Your dues go to helping us further the name of Jedediah Smith and other fur trade explorers and trappers. Research, public relations and publications have been a major goal and will continue grow this area. The 60th Commemorative CD and program in addition the great speakers we had at the seminar all contribute to the growth of the Society.

The Board discussed where we need to go in the future and one of the main goals is to increase our name recognition inside and outside of California. To expand our edition of the Castor Newsletter to 12 pages to include more member information and details on special events. The dues for 2017 will increase to \$30.00 per year. They are due on

**January 1, 2017.**

Milton von Damm, Current Board Member will assume the Treasurer position.

All 2017 dues should be sent to the following address:

**Treasurer  
Jedediah Smith Society  
1681 Visalia Ave  
Berkeley, CA 94707**

## Archives Corner

### Jedediah Smith and his Travels in San Joaquin County

BY ED SIECKERT

I work as a volunteer archiving the Western American map collections at Holt-Atherton Special Collections, University of the Pacific (UOP) and three years ago ran across the National Park Service Study for establishing a possible Jedediah Smith Trail System (1984). I was looking for his travel locations in San Joaquin County and am very familiar with the soils and rainfall patterns having lived and worked in Agriculture all my career in this County. When Joe Molter and I discussed developing a map I started looking at Jedediah Smith's Journal, transcribed by Samuel S. Parkman a close friend of Jedediah in 1831. The journal went undiscovered until Maurice S. Sullivan, a news editor in San Bernardino, CA started searching for records and found that the journal existed with a relative of Jedediah Smith, Ernst Smith of Eagle Pass, Texas. He was able to get a copy of this document and write the book *The Travels of Jedediah Smith, A Documentary Outline, Including His Journal in 1934*. This journal copy resides at UOP Holt- Atherton Special Collections

in the Maurice Sullivan Papers on Jedediah Smith (MS 19). Comparing the published text and the handwriting of Samuel Parkman helped us in the interpretation of the journal for map development. As Jed describes, the wet soil was a challenge near the city of Stockton. Tules and marsh land were abundant in those days and the soil is very heavy adobe which will stick to your shoes and that made it difficult to move 300 horses directly North from French Camp to Stockton in the wet winter of 1828. This story starts on page 55 of Sullivan's book. He had to travel east to go around this adobe to a more moderate loamy soil type (USDA California Soil Survey- San Joaquin County) which was more suitable for travel and then followed the foothills north of Belotta to near the Mokelumne River in Lodi. As Joe Molter describes in his article and accompanying map the route becomes more evident of Jed's travel. Joe Molter did an exceptional job on this article and accompanying map which will be archived in Special Collections for all current and future researchers, historians and the public to study.

### Jedediah S. Smith's Travels in the Central Valley in 1827 & 1828 Map

BY JOE J. MOLTER

In preparation for the upcoming 60th Anniversary Rendezvous of the Jedediah Smith Society being held at the San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum in Lodi, California, which included the dedication of a bronze plaque, some Board Members thought a map would be appropriate to show Jedediah's travels through this part of California and especially the County this plaque was being established in. I was asked to map Jed's 1827 travels through this location and Ed Sieckert agreed to map his 1828 travels, but the more I thought about it, I felt it was vital to show Jedediah's trips on one separate map to emphasize the fact that he and his company of men were not just passing through, but had crisscrossed this area on three separate occasions and had spent close to 42 days in doing so!

The map I choose to plot these various routes on was a portion of an *1873 Topographical Map of Central California* by J.D. Whitney which I was able to export

in a high resolution JPEG image from David Rumsey's Historical Map Collection web site. The reason for using this map was that it was uncluttered, unlike our modern maps with all its Roads, Highways and Freeways, and it showed land forms which I wanted to draw viewers' attention to, i.e. the large Central Valley Tule Marsh, and the foothills and mountains. I took this JPEG file to one of our local Copy and Print businesses and had them crop and print the portion I planned to use in the form of working and master copies.

The best tool I had in creating this map was Jedediah's own words that he recorded in his Journal on a daily basis, recording his directions through various compass bearings and the distances for each of those bearings, along with what he saw along the way. The original Journal disappeared long ago but prior to Jedediah's untimely death, he had a friend transcribe it in preparation of its publication and it's

## Archives Corner

this transcription or portions thereof, which fortunately have been discovered over the years which contain much of his travels in the Central Valley that I was able to use. I also used early diaries and maps dating from the Spanish/Mexican to the Gold Rush periods to help me determine locations of river fords and trails that possibly were also used by Jedediah. Those early followers after Jed were not expending a lot of resources in constructing bridges and roads but were following and using existing trails and fords of others which were originally established by the local Indian tribes. It was a common practice of Jedediah to seek out these local Indian Tribes, presenting them with gifts and acquiring a guide to help him navigate through this unknown landscape that lay before him. These guides helped Jedediah to avoid problem areas such as Tule marshes, gummy clay soils and other impassable routes which would have been a detriment to his travels. Another tool that I used which is more on the modern side was a computer program called Google Earth. This tool allowed me to see some of the same landforms that Jed saw, be able to accurately plot his bearings and distances that he had recorded and in doing so it revealed areas that I had to replot or shift to fit the area that Jed was describing, all done easily and quickly with this unique modern tool.

What this map shows are the three distinctive trips that Jedediah and company made through this portion of the Central Valley of California. The red dash line is Jedediah's "Early 1827" route which he started in 1826 in the southern portion of this State. Due to delays caused by unexpected problems with the Mexican Government, by the time he got to the Central Valley and the mouth of the "Appelaminy River" (present day Stanislaus River), it was time for him to start looking for a way to cross the snowy Sierra Nevada Mountains and head back to the rendezvous in the Rocky Mountains where his partners were expecting him! He heads up this river and starts moving north along the foothills looking for a suitable pass. He is sometime forced back into the valley for a safe place to ford a river or to avoid some obstacle his guide knew about and it's not until he reaches the American River (not shown on map), that he makes an attempt to cross over but fails due to deep snows. It is here on a high point overlooking that river; he makes a plan to return to the Stanislaus

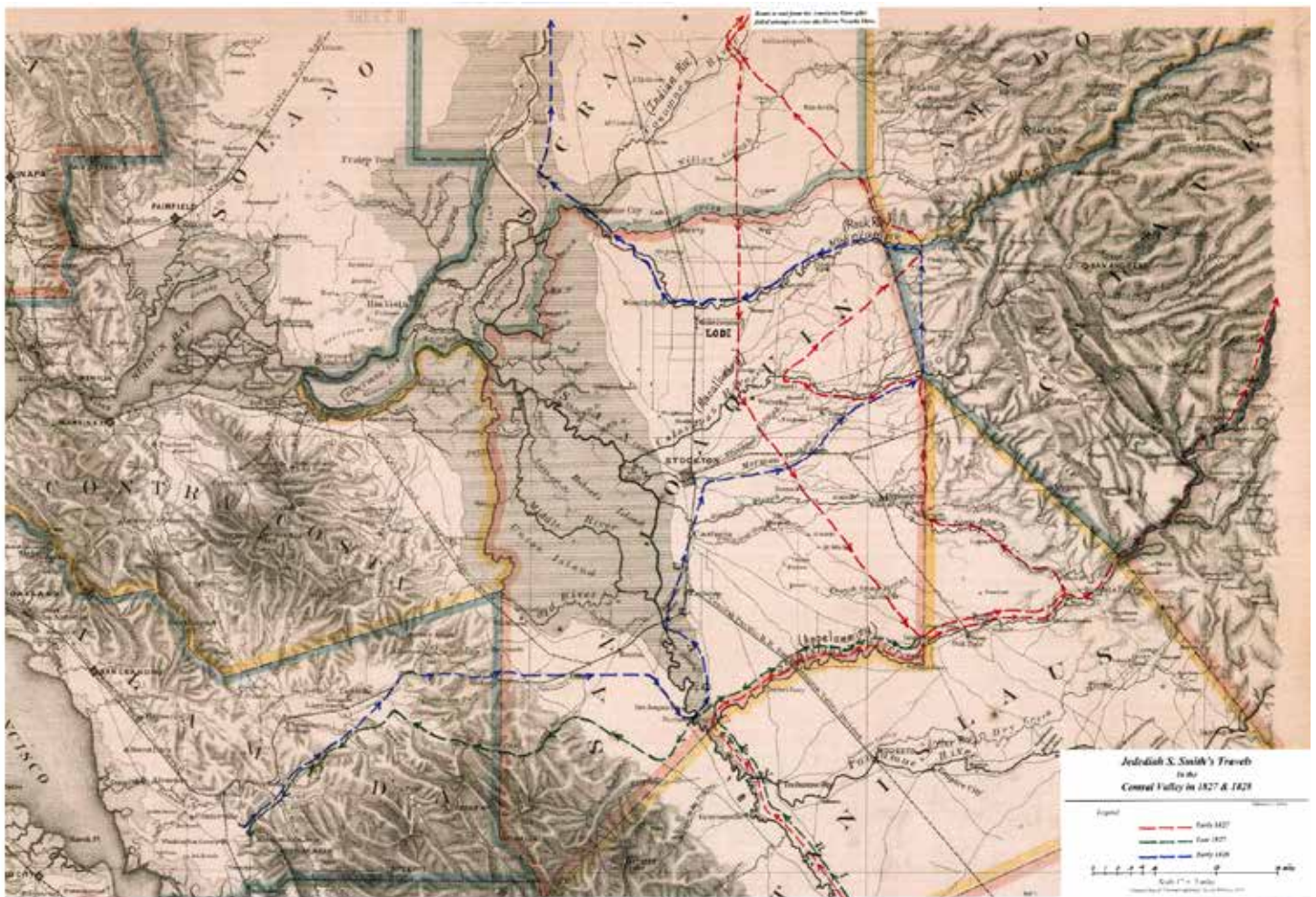
River where he will leave most of his men, knowing that the Indians there were friendly and that it would be a good place for hunting and trapping. This he does, taking only two men, extra horses and food for both men and beast and makes a successful crossing over the Sierra's and through the dry and barren Nevada and Utah deserts back to the Rendezvous, but in doing so they experienced great hardships of starvation and thirst! The green dash line is Jedediah's "Late 1827" route which is his return to California with supplies and extra recruits but when he gets back to his men camped on the Stanislaus River, he has lost those supplies and a portion of his men due to a surprise attack by the Mojave Indians when crossing the Colorado River! In much need of supplies, Jed was forced again to leave his men, taking only a few men that spoke Spanish and Indian guides; they headed southwest 70 miles to the Mission San Jose. His guides led them down the Stanislaus to the San Joaquin River to where they crossed over using a river ford near today's Durham Ferry Bridge, which early diaries have confirmed was in use during the early Gold Rush period. Having crossed they traveled over to the west edge of the San Joaquin Valley to an old Spanish Trail called El Camino Viejo A Los Angeles and followed it around to and through Corral Hollow to the Livermore Valley, then down through Vallecitos to Sunol and unto Mission San Jose, following what is today's State Highway 680. Again Jedediah ran afoul with the Mexican Government because he was supposed to have been long gone from Mexican territory!

The blue dash line is Jedediah's "Early 1828" route. After Jedediah extricated himself from these problems and was allowed to move on, he called in his men in and sold his furs and acquired 300 fine Spanish/Mexican horses and mules that he knew would make a good profit back in the Rocky Mountains. Early maps of that period showed a large river coming out of the Great Salt Lake that flowed west to the Pacific Ocean called the Buenaventura. It was this river he was relying on to follow back to the Rendezvous and felt it had to be just a little further north of his existing travels. Now pushing this large herd of animals, he left the San Jose Mission area and basically followed his same route until reaching the Livermore Valley. Instead of turning toward Corral Hollow he continued toward the mouth of Altamont Pass and travels east over it and

## Archives Corner

through Tracy Valley to the San Joaquin River. Here he turns southeast and heads back to the river ford he had previously crossed. After crossing, he headed down river, then towards and through French Camp (shown of this map as Castoria) and to what is now today the city of Stockton. Hitting the Mormon Slough, which was in flood stage at that time, he was forced to move up to the foothills before finding a safe river crossing. He moved north to the Mokelumne River which he called the “Rock River” and traversed down along this river, spending approximately 22 days in doing so. His slow progress along this river was in part due to its spring runoff conditions and heavy rains which caused multiple problems managing his large herd of livestock. Just to cross the river with this herd, which was required

several times, was now taking full day! Extracting bogged down animals and searching for strays was a constant chore. Added to all this, two of his men went missing. After spending considerable time looking for them, it was determined they had deserted! From here, Jedediah continued up through the Sacramento Valley, never finding the fabled Buenaventura River back to the Great Salt Lake and was thus forced to head north to the Columbia River.



Joe Molter map of San Joaquin County

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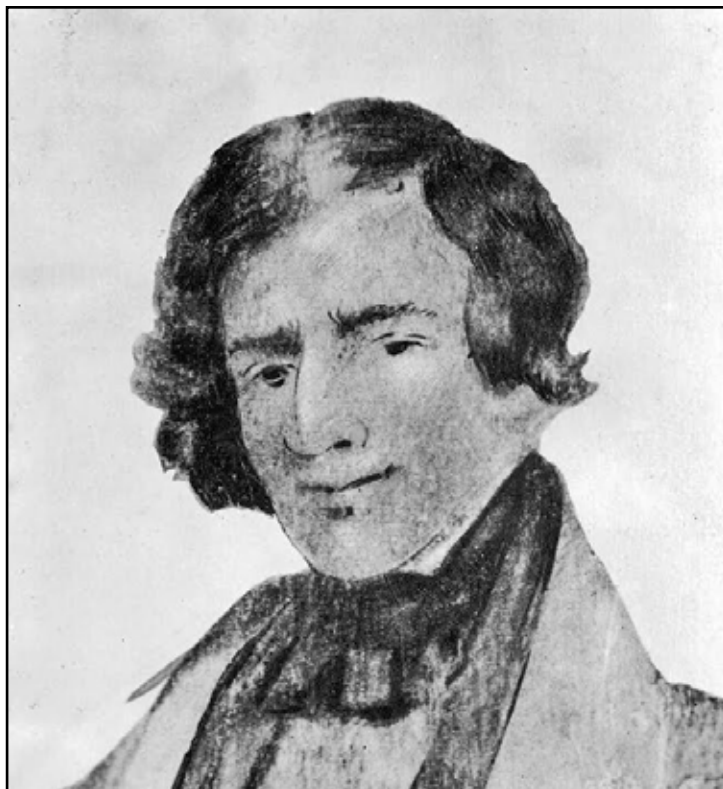
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