



CASTOR CANADENSIS

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

SUMMER 2010

The Back Side of Bonanza

By
Clifford Curtice



Had a 20th Century responsible and objective journalist been on the scene, a newspaper from the Spring of 1848 might have looked something like this:

New Helvetia Herald
EXTRA!
**Gold Discovered at Captain Sutter's
Saw Mill on the American River!
Aborigines' Homeland Stolen!**

In 1848, of course, no one considered the development of the West to be theft; but such a headline would have accurately predicted the genocide and ethnocide of the Nisenan, or Southern Maidu, people. Eyewitnesses, in the autumn of 1847, did not record whether there were Native Americans living at their Cullomah (Coloma) village when James Marshall and his crew (mostly Mormon returnees from the Mexican-American War) arrived to build a water-powered sawmill for John Sutter.

Quite possibly, local Nisenan had temporarily left Cullomah to harvest the winter Chinook run, at Salmon Falls. Or they may have fled to a more remote area, fearful of Anglos' motives, guns, and diseases. A few old survivors might well have remembered the terrible "White Man's Plagues": cholera, measles, smallpox, diphtheria, and malaria, which decimated as many as 100,000 of their Northern California brethren between 1830 and 1833.

Fear comes mostly from misunderstandings, from obstacles to communication. In 1847, there likely was very little animosity between local Amerinds and Anglos or Hispanics, although there is some evidence that John Sutter treated native people like chattel: incarcerating some, and feeding his workers mush [corn, beans, meat] from troughs as if they were farm animals. This behavior, however, appears to have been more exception than rule, and the non-native population was small, prior to gold discovery.

In September of 1850 John Steele arrived in California. From 1850 to 1852 he kept a journal (published in 1901) titled, *In Camp and Cabin*. Steele relates his interactions with both Hispanic Californios and native people. Prominent among the latter were "Captain Juan", leader of "Columbia" village (probably named by Steele for his home county in Wisconsin), located near the horse-shoe curve on what is now Bayne Road near Kelsey, and his son, Tchubo, whom Steele tried, unsuccessfully, to save from alcohol-

ism, in the pursuit of which Tchubo was aided and abetted by local saloon owners. Captain Juan and Tchubo were both fluent in Spanish as well as their Maidu dialect, and were learning English from Steele. Researchers have since discovered that many Native Americans were multilingual.

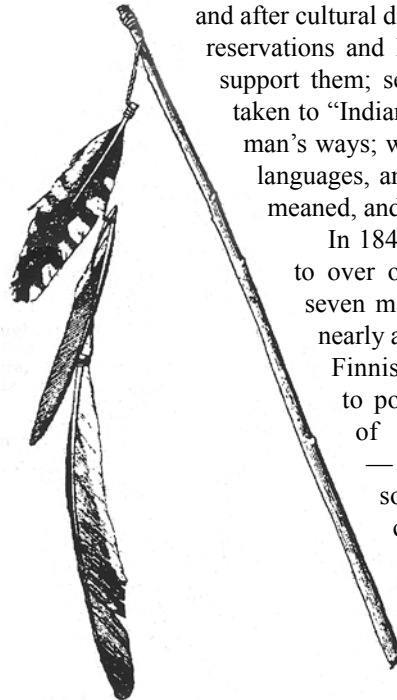
Both *Shirley Letters* and *In Camp and Cabin* reveal that aboriginal Californians in the very early 1850's panned for gold, we assume to exchange for wares, food, and sometimes, liquor. Steele watched native women, as well as men, mine near his "Kelsey" cabin.

To indigenous Californians the gold rush must have seemed like some biblical plague – those not killed by bullets, diseases, and alcohol saw their environment, including village sites, literally demolished by mining activities. Silted spawning beds decimated populations of salmon, trout, and other aquatic species. Deer, elk, pronghorn, and hare populations were devastated by a hungry exploding population of miners and tradesmen. From the late 1850's into the 1880's ranchers herded their pigs to harvest autumn acorns, which further denied native people their traditional food staple. Some foothill natives had undoubtedly heard tales of mistreatments, including the rape of female neophytes, at California's missions.

In retrospect, we now realize that long-lasting resentments toward European invaders developed only after repeated expropriations of native-owned lands, after legal disenfranchisement, and after cultural deprivation: being driven onto reservations and Rancherias which could not support them; seeing their children forcibly taken to "Indian schools" to learn the white man's ways; watching their rich traditions, languages, and material cultures lost, demeaned, and destroyed.

In 1847, Alta California was home to over one hundred tribes speaking seven major language families, each nearly as different from the others as Finnish is from Greek! Contrary to popular beliefs — both those of 150 years ago and today — aboriginal Californians had social and religious sophistication, high moral codes of conduct, and extensive cultural trade exchanges with other tribes, including the Paviotso, Shoshoni, and Washo of Nevada.

Today's anglo vocabulary is filled with denigrative stereotypes such as "Digger Indian Springs Campground" (Hwy 50), "squaw," "papoose," "buck" "war-whoop," "chief," and "red man." If we do not presently



Continued on page 2

The Back Side of Bonanza

Continued from front page

appreciate Native Californians' contributions to human culture – including the world's finest baskets and a system of sustainable horticulture (the tending of the oak woodlands) unparalleled in human history, which we are only now beginning to comprehend, is there any chance that they will ever be perceived as other than historic curiosities and vanquished people?

By the end of the 1850's the magnitude of the scourge had al-



ready begun to lessen as placer gold played out and miners flocked to other strikes in other states. Now broken liquor bottles, rusty tins, barrel hoops, and mining debris scarred the formerly pristine environment. For surviving victims of gold discovery the final ignominy had to have been the superiority displayed by almost all with whom they had dealings. Most people of European stock, newcomers to California, treated indigenous people as “dirty, ignorant, heathen savages” whom they felt justified in exploiting, disparaging, dispossessing, even exterminating, without consideration or remorse and, in the worst cases, with pride and boasting.

Gold brought early statehood to California, and later, helped the Union win the Civil War, but for Native Americans its discovery was a death knell, tolling the ethnocide and genocide of a proud and prosperous people.

[This article first appeared in the *Current*, American River Conservancy Coloma, CA April 1998.]

THE NEW YORK STATE CONSERVATIONIST



S. NEWHOUSE

TRAPS

By Nick Drahos

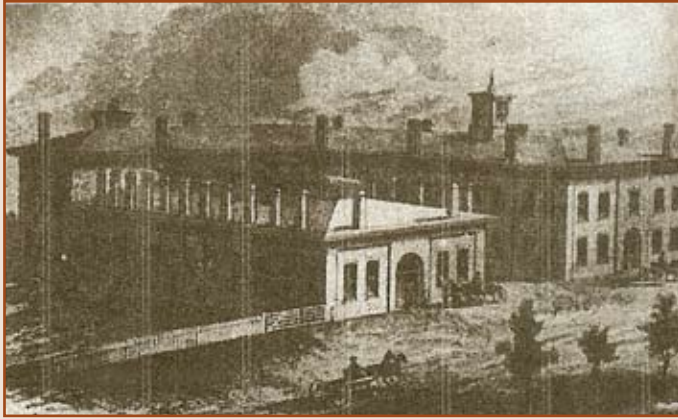
Regardless of personal sentiment for or against the trapping of wild animals, there are certain facts relating to traps and trapping which are of significance to everyone:

1. The trap was a vital tool in the march of civilization from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific. Going before the axe and plow, the trap – even more than the rifle – forced the beaver and the bear to give way to the wheat field, the library and the piano.
2. [New York] and many others, including Wisconsin, Minnesota, Oregon, Kansas and Colorado might well adopt the steel trap in their coats of arms; in any case, they owe that much of their settlement and development to the trap.
3. New York State is still the second largest fur producer in the nation; its women are the largest (in money value) fur coat buyers; and NY City is the center of the world fur trade as well as of fur importation.
4. The trap entirely changed the standard of living of many Indian nations, as well as of white men.
5. The steel trap is still essential for the harvesting of a wildlife crop and for the control of animals that threaten the interests and health of humans – animals ranging from orchard killing mice to rabies infected foxes and deer-killing coyote hybrids.

Father of this trap business was Sewell Newhouse. As a 17-year old lad he began making traps at Oneida Castle, following the 1768 English trap design. Each year he made a new set of 50 tempered traps out of old axe heads, scythes, files, rasps and bolts. These he used himself, then sold to the Oneida Indians for 62 cents apiece. (He became a famous trapper and gunsmith in his own right, and readily spoke the Oneida language.) The Oneidas took their highly prized Newhouse traps with them when they moved to Green Bay, Wisconsin on July 4, 1833 after selling their lands in New York State. And from Green Bay, the fame of the Newhouse trap spread westward.

Prior to 1848, Newhouse and his assistant blacksmith John Eddy were making 1,000 to 2,000 traps a year, all hand forged. In 1848 the Newhouses joined the Oneida Community, an experiment in communal living at Kenwood and shortly thereafter the steel trap business – financed by the Community and supervised by Newhouse – really got underway. The Newhouse trap was put on a mass production basis. Later a factory was built at Sherrill, and between 1864 and 1872 production of traps by the Community ran over the three-quarter million mark. Not many people realize that the steel trap for many years financially supported one of the most famous social experiments in our country's history.

Continued on page 3



Oneida Community-Newhouse Trap Works at Sherrill, Circa, 1860

The *Newhouse* trap provided trappers with a standard pattern in sizes, a product of precision work, light in weight, durable and reliable Every trap a perfect trap – that was the Newhouse watchword.

The only time the Oneida Community's trap business was in jeopardy was when the Blake, Lamb & Company's "Jump" trap came out in 1865. This was the first major departure from the English design and did away with the long single and double springs of Newhouse traps. It was short, compact, and light, with springs under the pan enabling the trap, when sprung, to jump about an inch off the ground to grasp the animal's leg higher up. Its lighter weight was also a boon to trappers, since it meant they could carry more. The Community immediately copied the principle and came out with the *Onedia Jump*, a trap with one under-the-pan spring.

In 1880 the Community was forced by pressure of public opinion to break up and re-organize minus the controversial communal aspects under the name of Oneida Community, Ltd. Newhouse died December 18, 1888, but trap manufacture continued to flourish with four styles in production: the *Newhouse* (1855), the *Oneida Jump* (1868), *Hawley & Norton* (1874), and the *Victor* (1886). A Canadian factory was built in 1896 with Oneida expansion into the mouse and rat trap business in 1906. Peak production of Oneida was reached in 1910, when 6,812,000 traps were made.

After the first World War Oneida decided that the trap business had served its purpose well, but that the future looked brighter in other fields. It sold its mouse and rat trap business in 1924 to the Animal Trap Company of America, organized that year at Lititz, PA and in 1925 Oneida sold out its entire trap line to the same company. Oneida today is known as Oneida Ltd, makers of fine silver.

After Oneida's exit, the Animal Trap Company of America quietly started to buy up trap makers. It bought out; W.A. Gibbs & Son with Triumph and Gibbs in 1936; Pratt Mfg. Co., Joliet, Illinois in 1937; Charles D. Birdsell, Inc., Crisfield, MD in 1939; Lester A Beardsley's Diamond Brand March 30, 1941; and Lovell Mfg. Co., Erie, PA in 1947.

There is still, of course, a bustling business in traps. The end is not in sight. Furbearers continue to play vital roles in many aspects of contemporary civilization – in the clothing industry, in medical research, in vermin and predator control, in their own right as valued and respected citizens of the world. Whether we like it or not, until we find something better, the trap remains the surest and most economical means of controlling our dynamic furbearer populations – for their own good as well as man's.

Crediting: Thanks for article help are due to Stephen R. Leonard, Sr., Kenwood, N.Y.; Dr. L.C. Jones, N.Y. State Historical Society, Cooperstown, N.Y.; Lester Giles, American Humane Association, Albany, N.Y.; Whalen Smith, Personnel Dept., Oneida, Ltd., Sherrill, N.Y.; D.S. Morrison, Animal Trap Company of America, Lititz, PA.

Below are 3 views of the same trap



French Style:

as shown on pg. 145 of 3rd edition of *The Trap Collector's Guide*, by Frodelius & Burt, 1981.

This trap was found by Merle G. Curtice in Fawcett Swamp, near South Tacoma, Washington, (Pierce County), in the early 1920's.

Merle replaced the original pan, which was nearly rusted away, when found.

Continued on page 4



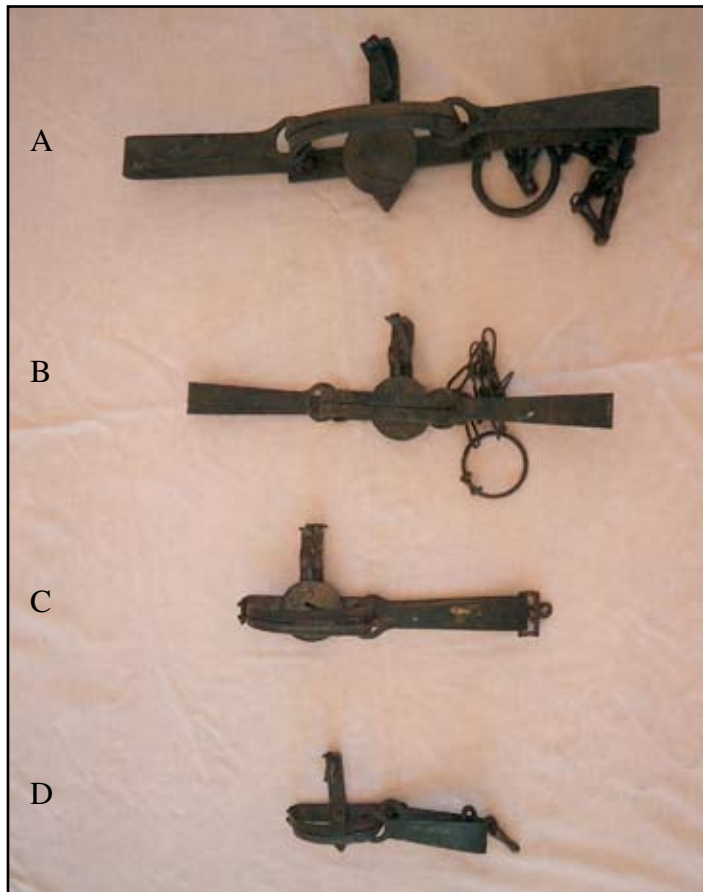
This incomplete trap was found by Merle G. Curtice near Fiddletown, Amador Co., CA in the early 1940's. It is a "one-of-a-kind" (not mass produced) hand forged, and similar to one in the Sutter's Fort Collection. Some conservators believe the "Sutter" trap may have been made in the Fort's blacksmith shop - 1840's - 1850's, but we have no way of knowing for certain!

Chains used with traps

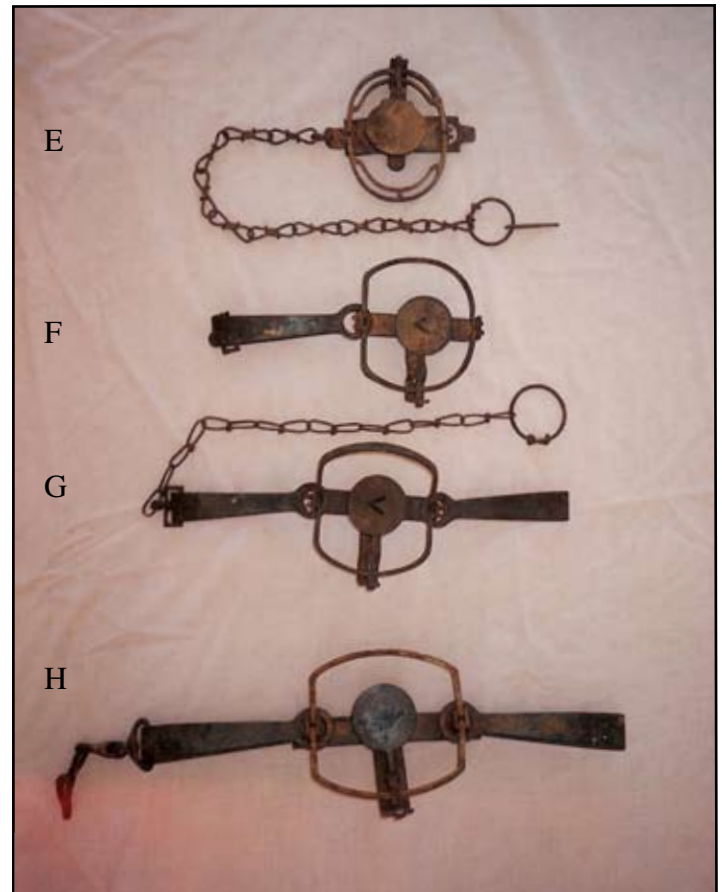


- 1- Lock Link Pattern, used by Blake and Lamb
- 2- Tenso Pattern, used by many companies
- 3- American Coil Chain, used by Triumph and Newhouse
- 4 - Niagra Pattern, used by Oneida, Triumph, etc.

Closed Traps (photo 1)



Open Traps (photo 2)



- "B" and "C" in photo 1 as well as "F" and "G" in photo 2, are the same traps, shown open and closed.
- "D" and "E" are different traps. "E" is a double-jawed "jump" trap.
- "A" and "H" are very similar, but different examples of #3 "Oneida Community" traps. "H" is a "Hawley & Norton" "Oneida", but "A" is a "S. Newhouse" "Oneida". The only differences, except names stamped on the pans, are: The "Newhouse" has a slightly larger (in diameter) pan, and forged 2-piece attachments for the jaws. The "Hawley & Norton" ("H") has one piece attachments for the jaws.
- "B" trap is a #2 "Victor"
- "C" trap is a #1-1/2 "Victor"
- "D" trap is an "O" - "Oneida-S. Newhouse"

RENDEZVOUS 2010 **

2010 Fur Trade Symposium

Three Forks of the Missouri, MT 200th anniversary of the erection of the Fort Three Forks trading post by the Missouri Fur Company led by Pierre Menard and Andrew Henry in April 1810.

Beginning with a field trip day and two days with speakers and concluding with Saturday night Barbeque Banquet and Entertainment at the Sacajawea Inn. Friday and Saturday lunch included in Registration fee. All other meals on your own.

Guided field trip to Fort Three Forks locale and Headwaters State Park - 1pm Thursday.

Upper Missouri Outfit of the American Mountain Men will demonstrate at Headwaters State Park. A Trapper's Camp by Manuel Lisa Party of the American Mountain Men will be at Milwaukee Park in Three Forks.

Speakers: Hal Stearns Keynote: *History of the Three Forks Area.*

Dr. James Hanson: *The Mystery of the Three Forks Anvil.*

Dr. John Logan Allen: *The Forgotten Explorers:*

William Clark and the "Master Map" of 1810-1812.

Mark Kelly: *The Evacuation of Three Forks.*

Larry Morris: *The Peeagans Had Attacked a Hunting Party: The Montana Fur Trade from 1807-1810.*

Paul Raezka: *Posted: No Trespassing; The Blackfoot and the American Fur Trapper.*

Allen Chronister: *Ceremonial Trade on the Plains.*

Jim Hardee: *The Fort at the Forks...A Good State of Defense.*

Clay J. Landry: *When Appraised of Danger-A Host Unto Himself, Michael Immel, Fur Man.*

Dr. Dan Flores: *The Horse Trade in the Early American West between 1780-1825.*

Rich Aarsted: *"This Unfortunate Affair" An 1810 Letter from the Tree Forks of the Missouri.*

Lysa Wegman-French: *Recent Historical and Archaeological Investigations Toward Finding Manual Lisa's 1807 Fort.*

C. Adrian Heidenreich: *The Western Tipi Pole of Crow Territory: Tribes, Fur Trade, and the Free Forks Area.*

Cody Merchant: *John Colter at the Tree Forks.*

Registration fee of \$150 includes Field Trip by bus, lunches Friday and Saturday, also Saturday evening Banquet at the Sacajawea Inn.

Additional Saturday Night ticket, \$25.00.

Registration form on line or contact Capt'n with clear, slow message: 916-971-1720.

CAPT'N SAYS

Welcome new members; Davy Mitchell, *Lubbock, TX*, Mr. & Mrs. Max Groth, *Santana, KS*, Russell P. Brenneman, *Gravois Mills, MO*, Joseph Ferrari, *Linden, CA*, Von Damm, *Berkeley, CA*.



Sponsors: Bill Hathorn, Von Damm, Robert Sandridge, Troy Tuggle, Max Groth, Roger Williams, Bob Shannon.

Patrons: Jim Steibinger

Congratulations Dr. Aaron Woodard on the completion and defense of your dissertation. Welcome to the Club! Aaron presented "Water in the Wilderness – Jed Smith's Trails & Trials," to the Dakota History Conference in April.

Bernice Laners, Charter member of Jedediah Smith Corral, W. Intl., ranches 20 miles outside Hot Springs SD on the edge of the Black Hills on one side with the Prairie on the other. The 125 year old ranch is worked by her four children. We hope the President of the Southern Hills Cattle Women will honor us with a poem in the future.

Jim Hardee assisted the bidding for Sublette County Historical (Pinedale, WY) at the auction of rare letters from the late Fred Risvold collection. Jedediah Smith letters are now available to researchers at the Pinedale Museum.

Finally the 50th Anniversary keepsake publication, #3 in Trapper Series, is ready for pick at UOP. It will be mailed to all current dues members soon. Additional copies of this 300 limited edition are available for ten dollars to the office.

After waiting 3 years for construction completion, I was rejected 2 weeks before scheduled move in at Acacia Creek, Union City, CA. So the office is now located in kitchen and living room at the Carlton Plaza in Sacramento. Answering Machine (speak slow and clear) 916-971-1720. 1075 Fulton Ave. #232, Sacramento, CA 95825.

The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Forum July 8-11, 2010 Box 900, Pinedale, WY 307-367-4101

Contact for more info.

Thursday July 8 * Dr. Gowans Fatal and Hostile Encounters on Proveu's and Webber's Forks.

Papers:

Steve Banks *Union Pass: A Mountain of Many Waters.*

Alida Bourn *Goggles in the Rocky Mountain West.*

Thomas. Danisi and John C. Jackson *Was Meriwether Lewis the Godfather of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade?*

Clay J. Landry *Going Indian! The Use of Leggings and Breech Clout by the Euro-American Trapper of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade.*

Tim Tanner *Painting the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade: An Artist Creates On the Headwaters of Spanish River.*

Rick Williams *Wheels to Rendezvous.*

Steve Banks and Dr. Fred Gowans will guide a tour of Union Pass – Friday July 9th from 8am to 3 pm.

INVITE A FRIEND TO JOIN

Membership in the Jedediah Smith Society is open to all who wish to join in supporting research, preservation and information about the 1st American to arrive overland into CA and other California pioneers of the 18th Century.

Student	\$10.00	Individual	\$20.00
Sponsor	\$50.00	Patron	\$100.00

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Please make check payable to: JEDEDIAH SMITH SOCIETY
Dr. Clover, 1075 Fulton Ave, #232 Sacramento CA 95825



RENDEZVOUS 2010 September 9-11, 2010

Society Representative Joe Molter (Details p. 5)

200 YEAR COMMEMORATION OF THE FORT AT THREE FORKS OF THE MISSOURI RIVER

For more info. write:

P.O. Box 116, Three Forks, MT 59752
museumthreeforks@aol.com • 406-285-4778

Headquarters Sacajawea Inn, Three Forks

Hotels available in Whitehall, Belgrade, and Bozeman. Also see *Three Forks Chamber of Commerce*.

Hal Sterns, Helena MT, Author and Historian Keynote Speaker

Early History of the Three Forks Area

Friday Morning, September 10, 2010.



Limited Copies

Rocky Mountain Journal Vol 1, 2, & 3 available for \$30 postpaid. New issue Vol. 4, postpaid in stock. Send payment to: Jedediah Smith Society, 1075 Fulton Ave. #232, Sacramento CA 95825



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Dues will expire Jan 1st

