



CASTOR CANADENSIS

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

WINTER 2016-17

A few years ago I received a call from Irene Steiner, JSS associate Castor editor who told me of a Jedediah S. Smith descendent who had contacted her. I called Lillian Smith, a long-time member of JSS and we had a great discussion about her relative, Israel Smith. Lillian Smith contributed a great genealogy of her family which is archived in the JSS collection at University of the Pacific. Israel Smith was the younger brother of Seth Smith (1736-1826).

Seth Smith and Thankful Bert were the parents of Jedediah Strong Smith Sr. Jedediah Strong Smith Sr. married Eunice Clark and their son was Jedediah S. Smith, the famous explorer and fur trader. This article tells the story of Jedediah Smith born March 20, 1840, in the village of Litchfield in Medina County, Ohio. Lucius Edwin the son of Israel Amos (1812-1864) - Lillian's grandfather. The parents of Israel and Seth were Deacon John and Elizabeth Smith. Permission to reprint this article was given by Lillian Smith.

(Ed Sieckert, Editor)

The Namesake of Jedediah Strong Smith (Part 1)

BY LILLIAN A. SMITH

The Pacific Historian, Summer 1969, Vol 13, No. 3, University of the Pacific, Stockton, California

High above the beautiful city of Lincoln, Nebraska, at the top of the dome of the Capitol Building, stands Sculptor Lee Lawrie's masterpiece, the roughly clad form of a young farmer, called "The Sower". Gazing far to the west with a visionary tilt to his head and with the rhythmic swing of his strong right arm arrested in mid-air, the statue seems almost in motion. It is a magnificent symbol of the thousands of pioneer farmers who poured into the new state of Nebraska a century ago.

One of these thousands of men was named Jedediah Strong Smith. As he left his home in Illinois and headed west for Nebraska in 1871, Jedediah Smith was fourth in a line of a succession of generations of pioneer farmers that extended back over a thousand miles in distance, and in time to the nation's beginning. His father, Israel Amos Smith, had come from Ohio to Illinois in 1848 when deer, prairie chicken and rattlesnakes were seen in abundance. His grandfather, Amos Smith, had come from New York to Ohio at some time near 1830 to be greeted by swamp and by forest. His great-grandfather, Israel Smith, born in Granby, Mass., had come down to Bainbridge, New York in 1789 when that country was being carved out of the wilderness.¹ In fulfilling a restless dream, each of the four broke sod, grubbed stumps, fished the streams, and tramped long happy miles of countryside in search of wild game in his own chosen land of promise.



Jedediah Strong Smith, Civil War Soldier

Jedediah Strong Smith was born on March 20, 1840, near the village of Litchfield in Medina County, Ohio, to Israel Amos and Emma Jane Cole Smith.² His arrival filled the empty place left by the death of the first son, Azor, twin of two year old daughter, Ruhama (Amy).³ They named him Jedediah Strong Smith in honor of Israel's second cousin,⁴ the fur trader and explorer who had met a tragic death nine years earlier at the hand of Comanche Indians.⁵ However, his name was soon shortened to "Dier" and he was always called this by

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The Namesake of Jedediah Strong Smith (Part I)



Israel Amos Smith,
Father of Jedediah Smith



Emma Jane Cole,
Mother of Jedediah Smith

family and friends. It had been suggested that the “r” on the end of “Dier” was a vestige of the family’s New England speech.⁶

During his early childhood in Ohio, Dier would hear much about his parent’s old home in Colesville (now Windsor), New York, where both had been born and lived until their early teens.⁷ He would hear his father, Israel, tell of how Dier’s great grandfather, also named Israel, and who had fought in the Revolutionary War, had come to New York in 1789 from “Hampshire Grants” when grandfather Amos was sixteen years old. He would also hear that grandfather Amos Smith’s wife, Betsey Allison, had lived as a child in “one of the first huts to be built on the site of Brainbridge, New York”.⁸ Amos and Betsey had lived at Colesville, N.Y. after their marriage where in 1822 Amos was named Commissioner of High ways. Later they moved with their large family to Medina County, Ohio. Betsey died in 1836, four years before Dier was born.⁹ One of the few facts known about Amos Smith was his act of naming his son Uri’s daughter “Chloe Hayes” in honor of his eldest sister, Chloe Smith Hayes, who was the grandmother of President Rutherford B. Hayes.¹⁰

From his mother, Emma Jane Cole, Dier would hear the proud revelation that Colesville, New York, had been named for Dier’s maternal great grandfather, Nathaniel Cole, also a veteran of the Revolutionary War,¹¹ who “had been postmaster and the owner of a grand hotel, painted red and two stories high”.¹² Emma was thirteen when the Connecticut Reservation of School Land came in to market. Her father, Walker Cole, bought land there in 1831. “We came to Ohio by way of Buffalo, N.Y. There we took a boat on Lake Erie to Cleveland. Then we hired teams to go on to Grafton,

Ohio. The ground was swampy and some of the way there were corduroy roads. We unloaded at Grafton in the forest.”¹³ From Grafton they went by ox wagon to the G. Wilcox farm, “nearly a whole day being consumed in going the distance of four miles.”¹⁴ Next they built a log house covered with elm bark with split puncheons for the floor.¹⁵

Dier Smith would hear his grandfather, Walker Cole, boast of many hunting exploits, having killed as many as eighty deer in one winter. Walker Cole was mail carrier between Litchfield and Norwalk (about thirty miles), “traveling much of the time on foot.”¹⁶

While Israel A. and Emma Smith still lived in Ohio, four more children were born, Amanda in 1841, Lucius Edwin (Ed) in 1843, Theodore in 1845, and Eugene in 1847.

By 1848, it was getting more and more difficult to make a living in Ohio. “Cows were sold that year for four or five dollars.”¹⁷ In 1846 Emma’s sister, Harriet Cole Turner, and husband, James, had moved their family to Monmouth, Illinois, and sent back good reports of their new home.

In 1848, Israel and Emma decided to follow the Turners to Illinois. A letter from Emma’s mother tells of “having reason to bless Providence” on hearing the glad news that they got along well on their journey. “I had expected to hear that some or all of you were sick for I know you could not be very comfortable on the boats and cars.”¹⁸ But Dier’s four year old brother Theodore died in 1849. It must have been late in the year for his grandmother’s letter does not mention it.

The first letter that came to Illinois from Israel’s family told of the death of Amos Smith who was aged and ailing when they left.¹⁹ Dier’s family now lived near Monmouth, Ill. for the next six years. Another child, Irene, was born there in 1850. In 1851, Israel’s brother Uri and family moved to what later became Greene Township in Mercer County, twenty miles north of Monmouth. In 1854, Emma’s younger sister and family, Emeline and Lyman Young, probably came to the farm now vacated by Israel and Emma when they bought an eighty acre farm northwest of brother Uri’s farm in Section 27 (Greene Township). So within a period of less than ten years there was a migration from Ohio to western Illinois of four closely related families. Dier Smith was fourteen years old when the move to

The Namesake of Jedediah Strong Smith (Part I)

Greene Township was made, the same year that the township assumed organization.²⁰

There is little doubt that Uncle Uri and his son Warren and a few other settlers helped Israel and his boys raise their first house here, a log cabin sixteen feet square.²¹ They went to work on a pile of logs with a broad-ax, an auger, and a cross cut saw. Cracks between the logs were “chunk and dobbed” with a kind of mortar made of clay and prairie grass. A chimney and fire place may have been made from stone from Pope Creek, a mile south of the farm. Curtained bunk beds lined the walls. A loft overhead reached by a ladder gave the boys in the family private sleeping quarters under rough rafters from which hung ears of seed corn, and sundry other supplies in need of storage. Rain water caught in a wooden barrel was used for washing. A shallow well, dug by hand and lined with stones was dug in the gully through which ran a slough, several yards north of the cabin provided water for drinking.

By 1857, when Frances Ellen was born, there were ten in the family living in this cabin and they also boarded the school teacher. Partly due to the influence of this teacher, they came from this home a gifted doctor, Eugene, and two teachers, Irene and Libby. Libby (Content Elizabeth) was born in 1860, the youngest child. Dier’s formal education would have ended when they left Mon mouth, however, and he would have done a man’s work from then on.

In their home life, Israel and Emma observed, and taught their children, a strict interpretation of the guidelines set forth in scripture. The Sabbath was kept as a day of worship and rest. The “Blessing” was asked before each meal. The men used no liquor or tobacco nor were profane words a part of their speech. Like the angry shepherd of Tekoa, for whom Grandfather Amos Smith was named, they were prone to equate riches with sin. They regarded those in positions of power and wealth with a wary eye. Israel provided responsibly for all of his children’s basic needs but to spoil them with luxuries was unthinkable. All of his sons would follow his example in their own homes. They probably did not think of themselves as “religious” people but their way of life was deeply ingrained.

As the eldest son of a large family, responsibility fell heavily on Dier’s shoulders at an early age. By the time he was ten, he’d have spent long weary days dropping seed corn by hand. Killing three or four rattlesnakes slithering along the furrows was part of the day’s work.

He and Ed could kill a snake by snatching it by the tail and then snapping its head off with one mighty whip-like swing. He learned early to train his eyes and ears to be ever alert to his surroundings. From his father he learned the common name of nearly every plant and tree in the region. He knew each bird both by sight and by sound. The habits of all the wild creatures were familiar to him and he knew the country side for miles around like the back of his hand. So along with early responsibility went the close companionship of his father who took him along on every fishing and hunting expedition. It has been said that there were many times in those early years in Illinois that the family would have gone hungry without their father’s trusty eleven gauge muzzle loader and sure aim. The tall virgin timber was open making it easier to find game. The Indians had burned off the under brush in the timbers every year.²² The settlers may have continued this practice for a while.

A few years after moving to Greene Township, Dier and his next younger brother Ed went to work by the month for their Uncle Lyman Young near Monmouth during the growing season. When they came home to visit, they walked, the whole distance of twenty miles. They boasted that they knew everyone who lived along the way. At this time, there were only three houses along this stretch. A stage coach line ran between Rock Island and Monmouth passing within a few hundred yards of the Smith’s cabin but the boys didn’t have fare.²³ Nor did a stage coach ride offer the adventures that they encountered on their long walks.

While he was away working at Monmouth Dier often grew homesick for the family cat whom he dearly loved. On one of their visits at home as Tom responded to his greeting with ecstatic writhing and purring, Dier decided to take his furry friend back to Monmouth with him. When it was time to leave, Dier scooped up Tom in his arms and set out, carrying him all the way. As Dier and Ed approached their uncle’s place they were met by their smaller cousins, Clark Young and his brothers. The boys took one look at the horizontal slant of Tom’s ears and the twitch at the end of his tail and shouted with laughter. At this point, old Tom, sensing a momentary distraction on Dier’s part and long since grown satiated with mile after mile of cuddled comfort, squirmed down and bounded toward the nearest thicket with long legged Dier in hot pursuit plaintively calling, “Kitty, Kitty.” The younger boys watched, convulsed

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with laughter. Eventually Dier retrieved the precious beast. As he again came within earshot of the boys, who had healthy respect for Dier's quick temper, they quickly smothered their mirth and tagged silently along to the end of the journey.²⁴

About a mile west of the Israel Smith farm a small stream extending some three miles from its source and flowing generally southward to the point where it empties into Pope Creek, became a landmark in the years before and during the Civil War as a route followed by runaway slaves after they left the underground railroad station at Bridger's Corners in Suez Township.²⁵ It still bears the uncouth name of "Nigger Run." (In that neighborhood, the word "Nigger" did not have the degrading connotation that it has today.) There was much sympathy for these unfortunate people²⁶ and when the call came to bear arms to preserve the Union and strike the shackles from the slaves every available man joined up, twenty-two year old Dier Smith among them. The convictions that he had formed by then, and that were intensified by his struggles in the war, remained a part of his personality. Always an ardent Republican, normally mild mannered Dier Smith would leap to his feet in a flash of anger to shout down an opponent in a political argument regardless of who that opponent might be.

Part 2 will be continued in the Summer Castor

NOTES

1. James Smith, **History of Chenango and Madison Counties** (Pub. 1880), p. 182. Notes from this source are contained in a letter to Lawrence Smith of Viola, Ill. from Mr. Robert G. Lester of Chicago, Ill. dated Aug. 27, 1950. Further research by Mr. Lester in **The Life of Rutherford Burchard Hayes** by Charles Richard Williams, Houghton Mifflin, 1914, and Sylvester Judd's **History of Hadley** gives Israel's line of descent; Deacon John⁴, Orphan John³, John², Lt. Samuel¹.
2. Family records.
3. Azor was named for Israel's brother, Rev. Azor Smith, a Congregational minister, who died in 1837, and was buried at Litchfield, Ohio.
4. From a copy of a clipping from the Newspaper, "Western Union" in the family records of Lawrence Smith. There is no date on this source.
5. Letter from Mrs. Stella R. Hare to this writer, dated March 10, 1967, gives us this connection.
6. Dier Smith's niece, Mrs. Alice Smith French, daughter of Dr. Eugene Smith offers this explanation.
7. The stories of Dier Smith's background did not come to us from him but from other sources.
8. **History of Chenango and Madison Counties** by James Smith p. 182 (cited previously)

9. Date on gravestone. (Information from R. W. Burrill of Monmouth, Ill. who visited the cemetery in 1960.)
10. Family record of Dier's sister, Irene Smith Matters.
11. Information from U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Pensions, Wash. D.C. Oct. 15, 1929. Nathaniel Cole lived at New Milford, Conn. and moved in 1795 to Broome Co. N.Y. (Lawrence Smith records)
12. A description of this hotel, of Nathaniel Cole, and the story of the move from Colesville to Ohio came to us from a descendant of Emma's older sister, Harriet Cole Turner.
13. Ibid.
14. Copy of the newspaper obituary of Walker Cole, "Death of a Pioneer," printed in the Medina, Ohio, **Gazette**, Aug. 14, 1871. (Lawrence Smith records)
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Letter to Israel and Emma from Emma's mother, Content Humiston Cole, dated Nov. 30, 1849. (Lawrence Smith records)
18. Ibid. Details of this journey are still being researched.
19. Family tradition written down by Irene Smith Matters. The letter no longer exists. She gave the date of Amos Smith's death as 1849. The date of his death given on his grave marker is 1851. (R. W. Burrill record)
20. **History of Mercer and Henderson Counties** H. H. Hill and Co. Pub. 1882. p. 660 and p. 697. The first town meeting was held in a school house that stood on a low hill in what is now the eastern part of the village of Viola. Uri Smith was chosen moderator at this meeting. Uri was active in public affairs and was deputy sheriff in 1856, 57, and 58.
21. Description of this cabin was told to Lawrence Smith by his father, Edwin. It was replaced by a frame house about 1860. Edwin Smith hauled the lumber from Rock Island by horses and wagon, twenty-five miles one way. After Emma sold the farm, later owners incorporated the old house into the present large square dwelling.
22. The Sauk and Fox Indian Nations were driven out of western Illinois and crossed the Mississippi River to Iowa at the close of the Black Hawk War in 1832. A few years after this the huts and cabins of settlers gradually began to appear beginning at the Mississippi and going up the Edwards River and Pope and Henderson Creeks. **History of Mercer and Henderson Counties** pp. 23 to 28.
23. The stage line followed the old Galena to Macomb road, also known as the old Military Road, the only major road connecting the north western part of Illinois with downstate. It followed an Indian trail used by the Sauk and Fox Nations for ages past and later by the army in the Black Hawk conflicts. A description of this stage line was related to Lawrence Smith by one of the last men employed to drive the stage.
24. Clark Young loved to tell this story and it was from him that the tales of Dier and Ed's physical prowess and skill as woodsmen came down to us.
25. Neighborhood tradition.
26. Govert S. Fleharty, who lived in the village of Oxford a few miles east of the Smith home was "an old-time abolitionist, who it was said, helped more than one fugitive slave." p. 805 **History of Mercer and Henderson Counties**. These activities were kept very secret.

Editor's Note

From the *Castor* Editor - Ed Sieckert



It has been a busy fall/winter here at the desk with transition of the treasurer to Milton von Damm and the new Public Relations/Outreach director Kevin Kucera position. We are also in the process of the early development of a digital interactive map of Jedediah Smith's trails will be available on the web site. I am adding a new section entitled getting to know your officers and board of directors to include title, description and contact information. We want to invite everyone to join us at the Green River Rendezvous hosted by the Museum of the Mountain Man July 6-9 in Pinedale, WY. A post rendezvous field trip (2 days) to South Pass and other locations will be headed up by Dr. Ned Eddins, JSS member (See event section). Mary Drachler, past officer and board member sends a great monument article for us on Bainbridge, NY Jed's birthplace. New guidelines for the authors for article submission has been placed on the web (under *Castor*) and the Newsletter itself.

CASTOR CANADENSIS NEWSLETTER GUIDELINES

The editor welcomes articles for publication. Please review the following guidelines:

1. Prospective authors should send their articles or questions to Ed Sieckert ed@sieckert.com
2. Submit in MS Word, double spaced with pages numbered.
3. End notes should be numbered consecutively.
4. Photographs, maps or illustrations should be sent as an attachment and not embedded into the article. They should also be numbered i.e. Fig 1. A separate list with Fig. No. should be attached with a short title of the photograph etc.
5. After receipt the article will be reviewed by a technical editor. Once this is completed the author will be notified and an approximate date for publication will be provided.
6. Please note the *Castor Canadensis* is not responsible for either the research or the opinions of the writer.

President's Message



Spring comes late to the Rocky Mountains. The Mountain Men, however, generally got an early start. Jedediah, for example, crossed South Pass in mid-March of 1824. Relying primarily upon James Clyman's recollection (James Clyman, American Frontiersman, 1792-1881), Dale Morgan gives a great account of Smith's springtime crossing of the continental divide in his biography, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West*. According to Morgan, the journey up the Sweetwater River to the Pass was a tough one: "The evening Jedediah reached the Sweetwater the wind blew with such violence that the men had to stay awake the whole night hanging on to their blankets and robes. Next morning they gathered a pile of dry pine logs and sought to build a fire. Impossible; the wind blew the fire away." They continued up and over South Pass, and arrived at the Green River on March 19th.

Morgan describes the significance of the crossing this way: "In retrospect this crossing of the South Pass is a high moment in American History. Others had traversed South Pass before him, but Jedediah Smith's was the effective discovery, the linking of the Pass in the lines of force along which the American people were sweeping to the Pacific...Much was to come of [his] discovery of a way west, but he crossed the divide shaking with cold,

President's Message - *continued*

anxious about the condition of his horses, hopeful that the streams would yield beaver..."

Other springs found Jedediah in other places and other climates, from the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, to the California Missions, to Fort Vancouver in the Pacific Northwest to name a few.

No matter how widely scattered they were from one another, following the spring hunts and explorations it would be time for the Mountain Men to gather every summer at a pre-arranged location for the Rendezvous. And so the tradition continues with the Jedediah Smith Society.

This year Jedediah Smith Society will gather in the heart of the Fur Trade country, at Pinedale, Wyoming, July 6-9, 2017. Pinedale sits on the west side of the Wind River Range, near the Green River. It is the home of the Museum of the Mountain Man. This year's Rendezvous ---the Society's 61st--- will be in conjunction with Green River Days in Pinedale, the community's annual celebration of the Fur Trade era. The good people at the Museum of the Mountain Man are expecting us, and they will do all they can to make us feel welcome.

The events commence Thursday evening (July 6) at the Museum of the Mountain Man with a Reception and the introduction of Volume 11, 2017 of The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal, edited by James Hardee. The next morning, Friday July 7, the Jedediah Smith Society will meet at the Hampton Inn in Pinedale from 8 am to 12 noon. We'll enjoy breakfast and informal fellowship from 8-10 am. From 10 am to 12 noon we'll have a business meeting. The Board will share its purpose, progress, plans and goals with the members and guests who are present.

Elsewhere in this issue of Castor is additional information on the 2017 Rendezvous, including a list of hotels in Pinedale. Please remember to make your reservations early. Please plan to attend this year's Rendezvous. It will be great to see old colleagues again, and to make new friendships this summer.

Sincerely, Jim Smith jim@smithandmcgowan.com

Members' Section

Annual Dues are due NOW

JSS dues are due to the Treasurer Jan. 1. Please submit your check to the Treasurer,
1681 Visalia Ave, Berkeley, CA 94707

If we do not receive your dues by the date of the this Castor Publication your name will be removed from the Roster and mailing list.

New Members

Please welcome our new members to the Society. We welcome you to our events and participation in various committees. If you like to write articles please see the guidelines under the editor column.

Loretta Smith Buxton,	Pittston, PA
Linda Clark	Twain Harte, CA
Jim Crumpler	Novato, CA
Eli Idec	Tunkhannock, PA

Programs and Projects

Outreach and Public Relations

Kevin Kucera of Plymouth, Indiana has a research interest and has joined us as Director of Public Relations and Outreach. He will focus his attention to working with other historical societies, advertising to get out brand name to increase the awareness of Jedediah Smith. We will also work on a Power Point presentation that can be used by members to share at schools, universities and public meetings.

Members' Section - *continued*

Digital Interactive Map Project

A group of 6 JSS specialists will work on a digital map of Jedediah Smith's explorations during the fur trade period. Ed Sieckert, coordinator, Jim Hardee, Technical Review editor, Dr. Ned Eddins and Albert Eddins Montana, Wyoming, St. Louis to Wyoming, Kansas and the Mojave area. Joe Molter, California, James Auld, Oregon, Washington; Sheri Wysong, Utah & Nevada. Milton von dam and Wayne Knauf are the financial advisors. It will be interactive on the JSS web site for researchers, students, and the public.

Committee Positions Events Director Needed

We have a new position "Events Director" which will plan, execute the Rendezvous each year. Planning the event, obtaining speakers, coordinating lunch if needed, program bulletins are part of the position. If you have an interest/experience in this area please contact Ed Sieckert, ed@sieckert.com. You do not necessarily need to live in California.

Events

2017 JSS RENDEZVOUS JULY 6-9 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 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), (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.

If you are planning on attending the Rendezvous, please email Jim Smith and let him know.

**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 NOW!

Events - continued

POST RENDEZVOUS FIELD TRIP

Subject: Post Rendezvous Field Trip July 10/11

Dr. Ned Eddins, JSS member in Afton, Wyoming, 60th Conference speaker, Reviewer for the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal has offered to take members attending the JSS Rendezvous and MMM Green River Rendezvous Days on a field trip to key sites that Jedediah Smith travelled while in the area. Dr. Eddins has lived and worked his entire life in the Wyoming area, explored many of Jed's trail routes and has published 2 books. His revised (2017) website on the Fur trade and link to JSS website is excellent. www.thefurtrapper.com

This is a great opportunity to not just see the site but have the history behind it given by Dr. Eddins.

Dates Monday/Tuesday, July 10/11

Each day we will stay in Pinedale (Hampton Inn or other hotel) and travel outbound in **your own car**. Below is the draft of the trip proposed:

July 10 Monday

1. Meet at the Museum of the Mountain Man Parking Lot 8 am
2. Farson Monuments, Pony Express area
3. South Pass Overlook
4. Oregon Trail Monument
Ezra Meeker 1909
Narcisse Whitman-Eliza Spaulding
5. Atlantic City (old mining Town) Lunch at a café in town (no host)
6. Return- Go to South Pass City
7. Sublette Cutoff- 5 miles on dirt road (Ore-CA trail)
8. Lombard Ferry on Green River
9. Fort Bonneville
10. Green River Rendezvous Overlook
11. Return to Pinedale.

July 11 - Leave MMM parking lot at 8:00 AM- Will stop in Pinedale to pick up lunch

1. Union Pass
2. 25+ miles of dirt road with beautiful scenery. Can be traversed in an automobile.
3. 10 small monuments on a knoll describing the whole area. 50 yards on a small trail to the knoll.
4. Lunch around a campfire 2-3 hours. If you want to take a folding camp chair please bring along. If you need one Ned Eddins can bring a few along. Let him know.
5. Monday was a big day with not a lot of time to discuss things. Today will give us plenty of time to talk about any subject at lunch. Union Pass is over 9000 feet in elevation. Take a jacket.
6. Return to Pinedale

FIELD TRIP REGISTRATION

If you plan on going, please register with Jim Smith, 2017 JSS Rendezvous chairman by May 1, 2017.

His email is: jim@smithandmcgowan.com.

This will help us in planning the event.

There is no charge for the trip.

Members' Book Corner

What are you reading?

If you have a book that you would like to recommend to other JSS members, please send your info by email to Paige or Steve Mair at pfrend1@yahoo.com. You can follow the format: title, author, publisher, why I read this book, a short review of the book, and why other members might be interested.

Book Title: *Hard Road West, History and Geology along the Gold Rush Trail*

Author: Keith Heyer Meldahl

Publisher: University of Chicago Press

Why I read this book: I found this book in a bookstore in Ashland, Oregon and it caught my attention as a mixture of human history and natural history.

The Book: In a recent edition of the Castor, there were references to the role of Jedediah Smith in advancing the use of the South Pass to cross the Continental Divide by wagon. If you have ever wondered how it is that there is a gently sloping crossing of the divide at 7,400 feet between two much more difficult and treacherous sets of mountains, then this book is for you. Prof. Meldahl uses the original journals of the Oregon Trail Pioneers to describe the overland journey from Missouri to Oregon and California. As the pioneers describe the terrain, he then reveals how geologic forces acted to cause and shape that terrain. Occasionally, he goes on to describe these same locations as they appear today with interstate highways roaring by and modern conveniences available. I found it to be a fascinating book; the only difficulty is the challenge of switching one's perspective back and forth from the time of the pioneers to the time when tectonic forces were shaping the West some 300 million years ago! A fine read and reminder that human history and exploration is often influenced and/or defined by millennia of natural and geologic forces.

Contributed by Steve Mair

Archives Corner

Joe Molter has been working with Mr. Willkomm of Glen Haven, Wisconsin on a paper that he has researched and has submitted for inclusion into the JSS Collection at University of the Pacific Special Collections.

Research Paper Review

Title of paper: [In Search of the Demise Site of Jedediah Strong Smith](#)

Author: Wayne A. Willkomm, **Date of Paper:** 2016,

Reviewed by: Joe J. Molter on 10/29/2016

In writing this document, the author of this paper has spent much time and money researching his subject. I became acquainted with Wayne over three years ago when he contacted the Jedediah Smith Society asking many questions and requesting copies of materials that the Society possessed, as well as recommendations of other materials and sources he should be seeking out that pertained to the location and circumstances of Jedediah's death. Since that time, he has continued to diligently pursue his quest, even traveling several times to the area this event occurred in Kansas to seek out its truths. What the author has accomplished in his extensive research is to answer many of the puzzling questions and brings to light new concepts and ideas pertaining to this event that in my view makes sense!

One of the interesting things brought up in this paper is that Jedediah and his partners were in a race to be the first ones to Santa Fe. I knew this was the case during the Rocky Mountain Rendezvous period in which the first

Archives Corner - *continued*

supplier to reach these events were the ones that did the best in the way of profits but had never applied it to the Santa Fe trade. It stands to reason why Jed and his partners were a little secretive about sharing too much detail about this venture, especially their departure date.

Another fact brought forth was that even though Jed and his partners had never visited this area before, they were well seasoned in reading the lay of the land and sign on the ground and had sought out good information of where they were, what they were facing and what they had to do. They had realized what the best, safest and only route to take to get their caravan to the Lower Spring, in the conditions they found themselves in. It wasn't to cross the east side or the middle of the "Jornada," a poorly watered short-cut, in a very dry Spring, but instead continue along the Arkansas River to the upper crossing and cross the "Jornada" at its shortest width.

Willkomm is also adamant that Jedediah never came in contact with the Mexican Comancheros before his death and presents a plausible scenario of where and how the Comanche Indians could have hidden themselves so that such an experienced person as he was unaware of their presence until they appeared in a situation that prevent any flight.

The author states he is not a scholar but a "student doer of things" and has a strong interest in the times of the mountain man. He himself is one of those that "lives beyond the sidewalks" and is quite an experienced outdoorsman, being an avid bow hunter, tracker, ballistics expert and a true river rat. He is also a student of nature, a land steward and raises cows and calves and the hay to feed them. Wayne's writing style is unique and he refers to his paper as his "rambling epistle". His paper is a little wordy, redundant on some points and doesn't have footnotes nor explain meanings to his colloquial terms but as he told me himself, he didn't want to make it too easy for the reader but wants them to do a little digging for themselves. Beyond this, the author has been very thorough in his researching out all the facts and his good logic and reasoning has produced answers to many past questions to what really happened. I recommend that any student of Jedediah Strong Smith should read and have a copy of this paper. This paper has been submitted to the Society for possible publishing in the "Castor" but due to its length (23 pages) it might not get published. Wayne has therefore mentioned that he would be glad to send an electronic or hard copy to anyone who requests a copy. Please include return address for a hard copy and an email address for an electronic copy to: Wayne Willkomm, 8271 Duncan Rd., Glen Haven, WI 53810.

*This paper has been placed into the JSS Manuscript Collection
Mss 018 at Special Collections, University of the Pacific.*

Monuments

Mary Drachler, JSS member and former board member lives in Bainbridge, New York and submitted this article on Jedediah Smith's birthplace.

Birthplace of Jedediah Strong Smith

Jedediah Strong Smith was born and spent his early childhood in the Susquehanna River Valley of New York State. Today farms fill the lush valley and small villages dot the river bank. The river begins in Otsego Lake, best known for the village of Cooperstown and the Baseball Hall of Fame at the southern end of the lake. Several streams enter the Susquehanna as it flows south 70 miles to Bainbridge and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay. Every Memorial Day for the past 54 years, canoers have raced those 70 miles as part of the General Clinton Canoe Regatta. The canoe races commemorate the events of August 1779 when Congress authorized General John Sullivan and General James Clinton to remove the Iroquois from this area.

The town was given the name Jericho by the Commissioner of the Land Office, and the first town meeting of Jericho was held April 19, 1791. This settlement was about a mile north of the current Village of Bainbridge. By the time Jedediah Strong Smith was born, the community boasted of the first schoolhouse in the area, a tavern, a

Monuments - *continued*

blacksmith shop, two stores, a hat manufacturer, a tailor shop, and several residences (Danforth 1986, 66). There are no records of the students who might have attended that school.

The history of the town's name is confusing, but not without a good story. By 1798 the settlement had begun to move south to its current location, and in 1804 a wooden bridge was built across the Susquehanna. The villagers began building a meeting house; the frame was erected and a roof put on. But for some reason building stopped. The years took their toll, and one night in 1813 it was mysteriously destroyed by fire.

The village was the eastern terminus of the Susquehanna to Bath Turnpike. There was a Land Grant office in Bath. Local lore tells that frequent travel by teams east and west spread the news of the fire, and when a local merchant traveled to the Hudson River area and told of his hometown the people exclaimed, "Oh, that's where they burned the church." He came back to Jericho and immediately started the process of renaming the town to scuttle the reputation. So by act of the Legislature the name was changed to Bainbridge on April 15, 1814, in honor of Commodore William S. Bainbridge who was a popular hero of the American Navy at that time. Today there is a city of Jericho, New York, located on Long Island.

Early church records located at the First Presbyterian Church in Bainbridge, New York, indicate that Jedediah Smith Sr. joined the Religious Congregational Society of Celicia in the town of Jerico (sic) in Tioga County on May 7, 1793. That would mean that he, his wife Sally Strong, and her brother Cyrus came here in the early 1790s. They established a small store for the purpose of trading goods that settlers needed in exchange for lumber which was largely substituted for specie (hard money) before the turn of the century (Danforth 1986, 64). The store undoubtedly was a log cabin, as was their home. Ash, oak, maple, birch, cherry, walnut, chestnut, pine, and hemlock were found in the surrounding woods.

In these same Presbyterian Church records, on August 21, 1794, the trustees and Society met according to notification and made the choice of Jedediah Smith, Collector for the upper district.

Jedediah Strong Smith was the fourth child born to the Smiths at Jericho. The eldest son Ralph arrived on September 11, 1794, followed by Betsey on February 12, 1796, and Eunice on October 7, 1797.

Jedediah was born January 6, 1799 (Morgan 1964, 24). From those same church records we learn that these four children were baptized on August 13, 1800.

As boys, Jedediah and Ralph would have found ample opportunities to fish in the river where even now bass and walleye are eager to take an angler's bait. In the woods are deer, rabbits, squirrels, turkeys, and beaver to lure young hunters. Most certainly the Smith brothers honed their hunting skills at an early age.

No record exists of when the Jedediah Smith family moved west, but church records show that Jedediah Smith was removed in December 1817.

Today two monuments honor Jedediah Strong Smith in Bainbridge. The first is located in the Village Park in the center of the village and reads:



IN MEMORY OF
JEDEDIAH STRONG SMITH
PATHFINDER OF THE SIERRAS
BORN IN BAINBRIDGE, N.Y., JAN 6, 1799
THE FIRST AMERICAN TO FIND A GATEWAY THROUGH
THE ROCKY MTS TO THE PACIFIC COAST, AT THE PRICE
OF AN HEROIC DEATH ON MAY 27, 1831.
ERECTED BY
AG-WRON-DOUG-WAS CHAPTER, DAR
1950

Monuments - *continued*

The second monument is located at Pathfinder Park at the north end of the village.



Jedediah Strong Smith Mountain Man, Western Pathfinder

Jedediah Strong Smith was born in Jericho (Bainbridge) on January 6, 1799 in his family's log cabin 1 mile east of this site, close to the Susquehanna River.

His parents moved here from New England about 1790. During his childhood here, Smith developed his interest for hunting and exploring in this wilderness and his business sense from his father at his trading post where Dingman Hill Road meets Route 7. Church records indicate he was baptized into the Christian faith August 13, 1800 by the Congregational Society of Cilicia, Jericho, New York

In 1822 he joined the Ashley-Henry Expedition from St. Louis. For nearly nine years, he led beaver-trapping brigades and explored the West. He rediscovered South Pass, opening the route for westward movement through the Rocky Mountains.

He was the first American to enter California overland, cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains from west to east, cross the Nevada desert, traverse Utah from north to south, and travel from Southern California to the Columbia River, as leader of exploring-trapping parties.

On May 27, 1831, while Smith was leading a trading expedition and searching for water, he was attacked and killed on the Santa Fe Trail by Comanche Indians.

Erected May 2005
Bainbridge Boy Scout Troup 52
Eagle Scout Project – Andrew McFee



A view of the Susquehanna River taken near where the childhood home of Jedediah Strong Smith is thought to have been.

Danforth, Edward Dr. 1986. *Stones from the Walls of Jericho*. Deposit, New York: Valley Offset, Inc.

Morgan, Dale. 1964. *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Eager Beaver Awards

Last issue we reported that Irene Steiner was awarded the Eager Beaver Award for her outstanding longtime contributions to the Castor and Website. The photo is of Irene receiving the plaque.



left Ed Sieckert, Irene Steiner, Wayne Knauf

Jedediah Smith Relatives:



Barbara Bush
Jeff Bush
Jessica Bush
John Felt
Ed Sieckert
Loretta Smith Buxton

...

Marlene-Smith-Baranzini,
friend of JSS

Marlene is the editor of *Overland Express*, Oregon California Trail Association. She is related to the 'Strong' side of the family. Verified in the JSS Genealogy section of Mss 018 at UOP Special Collections.

Student Projects

Both of these students contacted JSS through our web site.

Marissa Guggenheim of Loyola Marymont University in Los Angeles is writing a paper on Jedediah Smith and his travels for her senior project.

Eli Eidec, Tunkhannock, PA has submitted his senior paper entitled Bluffs, Beavers, and Bullets: The Explorations of Jedediah Smith and his contributions toward the Realization of Manifest Destiny.

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The Society wishes to thank the sponsors and patrons and all members for the investment in the future of our society.

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Thank you

Memorials

We want to remember our fellow Jed Smith members who have left us this year.

Robert Smith	Oakdale, Ca
Thomas Shephard	Stockton, Ca
Richard Dillion	Historian; Librarian at Sutro Library, San Francisco, Ca



Getting to Know Your Officers & Board Members

This is a new section that will provide name, photo and email of the officers and Board Members.
The intention is to broaden our communication level beyond the Roster.



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Jedediah Smith Society membership is open to all who wish to join in support of research, preservation and information about the 1st American arriving overland 1826 and other California pioneers of the 18th & 19th centuries.

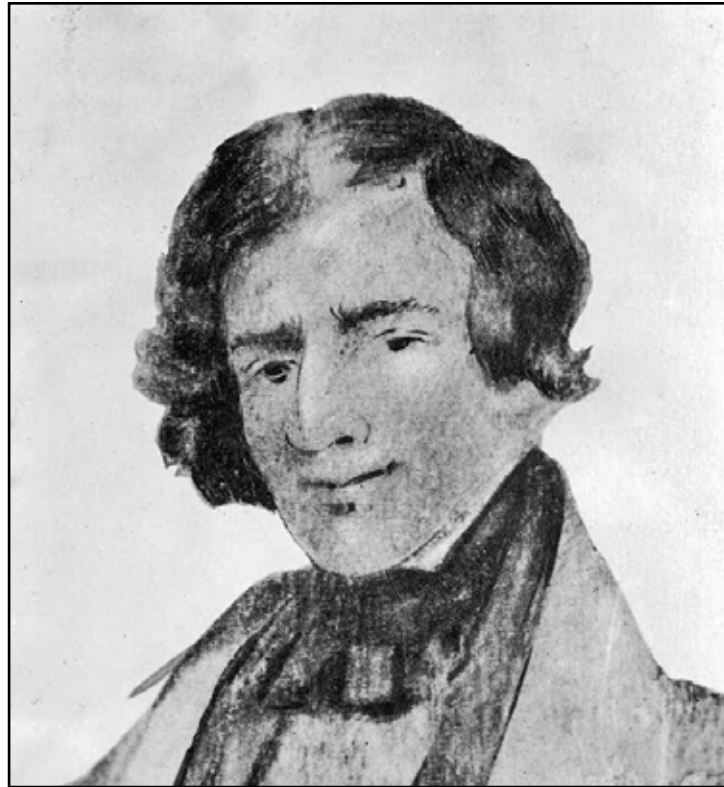
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See website: jedediahsmithsociety.org Go to Membership then click "Application"



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**Make sure your dues are up to date.
Dues were due Jan 1, 2017.**