



# CASTOR CANADENSIS

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

SPRING 2016

## Jedediah Strong Smith: Trails West

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### INTRODUCTION

#### JEDEDIAH STRONG SMITH

was among America's premiere trailblazers. His explorations contributed to overland routes used by over 400,000 emigrants following the Platte River-South Pass Trail.<sup>1</sup> Included in these pioneers were an estimated 40,000 children and over 1 million animals enroute to Oregon and California on what would become America's famous Oregon-California Trail. This article focuses on Jedediah Strong Smith, his extraordinary skills as a mountain man, trail explorer, and man of moral principles.

Great Britain's Atlantic colonists were instilled with a "sea to sea" mentality, an early "manifest destiny," which encouraged them to acquire as much hemispheric land as possible to assist in the expansion of an increasingly more expensive imperial system. Anglo-American pioneers initially were encouraged to extend their presence into regions with an abundance of resources through trade with the Indians and, eventually, to establish frontier settlements and businesses. The policy seemed to be a profitable and noble undertaking to promoters in London. However, long before they realized that this was tantamount to an assured loss of their American empire, autonomous colonists had relocated in the virgin wilderness during a century of "salutary neglect" by Parliament. Colonists chose to emigrate from the security of their coastal Anglo-American communities to the log cabin out posts of a rapidly emerging "America" from which they created and introduced new institutions and personal values.

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*Author's note: In 1999, the bicentennial of Jedediah Strong Smith's birth will be celebrated. This manuscript has been written as an invitation for OCTA members to assist in the transformation of Jedediah Strong Smith from an often unappreciated mountain man into an exemplary western hero.*

The westward movement of these hardy pioneers—the "continuous rebirth of society" in increasingly more distant frontier zones, as described by historian Frederick Jackson Turner—contributed to the birth of a new nation decades before the Revolution of 1776.

The frontier from the 1600s to 1750s extended about two hundred miles from the Atlantic seaboard to the Appalachian Mountains; from the 1750s to early 1800s, it increased by over five hundred miles to the Mississippi River; and from the early 1800s to 1850s, Anglo-Americans expanded the land claimed by 1,800 miles to the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, this last move by the pioneers was an "all or nothing" trek since there were few places to stop for help along the way (frequently the situation in early migrations): for these emigrants, it was "a greater distance to be covered in one season than their ancestors had accomplished in more than two centuries."<sup>2</sup>

How did one get to the Pacific? In the early 1800s, few had tried. There were the three American expeditions—Lewis and Clark, Jedediah Smith, and Joseph Walker. During the 1840s, mountain men spoke of the "great, unmeasured distance" to the coast and the "inhospitable" wilderness inhabited by "savage" Indians. The entire distance west of Missouri had been untraversed by a single wagon before 1830. The route that would become the popular Oregon-California Trail was largely trackless prairie and uncharted wilderness, waiting to be reconnoitered by trailblazers. Before 1840, the route to the Rocky Mountains was virtually the same as that explored by Smith and his party of trappers during the 1820s. When these men ascended the Platte River and its tributaries, they knew:

They were approaching the Black Hills [also known as the Laramie Hills], which rose at first only slightly above the rolling plains, but presently became a pleasant, undulating region of pointed dark pines, refreshingly different from

*Continued on page 2*

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the hot and dusty land they had thus far seen. The hills grew higher and near the dividing ridge were more bushy, with scrubby pine and juniper. Beyond the divide the ravines were steeper, rugged and rocky. The western slope of the Black Hills was undiscovered country....<sup>3</sup>

The expedition rediscovered South Pass<sup>4</sup> by way of the Sweetwater branch of the north fork of the Platte River. During the spring of 1824, the Smith party made the first effective discovery of what would become the most important wagon route across the Rocky Mountains. It was Smith's crossing which for the first time announced to the entire country that a passage for loaded wagons destined for the Columbia River had been found. South Pass—the gateway to the Rocky Mountains and as important as was the Cumberland Gap for eastern travelers crossing the Appalachian Mountain—commanded the various routes to the Great Salt Lake Basin and entire Pacific Coast. Although Astorian trappers had crossed the pass from west to east in 1812, the Smith party was the first to publicize that American pioneers with their wagons could not only overcome the mountainous barrier but go forth and transform the rich coastal regions of the continent into thriving American outposts. The route beckoned farmers, gold seekers, missionaries, mountain men, and entrepreneurs.

Thus, began the final chapter of America's occupation and annexation of the Far West. This period actually began with the Smith party's Southwest Expedition in 1826.

The first of the historic expeditions to reach the Pacific Ocean from the central Rocky Mountains in trapping grounds started from the recently discovered Salt Lake basin in the summer of 1826. Its leader was Jedediah Strong Smith, a pathfinder beyond the Rocky Mountains who deserves a place in national tradition equal in every respect to that accorded Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, Daniel Boone, Kit Carson, or any other American explorer.<sup>5</sup>

### BIOGRAPHY

**JEDEDIAH STRONG SMITH** was born 6 January 1799 in the fertile Susquehanna Valley of western New York. He was raised on a diet of Indians, wild animals, pioneer hardships, and God-fearing sermons. His career began when he joined William

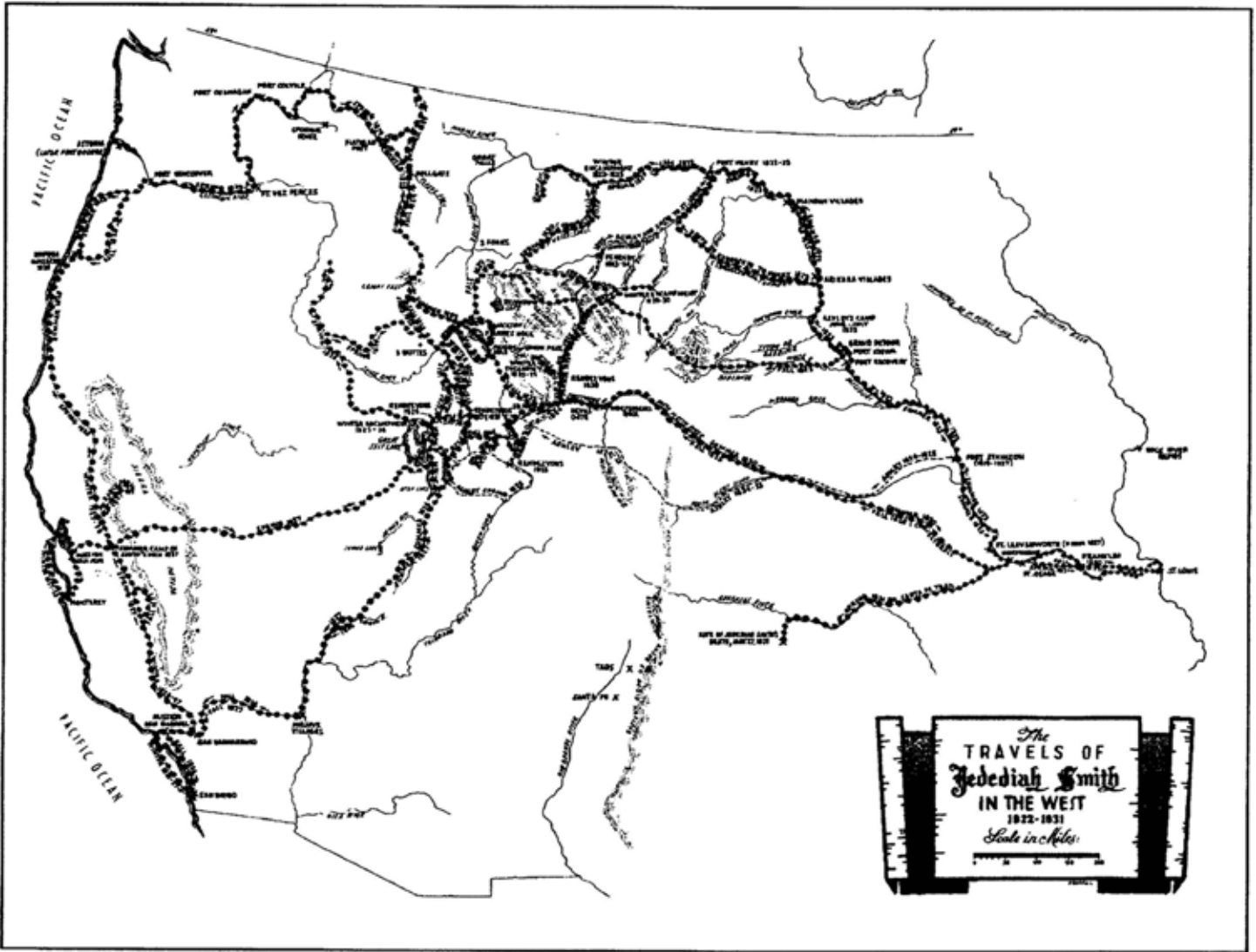
H. Ashley and Andrew Henry's fur company in 1822 as a hunter and trapper searching for beaver along the upper Missouri River. Although scarcely in his twenties, this skilled plainsman indicated that he "was destined to become America's greatest explorer."<sup>6</sup> After leading several profitable trapping expeditions to the eastern Rocky Mountain foothills, Smith was invited to become a partner in the fur company. In 1826, not committed to a life of hardship, Ashley decided to leave the mountains to concentrate on his business interests and political aspirations in St. Louis. Consequently, he sold his share in the fur company to Smith and his new partners, David Jackson and William Sublette. Despite Ashley's preoccupation with his personal affairs, he continued to supply the new partners with provisions in exchange for furs.

On 17 or 18 August 1826, Smith and seventeen trappers left Jackson and Sublette camped at their Cash Valley rendezvous site in northeastern Utah. Smith hoped to "find parts of [the southwest] country as well stocked with Beaver as the water of the Missouri . . . ." Smith assured his partners that he would return with a complete report about his journey at their next summer rendezvous, scheduled for Bear Lake near the juncture of present-day Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming.

The expedition traveled south along the eastern side of the Great Salt Lake, following the Sevier and Virgin rivers, then to the Colorado River where the group met the hospitable Mohave Indians. After resting and trading for food and fresh horses, the expedition crossed the Colorado River. With assistance from two Indians, the travelers followed an ancient Indian trading route (Old Spanish Trail) through the "complete barrens" of the Mohave Desert. The exhausted mountain men proceeded across the San Bernardino Mountains into the increasingly more fertile valleys of the great southern California basin. Their unannounced arrival at Mission San Gabriel startled the resident padre, Father Jose Sanchez. Nevertheless, his greeting and hospitality were genuine.

The padre, although "a very fine man and very much of a gentleman," warned the Americans about his government's opposition to the intrusion of borderlands by armed explorers; he convinced Smith to communicate with the governor in San Diego and explain his intentions while in the Mexican province. After receiving Smith's letter, the governor demanded the American's presence in San Diego to personally explain the expedition's nature. While some of the

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The travels of Jedediah Smith between 1822 and 1831 are highlighted on this map; as well as noting routes through the Northwest and Great Basin, the map also notes Smith's travels into Mexican California and up the Pacific Coast. (The Jedediah Smith Society)



Monuments located ten miles east of Sacramento, California, at Folsom City Park near the historic American River. The monument was erected by the Sacramento County Historical Society and is dedicated to Smith who was the "First of American Trappers on This River; April 30, 1827...." (Photograph by Raymond F. Wood, The Jedediah Smith Society)

trappers enjoyed the hospitality of the mission, Smith and several companions rode to San Diego. They expected to secure from Governor Jose Echeandia official permission to continue their expedition north through coastal California. After several weeks of vacillating during the detainment of the Americans, Echeandia denied the request. The suspicious governor feared both the armed American trappers and his own fickle superiors in Mexico City. Indecision seemed to be his most prudent action. Eventually, Smith and his men were ordered to leave Mexican California by the way they had come.

On 18 January 1827, Smith and his men retraced their route through the valleys of southern California and across the mountains near Cajon Pass. Once they left coastal California, author David Weber maintains that Smith had no intention of another waterless desert crossing. Weber wrote:

Two of Smith's newly discovered letters make it clear that he thought of no such thing. Fully aware that he had disobeyed the governor's orders, Smith invented an excuse. He told Echeandia that he could not follow orders because "the Mountains hung covered with snow, were impassable and I was obliged to go northwardly."<sup>7</sup>

The small brigade headed north by a circuitous route through the Tehachapi Mountains and into the southern grassland of the great central valley of California.

On 20 May 1827, east of the confluence of the Stanislaus and San Joaquin rivers, Smith and two companions left eleven trappers at an established camp and commenced a remarkable crossing of the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Ebbetts Pass; thus, these men became the first non-Indians to cross this formidable mountain range. After this hazardous mountain journey, the exhausted men traveled across the equally hostile Great Basin of Nevada and Utah and to the rendezvous site at Bear Lake. It was 3 July 1827. Since leaving their comrades in central California, the three resolute mountain men had been enroute for over six weeks. Smith wrote, "My arrival caused a considerable bustle in camp, for myself and party had been given up as lost" by the original party of trappers. A cannon salute highlighted the rendezvous merry making on behalf of the "lost" trappers' return.

In less than two weeks, the partners—Smith, Jackson, and Sublette—organized and reoutfitted Smith,

eighteen trappers, and two Indian women for the return trip to California. Later, ten members of the expedition were killed while crossing the Colorado River. The Mohave Indians had become treacherous after a bloody encounter with another group of American trappers since Smith's last visit to their village. Smith and the survivors retraced portions of their route of the previous year and in several weeks rejoined their comrades along the Stanislaus River.

During Smith's intervening absence, the American trappers' encroachment and "bad manners" had been reported to Mexican authorities and Governor Echeandia by Indians and John Wilson, one of several disgruntled men who had been discharged by Smith. This time, Governor Echeandia was convinced that Smith was spying and inciting the once peaceful valley Indians into protesting the government's decision to secularize the California missions. Once again, Smith was detained; this time he was locked in the *calabozo* in Monterey while an investigation was in progress.

Eventually, Smith was released but only after his old nemesis, Echeandia, received Capt. John Cooper's bond guaranteeing "good conduct and behavior" during a "safe passport" out of California; Cooper was a respected Bostonian shipmaster who had married and settled in Monterey. Smith and his men, now numbering nineteen, gathered their equipment, supplies, and recently purchased horses which they planned to sell once the party returned to the Rocky Mountains. They resumed their journey through the upper central valley of California. Despite initial success in trapping the valuable beaver, their hardships and conflicts with Indians increased as they broke trail through rugged northeastern California.

On 23 June 1828, the Americans crossed into Oregon Country. While camped along the Umpqua River, the Kelawatset Indians unexpectedly attacked the trappers; only Smith and three of his men survived. The survivors made their way to the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Vancouver along the Columbia River. The Americans were welcomed hospitably by their competitors and, in a few weeks, a company expedition was dispatched to coastal Oregon to recover from the Indians some of the Smith party's furs, horses, and personal possessions.

On 12 March 1829, after selling their recovered horses and furs for almost \$2,400 to the Hudson's Bay Company, Smith and Arthur Black, one of the original members of the 1826 expedition, ascended the Columbia

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River and traversed the northern Rocky Mountains into territory occupied by American trappers. Smith's sketchy record of the journey indicates that he was reunited with his partners, Jackson and Sublette, in the Teton Mountains of western Wyoming during the summer of 1829.

Smith's life came to a tragic end while scouting for a Santa Fe trading expedition which he and his partners had financed. He fell to a Comanche war party along the Cimarron River on 27 May 1831. He was thirty-two years of age.

As a result of this remarkable record, what was the public's reaction? Initially, the Smith story almost was consigned to oblivion, lost in various repositories and private storerooms. His original notes and invaluable maps were overlooked or destroyed by fire. Some official correspondence and one of his journals from the California sojourn have yet to be found in the national archives in Mexico City. Smith's extraordinary role in opening the West was "rediscovered" in 1918 by Harrison C. Dale who published a monograph on the Ashley-Smith explorations. During the 1920s, on the one hundredth anniversary of Smith's southwest exploration to California, several noteworthy articles were published, including John G. Neihardt's epic story of the mountain man, the first Smith biography. Subsequently, the discovery of portions of a copy of Smith's journal enabled Maurice S. Sullivan to publish in 1934 the first substantive description of the Southwest Expedition. Today, scholars are especially indebted to Dale L. Morgan for his precise research and incomparable biography of Smith, first published in 1953. Also, in 1967, a student of history donated to George R. Brooks yet another copy of Smith's "Southwest journal" which enabled him to publish in 1977 the most definitive account of that remarkable journey.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Smith himself had sought a place in the annals of western history by planning to publish his journals and maps; however, the loss of these precious documents before publication lessened his reputation as a premiere trailblazer.

With time, chance, and diligence, however, historians have located sources that have enabled them to reconstruct Smith's astounding achievements. The newly opened cache of documents described here represents another step in the ongoing process of reconstructing Smith's life and times. These records enrich our

understanding of the motives and movements of Smith and his companions, and they shed new light on Indian-white relations in California.<sup>9</sup>

In recent years, Smith scholars of the Jedediah Smith Society have continued to research and publish valuable monographs. Most notable have been Raymund F. Wood's pamphlet of monuments to Smith and Virginia L. Struhsaker's bibliography recording over 450 publications about Smith.<sup>10</sup>

The Smith story is incomplete, however. Western historians are challenged to begin anew in publicizing the remarkable account of his efforts in opening the American West.

*Part 2 - to be continued in the Summer 2016 issue*

## NOTES

1. Merrill J. Mattes, "OCTA Revolution," *Overland Journal* 13 (Winter 1995-1996), 28.
2. George R. Stewart, *The California Trail: An Epic with Many Heroes* (New York: McGraw-Hill, paperback ed., 1971), 4.
3. Dale L. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1964), 83.
4. Robert Stuart and six companions crossed South Pass in 1812 after an incredible year-long journey from their fur trading post at Astoria to St. Louis.
5. Robert Glass Cleland, *This Reckless Breed of Men* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 55.
6. Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 5th ed. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1982), 401.
7. David J. Weber, *The Californios Versus Jedediah Smith, 1826-1827* (Spokane: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1990), 19.
8. Harrison C. Dale, *The Ashley-Smith Explorations and the Discovery of a Central Route to the Pacific, 1822-1829* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1918); John G. Neihardt, *The Splendid Wayfaring: The Story of the Exploits and Adventures of Jedediah Smith and His Comrades, the Ashley Henry Men, Discoverers and Explorers of the Great Central Route from the Missouri River to the Pacific Coast, 1822-1831* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1920); Maurice S. Sullivan, *The Travels of Jedediah Smith: A Documentary Outline, Including the Journal of the Great American Pathfinder* (Santa Ana, Calif.: Fine Arts Press, 1934); Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*; George R. Brooks, ed., *The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith: His Personal Account of the Journey to California, 1826-1827* (Glendale, Calif.: A. H. Clark Co., 1977; reprinted, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1989).
9. Weber, *Californios Versus Jedediah Smith*, 66.
10. Raymund F. Wood, comp., *Monuments to Jedediah Smith* (Stockton, Calif.: The Jedediah Smith Society, 1984); Raymund F. Wood, comp., *Supplement to Monuments to Jedediah Smith* (Stockton, Calif.: The Jedediah Smith Society, 1991); Virginia Struhsaker, comp., *Jedediah Smith Bibliography* (Stockton, Calif.: The Jedediah Smith Society, 1991). The Jedediah Smith Society was organized in 1957 by a group of historians at the University of the Pacific, Stockton, Calif., to publicize the story of Smith and the fur trade. The Society is headquartered at the University of the Pacific in Stockton.

## President's Message

I trust it goes without saying that I am honored to be serving as your president this year. The members of the Society's Board of Directors are working hard to serve you and to execute the mission established nearly 60 years ago:

"An organization dedicated to the history of Jedediah Smith, and other explorers and mountain men of the fur trade era."

Toward this end the Society's objectives focus on three specific areas:

**Preservation** To acquire, preserve, and make available for scholarly research and public display the original journals, letters, records and personal belongings of Jedediah Strong Smith, 1799-1831, early American explorer, cartographer, and mountain man;

**Research** To encourage scholarly research and writing, with particular emphasis on the accomplishments of Jedediah S. Smith and other early fur traders and explorers, by offering appropriate awards, scholarships and grants for meritorious study and research;

**Education** To foster, through public meetings, publications, or other events or activities, appropriate and effective educational programs to promote public awareness and understanding of the career and accomplishments of Jedediah S. Smith and other early fur traders and explorers.

With renewed energy and direction the Board is active on all three fronts. Treasurer Ed Sieckert is spending a great deal of his time in the archives of the Society, which are capably housed at the University of the Pacific in the Holt-Atherton Library.

The Society's quarterly newsletter, *Castor Canadensis* is a treasure. Original research is crafted into entertaining articles by Fur Trade experts like Joe Molter, Jim Hardee, Howard C. Lewis, Roger Williams, and others. The 'Castor' underwent the conversion to an E-newsletter last year. We are cutting costs, reaching more people and delivering a quality product to the membership and others.

The Society's educational efforts include awarding scholarships, assisting with historical signage, markers and monuments, hosting two meetings each year, and outreach to other, similar organizations like the Museum of the Mountain Man, the California-Oregon Trail Association, and the California Historical Society. I attended the Annual Meeting at the Museum of the Mountain Man on March 11th. The keynote speaker that evening was Clay Landry, of Whitehall, Montana, who was a technical consultant for the making of *The Revenant*. Clay has been a frequent contributor to the *Journal of the Fur Trade*. Clay's lecture was entertaining, informative and educational in every regard.

The Spring Rendezvous in 2016 will be at Bear Valley, California where Eric Jung and some of 'Jed's Intrepids' will lead a hike to 'Jed's Vista,' where he saw the Nevada desert from the crest of the Sierras in late May, 1827. This concluded a very difficult crossing of this magnificent mountain range by Jedediah, Robert Evans and Silas Gobel.

The Fall Rendezvous is set for October 8th at the San Joaquin County Historical Society in Lodi, California. This will be the 60th Anniversary of the Jedediah Smith Society and it will be quite a celebration. Distinguished faculty will be on hand, including Edie Sparks, Ph.D., Department Chair & Associate Professor of History at the University of the Pacific. The keynote speaker will be Jim Hardee, currently Editor of the *Fur Trade Journal* at the Museum of the Mountain Man in Pinedale, Wyoming.

More information on these upcoming events can be found on the Society's web page, <http://jedediahsmithsociety.org/index.html>. We hope to see many friends at the Rendezvous in June or October.

The celebration will include the dedication of a new historical marker commemorating Jedediah's journeys through San Joaquin county in 1827 and 1828.

And on Saturday April 23rd in southern Utah, another Jedediah Smith monument will be dedicated. This will be at Fremont State Park, near Cove Fort.

All this indicates a renewed interest in the Fur Trade Era generally, and the Jedediah Smith Society is proud to be an important part of it. We look forward to seeing you on the trail or at the Rendezvous.

Sincerely, Jim Smith



## Castor Announcements

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

#### 60th Anniversary Jedediah Smith Rendezvous October 8, 2016

As we move closer to the 60th Anniversary Rendezvous the program is finalized with five fur trade speakers, a buffet lunch, Jedediah Smith Monument dedication and an Assembly Resolution to mark the day. We will celebrate it at the San Joaquin Historical Society and Museum conference room and lunch in the newly completed Red Barn. Jim Hardee, editor of the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal is our keynote speaker. We invite you to join us for a special day to honor Jedediah S. Smith and those who founded the Society.



#### The Spring Rendezvous June 11, 2016

Eric Jung author of *Jedediah Smith First Crossing of the Sierra Nevada-Hiked* will speak on his research and then we will drive to where we can see Jed's vista. Details in the Events section.

#### Spring Castor Article

This month's article: *Jedediah Strong Smith: Trails West* was written by Richard Dyer, Castor editor emeritus, and instructor in American History at Columbia College in California. This article, well researched and written, will be presented over two Castor newsletters. Please note, the Castor Canadensis is not responsible for either the research or the opinions of the writer. Publication dates are January 15, April 15, July 15 and September 15. If you have an article you would like published please send an email, in MS Word "Double Spaced" format to the editor 30 days prior to publication date. Editorial committee, Ed Sieckert, Irene Steiner, Wayne Knauf, Joe Molter and Darrell Thomas.

## Events in 2016

### Summer Rendezvous June 11 Jedediah Smith and Crossing the Sierra's

June 11, 2016 10am

Bear Valley Mountain Resort, Bear Valley, CA

The Jedediah Smith Society will celebrate Jedediah Smith's crossing of the Sierra Nevada in 1827. Jedediah Smith was the first non-native American to Cross the Sierra Nevada near Ebbetts Pass (Highway 4). There will be a presentation by Eric Jung, author of "Jedediah Smith First Crossing of the Sierra Nevada-Hiked" on his findings in a Power Point presentation. Afterward we will travel by private car 10 miles north of Bear Valley to see the Ridge call Jeds' Vista. Lunch at the Bear Valley Ski Lodge Cafeteria will follow and is no host. **Meeting will start at 10am at the Bear Valley Mountain Resort, Bear Valley California.** DVDs will be available which covers his presentation and maps of the route.

Directions:

Address of the Ski Lodge is 2280 State Highway 207. Travelling from the San Joaquin Valley go east on Highway 4 from Angels Camp one hour. Two miles past the entrance to Bear Valley, left on Hwy 207,

marked for Bear Valley Mountain Resort, follow to the end of the road, you will see the Day Lodge. Signs will direct you to the Jedediah Smith Society Meeting area.

### 60th Anniversary Rendezvous October 8, 2016

**The Jedediah Smith Society** will be celebrating their 60th Anniversary at a day long celebration (9:30 am to 4pm) **October 8, 2016**, and welcome all members and the public to this share in this historic and important milestone. It will be located at the San Joaquin Historical Society/Museum in Micke Grove Park southeast of the city of Lodi, California.

Registration: \$30 per person, includes 5 speakers, lunch, exhibits of artifacts of the fur trade period and a commemorative CD. Make check payable to "Jedediah Smith Society", send to 1040 West Kettleman Lane #147, Lodi, CA 95240.

**Registration closes September 10.**

For more information see the website:

[www.jedediahsmithsociety.org](http://www.jedediahsmithsociety.org)

# 60th Anniversary Program

## October 8, 2016

Location: San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum, Lodi, CA.

Time	Presentation	Speaker
9:30-9:35	<b>Opening</b>	<b>Ed Sieckert</b> , Chairman 60 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary
9:35-9:45	<b>Welcome</b>	<b>Jim Smith</b> , President Jedediah Smith Society <b>Dr. Edie Sparks</b> , Chair, History Dept. University of the Pacific
9:45-9:50	<b>Invocation</b>	<b>Rev. Darrell Thomas</b>
9:50-10:20	<b>Jedediah Smith and His Slaves</b>	<b>Jim Hardee</b> , Editor The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal
10:25-11:10	<b>The Sea Otter Fur Trade in California</b>	<b>Dr. Richard Ravalli</b> History Professor Willam Jessup University
11:15-12:00	<b>State of California Assembly Resolution to Jedediah Smith Society</b> <b>Dedication of the site of Jedediah Smith's path crossed the Lodi area</b>	<b>Susan Eggman</b> , Assemblywoman  <b>David Stuart</b> , Director San Joaquin Historical Society/Museum <b>Mr. Chuck Winn</b> , San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Dist. 4
12:00-1:15	<b>Buffet Lunch</b> <i>Catered by Buono Italiano</i>	
1:25-2:05	<b>Jedediah Smith and His Travels</b>	<b>Dr. Ned Eddins</b> , Author and Fur Trade Researcher
2:10-3:00	<b>Jedediah Smith and His Early Life in Ohio</b>	<b>James C. Auld</b> , Author and Researcher on Jedediah Smith
3:00-3:40	<b>Arms of the Fur Trade</b>	<b>Lee Dummel</b> , Author and Historian
3:40	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	<b>Ed Sieckert</b>

Registration is \$30.00 per person and includes lunch, program and 60th Anniversary commemorative disk. Send check to: Jedediah Smith Society, 1040 W. Kettleman Ln. #140, Lodi, CA 95240



## Members' Section

2016 Member Rosters will be sent out May 1



### Remembering Gordon Martin

Gordon Martin passed away March 6, 2016 in Prescott, Arizona. He was past President of the Jedediah Smith Society and President of the California Conference of Historical Societies. We always remember

his knowledge of California History and the friendly conversation he created when you first met him. Thank you for all you did and we will miss you.

### New Members

We welcome these members.

<b>Jim Anderson</b>	Oregon City, OR
<b>Barbara Bush</b>	Normal, Illinois
<b>Nathan Crum</b>	Lodi, CA
<b>Charles Kelso</b>	Sacramento, CA
<b>Brad Kosch</b>	Carson City, Nevada
<b>Mark Wilson</b>	McKinleyville, CA

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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.

We are compiling a list of Jedediah Smith Relatives. Let the editor (ed@sieckert.com) know and your name will be placed on this list for inclusion in the JSS archive at UOP and in the 60th Anniversary program.

To date, we have the following: **Lillian Smith, Barbara Bush, Ed Sieckert, John Felt**

## The Book Review

*Coordinators – Paige and Steve Mair*

Paige and Steve Mair have suggested this as a way to bring attention to interesting old and new books of explorers and the fur trade.

*Both of these members submitted a summary about Joseph Walker, so I decided to print both reports (editor)*

**From: Therese Melbar, Bakersfield Ca. member**  
**A Way Across the Mountain,** Joseph Walker's 1833 Trans-Sierran Passage and the Myth of Yosemite's Discovery, by Scott Stine. ISBN: 978-0-87062-432-2

This is a well-researched book that retraces Joseph Rutherford Walker's route across the Sierra Nevada by comparing actual geographic features to those found in the journal of Zenas Leonard. Nearly all of the major early explorers of this era (including Jedediah Smith) are mentioned throughout for additional supporting documentation, along with numerous maps and photos. The book is heavily footnoted for clarification, and there is an extensive reference section at the end of the book that is worth taking a look at for anyone who would like to expand their reading library.

**From: Steve Mair**

Title: **A Way Across the Mountain,** Joseph Walker's 1833 Trans-Sierra Passage and the Myth of Yosemite's Discovery. Author: Scott Stine Publisher: The Arthur H. Clark Co. 2015

*Why I read this book:*

While attending the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua in 2006, I heard Scott Stine speak as one of the presenters on topics related to the geographic area. The lecture covered his research regarding the 1833 Walker expedition and its relation to Mono Lake and Yosemite. I took notes and was impressed by his detailed research. Years later, a newsletter from the Mono Lake Committee listed his book as a new publication and I knew I wanted to read it.

*Book Review Continued on page 10*

## The Book Review - *Continued*

### *The Book:*

Stine is a professor emeritus in the Department of Anthropology, Geography, and Environmental Studies at Cal State, East Bay. In this book he uses his interdisciplinary knowledge to unravel the truth about the discovery of Yosemite. By meticulously following the journal of Zenas Leonard, Walker's clerk, who wrote the only written account of the expedition, and paying close attention to the terrain and available forage of the route, Stine concludes that the expedition did not go to the Yosemite Valley. For example, based on Stine's retracing of the route, the description of the grove of Giant Sequoias given in the journal is not one of the two groves in Yosemite (as it is usually posited as proof of the Walker discovery) but is actually the North Grove in current Calaveras Big Trees State Park. The reasoning behind his conclusions along with geographic details and historical information make for a fascinating read.

### *Why other JSS members might be interested:*

Of particular interest to JSS members is Prof. Stine's development of methodology to compare a journal (that is not always consistent) to the geography of the area, paying attention to the size of the historical party and the needs of its men and animals. As fur trade era history is most often understood through journals, this book is an excellent example of unraveling first person accounts of discovery. It is also an area many JSS members are familiar with and associate with other era mountain men.

**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](mailto:pfrend1@yahoo.com). You can follow the above format. Title, author, publisher,**

## Monuments



***Therese Melbar works at Cal Poly State University San Dimas and posted these photos of the Jed Smith Monument.***

I recently traveled to San Dimas (formerly Mud Springs) to view the monument of Jedediah Smith. The sculpture by Victor Issa titled "A Welcome Site" is an impressive life-sized figure of Jedediah located on the grassy corner of the San Dimas Civic Center at the Bonita and Walnut Ave. intersection. The monument is one mile off the 57 freeway from the Arrow Hwy. exit. Turn left at the covered wagon welcome sign for the city of San Dimas, CA on Bonita, and drive through the city's old downtown historic district, where many buildings date back to the turn of the century. The older section of town has wood planked sidewalks; and is where the Pacific Railroad Museum is located.

There are several plaques at the Smith monument. One reads: Jedediah Strong Smith 1799-1831 Jedediah Strong Smith, an American explorer, was the first man to lead a party of Americans over land into California. Setting out from near the Great Salt Lake in August, 1826 Smith and his party traveled the entire length of the Great Basin, crossed the Mojave Desert, and entered southern California. On November 26, 1826, the group camped at Mud Springs. The following day they reached Mission San Gabriel. Smith was the first to cross the Sierra Nevada Range, first to travel the length and breadth of the Great Basin, and the first to reach the Columbia River by land from San Diego. He explored more of the American West than any man of his generation. The legacy of Jedediah Strong Smith's journeys will always be an inspiring account in the history of the American West. Smith was a man of high moral principles, a respected leader, and great American.

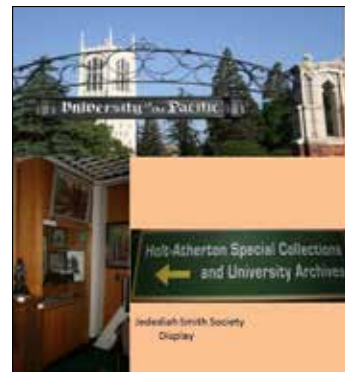
*Dedicated November 21, 1992 San Dimas Festival of Western Arts  
John H. Walgren, President*



## Archives Corner

### University of the Pacific Special Collections

When you come to the October 8 meeting be sure and stop at UOP Holt Atherton Special Collections and see the Jedediah Smith display in the Reading room. Hours 10-4 M-F. Of special interest are 3 collections, Jedediah Smith Collection, Maurice Sullivan and the Smith-Bacon Collection. Joe Molter and I are researching the Sullivan Collection regarding Jed's trail through San Joaquin County in the wet winter months of 1828. Sullivan's book gives a day by day account of his travel in Utah and California- *The Travels of Jedediah Smith*, a documentary outline, Including his Journal. This journal is also on-line.




### OTHER MUSEUMS:

#### San Joaquin Historical Society and Museum



50th Anniversary June 26, 2016. It will also celebrate the opening of the Sunshine Trail and Water Path.

## DELTA WILDLIFE



**The Delta once teemed with birds, fish, and other wildlife**

The Delta was home to an amazing abundance of wildlife. Delta beaver, otter, and mink attracted trappers in the 1820s and 1830s. Salmon, sturgeon, and dozens of other fish filled its rivers. Millions of ducks, geese, and other birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway relied on Delta wetlands to rest and feed. That abundance of wildlife began to change with the arrival of thousands of gold miners. In the 1850s, tule elk and waterfowl were heavily hunted to feed the miners. Salmon were netted and canned in huge numbers, too. Rivers were dammed and became choked with mud from the mines upstream until few salmon were left.



Now, recognizing how much has been lost, conservation efforts are underway.

This is where the Jedediah Smith Monument will be located when completed this summer. Thanks to Wayne and Dave for making this historic Rendezvous a successful one.



**Captain Weber's Cottage and beaver pond and cattails. Site of Jedediah Smith Monument**

Wayne Knauf, is a member of the San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum here in Lodi. Wayne is working with Dave Stuart, Director of the Museum on our 60th Anniversary Rendezvous. Dave has built a world class museum with the help of many volunteers. You need to take some extra time to see this museum inside and out. The new "Innovators in Ag" Building which has interactive exhibits on the key crops grown in the area: almonds, walnuts, cherries, tomatoes and asparagus. It is one of the best museums I have visited. The main building as you enter the museum includes early life in San Joaquin County, Jedediah Smith and the trappers, the native American display are excellent. Wait till you see the various buildings of Captian Weber and the founding of the City of Stockton. Old farm equipment is also on exhibit.

## INVITE A FRIEND TO JOIN

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.

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

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to: JEDEDIAH SMITH SOCIETY  
Mail to Treasurer: 1040 West Kettleman Lane #147, Lodi, CA 95240

## Links on the Web



**Museum of the Mountain Man, Pinedale Wyoming**  
[www.museumofthemountainman.com](http://www.museumofthemountainman.com)

**Museum of the Fur Trade Chadron, Nebraska**  
[www.furtrade.org](http://www.furtrade.org)

**San Joaquin Historical Society and Museum, Lodi, CA**  
[www.sanjoaquinhistory.org](http://www.sanjoaquinhistory.org)

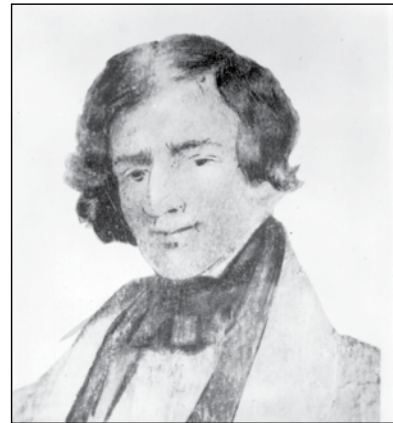
**California Conference of Historical Societies**  
[www.californiahistorian.com](http://www.californiahistorian.com)

**Sutters Fort Sacramento, CA**  
[www.suttersfort.org](http://www.suttersfort.org)



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